

## **Chapter 8**

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### **Japan: The Adoption of the New National Defense Program Guidelines—Toward a More Dynamic Defense Force**



Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) is the most fundamental document in Japanese defense policy that analyzes the country's basic defense situation and defines the roles and basic composition of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF). The NDPG also forms the basis for the Mid-Term Defense Program, a plan that guides the defense capabilities involving specific budgeting, including equipment procurement, over five-year periods. The NDPG was first drawn up in 1976, during the Cold War, and subsequently revised in 1995 after the end of the Cold War and in 2004 in the post-9/11 period. On December 17, 2010, the latest version of the NDPG was adopted by the Security Council of Japan and the Cabinet, under the title *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2011 and Beyond* (hereinafter, "the new NDPG").

Among the various innovations introduced under the new NDPG, the most important is the creation of dynamic defense capabilities, replacing the "Basic Defense Force Concept." Specifically, the document states that it is vital to build a "Dynamic Defense Force" that "can effectively respond to security challenges," and explains that "comprehensive operational performance such as readiness for an immediate and seamless response to contingencies is increasingly important, considering shortening warning times of contingencies due to exponential advances in military technology." Given these circumstances, the NDPG stresses: "Clear demonstration of national will and strong defense capabilities through such timely and tailored military operations as regular intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR), not just maintaining a certain level of defense force, is a critical element for ensuring credible deterrence and will contribute to stability in the region surrounding Japan." As a means of achieving that aim, Japan must, according to the document, "[place] importance on dynamic deterrence, which takes into account such an operational use of the defense forces." On this basis, the NDPG proposes the creation of "a Dynamic Defense Force that possesses readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, and versatility," and is reinforced by advanced military technology and intelligence capabilities.

The basic idea that underlies the new concept of Dynamic Defense Force is that, rather than dividing the nation's defense forces into two separate roles of "deterrence in peacetime" and "response to emergencies," it is becoming more important to let the forces operate actively and seamlessly in the middle ground between the extremes of peace and military contingency. For this purpose, the concept of Dynamic Defense Force—which focuses on "how to operate" the

forces—has replaced the previous concept of Basic Defense Force—which concentrated on “how to build” the forces—and constitutes the foundation of the new NDPG.

## **1. The Drafting of the New National Defense Program Guidelines**

### **(1) The Background to the Drafting of the New NDPG**

Japan’s National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) is the most fundamental document in Japanese defense policy that analyzes the country’s basic defense situation and defines the roles and basic composition of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF). The NDPG also forms the basis for the Mid-Term Defense Program, a plan that guides the defense capabilities involving specific budgeting, including equipment procurement, over five-year periods. The NDPG was first drawn up in 1976, during the Cold War, and subsequently revised in 1995 after the end of the Cold War and in 2004 in the post-9/11 period (the NDPG was initially called the “National Defense Program Outline,” but for simplicity, all versions are herein referred to as “NDPG”).

The NDPG formulated in 1976 (1976 NDPG) stated: “Under present circumstances, ... there seems little possibility of a full-scale military clash between East and West or of a major conflict possibly leading to such a clash, due to the military balance—including mutual nuclear deterrence—and the various efforts being made to stabilize international relations.” On that basis, the document said that the building of the SDF should focus on the creation and maintenance of a defense capability enabling the country to deal, independently, with instances of limited, small-scale aggression whose occurrence was deemed relatively likely. The phrase “limited and small-scale aggression” was explained, according to the 1977 Defense White Paper, as “an invasion that is as a rule conducted without large-scale preparations in a surprise manner so as not to reveal the aggressor’s intentions and is intended to create a *fait accompli* in a short space of time.” The scale of such “limited and small-scale aggression” was assumed to be the landing of approximately three to four divisions in the case of invasion by ground forces for instance (according to a remark by government official Seiki Nishihiro during a Cabinet Committee hearing at the House of Representatives on August 27, 1987).

The NDPG drawn up in 1995 (1995 NDPG) reflected the new defense needs

of Japan following the ending of the Cold War. The 1995 NDPG's conclusions and recommendations were based on the recognition that "a stable security environment has yet to be established with remaining uncertain elements" surrounding Japan. This document therefore contained recommendations to maintain Japan's basic defense capability and to rationalize and streamline its defense forces and make them more efficient. Additionally, in 1995, it was considered that the ability to "repel limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance," as put forward in the 1976 NDPG, was no longer an appropriate emphasis for the post-Cold War era, and that expression was not employed in the 1995 NDPG.

The NDPG adopted in December 2004 (titled "National Defense Program Guidelines for Fiscal 2005 and Beyond"; 2004 NDPG) focused on adapting to changes in the security environment, such as the threats posed by international terrorism and North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs. Following a decision taken by the Security Council of Japan in December 2003 on the introduction of a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system, this NDPG, while maintaining aspects of the "Basic Defense Force Concept" (hereafter, "BDF Concept") used in previous NDPGs that were believed to be still valid, advocated a new defense force concept featuring such key words as "multifunctional," "flexible," and "effective."

In a departure from the practice of previous NDPGs, in which no particular time limits had been stipulated for reviews, the 2004 NDPG stipulated, "...five years from now or in case there is a significant change in the international situation, we will review and, if necessary, revise the Guidelines in light of the security environment, technological progress, and other relevant factors at the time."

To obtain a wide range of opinions on proposals for improving the nation's security and defense capabilities in preparation for a review of the 2004 NDPG, from January 2009 the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Taro Aso of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) created the Council on Security and Defense Capabilities (hereinafter, "the Council on Security"), chaired by Tsunehisa Katsumata, chairman of Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc.. The Council on Security discussed such issues as the international security environment, problems involving the Japan-US alliance, activities by the SDF under the Act concerning Cooperation for United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations and Other Operations, the defense industry and Japan's technological base, as well as other factors that support

Japan's defense capabilities, and plans to reorganize the SDF in the future. The Council issued a report in August 2009.

At the end of August 2009, just after the publication of the report, the LDP government was defeated in an election to the House of Representatives, and Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) became prime minister. The Hatoyama Cabinet put off a final decision on the review of the NDPG for a further year, to December 2010, on the grounds that the historic change of government necessitated a thorough re-examination of a document so vital to national security. For this reason, the Council on Security and Defense Capabilities in the New Era (hereinafter the New Council on Security) chaired by Shigetaka Sato, CEO of Keihan Electric Railway, was established in February 2010. On August 27 of the same year the New Council on Security released its report, entitled "Japan's Vision for Future Security and Defense Capabilities in the New Era: Toward a Peace-Creating Nation."

