

Section 2. Contents of the National Defense Program Guidelines

1. Basic Principles of Japan's Security Policy

As described earlier, there are two objectives for Japan's security: to prevent direct threats from reaching Japan and to repel them, and to improve the international security environment so as to reduce the chances that threats will reach Japan.

Japan will achieve these objectives by combining Japan's own efforts, cooperation with alliance partners, and cooperation with the international community in an integrated manner.

1. Japan's Own Efforts

Japan's security depends first and foremost on its own efforts. Based on this recognition, it is stated in the National Defense Program Guidelines that Japan will make its utmost efforts, utilizing all available means, to prevent threats from reaching the country directly. The guidelines state that in the event that these efforts fail to prevent the threat from reaching the country, the Government of Japan will take an integrated response by swiftly making the appropriate decisions and bringing together all relevant organizations, such as the SDF, the police and the Japan Coast Guard, and ensuring adequate cooperation among them. In addition, the Government will establish necessary civil defense systems to respond to various emergency situations, and the central and local governments will work together closely to establish adequate systems.

At the same time, Japan will engage in its own diplomatic and other activities to prevent the emergence of threats by improving the international security environment.

The guidelines prescribe that Japan's defense capabilities, which are the ultimate guarantee of national security, shall be multi-functional, flexible, and effective, and that the improvement of efficiency and rationalization are necessary in order to realize such capabilities.

2. The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements (Cooperation with Allies)

The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements are indispensable to ensuring Japan's security, and the presence of the U.S. military is essential for the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Considering the progress made in Japan-U.S. cooperation in dealing with global issues, as exemplified in the fight against terrorism, the close Japan-U.S. cooperative relationship plays a significant role in the effective promotion of international efforts to prevent and respond to new threats and diverse contingencies.

The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements do not function simply because of the existence of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States. In order to make this agreement effective, it is essential to make continuous efforts in times of peace. From this perspective, the National Defense Program Guidelines clearly specify the following efforts.

(1) Implementation of Strategic Dialogue between Japan and the United States (Strategic Objectives, Role-sharing and Military Posture)

Based on the posture of Japan's security and defense capabilities clarified in the National Defense Program Guidelines, Japan will proactively engage in strategic dialogue with the United States on wide-ranging security issues such as role-sharing between the two countries and military posture while working to harmonize perceptions of the new security environment and the appropriate strategic objectives⁶. In doing so, the Government of Japan will bear in mind the need to reduce the excessive burden on local communities which host U.S. military facilities, while maintaining the deterrent capabilities that the U.S. military presence in Japan provides.

(2) Various Efforts for Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements shall be enhanced through active promotion of measures including information sharing, various forms of operational cooperation and collaboration on ballistic missile defense (BMD).

3. Cooperation with the International Community

The National Defense Program Guidelines state that in order to improve the international security environment in cooperation with the international community and to help maintain the security and prosperity of Japan, the Government of Japan will actively engage in diplomatic efforts, including the strategic use of Official Development Assistance (ODA). The guidelines also state that based on the recognition that the destabilization of the international community by events such as regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international terrorist attacks would directly affect its own peace and security, Japan will, on its own initiative, proactively participate in international peace cooperation activities as an integral part of its diplomatic efforts.

In particular, stability in the region extending from the Middle East to East Asia is crucial to Japan. Therefore, the Government of Japan will strive to stabilize the region by promoting cooperative efforts in conjunction with other countries concerned in order to deal with common security challenges. Japan will also actively engage in U.N. reforms, as well as promote efforts for multilateral frameworks for security in the Asia-Pacific region such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

2. Vision for Future Defense Capabilities

1. Role of Defense Capabilities

In recognition of the new security environment, the National Defense Program Guidelines define the role of defense capabilities as:

- 1) Effective response to new threats and diverse contingencies
- 2) Preparation for a response to a full-scale invasion
- 3) Proactive efforts, on Japan's own initiative, to improve the international security environment

The guidelines state that Japan will efficiently maintain the SDF posture deemed necessary to carry out missions effectively in each area.

NDPG 1995 clearly stated the maintenance of the defense posture of each branch of the SDF. However, the current National Defense Program Guidelines adopt the idea that a new SDF posture should be formed in the process of joint operations being conducted to respond to each contingency. Based on this concept, the guidelines specify in a comprehensive manner, the role and response to be fulfilled in each contingency and the concept of the SDF posture under "The Role of Defense Capabilities."

(1) Effective Response to New Threats and Diverse Contingencies

The idea behind the response to new threats and diverse contingencies presented in the National Defense Program Guidelines is as follows.

As new threats and contingencies are difficult to predict and have the potential to emerge suddenly, Japan will effectively counter such changes by forming and deploying highly ready and mobile defense force units capable of responding appropriately to the characteristics of each situation in accordance with the characteristics of the units and Japan's geographical characteristics. When contingencies do actually occur, the defense force will act quickly and appropriately to seamlessly respond to the situation and in close collaboration with the police, the Japan Coast Guard and other relevant organizations in accordance with the circumstances and the

need for division of labor.

Major responses to new threats and diverse contingencies are as follows.

a. Response to Ballistic Missile Attacks

Japan will effectively deal with ballistic missile attacks by maintaining a system to counter such attacks, including a BMD system, to be established at an early date.

Japan will appropriately deal with nuclear threats through efforts to build the BMD system as well as relying on the U.S. nuclear deterrent. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-1)

b. Response to Attacks by Guerillas or Special Operations Forces



Patriot PAC-3 deployed at Ichigaya under an order for measures to destroy ballistic and other missiles

In response to guerillas and special operations force attacks, Japan will maintain the necessary defense force structure to effectively deal with the situation by enhancing the readiness and mobility of defense force units, as well as by coping with such attacks in a flexible manner, including swift and concentrated unit deployments. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-2)

c. Response to the Invasion of Japan's Offshore Islands

Because of Japan's geographical characteristics, featuring many offshore islands, invasion of such islands can be envisioned as one method of orchestrating an armed attack against Japan. In this regard, Japan must maintain a defense structure which is capable of dealing with precise guidance attacks by transporting SDF units by sea and air in a flexible manner. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-3)



Shooting training from a light-armored vehicle

d. Patrol and Surveillance of Sea and Airspace Surrounding Japan, and Responses to Violations of Japan's Airspace and Intrusion of Armed Special Operation Vessels and Other Vessels

In order to effectively respond to new threats and diverse contingencies, early detection is extremely important for the prevention of undesirable events, as well as the prevention of expansion if such an event should it occur. Therefore, around-the-clock patrol and surveillance of the sea and airspace surrounding Japan remains a key role of the SDF. For this reason, Japan will maintain a defense structure that includes warships, aircraft and other equipment necessary to achieve this aim.

Japan will also maintain fighter aircraft units to respond swiftly and appropriately to the violation of territorial airspace. Furthermore, in light of issues concerning armed North Korean special operation vessels and submerged navigation within Japanese territory by Chinese nuclear submarines, Japan will take appropriate actions against such spy ships in the waters surrounding Japan and submerged foreign submarines navigating in

Japan's territorial waters. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-4)

e. Response to Large-Scale and Special Disasters

In the event of a large-scale natural disaster or a special disaster such as a nuclear disaster, it is of extreme importance that Japan utilizes the capabilities of the SDF to ensure the security of the people. For situations in which protection of life or property are necessary, Japan will maintain an adequate force structure consisting of defense force units and personnel with specialized abilities and expertise with the ability to undertake disaster relief operations throughout Japan. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-5)

(2) Preparations for Full-Scale Invasion

While the likelihood of full-scale invasion is declining, new defense capabilities are required for Japan to effectively respond to new threats and diverse contingencies. Proactive engagement is also required of Japan, on its own initiative, aimed at improving the international security environment.

In recognition of this security environment, the National Defense Program Guidelines state that Japan will depart from the previous defense build-up concept that emphasizes so-called Cold War-type counter-armor warfare and implement a sweeping review of its defense equipment and personnel earmarked for responding to full-scale invasion with an eye toward reducing numbers.

