

On the Publication of Defense of Japan 2009



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The Ministry of Defense publishes a defense white paper every year so that more people can understand Japan's defense policies as well as major developments that have occurred over the past year involving the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces. As evidence of the transparency of Japan's defense policies, this white paper "Defense of Japan" plays an important role in enhancing other countries' understanding of, and trust in, our country.

During the period covered by the "Defense of Japan 2009," anti-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden have been a focus of international attention. Amid various countries dispatching naval vessels to the area, Japan has also dispatched destroyers and P-3C patrol aircraft and is active in guarding Japan-related ships.

Japan's security environment remains severe as seen in North Korea's ballistic missile launch in April of this year and its nuclear test in May, which were carried out despite opposition from the international community including our country. In the midst of this situation, the SDF plays an important role by steadily making full use of their high degree of proficiency and strength.

Firstly, in this year's white paper, the Ministry of Defense presents its perspective on the entire international situation, outlines foreign countries' defense policies that could have an influence on Japan's security, and discusses the situation in areas surrounding Japan.

Secondly, there are new reports on measures for the development and utilization of space, which the Ministry of Defense is now working on following the enactment of the Basic Space Law, as well as the Ministry's efforts for promoting ocean policy, including anti-piracy activities by the SDF off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

In addition, along with an explanation of the SDF's response to North Korea's missile launch in April, we also present the proactive efforts to carry out international peace cooperation activities on Japan's own initiative, such as lessons and reflections from the SDF international peace cooperation activities in Iraq and the Indian Ocean, and the dispatch of SDF members to the PKO center in Egypt as instructors.

The SDF continues to make progress and develop while the field of their activities is expanding. I believe that gaining public trust is important for their future activities. In response to the fact that in recent years, a series of incidents have seriously undermined public trust in the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, the Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense was established two years ago within the Prime Minister's Office. In this white paper, one part is allocated for a detailed explanation of the reform of the Ministry of Defense in accordance with the Council's report as well as directions for organizational reform in the future.

We have written this white paper in an easy-to-understand manner so as to promote an understanding of the SDF activities at home and abroad among the people of Japan and other countries. Through columns that introduce SDF members engaged in their day-to-day duties and pick up important issues in considering national security, we have tried to give a real picture of the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, while also providing

materials for thinking about defense issues.

National security is only ensured with the understanding and cooperation of the people. I sincerely hope that this white paper is read by as many people as possible and that it will help to deepen their understanding of national defense.