

Section 2. Japan-U.S. Security Consultation on the Future of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

The maintenance of peace and security requires the appropriate development of its means depending on changes in the security environment. To make the cooperative relationship between Japan and the United States as Japan's ally based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements effective, the Governments and people of both countries must make constant efforts in developing the alliance depending on changes in the security environment from time to time.

Also, Japan and the United States cooperate to solve various challenges in the world, in the wide spheres including political and economic ones, as well as cooperation under the Japan-U.S. security treaty, based on the concept of "the Japan-U.S. alliance in the global context," with cooperation with other countries.

Among such widespread bilateral cooperation, in the security sphere, as the conclusion of the last three-odd years of continued strategic dialogues, Japan and the United States reached watershed agreements to transform the alliance for the future, including the agreement regarding Force Posture Realignment in May 2006. In May 2006, the Japan-U.S. consultation on future Japan-U.S. alliance, including force posture realignment, came to an end as the outcome of the dialogue.

This section explains details of consultation including the basic stance of the future Japan-U.S. alliance and the realignment of USFJ.

1. Background (Based on Section 1 of Chapter 4)

In consideration of below-mentioned circumstances after the end of the Cold War, Japan and the United States have been engaged in consultations on the future Japan-U.S. alliance, including force posture realignment.

(1) Post-Cold War Developments around the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

1) Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security and Subsequent Developments

During the Cold War era, the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements contributed to the maintenance of security of Japan as a member of the Free World and the maintenance of peace and security of the region surrounding Japan. Since the end of the Cold War era, Japan and the United States have held various types of dialogues depending on changes in the international security environment. The two countries announced the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security, which clarifies the direction of bilateral cooperation for the 21st century, at the Japan-U.S. summit meeting held in Tokyo in April 1996.

The Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security reaffirmed that the bilateral security relationship would continue to be the cornerstone for maintaining stability and prosperity in the region, and indicated those cooperative measures in specific areas that would serve as important pillars to enhance the credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Based on the Declaration, in September 1997, the two countries established new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (the "Guidelines"), and Japan implemented various measures. Through these measures, Japan-U.S. defense cooperation has become more effective, and the credibility of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements has further strengthened.

2) Japan-U.S. Alliance in the Global Context

At the Japan-U.S. summit meeting held in May 2003, the two countries agreed to enhance the "Japan-U.S. alliance in the global context," including the enhancement of collaboration in responding to global problems in cooperation with the international community. In concrete terms, Japan and the United States have increasingly cooperated with each other in the areas of international activities, including the fight against

terrorism, humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq, assistance to sufferers of the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean.

As for bilateral cooperation in the field of security and defense, the two countries have enhanced cooperation for ballistic missile defense (BMD) including joint technological research on ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems.

(2) Changes in the International Security Environment

The international community has recently seen such changes in the international security environment as the emergence and globalization of new threats, including international terrorism as represented by 9-11 terrorist attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles as means to deliver these weapons. As there remain problems that cause unpredictability and uncertainty in the Asia-Pacific region, it is necessary to pay attention to moves of the modernization of military forces in the region.

Since military technology has remarkably improved, such as improvements of information technology and mobility, and various technologies have increasingly been integrated, it is essential to utilize these achievements in defense and security policies.

(3) Changes in Policies of Japan and the United States

1) Adoption of the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) by Japan

To respond to changes in the international security environment after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, a defense posture review was conducted, as a result, the NDPG that determines Japan's future security and defense forces was adopted in December 2004.

The NDPG acknowledged that the Japan-U.S. Defense Arrangements are indispensable for maintaining the security of Japan and the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and that the two countries' cooperative relationship based on the Arrangements are indispensable for effectively conducting international efforts to respond new threats and diverse contingencies. The NDPG also recognized that cooperation with the United States as alliance partner is one of the three approaches to the realization of security objectives.

2) Transformation and Posture Review of U.S. Forces

As a response to the new security environment, the United States has promoted the transformation of their military, in particular, due to drastic changes in their awareness of international situation that were caused by the 9-11 terrorist attacks, the United States accelerated their transformation and the review of their strategies. As part of such efforts, the United States has promoted the global posture review of their military in close coordination with allies and other countries..