At the same time, in light of the fact that the primary role of defense capability is to respond to full-scale invasion and that the rearrangement of defense build-up will require time, Japan will secure the most fundamental element of its defense capabilities in order to prepare for full-scale invasion. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3)



Ceremony marking the launch of submarine Unryu

(3) Proactive Efforts on Japan's own Initiative to Improve the International Security Environment

a. Proactive Engagement on its Own Initiative in International Peace Cooperation Activities

It is stated in the current National Defense Program Guidelines that Japan will proactively participate in international peace cooperation activities on its own initiative with the objective of further ensuring the peace and security of Japan, rather than simply "to make a contribution" as was stated in the previous version of the guidelines.

The scope of international peace cooperation activities is extremely broad, and the Government of Japan as a whole needs to be engaged in these activities in an integrated manner with diplomacy as part of the country's unified efforts. Within the framework of the Government's overall policy, the SDF must be appropriately engaged in international peace cooperation activities drawing on its self-sustainability and organizational capabilities. For this reason, the SDF plans to establish the infrastructure necessary to quickly dispatch and maintain defense force units overseas by developing education and training systems, maintaining a highly ready force posture for relevant units, and improving transport and other capabilities.

In order for Japan to appropriately participate in international peace cooperation activities, it was determined that necessary arrangements would be made including efforts to prioritize these activities within the SDF's overall missions. (See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1)

b. Security Dialogues and Promotion of Defense Exchanges

Security dialogues and defense exchanges including bilateral and multilateral training need to be continued in view of the changes in the international security environment and in recognition of the fact that such efforts contribute to the effective implementation of international peace cooperation activities. In addition, activities which contribute to the peace and stability of the international community need to be actively promoted by continuing the implementation of cooperative activities in the area of arms control and disarmament conducted by international organizations such as the United Nations. (See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 2 and 3)

2. Fundamental Elements of Japan's Defense Capabilities

Following are fundamental elements of Japan's defense capabilities that are included in the National Defense Program Guidelines, which are necessary to fulfill the defense missions described earlier.

(1) Enhancement of Joint Operation Capabilities

In order to execute its missions swiftly and effectively and respond to new threats and diverse contingencies without delay in the new security environment, the SDF needs to enhance the joint operational posture so that all SDF services can operate in a unified manner in such situations from the moment they arise.

For this reason, the Joint Staff was established and the infrastructure for joint operations was put in place in such areas as education and training, and information and communications, and the SDF reexamined its existing organizations for joint operations capabilities so as to enhance their efficiency. (See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-4)

(2) Strengthening Intelligence Capabilities

In order for defense capabilities to function effectively with multi-functionality and flexibility, it is imperative for the Government of Japan to build and fully utilize advanced intelligence capabilities, including the ability to detect contingencies as early as possible and to consolidate and share intelligence accurately and in a timely manner.

Therefore, Japan will strengthen its advanced and diversified intelligence-gathering capabilities and enhance its comprehensive analysis and assessment capabilities, considering the security environment and technological trends. Japan will also strengthen its intelligence structure, including the Defense Intelligence Headquarters, which will play a role in supporting these capabilities, and in this regard, Japan will build a sophisticated intelligence capability.

(3) Incorporating the Progress of Science and Technology in Japan's Defense Capabilities

In order to realize multi-functional, flexible and effective defense capabilities, the fruits of various technological innovations resulting from progress in information science and technology should be adequately reflected. In particular, advanced command and communications systems, as well as information communication networks shall be established to develop reliable command and control systems while the rapid intelligence-sharing systems that are indispensable to the SDF's joint operations described above will be enhanced in line with the advanced information and communication technologies available in Japan and abroad.

(4) Effective Utilization of Human Resources

In order to achieve greater outcomes with limited human resources, it is necessary to recruit human resources with high potential and train and educate them to adequately respond to increasingly diverse and international SDF missions and to properly operate rapidly advancing high-tech defense equipment.

