

East Asian Strategic Review 2008

The National Institute for Defense Studies
Japan

The Japan Times

Preface

The maintenance of peace and stability in East Asia, which is a prerequisite for the preservation of Japan's national security, requires an objective understanding of the regional security environment. With the aim of facilitating that understanding, the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) has compiled the findings of its research and analyses into the *East Asian Strategic Review (EASR)* for dissemination throughout the international community.

Published annually, the *EASR* examines medium- and long-term issues critical in assessing East Asian security, and analyzes major trends of the preceding year in the chapters focused on specific countries and areas. In this 2008 edition, the examination of critical issues is mainly focused on the space development program of China, a nation that is dramatically rising in power and influence. The chapters analyzing regional trends in the 2007 calendar year discuss such topics as the Six-party Talks aimed at encouraging North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and nuclear development program; the burgeoning of Chinese diplomacy under the consolidated political foundation of the Hu Jintao regime, and the state of the People's Liberation Army as it celebrated its eightieth anniversary; Southeast Asian countries' expansion of cooperation with other nations inside and outside the region, and their adoption of the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Russia's increasingly independent direction in foreign policy, and its pursuit of a military buildup fueled by economic growth; the North Korea policy taken by US President George W. Bush and his administration following their change of course, and the outlook for US policy toward Asia; policy challenges in the wake of Japan and the United States' agreement on realignment of US armed forces in Japan, the growth of Japanese security cooperation with Australia and India, and issues related to international peace cooperation activities by the Self-defense Forces.

The *EASR* is founded on the independent perspectives held by the members of the NIDS team that wrote and edited it, and the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official position of the Japanese government or the

Preface

Ministry of Defense. It would be our great pleasure if this book helps to enhance public understanding of the current East Asian security environment and to stimulate discussion of Japan's national security and defense.

April 2008

Shinichi Ogawa
EASR 2008 Editor-in-chief
Director of Research Department
The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan