

Section 3 Reform of the Ministry of Defense

1 Background of the Reform

The purpose of the reform of the Ministry of Defense (the MOD reform) is to secure public trust, and shape the MOD as an organization that is capable of adequately performing the missions assigned to it. The MOD has made every effort to implement the MOD reform, including the reorganization of the central organization from the standpoint of preventing scandals; and ensuring that the SDF operates more actively and efficiently through the effective use of human resources.

In response to the frequent incidence of scandals within the MOD and the SDF, the “Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense” was established in the Prime Minister’s Office in 2007, and a report compiled in 2008. In accordance with the basic directions stipulated in this report, the MOD made various initiatives aimed at the MOD reform, including thorough adherence to rules and regulations, and the establishment of operational management that prioritizes the execution of duties, with the aim of total optimization; as well as the establishment in law of the Defense Council, the Special Adviser to the Minister of Defense, and the abolition of the post of the Director of Defense in 2009, in order to strengthen support for the Minister of Defense and ensure more thorough civilian control. Furthermore, incorporated in the FY2010 budget request made in August 2009 was an organizational reform proposal which detailed, amongst other things, unification into the Internal Bureau of defense capabilities build-up departments in the MOD central organization, and unification into the Joint Staff of the operational departments. However, the request was passed over in the FY2010 budget request in October 2009 due to the change in administration to the Democratic Party of Japan in September 2009, which resulted in a review of the MOD reform reviewed from the DPJ’s perspective.

The subsequent change in administration to the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito in December 2012 promulgated the release of the “Direction by the Minister of Defense on the MOD Reform” and the establishment of the “Committee for the Deliberations on the MOD Reform (referred to as “Committee” hereinafter),” whose chairperson was the Senior Vice-Minister of Defense in February 2013, in order to accelerate the deliberations on the MOD reform. The Committee is conducting the necessary considerations together with a review of approaches to defense capabilities and putting its efforts to realize required measures, from the perspectives not only of preventing scandals but of making the SDF operate more actively and efficiently through the effective use of human resources, and accomplishing the civilian control

over the SDF under the severe security environment facing Japan.

With regard to the business operation and structure of the central organization, the Committee is giving necessary consideration, taking into account the lessons learned from handling recent incidents such as the Great East Japan Earthquake and the launch of missiles by North Korea, and in tandem with the discussion to strengthen the commanding function of the Prime Minister's Office concerning national security such as the establishment of the Japanese National Security Council.

2 Direction of the MOD Reform

1 Course of Considerations

Based on discussions and considerations conducted at Committee and various other levels, the "Direction of the MOD Reform" was arranged at the 7th Committee Meeting on August 29, 2013, and reported to the Defense Council and made public on the 30th of the same month.

See ▶ Reference 76 (Direction of MOD Reform)

2 Basic Concept and Direction of Reform

The fact that the security environment surrounding Japan is increasingly severe has been recognized, as have a number of lessons relating to the use of units in like the Great East Japan Earthquake. Changes have also arisen in the policy environment, including the establishment of the National Security Council and comprehensive exceptional measures relating to the Three Principles on Arms Exports (as it was then).

The "Direction of the MOD Reform" determined that full-fledged reform would be undertaken, taking due account of the matters specified in previous considerations, on the basis of situational changes such as those above. The course of action for this full-fledged reform including reorganization, which is also stipulated in the Mid-Term Defense Program (JFY2014-2018), is as follows.

(1) Removal of Barriers between civilian official and Uniformed Personnel

In order to foster a sense of unity among civilian officials and uniformed personnel, permanent posts for uniformed personnel will be established in the Internal Bureau, while permanent posts for civilian officials will be established in each of the Staff Offices and major commands.

(2) From partial to total optimization (defense capabilities build-up)

In order to eliminate defense capabilities build-up based on individual, vertically-divided

optimization for the ground, maritime and air forces, and ensure that build-up is instead conducted based on total optimization, a procedure will be established for defense capabilities build-up based on joint operation. In combination with this, equipment acquisition will be streamlined and optimized by means of management of equipment throughout its lifecycle, and sections involved in equipment acquisition will be reorganized in order to contribute to the overall optimization of defense capabilities.

(3) Make accurate decisions more swiftly (Joint Operation)

In order to ensure the accuracy of decision-making relating to the operation of the SDF and make the process swifter, a review of the organization will be conducted so that affairs concerning actual operations will be unified into the Joint Staff office.

(4) Enhancement of Policy-planning and Public Relations Capability

Policy-planning functions will be enhanced in response to the rapid increase in international affairs-related work and the establishment of the National Security Council. In addition, public relations capability will also be strengthened.

In order to make the reforms in the “Direction of the MOD Reform” truly effective, a change in the mentality of both civil officials and SDF personnel is vital, and it is necessary for reforms to be advanced smoothly so as not to invite disruption and stagnation in operations in response to contingencies. For this reason, it is important to establish a series of reforms through steady and phased implementation while Internal Bureau and Staff offices equally support the Minister of Defense.

3 Specific Reform Initiatives

Based on the direction of the reform detailed above, specific areas were arranged for the MOD.

See ▶ Fig. IV-2-3-1 (Specific Initiatives in the MOD Reform)

Based on the foregoing, the initiatives below are being implemented during FY2014.

First, the Act for Establishment of the Ministry of Defense will be revised, and a total of 40 permanent posts for uniformed officials will be established in the Internal Bureau; while permanent posts for civil officials will be established in the Joint Staff, the each Army Headquarters of the GSDF, the Yokosuka and Sasebo Headquarters of the the MSDF, the Air Defense Command Headquarter and Air Defense Support Command Headquarter of the ASDF.¹

¹ Reflecting these changes, the “Act for Partial Revision of the Ministry of Defense Establishment Act”

In response to the diversifying security challenges and rapidly increasing volume of international affairs, in order to ensure support system for political appointees including Minister of Defense, a Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs will be newly established to collectively coordinate important policies such as international affairs.¹

Furthermore, a cross-functional Integrated Project Team (IPT) headed by a Project Manager (PM) will be established, and so that projects can be managed in a unified way throughout the life cycle of the equipment, a PM will be assigned to be exclusively responsible for the management of each project.

In addition to these initiatives, considerations will be pursued over the medium term toward organizational restructuring, including the integration of departments associated with equipment acquisition (with a view to the establishment of a Defense Equipment Agency (provisional name), and the revision or abolition of the Bureau of Operational Policy, due to the unification of work relating to actual operations into the Joint Staff office.

See ▶ Fig. IV-2-3-2 (Deliberation Framework on the MOD Reform)