Research and education on security issues will be promoted together with a reinforcement of the manpower foundation for promoting such research⁷.

3. Specific Posture for Defense Capability

The attached table of the National Defense Program Guidelines clarifies the specific posture for the defense capabilities needed to fulfill the missions described above. The following provides an overview.

1. Ground Self-Defense Force

(1) More Effective System for Basic Strategic Units

In peacetime, regionally deployed units (basic strategic units) comprising eight divisions and six brigades, which are responsive and highly mobile, will be formed in preparation for effective and timely response to new threats and diverse contingencies that are often difficult to predict. The units will each be stationed in one of 14 sections demarcated with consideration given to Japan's geography, which is characterized by mountains, rivers and straits. (See Fig. II-2-2-1)

(2) Transition to Personnel-oriented System in Response to the New Security Environment

The transition will be made from the conventional anti-tank warfare-oriented defense build-up concept to a personnel (manpower)-oriented system in order to respond quickly to new threats and diverse contingencies such as attacks by guerillas and special operations forces, large-scale disasters by deploying units across the country and enhance participation in international peace cooperation activities. To ensure effective response capability, the 160,000 reserve personnel set forth in NDPG 1995 will be reduced to 155,000, and the 145,000 regular defense officers set forth in NDPG 1995 will be increased to 148,000.

Meanwhile, the amount of primary equipment "tanks and artilleries" will be reduced from approximately 900 vehicles to 600 vehicles for tanks, and from 900 to 600 artillery/vehicles for artillery, respectively. (See Fig. II-2-2-2)

(3) Formation of Central Readiness Force

In order to prevent the expansion of various contingencies should they occur, the Central Readiness Force will be newly organized, for the unified control of Mobile Operation Units (Central Readiness Force Regiment, etc) and various other specialized units (Central NBC Weapon Defense Unit, etc), as a unit which will be provided to each area in the case of contingencies. Within this force, the International Peace Cooperation Activities Training Unit will be newly organized to conduct the necessary education, trainings and research with the aim of swiftly dispatching personnel for international peace cooperation activities.

2. Maritime Self-Defense Force

(1) Posture of New Destroyer Units for More Effective Response

In order to secure as many well-trained destroyers as possible within the limited number of vessels and to enable prompt response to diverse contingencies, destroyer units will be formed according to the level of readiness rather than the conventional fixed formation. Mobile Operation Units will be integrated into eight divisions (one division consisting of four vessels) to enable swift and continuous response to contingencies. The formation of Regional District Units will be modified so that one unit is deployed in each of five patrol districts in view of the current security environment.

Fig. II-2-2-1 Deployment of Divisions and Brigades under the National Defense Program Guidelines