Of particular interest in this report is the following statement: "With the non-combat role of the military capabilities becoming diversified and increased, the 'Basic Defense Force' concept, which has limited Japan's defense capabilities only for the purpose of denial of limited-scale external invasion, is no longer valid." The report thus recommended the jettisoning of the BDF Concept that had been advocated in the 1976 NDPG and had been pared down to "those elements that remain valid" in the 2004 NDPG. Specifically, the report argued that the BDF Concept must not be invoked as an excuse to preserve SDF units and equipment

that are of little importance or urgency in view of the likely future changes in the security environment. It also stated that Japan had reached a point where it was necessary to make it clear that the BDF Concept would no longer be maintained, and where a break must be made with the passive ideas and practices associated with this concept in order to implement a more thoroughgoing reorganization of the defense system. Moreover, the report asserted that it was becoming more

important for Japan to realize a dynamic deterrence capability characterized by SDF units with high-level operational abilities, capable of carrying out warning and surveillance activities under normal circumstances and of responding promptly and appropriately to encroachment by hostile forces.

The recommendations of the New Council on Security were subjected to examination and debate by the government as well as the ruling Democratic Party, and the new NDPG for fiscal 2011 and beyond was approved on December 17, 2010 by resolution of the Security Council and the Cabinet.

## **(2) The New NDPG—Changes from the 2004 NDPG**

The most important point to note regarding the future direction of Japan's defense capabilities presented in the new NDPG is the establishment of the goal of creating a "Dynamic Defense Force" freed from dependence on the BDF Concept. The new NDPG states that "Building defense forces that can effectively respond to security challenges is important." It also points out that "readiness for an immediate and seamless response to contingencies" is increasingly important, "considering shortening warning times of contingencies due to exponential advances in military technology." On this basis, the NDPG states that: "Clear demonstration of national will and strong defense capabilities through such timely and tailored military operations as regular intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR), not just maintaining a certain level of defense force, is a critical element for ensuring credible deterrence and will contribute to stability in the region surrounding Japan." It also states that: "Japan needs to place importance on dynamic deterrence taking into account such an operational use of the defense forces." These elements are basically in line with recommendations contained in the report by the New Council on Security, but what is important is not solely to create a dynamic deterrent to protect Japan's sovereign rights, but also to bring Japan's defense forces into play appropriately so as to further stabilize the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and make possible a more active role in improving the global security environment. In light of these factors, the NDPG states that Japan should: "develop a Dynamic Defense Force that possesses readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, and versatility. These characteristics will be reinforced by advanced technology based on the trends of levels of military technology and intelligence capabilities."

It is true that the 2004 NDPG already recommended building a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force that could effectively deter various contingencies, and switching the focus of defense policies from deterrence to response capability. However, the document divided up the roles of a defense force into the two distinct categories of “peacetime deterrence” and “contingency response,” while specifying the details of contingencies Japan needed to cope with. This is the kind of thinking that was prevalent during the Cold War, and was implicitly premised on the idea that a clear distinction can be drawn between the categories of peacetime (or “ordinary times”) and contingencies (or “emergency situations”). In today’s world, however, tasks aimed at improving the international security environment, such as counterterrorism, peace-building activities in a failed state, or counterpiracy patrolling, are called for on a constant basis. In other words, there is an increasing need to conduct operations that may not necessarily be of high intensity but are long term to cope with incidents taking place under a situation that is neither peace nor war, but a kind of middle ground between the two.

The new NDPG, in the context of describing the security environment surrounding Japan, also states that “there are a growing number of so-called ‘gray-zone’ disputes—confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interests that are not to escalate into wars.” This statement reflects the recognition that security issues that do not actually reach the status of emergency or contingency are increasingly important. In this environment, while recognizing the conventional role of a “static” deterrent as a means to prevent the materialization of contingencies, a need has arisen for emphasizing a defense force capable of supporting Japan’s more dynamic efforts in response to various events in this “gray zone.” The movement toward a dynamic defense force seen in the new NDPG is a response to this situation.

The new NDPG also changed from the previous 2004 NDPG in terms of the formulation of Japan’s security policy objectives. In the 2004 NDPG, the two main security objectives were given as follows: “preventing threats from reaching Japan and, in the event that they do, repelling them and minimizing any damage,” and “improving the international security environment to reduce the potential that threats will reach Japan in the first place.” In the new NDPG, three security objectives are given as follows:



The first objective of Japan's security policy is to prevent any threat from directly reaching Japan and to eliminate external threats that have reached it so as to minimize the ensuing damage, and thereby secure the peace and security of Japan and its people. The second objective is to prevent threats from emerging by further stabilizing the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and by improving the global security environment, so as to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order and ensure Japan's security and prosperity. The third objective is to contribute to creating global peace and stability and to secure human security.

Of these three objectives, the first is almost the same as in the 2004 NDPG, while in the case of the second objective, "further stabilizing the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region" and "improving the global security environment" are juxtaposed as a means to "prevent threats from emerging." What this means is that Japan's security policies in the Asia-Pacific region are distinguished from those on the global stage, and this is a significant difference from the 2004 NDPG, where these two aspects of Japan's security policy were treated together under the single heading of "improvement of the international security environment." The use of the expression "to secure human security" is also noteworthy, although it is still unclear to what extent it will have a direct impact on Japan's defense policies.

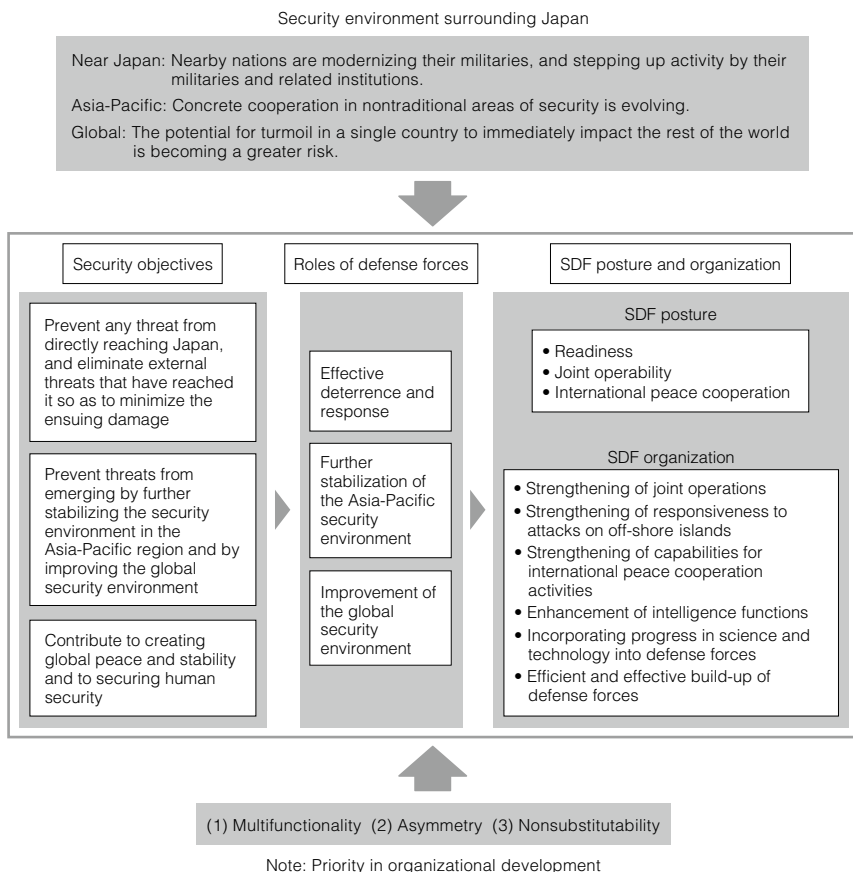
The means employed to formulate policy measures on the basis of these security objectives is also different from that found in the 2004 NDPG. The 2004 NDPG advocated a combination of three approaches for the realization of the aforementioned two security objectives—Japan's own efforts, cooperative efforts with the United States, Japan's alliance partner (the Japan-US Security Arrangements), and cooperation with the international community. Consequently, two objectives were paired with three approaches in the application of Japan's security policy, giving a total of six areas in which the security policy would have to be applied. A variety of measures have been tried with the aim of covering all six areas. However, this "two objectives and three approaches" method proved to be simply an abstract formula, as the 2004 NDPG did not explain how the various combinations were to be realized in concrete terms, or to what extent each could be expected to contribute to Japan's security. For example, in the case of the combination of the security objective "defense of Japan" with the approach to realize that objective of "cooperation with the international community," it is

difficult to imagine that “cooperation with the international community” would contribute to the “defense of Japan” in the same degree as a combination of this with either “Japan’s own efforts” or “cooperation with the United States.” Presenting a whole idea by using this combination of two objectives and three approaches makes it difficult to set the order of priority between the six areas.

In addition, as the two security policy objectives stated in the 2004 NDPG—defense of Japan and improvement of the international security environment—encompass almost all possible security-related issues, it was inevitably difficult to assign an order of priority to specific measures based on these objectives. In order to debate how to build up the nation’s defense forces within the limited budget resources available, however, the assignment of an order of priority to policy measures is a vital requirement, and it is therefore essential to find and apply a logical tool that will enable us to arrive at some sort of order of priority.

The new NDPG has brought about certain improvement in this respect. Rather than presenting policy areas simply by multiplying the number of approaches by the number of objectives, the new NDPG directly identifies the roles of Japan’s defense forces in realizing the country’s security objectives. Based on those roles, it attempts to formulate policies under which priority areas for the provision of defense capabilities are specified within the two categories of “Force Posture and Organization” and “Equipment and Force Disposition.” The roles of Japan’s defense forces are stated as “effective deterrence and response,” which is linked to the first security objective, and, within the second objective, “further stabilizing the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region” and “improving the global security environment.” To effectively perform these three roles, the documents argues that Japan’s SDF must be prepared to deal with a wide range of contingencies, and that in particular as a matter of priority, the SDF must constantly maintain three postures—readiness, joint operations, and international peace cooperation activities. With regard to the matter of the organization, equipment and force disposition of the SDF, as a general principle, Japan will prioritize strengthening functions applicable to a wide variety of operations, functions that have asymmetrical capability, and functions which cannot be substituted. As items to be emphasized, the document cites the following six items of high priority: the strengthening of joint operations, response to attacks on off-shore islands, strengthening capabilities for international peace cooperation activities, enhancement of intelligence functions, incorporating progress in

**Figure 8.1. Overview of the new National Defense Program Guidelines**



science and technology into defense forces, and efficient and effective build-up of defense forces.

The items termed “force posture” and “organization, equipment and force disposition” in the new NDPG are employed to indicate specifically what sort of capabilities the SDF must possess for the country’s defense posture, and what principles shall be employed in forming military units for that purpose. While these matters were incorporated in the 1976 and 1995 NDPGs, these were missing from the 2004 NDPG, but were restored to the new NDPG. Moreover, the new

NDPG succeeded in identifying the roles for the defense forces in the context of the country's security objectives, which has also contributed to present the priority areas for capability development in a clearer manner.

## **2. Basic Defense Force and Dynamic Defense Force**

### **(1) The Basic Defense Force Concept**

The BDF Concept, as expressed in the 1976 NDPG, has been the fundamental concept underpinning the building of Japan's defense forces under the international environment during the Cold War. The core element the BDF Concept that has been consistently maintained is that it is not based on the idea "threat-based defense force (or requirement-based defense force)," meaning that the size of the defense forces required by Japan should not be determined by those of neighboring countries. The BDF Concept incorporates three elements.

First, the forces guided by the BDF Concept can be seen as "foundations" of a larger defense force. The theoretical backbone of the 1976 NDPG was the internal paper *Thoughts on the Creation of a Defense Force* by Takuya Kubo, director-general of the Bureau of Defense Policy, Japan Defense Agency (precursor of the Ministry of Defense). Subsequently, the document was published in a posthumous collection of Kubo's writings. In this document, Kubo wrote that "it would be appropriate to hypothesize the occurrence of limited wars as a matter of theoretical probability," and stated that it was necessary in designing a defense force for Japan to take account of the requirement that the force be capable of adapting to changing conditions in the future. Here, changing conditions in the future was understood to refer to a deterioration in circumstances, such as "the appearance of signs suggesting that a major country has changed its policy in the direction of aggression." Consequently, if such a change were to occur, Japan would require a defense force of a size beyond that assumed in Kubo's thesis. He then went on to argue that "In this sense, this kind of defense force would constitute a basic defense force for Japan." This led to the statement in the 1976 NDPG that Japan's defense capability "will be standardized so that, when serious changes in situations so demand, the defense structure can be smoothly adapted to meet such changes." As this statement implied the necessity for expansion of the defense forces in the event of changed circumstances, it became known as the "expansion provision." It is because the word "basic" in the phrase "Basic Defense Force" implies that

the size of the defense force at any one time merely constitutes the foundations of a yet-larger force, that this concept has come to be called the “Basic Defense Force Concept.”

The second element in the BDF Concept was the creation of a posture “without deficiencies,” meaning a defense force without deficiencies in both the functional and geographical contexts. The 1976 Defense White Paper offered an explanation of the BDF Concept from both these perspectives. In the functional context, the white paper states, “If Japan’s defense forces are lacking with respect to a certain aspect of military activities, they will be completely unable to take countermeasures in that field, leaving the enemy with a free hand.” Consequently, the white paper continued:

It is unacceptable for there to be any deficiency in those functions of Japan’s defense forces that enable them to defend against attack by air, sea, or land, nor in the information gathering and command communications functions that make such defense possible, nor in the support functions for such front-line activities.

In this way, it was argued that with respect to the functional aspect of the BDF Concept, such a force needed to possess all the functions required to deal with all conceivable types of attack, by land, sea, or air. Meanwhile, from the geographical context, the white paper stated that:

The defense forces of Japan must possess their various functions in such a way that the forces are able to defend in an organized manner against attacks against the territory of Japan or its territorial waters and airspace immediately upon the initiation of hostilities. To make this possible, the defense forces must be prepared and adapted to the unique geographical features of every part of Japan and its surrounding seas.

In this way, the white paper aimed to create a defense posture that would not allow any geographical gaps in the nation’s defenses. In particular, in the geographical context, the deployment of forces according to the Ground Self-Defense Force’s “Fourteen Topographical Areas” plan, also known as the “Mountains & Rivers Theory”—in which military units are deployed in groups determined by lines of

high ground (hills or mountains) and rivers—was based on the principle of creating a defense posture “without deficiencies.”

The third element that characterized the BDF Concept was the “power vacuum” theory, meaning that Japan needed to avoid creating a power vacuum that could destabilize the whole region. The “power vacuum” theory became associated with the BDF Concept during the 1980s, when the SDF was going through a period of expansion of its capabilities during the so-called new Cold War era after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Seiki Nishihiro, who was at that time serving as director-general of the Bureau of Defense Policy, explained the relationship between the expansion of the capabilities of the SDF and the 1976 NDPG as follows. In the 1976 NDPG, the purpose of building up the SDF was laid down as enabling it to “repel limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance.” This contained a problem, however, in that the scale of this “limited and small-scale aggression” was subject to possible change depending on the level of military technology and the composition of the forces deployed by the enemy. Therefore, the BDF Concept, in a very limited sense, contained an element of a “threat-based” defense concept. By the 1980s, the definition of “limited and small-scale aggression” had expanded considerably from the scale of the “limited and small-scale aggression” envisaged when the 1976 NDPG was adopted. Consequently, it was argued in the 1980s that it would be possible to expand the capabilities of the SDF without amending the 1976 NDPG or the BDF Concept. In other words, given that the definition of the scale of “limited and small-scale aggression” was itself variable, if Japan did not respond to the circumstances in its part of the world and did not provide its defense forces with the capability to repel incidents of aggression independently, this would lead to a “power vacuum” in the region, thereby destabilizing the international security environment. To ensure that Japan would not become a destabilizing factor in the region by creating a “power vacuum,” its defense forces needed to possess the ability to “repel independently limited and small-scale aggression,” and for as long as the military capabilities of surrounding countries remained subject to change, Japan needed to maintain the ability to adjust its military capabilities to deal with “limited and small-scale aggression.”

However, with the end of the Cold War, the nature of the “power vacuum” theory changed. Unlike the 1980s, when Japan’s ability to deal independently with “limited and small-scale aggression” was defined as a “non-vacuum”

situation, in 1995 the definition of a “non-vacuum” situation had changed to that of a “defense force without deficiencies.” During this period, the “power vacuum” theory served to conceptually underpin the BDF Concept, which was redefined by the 1995 NDPG.

The “valid aspects” of the BDF Concept were inherited by the 2004 NDPG. In the white paper *Defense of Japan 2005*, the following statement appears regarding valid elements of the BDF Concept:

...not to directly oppose military threats facing Japan, but to build up a defense force based on needs arising from the trends in armaments and military postures of the countries in Japan’s immediate vicinity and other strategic considerations, as well as this country’s unique geographical features, so as to preempt acts of aggression against Japan.

In other words, arguably the most important principle of the BDF Concept—not to build Japan’s defense forces in accordance with the level of military forces of neighboring countries—remained intact.

On the other hand, of the three elements described above, the essence of “foundations” of the requirement-based defense force had already ceased to play a role in defense debates with the deletion of the expansion provision in 1995.

With respect to the geographical aspect of the second element—“a defense force without deficiencies”—*Defense of Japan 2005* defines this as “the stationing all over Japan of military units with a high level of readiness and mobility in an appropriate manner,” and this had already been maintained in the 2004 NDPG, although it suggested the potential revision of proportionate distribution of defense forces by using the term “an appropriate manner”. With regard to the capability aspect, however, the 2004 NDPG had added to the existing international peace cooperation activities the new concept (introduced in the 2004 NDPG) of ability to meet “new threats and diverse situations,” as well as the idea of a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force. This introduced a new element distinct from the “defense force without deficiencies” concept within the conventional BDF Concept in which Japan’s military focused on meeting a full-scale invasion. Specifically, a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force is one whose capabilities are “without deficiencies” in respect of defending Japan against acts of aggression. In other words, this concept is not based on

passive conceptual prescriptions, but is one in which, in order to “achieve Japan’s security objectives” the defense force possesses the functions and capabilities to deal with “new threats and diverse situations” as well as those required to engage in international peace cooperation activities. Such a defense force is thus based on a more “active” posture.

