

East Asian Strategic Review 2012

The National Institute for Defense Studies
Japan

The Japan Times

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First edition: May 2012

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This publication is an English translation
of the original Japanese edition published in March 2012.

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Published by:

The Japan Times, Ltd.

4-5-4 Shibaura, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-0023, Japan

Phone: +81-3-3453-2013

Fax: +81-3-3453-8023

URL: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>

ISBN 978-4-7890-1487-8

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Printed in Japan

Preface

The maintenance of peace and stability in East Asia requires an objective and comprehensive understanding of the region's security environment. With the aim of facilitating that understanding, researchers at the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) examine trends and developments in the East Asian security environment and compile their analyses into the *East Asian Strategic Review (EASR)*, which is published annually for dissemination throughout many parts of the international community.

EASR 2012 covers the major security-related events and trends that took place in selected nations and subregions during the period from January through December 2011. It also includes a thematic chapter and sidebars that explore issues deemed critical to the study of security in the context of not only East Asia but also the global community. Chapter 1, the thematic chapter, examines the “Arab Spring” political movement that has been unfolding in the Middle East, and provides medium- to long-range analysis of the future path for the democratizing efforts and of the movement's potential impact on East Asia. The remaining chapters, which focus on specific nations and subregions, analyze the following topics: the succession of power in post-Kim Jong Il North Korea and the realignment of South Korea's security policy; China's endeavors to build a stable environment ahead of the Eighteenth Party Congress; security issues that concern Southeast Asian nations, including the South China Sea issue; preparations in Russia for the inauguration of a new administration, and the Russian military's increased activity in the vicinity of Japan; the security policy of a United States that must navigate the narrow straits between its national fiscal crisis and its foreign commitments; and the lessons that can be drawn from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and Japan's various efforts toward building a “Dynamic Defense Force” set forth in the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2011 and Beyond published in 2010. We hope that *EASR 2012* will help readers to better understand the security environment surrounding Japan, and that it will encourage discussion of the security issues faced by Japan and other countries in the region.

This edition was written by NIDS staff members Shigeki Akimoto, Hiroyasu

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Akutsu, Hiromu Arakaki, Masafumi Iida, Sukeyuki Ichimasa, Shigeo Kikuchi, Atsushi Saito, Yoshiaki Sakaguchi, Tomotaka Shoji, Yasuyuki Sugiura, Sugio Takahashi, Masami Nishino, Yasuaki Hashimoto, Shinji Hyodo, Masayuki Masuda, and Tetsuo Murooka. It was edited by Yusuke Ishihara, Sukeyuki Ichimasa, Ken Ohnishi, Tomohiko Satake, Minoru Takamatsu, Yoshihide Matsuura, and Koichiro Matsumiya.

The analyses and descriptions contained herein are solely those of NIDS researchers and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Ministry of Defense or the Government of Japan.

March 2012

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