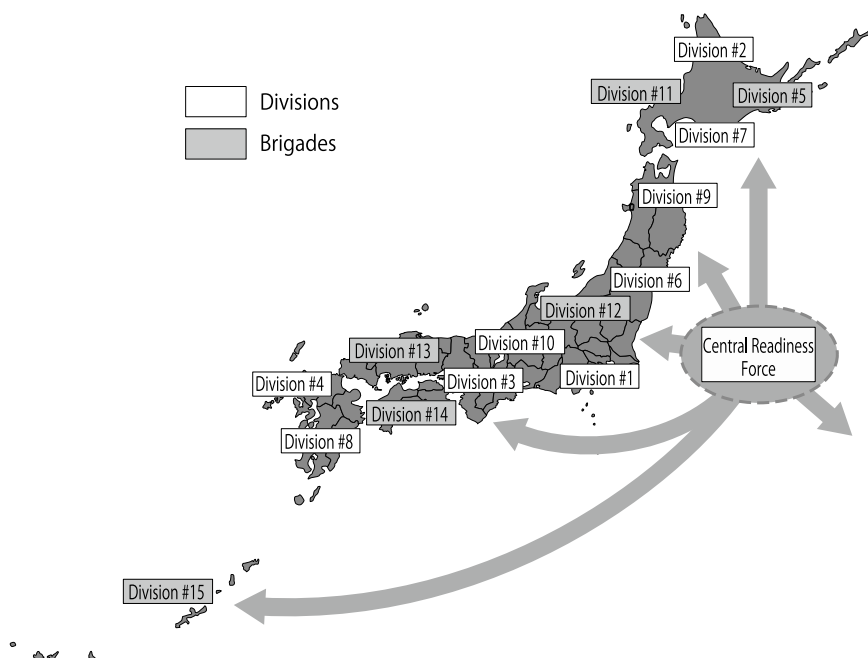
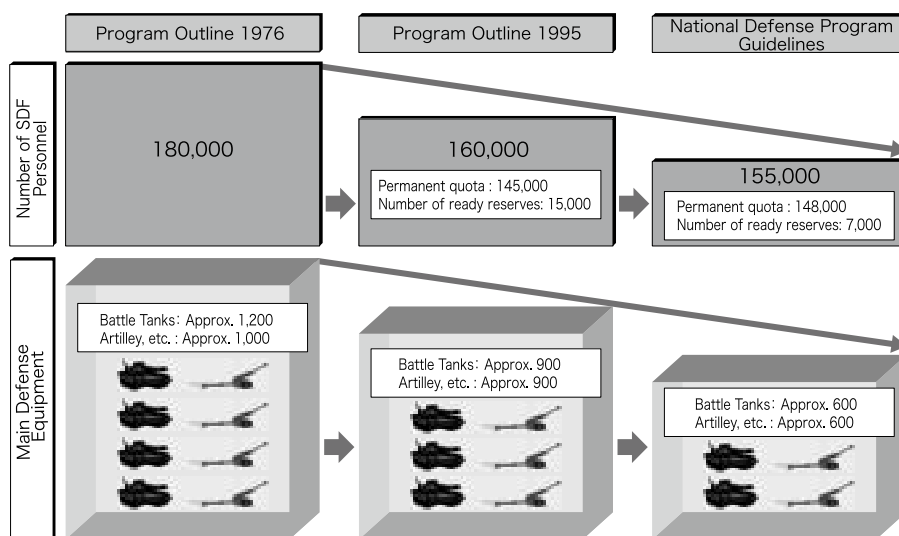


Fig. II-2-2-2 Changes in Number of SDF Personnel and Main Defense Equipment



(2) Formation of Submarine Units Focusing on Response to New Threats and Diverse Contingencies

Submarine units will continue to retain a total of 16 submarines (units are to be consolidated, from six divisions with two or three vessels per division to four divisions with four vessels each). The new formation of submarines to be deployed in important maritime traffic points in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan for information gathering purposes is intended to detect signs of new threats and diverse contingencies as early as possible to enable a flexible response.

(3) Streamlining of Combat Aircraft Units

While ensuring the continued surveillance posture of the surrounding waters, as well as its readiness and effectiveness, the number of combat aircraft (including patrol aircraft, and minesweeping and transport helicopters) will be reduced from approximately 170 to 150 as a result of consolidation of units and improvements in efficiency.

For the fixed-wing patrol aircraft units, P-3C successor aircraft (P-1) with improved performance will be introduced, and the current eight squadrons will be integrated into four squadrons for increased efficiency. From the viewpoint of increasing operational efficiency, patrol helicopter units will be consolidated from eight squadrons to five, and will be ship-based, in principle.

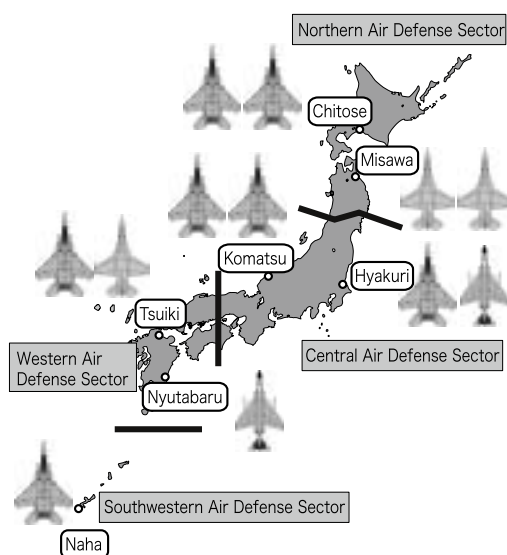
3. Air Self-Defense Force

(1) Improving the Efficiency of Fighter Aircraft Units

Although fighter aircraft units will continue to be major units in order to permit appropriate action in a timely manner against the violation of airspace, in light of the decreased probability of a full-scale invasion of Japan, the number of aircraft will be reduced from approximately 300 to 260 by means of improvements in operational efficiency.

The number of combat aircraft, including fighters, will be reduced from approximately 400 to 350 in line with such developments as the downsizing of air reconnaissance units. (See Fig. II-2-2-3)

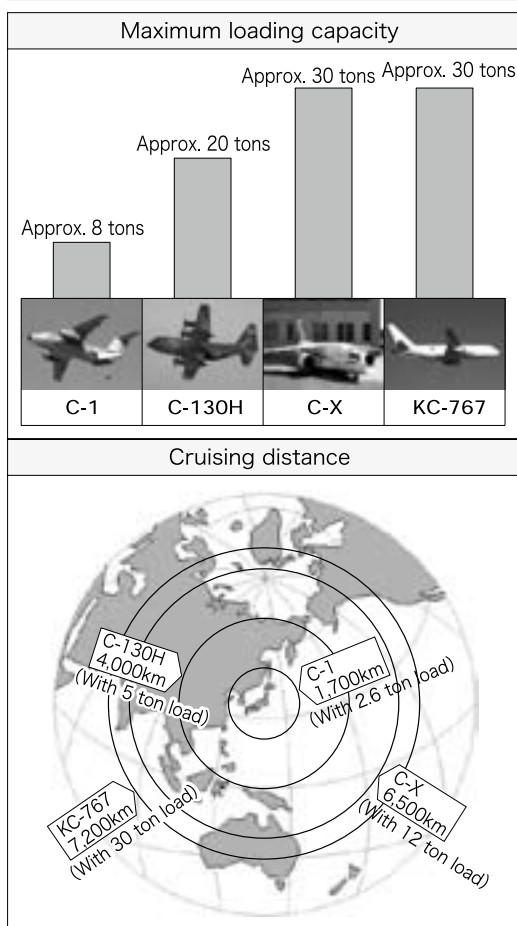
Fig. II-2-2-3 Deployment of Fighter Units



(2) Strengthening Transport and Deployment Capabilities

In order to allow Japan to effectively respond to an invasion of its offshore islands and to properly participate in international peace cooperation activities, Aerial Refueling/Transport Units will be newly established. (See Fig. II-2-2-4)

Fig. II-2-2-4 Future Structure of Air Transport Units



(3) Division of Airborne Early-Warning Group into Two Groups

The Airborne Early-Warning Group will be reorganized from the single group described in NDPG 1995 into two groups: E-767 early-warning and control aircraft units and E-2C early-warning aircraft units.

4. Major Equipment and Major Units Also Available for Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)

The National Defense Program Guidelines state that the posture of the SDF must be capable of taking on various roles to deal with diverse tasks. In particular, it has been deemed important for Japan to attempt to obtain understanding for its BMD system both domestically and abroad by explaining the system as specifically as possible and ensuring its transparency. To that end, the guidelines, in the attached table, specify “major equipment and major units also available for ballistic missile defense⁸.” (See Fig. II-2-2-5)

Fig. II-2-2-5 Comparison of Program Outlines and Structures when Mid-Term Defense Program is Complete