The third element in the BDF Concept—the “power vacuum theory”—cannot be found in the 2004 NDPG. The 2004 NDPG called for a more proactive and constructive contribution to global security. In line with this, the sphere of activity of the SDF was expanded from solely the defense of Japan to the maintenance of security on a global scale. It follows that it would be difficult to create a defense force that could allow Japan to engage in such activities on the basis of the fundamental principle—as in the BDF Concept—that the only necessity is to ensure that there is no “power vacuum” in the region.

## **(2) Building a Dynamic Defense Force**

The 2004 NDPG, while upholding the “valid elements” of the BDF Concept, introduced the idea of building a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force. In the new NDPG this tendency has been strengthened still further, and the NDPG argues for the building of a Dynamic Defense Force capable of active involvement in a wide variety of activities without reliance on the BDF Concept. These two NDPG approaches share a common emphasis on ensuring security through the active use of the defense force, rather than relying on “deterrence through the existence of defense forces per se.” Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the two documents.

The 2004 NDPG’s insistence on the necessity for a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force reflected the understanding that meeting “new threats and diverse contingencies” became more important than responding to a “full-scale invasion.” Since “new threats and diverse contingencies” were thought to be “difficult to predict and can occur unexpectedly,” conventional deterrent power by the presence of defense forces would not necessarily work effectively. Thus, rather than relying on the role of defense force as deterrence, the need to shift from “deterrent-effect-oriented” to “response-capability-oriented” defense force, with stronger emphasis on the ability to respond to various situations both at home and abroad, was stressed.

Although this concept has something in common with the idea of a Dynamic



Defense Force in respect of the importance of actively employing the defense force, it is different in the sense of employing a dichotomy between “peacetime” and “contingencies,” leading to a distinction between “deterrence in peacetime” and “countermeasures upon the occurrence of a contingency.” The Dynamic Defense Force concept proposed in the new NDPG does not employ this dichotomy between the roles of the defense force—“deterrence in peacetime” and “countermeasures upon the occurrence of a contingency”—but rather emphasizes the active use of a defense force in the “gray zone” between peacetime and contingency and the importance of constant activities. With regard to this point, the new NDPG differs from the 2004 NDPG with its emphasis on a “multifunctional, flexible, and effective” defense force.

This point was made clear by Minister of Defense Toshimi Kitazawa’s statement released upon the adoption of the NDPG. According to the statement,

The roles of military power are diversifying. It is now becoming normal practice for military forces to be used at all times and on a constant basis for humanitarian aid, disaster relief, peacekeeping operations, and the suppression of piracy.

The statement went on to say that, against this background, “it has become an everyday affair for Japan’s SDF to be employed overseas,” and that “many of Japan’s neighboring countries are modernizing their militaries and their activities are increasing in a variety of fields.” The Defense Minister’s statement also said that, in order for Japan’s defense forces to perform the three essential roles of effective deterrence and countermeasures, contributing to the further stabilization of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region, and helping improve the global security environment, “it is becoming important for the defense forces to employ a variety of activities to defend the sovereignty of Japan, ensure peace and security, and secure the nation’s prosperity.” Because of these factors, said Minister Kitazawa, “the



**Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force P3-C Orion on a surveillance flight** (Japanese Ministry of Defense photo)

government will create a 'Dynamic Defense Force' with a focus on 'operations.'"

With regard to what sort of defense force "operations" would be pursued, the statement specified three fundamental concepts that would serve as guidelines. The first concept is "the regular and strategic implementation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR)." Since armed organizations including the military forces are becoming more active on a regular basis in the surrounding region, Japan must conduct constant, more intense and more frequent monitoring activities. This corresponds to the "dynamic deterrence" called for in the new NDPG. The second concept is "immediate and seamless response to contingencies." As a result of the development of military technology, the sudden occurrence of contingencies is becoming increasingly likely. There is also a growing risk that turmoil arising in a particular country will have immediate repercussions on the international community. Because of these factors, it is necessary to deal immediately with contingencies that arise suddenly. Moreover, it is absolutely vital that all government organizations concerned with such matters liaise and collaborate seamlessly with one another to enable a swift response.

The third concept is "the multilayered promotion of coordinated activities with other nations." Since security issues and destabilizing factors are becoming more complex and multilayered, it is necessary to coordinate action among many countries to deal with these problems effectively. Japan therefore needs to pursue approaches to the solution of such problems from all possible angles including effective cooperation within a bilateral or multilateral framework. For example, thanks to the collaboration between Japan and Australia in Iraq, the security relationship between the two countries saw a significant development. In this way, concrete cooperation on global security issues with other countries would help create cooperative relationships between Japan and those countries and simultaneously help raise Japan's presence within the international community.

These principles are important in gauging the nature of the Dynamic Defense Force, which the new NDPG aims to build independently from the BDF Concept. In turn, this will lead to the understanding that the central focus of the Dynamic Defense Force concept is on "how to operate" the nation's defense force, in contrast to the BDF Concept, which focuses on "how to build" the force. This conceptual shift is particularly important at a time when the dynamic employment of defense forces in so-called "gray zones" that are neither peacetime nor emergency is important.

### **(3) Dynamic Deterrence**

According to the new NDPG, “Clear demonstration of national will and strong defense capabilities through such timely and tailored military operations as regular intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR) is a critical element for ensuring credible deterrence and will contribute to stability in the region surrounding Japan.” It also states that “Japan needs to place importance on dynamic deterrence taking into account such an operational use of the defense forces.” Whereas the concept of a dynamic defense force relates to all three of the roles of the SDF, dynamic deterrence has a particularly strong connection with effective deterrence and countermeasures. Of the three fundamental concepts that serve as guidelines presented in the above-mentioned statement by the Defense Minister, a dynamic deterrent would be deployed in line with the first concept—“the regular and strategic implementation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR).” This does not imply, however that the deterrent role of such a force would be limited to conventional conflicts.

As already mentioned, amid the current security environment, it has become commonplace to employ military forces in peacetime for such activities as peacekeeping missions and antipiracy activities, and it is no longer very useful to separate situations into the categories of peacetime or emergency. Particularly in the region surrounding Japan, although it is believed that the occurrence of a large-scale conflict is becoming increasingly unlikely, military activities are taking place frequently. Furthermore, although such military activities cannot be classed as illegal, they can potentially become detrimental to Japan’s interests. Since such activities clearly differ from the aggressive activities that are the target of the traditional concept of deterrence, it is necessary to rethink that concept in order to be able to deter such activities. Dynamic deterrence is one approach that is intended to deter such activities.

Within deterrence theory, deterrence is defined as the use of military force “in the event of aggression, by taking up a military stance that threatens to inflict damage, such that the other side is deterred from further aggression.” Such deterrence takes two forms —“deterrence by punishment” and “deterrence by denial.” “Deterrence by punishment” refers to forcing the enemy to abandon the aggression by inflicting or threatening to inflict intolerable blows that would represent an unacceptable cost of the said aggression. “Deterrence by denial,” on the other hand, involves equipping one’s military forces with the ability to

physically prevent the enemy from conducting certain specific types of attack, thereby forcing the enemy to abandon the attempt. This form of deterrence forces potential enemies to calculate the possibilities of achieving their objectives through the use of attacks.

Deterrence theory has developed from debate about ways of preempting the change from peacetime to a contingency by deterring an enemy from engaging in such military activities as attacks or invasions. In particular, this theory developed as a way of preventing the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union from escalating to a “hot war.” Within discussion of deterrence theory, two situations have been hypothesized as examples of the failure of deterrence: (1) when the enemy adopts a strategy in which it attempts to create a *fait accompli* that changes the facts on the ground, by denying one’s own side the time to react; and (2) when the enemy engages in so-called probing activities with the aim of discovering the minimum level of contingency that would set deterrence measures in motion.

The dynamic deterrence concept was developed precisely as a result of concerns that certain situations could not be dealt with by the traditional type of deterrence, which had been designed with full-blown emergencies in mind. In the dynamic deterrence concept, the object of activity is not such military activity as the conventional “invasion” or “armed attack,” but activities that cannot easily be assigned to one or the other of the two traditional dichotomous categories of “peacetime” and “contingency.” In particular, the main deterrent objectives of dynamic deterrence are the two types of situations mentioned above, in which conventional deterrence would be likely to fail, i.e. “*fait accompli* situations” and “probing activities.”

Special emphasis is placed on deterring the enemy from acting by denying it any geographical opening or gap in time. This is done through surveillance



**Submarine capable of underwater surveillance and intelligence gathering** (Japan Self-Defense Forces photo)

and warning activities, information gathering, military drills and training exercises, actual military operations such as international cooperation in peacekeeping, and so on. In these ways, dynamic deterrence differs considerably from traditional deterrence in that it comes into being through the actual exercise of military force.

The various activities that constitute dynamic deterrence are not identical to “punishment” in response to full-scale military action or the “denial” to the enemy of the ability to conduct such action. It is undeniable that dynamic deterrence measures would probably be insufficient to make an enemy think twice before making the sort of critical political decisions needed to initiate full-scale military activities. In other words, it would be difficult to directly make the enemy hesitate to escalate their actions to the higher level of armed attacks or invasion. Consequently, traditional deterrence is a precondition in order for dynamic deterrence to work. On the other hand, dynamic deterrence is likely to be successful in forcing the enemy to realize that there would be little probability of success for a strategy of attempting to change the status quo by creating a “fait accompli” or through “probing activities.” Because of this, dynamic deterrence would act as a supplement to traditional deterrence, particularly in the context of deterrence by denial.

### **3. The New NDPG and Extended Deterrence**

#### **(1) Extended Deterrence in Past Defense Reviews**

As explained above, within the strategic context of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the 1976 NDPG proposed that Japan be able to deal independently with limited, small-scale aggression. In addition, with regard to the concept of extended deterrence, the 1976 NDPG stated:

Japan’s basic defense policy is to possess an adequate defense capability of its own while establishing a posture for the most effective operation of that capability to prevent aggression. In addition, a defense posture capable of dealing with any aggression should be constructed, through maintaining the credibility of the Japan-U.S. security arrangement and insuring the smooth functioning of that system. Against nuclear threat Japan will rely on the nuclear deterrent capability of the United States.

In 1968, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Eisaku Sato expressed “reliance on the US nuclear deterrent” as one of the four pillars of Japan’s nuclear policy, and in 1972 when the nation’s fourth defense plan was being drawn up, in a document entitled “Defense Concept and Situation Assessment with Respect to the Drafting of the

Fourth Five-Year Plan for the Defense of Japan,” the following statement appeared:

With regard to its defense, Japan will firmly maintain the Japan-US security arrangement, and will also base its defense on the possession of its own defense forces so as to prevent invasion of its territory. With regard to nuclear threat, the country will rely on the nuclear deterrence capability of the United States.

It is understood that the statement in the 1976 NDPG was based on those preceding statements, which had basically been upheld through the 2004 NDPG.

It seems unlikely that this statement regarding “reliance” on the US nuclear deterrent refers to the use of nuclear weapons in the event of the sort of limited, small-scale aggression envisaged in the 1976 NDPG. This is because, as Japan was committed to dealing with such incidents of limited, small-scale aggression “without external assistance,” the use of US nuclear weapons would not, logically, be contemplated. The 1976 NDPG presumed that a conflict surrounding Japan would be unlikely to exceed limited, small-scale aggression because of the existence of a situation of mutual nuclear deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, the expectation of the 1976 NDPG with respect to the US nuclear deterrent is thought to be that a “military balance including mutual nuclear deterrence” would create a strategic environment that would serve to prevent the eruption of a “full-scale military conflict between East and West.” It was on the basis of this assumption that Japan was able to concentrate on preparing itself for limited, small-scale aggression.

In this context the credibility of the United States’ nuclear deterrent vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, which was aimed at preventing a “full-scale military conflict,” was especially vital. Meanwhile, insofar as the relationship between this argument and the incidents of limited, small-scale aggression that Japan was supposed to deal with independently was concerned, whether or not the United States would use nuclear weapons in such a situation constituted a secondary issue compared with its nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. As Japan had nothing to contribute to the strengthening of the deterrent effect of the US nuclear capability vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the basic thinking was that it was logical for Japan to “rely on” the US nuclear deterrent.

Subsequent NDPGs retained this thinking from the 1976 NDPG. The 1995

NDPG stated:

Against the threat of nuclear weapons, [Japan will] rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent, while working actively on international efforts for realistic and steady nuclear disarmament aiming at a world free from the nuclear weapons.

This statement is notable for its reference to nuclear disarmament efforts while maintaining the line of thought of the 1976 NDPG, embodied in the phrase “rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent.”

The Advisory Group on Defense Issues, convened ahead of the drafting of the 1995 NDPG, issued a report entitled *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century*. This report declared: “As long as countries possessing nuclear weapons continue to exist, the nuclear deterrent capability of the United States will remain essential to the security of Japan.” It also stated:

Both goals [nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation] agree perfectly with the interests of Japan, which is determined to firmly maintain its nonnuclear policy. At the same time until these two goals are actually achieved, it is of decisive importance that the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrence be firmly maintained. The long-term strategy for peace of creating a world free from nuclear weapons and the policy of maintaining and strengthening Japan-U.S. security cooperation are, in this respect, inseparably related.

Thus, the report urged that the credibility of the US extended deterrence be maintained while simultaneously making efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation. The way in which this report emphasized the importance of both extended deterrence and efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament reflects an attitude widely held at that time.

A similar statement can be found in the 2004 NDPG, which said:

To protect its territory and people against the threat of nuclear weapons, Japan will continue to rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent. At the same time, Japan will play an active role in creating a world free of nuclear weapons by

taking realistic step-by-step measures for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan also will play an active role in international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts regarding other types of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means, such as missiles.

Following this statement, the NDPG went on to say in relation to response to ballistic missile attacks in the context of the “role of defense forces”:

We will respond to ballistic missile attacks by establishing necessary defense force structure, including the introduction of ballistic missile defense systems, to deal effectively with ballistic missile attacks. We will adequately respond to the threat of nuclear weapons by doing so, in addition to relying on U.S. nuclear deterrence.

A report by the Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, which was established prior to the drafting of the 2004 NDPG, had the following to say.

The international environment surrounding Japan remains volatile and there is no guarantee that a conflict involving nuclear weapons or other WMD will not break out. There are also threats from ballistic missiles. For these reasons, it will be necessary to maintain deterrence by bolstering the credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance. In particular, it will be essential for Japan to continue to rely on the extended deterrence provided by the United States to respond to threats by WMD, including nuclear weapons. Furthermore, because traditional approaches to deterrence do not always work in a situation where proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles capable of delivering them could produce serious consequences, there is a need to complement the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

In line with this, it is believed that the 2004 NDPG mentioned ballistic missile defense (BMD), which had been decided to be introduced in 2003, as a complement to the US nuclear deterrent, in addition to reliance on it.

## **(2) Issues to Be Considered regarding Extended Deterrence**

As we have seen, defense reviews since the 1976 NDPG have based their thinking



on the fundamental statement: “To protect its territory and people against the threat of nuclear weapons, Japan will continue to rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent.” However, this was based on the premise that the US deterrent would operate as part of the mutual nuclear deterrence situation between the United States and the Soviet Union, while Japan would deal independently with limited, small-scale aggression. The external situation changed from the time that this statement was first formulated in 1976. In the light of the current security environment, it appears necessary for Japan to clearly articulate its policy on extended deterrence.

The first issue that needs to be considered is the situation of the threats posed by nuclear weapons. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have pursued arms reduction through a series of agreements—the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), START II (not ratified), the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT, also known as the Treaty of Moscow), and the New START—while maintaining strategic stability on the basis of mutual vulnerability. As a result of these agreements, under the New START the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads will be reduced to 1,550, representing a major nuclear arms reduction compared with the Cold War era. Meanwhile, despite international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms, the number of countries known to possess or suspected of possessing nuclear weapons continues to grow. Moreover, out of the five countries recognized as nuclear weapons states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France are reducing their nuclear arsenals. However, China is pursuing the modernization of its nuclear weapons and missile forces in a non-transparent manner. In this way, while the United States and Russia have been making good progress in reducing nuclear arms, and the total number of nuclear warheads has been reduced, the number of states possessing nuclear weapons is on the increase.

In the Asia-Pacific region, given the lack of transparency in China’s nuclear weapon and missile modernization program and the fact that North Korea has recently conducted nuclear tests and has declared that it possesses a nuclear deterrent, it can be said that the nuclear threat is becoming more serious, albeit in a different manner from that seen during the Cold War era. Thus, the existence of a deterrent to attacks with nuclear weapons against Japan remains important.

The second issue relates to changes in the United States' views regarding its nuclear deterrent. In view of the increasing complexity of the security environment after the Cold War, as well as with a diversification in the types and sources of attacks against which deterrence was required, the United States adopted the strategic deterrence concept of a "new Triad" incorporating non-nuclear strike capabilities, missile defense systems, and an R&D and infrastructure program in the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). This idea was incorporated in the joint statement released in May 2007 by the United States-Japan Security Consultative Committee (SCC, known as the two-plus-two in Japan). According to the joint statement: "The U.S. reaffirmed that the full range of U.S. military capabilities—both nuclear and non-nuclear strike forces and defensive capabilities—form the core of extended deterrence and support U.S. commitments to the defense of Japan."

The United States has maintained the same policy direction under the administration of President Barack Obama. The 2010 NPR contained a statement to the effect that, to realize "a world without nuclear weapons," it was crucial for the "regional security architecture" to realize a nuclear deterrence backed by a strong political commitment in conformity with the regional security environment. Such deterrence must incorporate missile defense, the capability to deal with weapons of mass destruction (WMD), conventional forces, and integrated command and control capabilities. It was also emphasized that non-nuclear elements should be strengthened. In this way, the current US thinking on deterrence envisages the combined use of nuclear weapons and a variety of other means to deter attacks against the United States and its allies. At the same time, the NPR also states that "The U.S. nuclear posture has a vital role to play in regional security architectures." This statement clearly shows the continued importance attached by the US to its nuclear deterrent.

The third issue relates to the evaluation of the role of Japan's own missile defense system. As described above, the concept of extended deterrence includes not only a nuclear strike capability, but also the ability to defend against attacks. Consequently, to maintain the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan should not simply "rely" on the US nuclear deterrent, but should make proactive efforts to defend itself by means of its missile defense system. In fact, the 2004 NDPG referred to Japan's BMD in the context of the threat of nuclear attack.

