



NIDS Symposium on International Security 2006

Military Transformation in the 21st Century: Challenge for New Security Environment

Backgrounds and Aims

Under the Administration of George W. Bush the United States is proceeding with an ambitious and wide-ranging plan for military transformation intended to enable the U.S. military to cope with various threats of the 21st century. Elements of this transformation include, first, accelerating and emphasizing high technology, information capabilities, and joint operations among services so that even lightly-equipped forces capable of rapid deployment will be more effective or equal in combat to current heavily-equipped forces; second, strengthening the defense corporation with its allies; and third, enabling the U.S. military prompt access to unstable regions by realigning the Cold War footprint of its overseas military bases to one more suitable for the challenges of the new century.

Through transformation the United States will seek to better respond to and manage the international conflicts of the 21st century. Repositioning of U.S. bases in Japan is being implemented in this context, with U.S. efforts to realign its overseas bases, which are closely related to Japan-U.S. defense cooperation, especially the division of roles and missions. In the meantime, in an effort to better deal with the changing security environments in the 21st century, Japan and the United States agreed at the Security Consultative Committee (“2 Plus 2”) meeting in February 2005 on a set of common strategic objectives to bolster their defense and security cooperation, and Japanese-U.S. security cooperation now deals with a wide range of security challenges of both regional and global significance.

For Japan, U.S. military transformation and the evolving role of the U.S.-Japan alliance has raised a number of policy questions that must be answered without delay: How should Japan build its defense capability to deal with new threats and adapt to the Revolution in Military Affairs? How do allies deal with U.S. military transformation and base realignment? How should roles and missions be divided between the Self Defense Forces and the U.S. military? What creative and additional roles can and should Japan play?

As Against this background, the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), the research wing of the Japan Defense Agency, will address this year’s Symposium on International Security to the theme of “Military Transformation: Challenges and Prospects.” With the participation of experts from Japan and abroad, the Symposium, to be held February 1, 2006, aims to foster a deeper appreciation of security issues among the general public.

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