Category		1976 National Defense Outlines	1995 National Defense Outlines	National Defense Program Guidelines	Mid-Term Defense Program
GSDF	Authorized personnel Regular Ready reserve	180,000	160,000 145,000 15,000	155,000 148,000 7,000	About 161,000 (Note) About 152,000 8,000
	Major units	Regionally deployed units in peacetime	12 divisions 2 combined brigades	8 divisions 6 brigades	8 divisions 6 brigades
		Mobile operation units	1 armored division 1 artillery brigade 1 airborne brigade 1 combined training brigade 1 helicopter brigade	1 armored division 1 airborne brigade Central Readiness Force 1 helicopter brigade	1 armored division Central Readiness Force
		Ground-to-air guided missile units	8 anti-aircraft artillery groups	8 anti-aircraft artillery groups	8 anti-aircraft artillery groups
	Main equipment	Tanks Main artillery	— —	About 900 About 900/tank	About 790 About 830/tank
MSDF	Major units	Destroyer units (for mobile operations) Destroyer units (regional district units) Submarine units Minesweeping units Patrol aircraft units	4 escort flotillas (Regional units) 10 units 6 divisions 2 minesweeper flotillas (Land-based) 16 squadrons	4 escort flotillas (Regional units) 7 units 6 divisions 1 minesweeper flotilla (Land-based) 13 squadrons	4 escort flotillas (8 divisions) 5 divisions 4 divisions 1 minesweeper flotilla 9 squadrons
	Main equipment	Destroyers Submarines Combat aircraft	About 60 ships 16 ships About 220 aircraft	About 50 ships 16 ships About 170 aircraft	47 ships 16 ships About 150 aircraft
ASDF	Major units	Aircraft control & warning units	28 warning groups — 1 squadron	8 warning groups 20 warning squadrons 1 squadron	8 warning groups 20 warning squadrons 1 airborne warning squadron(2 squadrons) 12 squadrons
		Fighter units	—	—	—
		Fighter-interceptor units	10 squadrons	9 squadrons	—
		Support fighter units	3 squadrons	3 squadrons	—
	Major units	Air Reconnaissance Units	1 squadron	1 squadron	1 squadron
		Air Transport Units	3 squadrons	3 squadrons	3 squadrons
		Air refueling/transport units	—	—	1 squadron
		Surface-to-air guided Missile Units	6 groups	6 groups	6 groups
	Main equipment	Combat aircraft (fighter aircraft)	About 430 aircraft (about 350 aircraft)	About 400 aircraft (about 300 aircraft)	About 350 aircraft (about 260 aircraft)
Main equipment & major units which can also be used in ballistic missile defense	Aegis-equipped destroyer		—	—	4 ships
	Aircraft control & warning units		—	—	7 groups
	Surface-to-air guided missile units		—	—	4 squadrons 3 groups

Note: Regarding the sufficiency of SDF Regular Personnel in the Mid-Term Defense Program, in order to effectively respond to new threats and diverse situations, and for active and major participation in international peace cooperation activities, current levels shall be maintained, with a target of approximately 146,000 personnel.

4. Additional Elements for Consideration

The National Defense Program Guidelines state that the following elements shall be taken into consideration in building up, maintaining and operating defense capabilities.

1. Fiscal Conditions, Procurement of Defense Equipment, and Maintenance and Operation of Defense Facilities

In light of severe fiscal conditions, defense expenditures must be curbed by further rationalizing and streamlining of defense forces, and overall defense capability needs to function smoothly and efficiently through harmonization of operations with other measures implemented by the Government.

In addition, the Government will make the following efforts: promotion of measures to curb the lifecycle cost⁹ of procuring defense equipment, implementation of effective and efficient research and development activities, as well as the allocation of limited resources to core technological fields for the establishment of a truly necessary defense production system and technological foundation.

In order to efficiently maintain and upgrade Japan's defense-related facilities, the Government will take various measures to promote more harmonious coexistence between these facilities and the local communities.

2. Time frame for Achieving Defense Capability Objectives and Its Review

The National Defense Program Guidelines provide a vision for Japan's defense capabilities for the next decade, based on the idea that it is important to set a concrete timeline for achieving the goals of defense capabilities more clearly.

However, necessary revisions will be made either after five years or should there be a significant change in the security environment, taking into consideration such change in the environment, technological progress and other relevant factors at the time.