### **(3) The New NDPG and the Extended Deterrence Concept**

With regard to the concept of extended deterrence, the new NDPG says:

To address the threat of nuclear weapons, Japan will play a constructive and active role in international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, so as to achieve the long-term goal of creating a world without nuclear weapons. At the same time, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the extended deterrence provided by the United States, with nuclear deterrent as a vital element, will be indispensable. In order to maintain and improve the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan will closely cooperate with the United States, and will also appropriately implement its own efforts, including ballistic missile defense and civil protection.

The most significant point about these statements in the new NDPG is that the document first says that “Japan will play a constructive and active role in international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, so as to achieve the long-term goal of creating a world without nuclear weapons,” and having established this, it goes on to prescribe a policy path to be followed “for so long as nuclear weapons exist.” By proposing a basic policy in this way, the document resolves the dichotomy of Japan’s long-term goal of seeking “a world without nuclear weapons” and its current policy of cooperating with the United States to counter the threats posed by existing nuclear weapons. This statement not only constitutes a confirmation of Japan’s long-standing policy, but also a confirmation that Japan shares the policy announced in President Obama’s Prague speech in April 2009 that the United States will work toward the realization of “a world without nuclear weapons” while at the same time maintaining a nuclear deterrent against nuclear attack.

The second most significant of the new NDPG’s statements is that, whereas previous defense reviews had simply used the phrase “the US nuclear deterrent,” the new NDPG employs the expression “the extended deterrence provided by the United States, with nuclear deterrent as a vital element.” This change is believed to have resulted from a change, as touched on above, in the attitude of the United States itself to its own nuclear deterrent. As seen in the 2010 NPR, the US extended deterrence does not consist solely of a nuclear deterrent capability, but also of missile defense systems, anti-WMD capabilities, conventional military

capabilities, and an integrated command and control capability. The phraseology employed shows that nuclear weapons are thought to play a central role within these various elements.

The third most significant statement found within the new NDPG is the replacement of the phrase “will rely on” with respect to the US nuclear deterrent with the phrase “will be indispensable.” This change results from the fact that the United States had changed its attitude to deterrence against the use of nuclear weapons from reliance solely on nuclear retaliation to reliance on a mixture of methods including missile defense systems and conventional military forces. In other words the situation had changed to the point where Japan could now envisage playing an active role in its own defense against the threats posed by nuclear weapons and other WMDs through the use of missile defense systems deployed on its own territory. The change of terminology thus reflects a changing situation in which the simple term “rely” may not be entirely appropriate. Furthermore, the choice of this phraseology is thought to indicate Japan’s recognition that an extended deterrence in which nuclear deterrence is a central element plays an important and irreplaceable role for its security amid the current security situation in East Asia.

A fourth and final point with regard to the phraseology employed in the new NDPG is contained in the statement “In order to maintain and improve the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan will closely cooperate with the United States, and will also appropriately implement its own efforts, including ballistic missile defense and civil protection.” This statement indicates Japan’s will to make its own efforts in defense of its interests. It clarifies Japan’s intention to move forward with the implementation of policies enabling Japan to meet nuclear threats itself rather than simply “rely” on the US extended deterrence.

### **The New NDPG and Japan-US Cooperation: Building a Dynamic Japan-US Collaborative Relationship**

The new National Defense Program Guidelines set forth three roles that Japan’s defense force should play—effective deterrence and effective response; realizing the further stabilization of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific Region; and helping to improve the global security environment. As we have discussed in the main body of this chapter, to be able to fulfill these roles, it is becoming

increasingly essential that a defense force be able to conduct military activities in the gray zone between peacetime and contingency. It is increasingly common for military forces to engage constantly and continuously in relatively low-level military action over a long period. In view of this, the new NDPG calls for the creation of a dynamic defense force.

The United States' Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) published in February 2010 also recognizes the importance of the role of military force in the gray zone. The QDR contains the statement: "The future strategic landscape will increasingly feature challenges in the ambiguous gray area that is neither fully war nor fully peace." There is clearly a strong similarity between this statement and that found in the new NDPG: "...there are a growing number of so-called 'gray-zone' disputes—confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interests that are not to escalate into wars."

If, as we have seen, both Japan and the United States recognize the importance of military activity in the so-called gray zone, it will be necessary to promote the development of defense cooperation between the two countries with a greater emphasis on dynamic aspects. After all, in all three military roles laid out in the new NDPG—effective deterrence and response; realizing the further stabilization of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific Region; and helping to improve the global security environment—cooperation with Japan's ally the United States will be extremely important. In order to further strengthen the ties of alliance between Japan and the United States, it will be vital to promote dynamic defense cooperation between the two nations in such a way that the cooperation displays synergistic effects with the three roles played by Japan's own defense forces.

The Japan-US collaboration is believed to show a strong relationship with the three roles of Japan's defense force, as indicated in the new NDPG. Specifically, in relation to the role of effective deterrence and response, Japan-US cooperation in warning and surveillance measures, and expansion in joint maneuvers and the shared use of military facilities will be important.

In relation to the role of realizing the further stabilization of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific Region, the further promotion of Japan-US cooperation will be vital within the framework of trilateral collaboration agreements such as Japan-US-ROK and Japan-US-Australia. In relation to the role of helping to improve the global security environment, Japan-US cooperation will be essential in international peacekeeping activities such as antiterrorism and antipiracy operations as well as measures to deal with failed states, and in addressing global issues such as climate change, defense against attacks from outer space, and cyber-attacks.

Needless to say, as the new NDPG stipulates that "the extended deterrence provided by the United States, with nuclear deterrent as a vital element, will be indispensable," the principal role played by the Japan-US alliance is to deter potentially hostile states from initiating a high-end armed conflict. In addition to that threat, however, in the current security environment, Tokyo and Washington have to deal with issues occurring in the gray zone between war and peace, which are increasingly important. To ensure the security of Japan, it is not only important to make efforts to enhance the effectiveness of extended deterrence and secure the deterrent capability that results from the presence of US forces, but to press

ahead with the creation of a dynamic Japan-US defense collaboration by taking advantage of both allies' capabilities originally developed for an effective deterrence against high-end conflicts. This is a task of growing importance.