The global posture review aims at establishing the military posture that can respond to contingencies more flexibly than before and move against an existing potential enemy that could be a real enemy at any moment. (See Fig. 4-2-1)

Background of Japan-U.S. Consultations

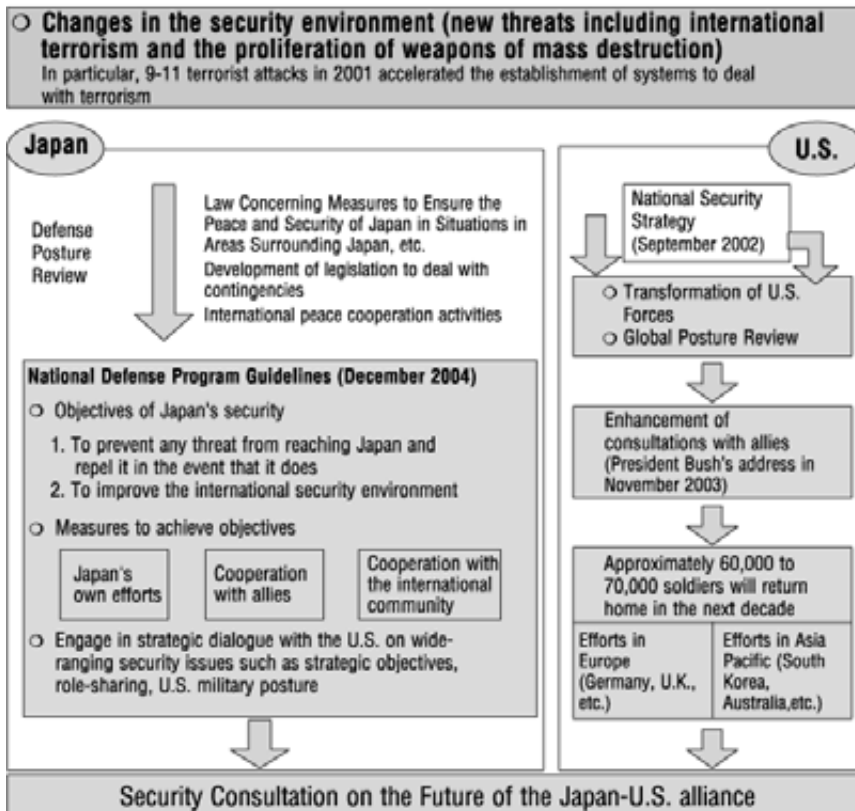


Fig. 4-2-1

2. Basic Concepts of Japan-U.S. Consultation

Based on the understanding that it is important for Japan and the United States to maintain close exchanges in reviewing respective defense and security policies, the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee³ (the "2+2" meeting) held in December 2002 confirmed that the bilateral security consultations should be intensified. Since then, working-level consultations have been held.

(1) Viewpoint in Consultations

Japan-U.S. consultations on the realignment of U.S. Forces have been conducted as part of bilateral strategic



The defense ministers of Japan and the United States meet the press after a meeting of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC) in May this year

dialogues from a viewpoint of how to make the capabilities of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which is indispensable to the maintenance of peace and security of Japan, more effective in meeting changes of the times. Based on the concepts specified in the NDPG, Japan has actively addressed these consultations as its own security issue, based on the basic principle of maintaining deterrence and capabilities while reducing burdens on local communities as its security issues.

(2) Maintenance of Deterrence and Capabilities and Reduction of Burdens on Local Communities

In short, Japan attended these consultations based on the following policies: i) to maintain deterrence and capabilities that are needed for the security and stability of Japan and the Asia-Pacific region by establishing a posture that can respond to new threats and traditional challenges; and ii) to reduce burdens on local communities so that the facilities and areas of USFJ may be stably used with the understanding and support of the Japanese people.