5. Three Principles on Arms Exports

A statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary released at the time of the formulation of the National Defense Program Guidelines addressed issues related to arms export control. It stated that given the fact that ballistic missile defense (BMD) would contribute to the effective implementation of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements and from the viewpoint of contributing to the security of Japan, the Government would exempt items related to BMD systems from the regulations of the Three Principles on Arms Exports and related provisions, on the condition that those items would be subject to strict export control¹⁰. (See Reference 11-12)

In addition, with regard to cases of joint development and production with the United States as well as cases seen as contributing to counterterrorism and counter-piracy, regarding which questions were raised through the process of developing the National Defense Program Guidelines, it mentioned that the Government would decide whether to take any actions in the future on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the basic philosophy as a peace-loving nation of avoiding exacerbation of international conflicts¹¹.

The statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary clarified that Japan would continue to firmly maintain its policy of dealing carefully with arms export control in light of the country's basic philosophy as a peace-loving nation, which is the basis for the Three Principles on Arms Exports and their related policy guidelines.

Voice of SDF Personnel Serving in the Forefront of Defense (in Tsushima)

Staff Sergeant Daisuke Ikeda

The 19th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron, ASDF

Many people have been to the Republic of Korea (ROK). But have you visited Tsushima, the Japanese island closest to the ROK?

Tsushima, a scenic island, repeatedly experienced invasions in its history, including one by the Mongols. Today, Tsushima Station of the Ground Self-Defense Force, Tsushima Coastal Defense Group of the MSDF, and Unijima Sub Base of the ASDF are here to protect the region. Unijima Sub Base, where I work, is located at the northernmost tip of Tsushima Island. This is a kind of remote island that is truly on the frontline of the



Staff Sergeant Ikeda on his warning and surveillance duty

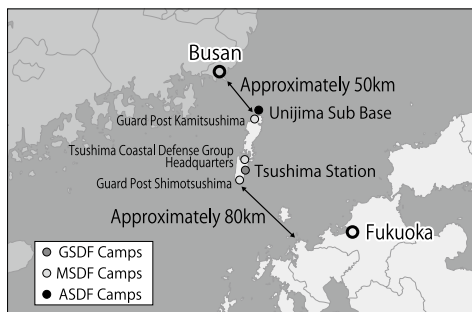
border—only about 50 km from the ROK. You can see the city of Busan with the naked eye on a clear day. In addition, since this is a remote island, we commute by ship every day.

Currently I belong to the Surveillance Platoon of the 19th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron. The Surveillance Platoon uses radar to keep an eye on aircraft, etc. approaching Japan and conducts constant surveillance 24 hours a day, every day, as the eyes of air defense of the region. I am engaged in daily warning and surveillance activities in the platoon and providing radio support to pilots of Japanese aircraft.

Let me explain why I am working at Unijima Sub Base. I was interested in working in Tsushima, a place with a long history, and also I thought I could gain something positive by working in a severe environment. In addition, senior officers who had instructed me at my previous work location and who I look up to were working there. Those were the main reasons for my coming here.

Though this is the duty I wanted to do, honestly speaking, it is sometimes difficult to remain vigilant and keep myself in good shape, because of frequent late night shifts, when ordinary people are in bed. However, I refresh my body and spirit by distinctly switching my life between on- and off-duty modes.

One event that occurred during this duty made a big impression on me. An unidentified aircraft appeared near Tsushima. It is unforgettable how all the members who were working in the operation room at that time worked together to respond to the situation in an intense atmosphere, getting information and detecting the location of the aircraft accurately and swiftly, reporting to the Air Defense Direction Center, and so on. I really felt that I was working on the front line of defense. With this experience always in mind, I will work hard as the “eyes of air defense,” disciplining myself to do my task correctly as a member of the Surveillance Platoon while passing on my knowledge and skills to my juniors.



Map showing the location of Tsushima



Unijima Sub Base, seen from the main island of Tsushima (Korea can be seen on the opposite shore)