

## Preface

This edition of the *East Asian Strategic Review (EASR)* marks the twenty-third year of the flagship publication of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), Japan's sole national think tank in the area of security affairs. Over those years, *EASR* has built up an established reputation as the only annual report in both Japanese and English that provides domestic and international audiences with insight into Japan's security environment in the context of the increasingly challenging security issues of East Asia.

*EASR* comprises chapters examining trends in specific regional countries that have an impact on Japan's security, and chapters covering timely topics in East Asian security. This edition analyzes diverse themes such as the US Donald Trump administration's response to the great power competition, developments toward the "denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula, the power base and policy issues of Xi Jinping's second term, building of Japan's "cross-domain" defense force, and the "Indo-Pacific" concepts of Australia and India.

As part of the NIDS editorial policy, *EASR* lists the names of the authors responsible for each chapter and provides chapter notes indicating information sources, so as to further strengthen its standing as a scholarly text founded on analyses personally made by its contributing researchers. It also adds a wide array of supplementary material to further enhance general readers' understanding of East Asian security, including figures, tables, photos, sidebars, and a list of abbreviations.

*EASR 2019* represents NIDS researchers' analyses and descriptions of major security-related developments that took place mainly during the period from January through December 2018, and is based on information compiled from open sources in Japan and overseas. The statements contained herein do not necessarily represent the official position of the Government of Japan or the Ministry of Defense. The titles and ranks of people mentioned herein are, in principle, those that were current at the time of the events described.

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As the world's interest gravitates toward strategic trends in East Asia, it is our hope that *EASR* will help build interest in and understanding of the East Asian strategic environment and will serve as food for intelligent discussion aimed at helping Japan to make better security policy decisions.

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