At the summit meeting in September 2004 and "2+2" meeting held in February 2005, Japan and the United States acknowledged that the maintenance of deterrence and capabilities and the reduction of burdens on local communities would be basic concepts of bilateral consultations on the realignment of U.S. Forces. These concepts are based on the perception that amid changing security environment, in order to remain strong, the Japan-U.S. alliance requires the enhancement of reliability and effectiveness of U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan and the maintenance of peace and security of the Asia-Pacific region and broad and firm support of the people of the two countries.

Through the following processes, Japan and the United States have made efforts and drawn on their resources with a strong will to meet tough challenges. The reliability of Japan-U.S. alliance will be remarkably enhanced by steadily implementing the results of the consultations on the realignment of U.S. Forces.

(3) Three Phases of Japan-U.S. Consultations

In response to significant changes in the security environment, recently-held Japan-U.S. consultations confirmed common strategic objectives common to both countries at first, and established the direction of Japan-U.S. alliance gradually and comprehensively.

1) Common Strategic Objectives (the First Stage)

At the first stage, the two countries identified the strategic objectives concerning defense and security that should be achieved by them in cooperation with each other in the region and the world.

2) Roles, Missions and Capabilities of Japan and the United States (the Second Stage)

At the second stage, the two countries examined the roles, missions and capabilities of the SDF and U.S. Forces that would be needed for achieving the strategic objectives identified at the first stage, taking into consideration the developments and achievements of security and defense policies of the two countries in recent years.

This examination was made to clarify how Japan and the United States should cooperate with each other through adequate coordination between the SDF and USF before the United States will begin force posture realignment.

3) Force Posture Realignment (Realignment of US Force structure in Japan) (the Third Stage)

At the third stage, the two countries studied the postures of USFJ and the related SDF that would be

necessary for sharing the roles, missions and capabilities, which were examined at the second stage.

The common strategic objectives, as the first stage, were reconfirmed in the joint statement at the "2+2" meeting held in February 2005. At this meeting, the two countries agreed that they should intensify consultations on the sharing of the roles, missions and capabilities as examined at the second stage and on force posture realignment as studied at the third stage.

Pursuant to these consultations, the "2+2" meeting held in October 2005 prepared a SCC document titled the "Japan-U.S. Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future." (hereinafter "the SCC document"). The SCC document indicates the concrete direction of the roles, missions and capabilities shared by Japan and the United States, and that of posture realignment of USFJ and the related units of the SDF.

At the "2+2" meeting held on May 1, 2006, as a result of the series of Japan-U.S. consultations, the details of the force posture realignment were finalized in a document titled "the Japan-U.S. Roadmap for Realignment Implementation".

This document clarifies the details for implementing the concrete measures.

As mentioned above, during a round of Japan-U.S. consultations, a joint document was produced at each "2+2" meeting held at each stage. Thus, the transparency of consultations was ensured, and the contents of consultations were made known in Japan and abroad at each stage. The contents of Japan-U.S. consultations held in above-mentioned manner are explained as follows. (See Fig. 4-2-2)

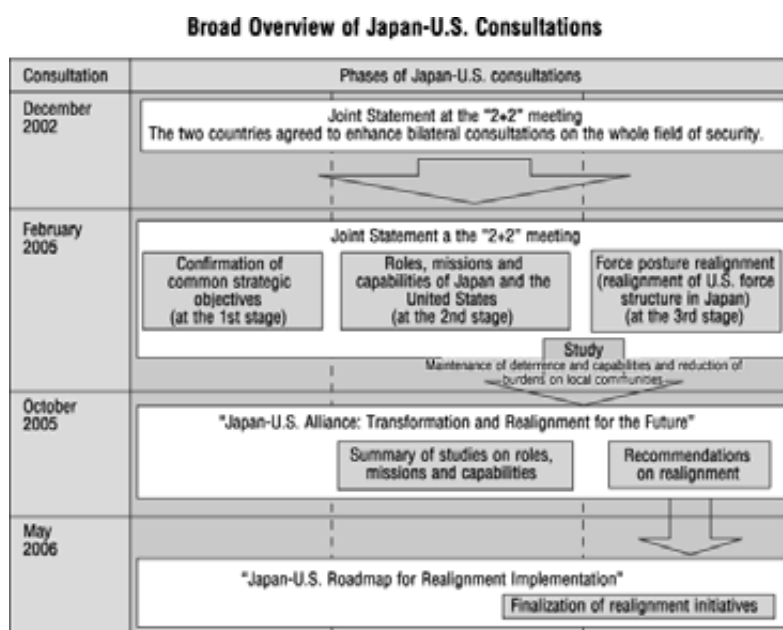


Fig. 4-2-2

3. Common Strategic Objectives (the First Stage)

The outline of the common strategic objectives to be pursued by the two countries, which were set out confirmed in the joint statement of the "2+2" meeting held in February 2005, is as follows.

- Region: maintenance of security in Japan, strengthening peace and stability in the region, peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, peaceful resolution of issues related to North Korea, welcoming China's responsible and constructive roles and development of a cooperative relationship with China, peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait, improvement of transparency of China's military affairs, constructive involvement by Russia, assistance to peaceful, stable and vibrant South East Asia, etc.
- World: promotion of fundamental values such as democracy in the international community, engagement in international peace cooperation activities etc., reduction and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means to transport these weapons, prevention and eradication of

terrorism, improvement in effectiveness of the UN Security Council, etc.

4. Roles, Missions and Capabilities of Japan and the United States (the Second Stage)

(1) Outline

At the second stage, the two countries examined how Japan and the United States, especially the SDF and U.S. Forces, should cooperate with each other through adequate coordination in achieving the common strategic objectives set out at the first stage and in effectively responding to diverse challenges. The SCC Document prepared in October 2005 summed up the following items:

- i) Defense of Japan, and responses to situations in areas surrounding Japan, including responses to new threats and diverse contingencies;
 - ii) Efforts to improve the international security environment as primary area and basic concepts in making such efforts.
- Examples of operations in broad bilateral security and defense cooperation to be improved in a new security environment
 - Essential steps to strengthen posture for bilateral cooperation to respond to diverse challenges.
These steps include not only those related to the cooperation between the SDF and U.S. Forces but also those that should be addressed as government-wide efforts.
 - Enhancement and expansion of Japan-U.S. security and defense cooperation

The particulars of the above-mentioned items are discussed below; Through realization of them, Japan-U.S. alliance will be able to establish the capabilities to respond to diverse challenges effectively along with the realignment of force posture, including that of USFJ

(2) Primary Areas

As for the roles, missions and capabilities of Japan and the United States, or the SDF and U.S. Forces in particular, that would be needed for responding to diverse challenges in the contemporary security environment, the priority was placed on the following two areas.

1) Defense of Japan, and Responses to Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, Including Responses to New Threats and Diverse Contingencies

The defense of Japan constitutes the core objective of Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements. Situations in areas surrounding Japan gravely affect the peace and security of Japan, and therefore could develop into Armed Attacks on Japan if no response is made. For these reasons, priority continued to be placed on the examination of these areas. Considering that responses to new threats and diverse contingencies have become an urgent task for Japan and the United States, these responses are also to be examined.

2) Efforts to Improve the International Security Environment, such as Participation in International Peace Cooperation Activities

New threats have grown enough to affect the security of countries in the world. The peace and security of a nation is closely linked with the peace and security of the international community. Priority was placed on efforts to improve the international security environment because they are indispensable for the maintenance of the peace and security of a nation.

(3) Basic concepts on Roles, Missions and Capabilities

The basic concepts on the primary areas that have been presented in the SCC document are as follows. In due consideration of the increasing importance of these areas, Japan and the United States will develop their respective defense capabilities and maximize the benefits of innovations in technology.

1) Defense of Japan, and Responses to Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, Including Responses to New Threats and Diverse Contingencies

- a. Bilateral defense cooperation remains vital to the security of Japan as well as to peace and stability of the region.
- b. Japan will defend itself and respond to situations in areas surrounding Japan, including addressing new threats and diverse contingencies such as ballistic missile attacks, attacks by guerilla and special forces, and invasion of remote islands. For these purposes, Japan's defense posture will be strengthened in accordance with the 2004 National Defense Program Guidelines.
- c. The U.S. will maintain forward-deployed forces, and augment them as needed, for the defense of Japan as well as to deter and respond to situations in areas surrounding Japan. The U.S. will provide all necessary support for the defense of Japan.
- d. Japanese and the U.S. operations in the defense of Japan and responses to situations in areas surrounding Japan must be consistent so that appropriate responses will be ensured when a situation in areas surrounding Japan threatens to develop into an armed attack against Japan or when such a situation and an armed attack against Japan occur simultaneously.
- e. Japan will continue to provide host nation support including facilities and areas for U.S. forces. Japan will also take appropriate measures to provide seamless support to U.S. operations as the situation evolves, including support based on Japan's legislation to deal with contingencies. Both sides will work with local communities to ensure stable support for the presence and operations of U.S. forces in Japan.
- f. U.S. strike capabilities and the nuclear deterrence provided by the U.S. remain an essential complement to Japan's defense capabilities in ensuring the defense of Japan and contribute to peace and security in the region. (See Fig. 4-2-3)

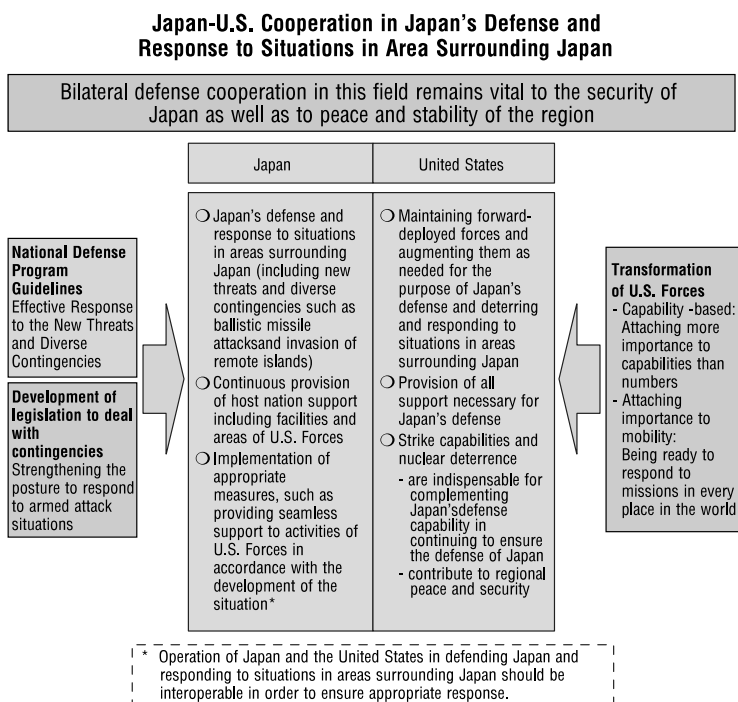


Fig. 4-2-3

2) Efforts to Improve the International Security Environment

- a. Bilateral cooperation in improving the international security environment to achieve regional and global common strategic objectives has become an important element of the alliance. To this end, Japan and the U.S. contribute as appropriate based on their respective capabilities, and take necessary measures to establish effective posture.
- b. Rapid and effective response requires flexible capabilities and can benefit from close Japan-U.S. bilateral cooperation and policy coordination. Regular exercises, including those with third countries, can improve these capabilities.
- c. The SDF and the U.S. forces will strengthen cooperation with other partners to contribute to international activities to improve the international security environment. (See Fig. 4-2-4)

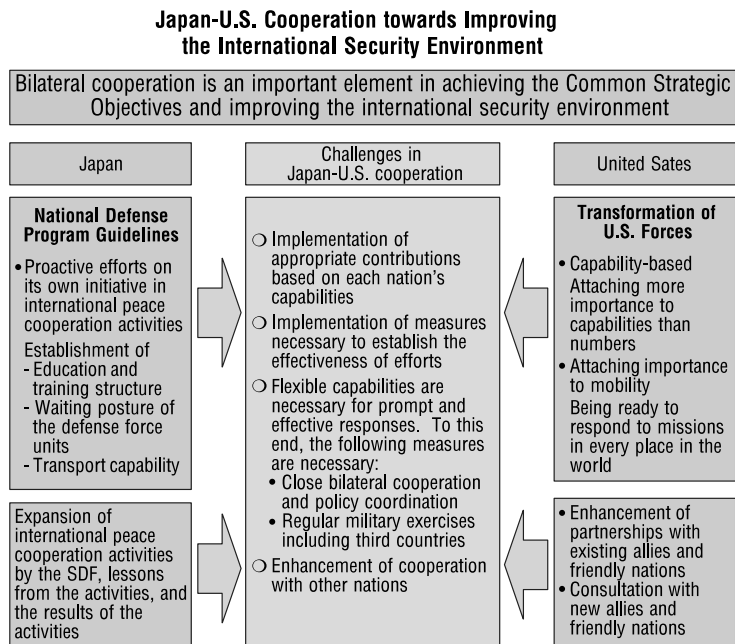


Fig. 4-2-4

(4) Examples of Operations in Bilateral Security and Defense Cooperation to be Improved

The SCC document reconfirmed that the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation must be strengthened. The Document pointed out specific examples of key areas for further enhancement in the current security environment, but the list of key areas is not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible areas of cooperation, and other areas of operation not explicitly listed above remain important to alliance capabilities. (See Fig. 4-2-5)

Examples of Those Activities Made as Part of Japan-U.S. Security and Defense Cooperation That Should be Improved

| | Area | Envisioned activities (taken by SDF and U.S. Forces) |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Air defense | • Information sharing through improved coordination among headquarters |
| 2 | Ballistic missile defense | |
| 3 | Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and other proliferation prevention activities | • Activities under PSI such as 1) surveillance using airplanes with wide-area monitoring capabilities, and 2) onboard inspection of suspicious ships • Information sharing for proliferation prevention activities |
| 4 | Anti-terrorism measures | • Cooperation by sharing information • OEF and support for OEF |
| 5 | Minesweeping, maritime interdiction, and other operations to maintain the security of maritime traffic | • Minesweeping in normal situations, situations in areas surrounding Japan, and armed attack situations • Inspections and other maritime interdiction measures to maintain the security of maritime traffic |
| 6 | Search and rescue activities | • Search and rescue activities by airplanes and naval vessels • Provision of information needed for SDF's activities by the U.S. and reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies and services under ACSA |
| 7 | Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities ¹ and improvement of capabilities and effectiveness of the activities by using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and patrol aircraft. | • Mutual provision of information obtained through intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) activities • Information provision by the U.S. to help SDF's smooth international peace cooperation activities |
| 8 | Humanitarian relief operations | • Provision of information, supplies, and services by the U.S. Forces for international peace cooperation activities; activities to preserve public order by U.S. Force; etc. |
| 9 | Reconstruction assistance activities | |
| 10 | Peacekeeping activities and capacity building for other nation's peacekeeping efforts | |
| 11 | Guarding operations for important infrastructure including USFJ facilities and areas | • Guarding operations for important facilities including USFJ facilities and areas in cooperation with public security agencies |
| 12 | Disposal and decontamination of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and other measures against WMD attack | • Collection of damage information, decontamination, transport of the injured, and support for organizations engaged in medical services |
| 13 | Mutual logistic support activities such as supply, maintenance, and transportation. Supply cooperation includes mutual provision of aerial and maritime refueling. Transportation cooperation includes enhanced or combined efforts of air and marine transportation (including transportation by high speed vessels ² (HSVs)) | • Defense of Japan and response to a situation in areas surrounding Japan; Mutual provision of goods, materials, and services in the areas of supply, maintenance, and transportation |
| 14 | Transportation, use of facilities, medical support and other activities for noncombatant evacuation operations (NEOs) | • Transportation of citizens by airplanes and ships |
| 15 | Use of ports, airports, roads, sea, airspace, and frequency bands | Legal use of ports, airports, roads, sea, airspace, and frequency bands based on related laws and regulations, taking the needs of SDF and U.S. Forces into account |

Notes: 1. Wide-area monitoring capabilities of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), hovering UAVs in particular, and patrol aircrafts are specifically mentioned here because they are extremely effective in intelligence activities in areas surrounding Japan. (Refer to Section 2, Chapter 2)

2. High speed vessels (HSVs) are currently being used on a trial bases in U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. As high-speed marine transportation capability, they are used to transport personnel and artilleries. For example, Westpac Express, which is leased by III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) in Okinawa, has a sailing speed of 35 knots (maximum speed: 40 knots) and transportation capacity of 550 tons of cargo or approximately 1,000 passengers and can sail approximately 1,100 km continuously.

Fig. 4-2-5

(5) Essential Steps to Strengthen Posture for Bilateral Security and Defense Cooperation

It is important for Japan and the United States to intensify their postures of security and defense cooperation so that the two countries may respond to diverse contingencies in a new security environment. For this purpose, the two countries must implement necessary steps in peacetime. Above-mentioned areas of cooperation must be addressed not only by the SDF and U.S. Forces but also by the Governments as a whole sweepingly and comprehensively. The SCC Document specified some examples of essential steps as below. Each of the examples is explained as follows. (See Fig. 4-2-6)

Measures Essential for Enhancing Bilateral Security and Defense Posture

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Close and continuous coordination of policies and operations | Improvement of effectiveness of various mechanisms under the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation |
| (2) Advancing bilateral contingency planning | Reflect emergency legislation (use of airports and seaports by the SDF and U.S. Forces), coordination with related ministries/agencies and local governments, and detailed survey of airports and seaports |
| (3) Enhancing information sharing and intelligence cooperation | Additional measures to protect shared secret information among related ministries and agencies |
| (4) Improving interoperability between the SDF and U.S. Forces | Improvement of interoperability at the level of headquarters in particular |
| (5) Expansion of training opportunities in Japan and the United States | Expansion of trainings by SDF units in Guam, Alaska, etc. |
| (6) Shared use of facilities by the SDF and U.S. Forces | (To be specified when force posture is realigned) |
| (7) Ballistic missile Defense(BMD) | Constant information gathering and sharing, and maintenance of readiness and interoperability If appropriate, U.S. forces will deploy supplemental capabilities to Japan and its surrounding areas. |

* Activities printed in red ink mean those to be addressed by the Governments of Japan and the United States. Activities printed in black ink mean those to be addressed by the SDF and U.S. Forces.

Fig. 4-2-6

1) Steps to be taken as Governments as a Whole

a. Close and Continuous Coordination of Policies and Operations

At present, policies of Japan and the United States are closely coordinated by parties at various levels, such as the Japan-U.S. Security Consultation Committee (the "2+2" meeting) at the ministerial level, Japan-U.S. defense ministers meeting and the Subcommittee for Defense Cooperation. As for operations, there exist frameworks, such as the Comprehensive Mechanism and the Coordination Mechanism under the Guidelines.

Close and continuous policy and operational coordination at every level of government, from unit tactical level through strategic consultations, is essential to respond to diverse security challenges.

When the SDF and U.S. Forces coordinate their operations, it is essential for the commanders of both forces to share the common perception of situation at all times. Therefore, development of a common operational picture shared between the SDF and the U.S. forces will facilitate common perception of situation and should be pursued where possible.

In addition, closer cooperation between defense and other pertinent authorities is also increasingly necessary. In this context, both sides reaffirmed the need to improve the effectiveness of the comprehensive mechanism and bilateral coordination mechanism under the 1997 Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense

Cooperation by streamlining their functions.

b. Progress of Bilateral Contingency Planning

Under the Guidelines, studies are underway on a bilateral defense planning for an armed attack situation against Japan and a mutual cooperation planning for a situation in areas surrounding Japan are developed. Such studies are required to be continued while taking full account of the changing security environment.

This planning will reflect Japan's legislation to deal with contingencies, which provides a strengthened basis for contingency use by U.S. forces and the SDF of facilities, including airports and seaports, in Japan. Both sides will expand their planning by adding specificity, coordinating closely with relevant government agencies and local authorities, enhancing bilateral mechanisms and planning methods.

c. Enhancement of Information Sharing and Intelligence Cooperation

Common situational awareness is a key to well coordinated bilateral cooperation. Both sides will enhance information sharing and intelligence cooperation in the whole range from unit tactical level through national strategic level. To facilitate this interaction, both sides will take additional necessary measures to protect shared classified information so that broader information sharing is promoted among pertinent authorities.

2) Steps to be Taken by the SDF and U.S. Forces

a. Improvement of Interoperability⁴

To ensure smooth cooperation under diverse contingencies, as the SDF transitions to a joint operations posture, the SDF and the U.S. forces will strengthen connectivity between the headquarters.

b. Expanding Training Opportunities in Japan and the United States

Both sides will expand opportunities for bilateral training and exercises to improve interoperability, improve capabilities, enhance readiness, more equitably distribute training impacts among local communities. In this context, both sides will increase mutual use of U.S. and SDF training facilities and areas throughout Japan, and expand the training of SDF personnel and units in Guam, Alaska, Hawaii. Additionally, both sides recognize that the SDF and the U.S. forces participation in multinational training and exercises will enhance their contribution to a better international security environment.

c. Shared Use of Facilities by the SDF and the U.S. Forces

Both sides recognized that shared-use of facilities between the SDF and the U.S. Forces contributes to closer bilateral operational coordination and improved interoperability. Specific opportunities for shared use of facilities are described in the force posture realignment recommendations.

d. Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)

BMD plays a critical role in deterring and defending against ballistic missile attacks, and can dissuade other parties from development and proliferation of ballistic missiles. Therefore, closely coordinating improvements in their respective BMD capabilities are valuable. To support these BMD systems, constant information gathering and sharing, as well as maintaining high readiness and interoperability are critically important in light of the minimal time available to respond to a ballistic missile threat.

The U.S. will deploy additional complementary capabilities in and around Japan when appropriate, coordinating their operations to support Japan's missile defense operations.

(6) Enhancement and Expansion of Japan-U.S. Security and Defense Cooperation

Basic stances on Japan-U.S. defense cooperation are indicated in the Guidelines, under which measures for Japan-U.S. cooperation have been taken. In view of the current security environment, however, bilateral cooperation in those fields that are not specified in the Guidelines, such as international peace cooperation activities and BMD, is also important. Both sides committed to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation under the Guideline and, as appropriate, in additional areas not currently addressed by the Guidelines.

As for the roles, missions and capabilities of Japan and the United States, the two countries emphasized at the "2+2" meeting held in May 2006 that the effectiveness of bilateral security and defense cooperation in the field of bilateral contingency planning, information sharing and intelligence cooperation, and international peace cooperation activities should be enhanced or improved. Furthermore, the two countries emphasized the importance of examining security and defense cooperation so that the two countries may solidify the alliance relationship in changing regional and international security environments and improve the alliance's capabilities in responding to various challenges.

[COLUMN]**Q & A****What is interoperability?**

The idea of interoperability is meant to have common and dual-use characters in tactics, defense equipment, logistic support, implementation guidelines in various works, information and telecommunications. When one unit undertakes an operation in cooperation with other units, for example, they can exchange bullets of rifles if their calibers match each other. But mutually necessary goods and services cannot be exchanged between units unless standards and procedures concerning defense equipment including rifles, transportation and maintenance are unified. Like wireless communication becoming impossible in different frequencies, if formats and other standards of information and telecommunications systems are different, sufficient communication becomes difficult and it hampers smooth operation in mutual support activities. It is important to increase common characters in these systems to enable mutual use for expeditious and efficient cooperation.

Therefore, it is extremely important for Japan to increase interoperability with the United States in the fields of operations, logistic support and defense equipment, because the two countries are supposed to take bilateral actions in the event of an emergency in line with the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

While opportunities in which Japan and the United States cooperate in international activities are increasing, the both countries have been separately promoting the review of their defense policies, including the shift of the SDF to the joint operations structure and the transformation of the U.S. forces. Based on these efforts, Japan and the United States, particularly the SDF and the U.S. military, cited the importance of enhancing their interoperability in the examination of roles, missions and capabilities as an indispensable measure to strengthen their cooperative framework. The two countries have thus said they will maintain regular consultations to keep or strengthen interoperability.