

Part IV

Reform of the Ministry of Defense

Section 1. Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense

Section 2. Efforts for Realizing Reform of the Ministry of Defense

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Defense capabilities are the last resort to ensure the nation's security and cannot be substituted by other means. Nevertheless, a defense force that lacks the public support cannot function effectively. Thus, Self-Defense Forces personnel strive on a daily basis to live up to the public trust and expectations.

However, a number of incidents of misconduct have occurred recently that could shatter public trust in the Ministry of Defense and the SDF.

The Ministry of Defense and the SDF are advancing fundamental reforms, by thoroughly reviewing conventional work patterns and practices so as to revitalize the organizations that are responsible for ensuring the peace and independence of our country.

Part IV explains various efforts for the reform of the Ministry of Defense. Section 1 covers the Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense, including the background/progress of the reform, Section 2 covers efforts for realizing the reform, and Section 3 covers other efforts.

Section 1. Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense

1. Background/Process of the Ministry of Defense Reform

In response to frequent occurrences of misconduct and accidents involving the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, such as mistakes in reporting the amount of refueling in the Indian Ocean, information leakage via the Internet, leakage of special defense secrets related to the Aegis system, and the misconduct by the former Vice-Minister of Defense, the Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense (the Reform Council) was established at the Prime Minister's Office to engage in a fundamental review of the issues related to the Ministry from the viewpoint of the public, with the participation of various experts. The first meeting of the Council was held in December 2007¹.

2. Report of the Reform Council

The Reform Council held 11 meetings, and a report was formulated in July 2008². In December 2008, the 12th meeting was held to discuss the progress of the reforms.

This section describes the recommendations for reform as well as the major incidents of misconduct contained in the report. (See Reference 76)

1. Incidents of Misconduct - Identifying the Issues

The Reform Council points out that it is essential that continuous organization-wide efforts be made to identify goals and nurture a sense of duty, while making every effort to minimize mistakes in order to prevent a recurrence of the incidents of misconduct that have repeatedly occurred in the Ministry of Defense and the SDF in recent years, which have had a considerable impact on the society. (See Fig. IV-1-1)



Report by the Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense

2. Reform Proposal (1) – Reform of the Awareness of Personnel and Organizational Culture

The Reform Council proposed the following three principles for reform:

- (1) Thorough adherence to rules and regulations
- (2) Establishment of professionalism (professional awareness)
- (3) Establishment of a management of work that prioritizes execution of duties, with the aim of total optimization

The specific measures are shown in Figure IV-1-2.

Fig. IV-1-1 Major Incidents included in the Report

| Incidents | Outline of Incidents Highlighted in the Report |
|---|--|
| Mistakes in reporting the amount of refueling (Negligence of duty to report) | Concerning the amount of fuel provided to U.S. naval vessels, incorrect figures were reported by the Head of Defense Plans and Program Division of the MSDF Maritime Staff Office, and were subsequently reflected at the press conference held by then Chief of Joint Staff, and in statements made by then Director-General of Defense Agency and Chief Cabinet Secretary. His negligence to correct the mistake even after its recognition indicates a lack of professionalism and a denial of civilian control. The responsibility to correct mistakes is ambiguous and this organizational problem must be corrected. |
| Information leakage via the Internet (Information and communication modernization and information security) | Several incidents concerning information leakage occurred in sequence until 2006, including one such incident where administrative data containing classified information was leaked through file-sharing software on a personal computer. These incidents occurred due to the failure of the SDF to stay abreast of the rapid modernization of information and communication technology, and due to the inadequacy of the security awareness of classified information. |
| Leakage of special defense secret related to the Aegis System (Education on advanced technology and information security) | Information on Aegis categorized as special defense secret was used as teaching materials and was distributed within an MSDF unit without appropriate procedures. This incident occurred due to both a desire to learn about the latest technology and a lack of awareness of information security. |
| The collision of the destroyer Atago and the fishing boat Seitoku Maru (Negligence of basic action) | The MSDF destroyer Atago collided with a fisherman's boat. This incident demonstrates how the loosening of basic discipline, the prevalence of disregard of organizational rules, and the lack of navigation capability, can lead to disastrous results. Problems with communications information between the Staff Office and the Internal Bureau in emergency also became apparent with this incident. |
| Breach of faith by the former Vice-Minister of Defense | This was an incident in which the former Vice-Minister of Defense received monetary gifts, and used influence on the procurement of defense equipments and materials. In the procurement of equipments and materials, actions motivated by personal gains are unacceptable and are far from the professionalism of which the Internal Bureau is proud. This is a breach of faith. Furthermore, there were organizational problems to allow a grave deviation by a high-ranking ministry official. |

Fig. IV-1-2 Specific Details of Reform Proposal (1)

| Items | Outline |
|---|--|
| Thorough adherence to rules and regulations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Senior personnel understand the necessity of rules and regulations and take the initiative in obeying them 2) Workplace training for staff members on regulations focused more on necessity than formality 3) Thorough enforcement of rules and regulations related to preservation of classified information and strict disciplinary action for violation 4) Clarification of responsibilities for securing transparency in defense procurement, as well as preparing and releasing records of meetings 5) Strengthening inspection and observation including inspections without notice 6) Revision and examination of necessities of rules and regulations |
| Establishment of professionalism | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review of educational programs and administrative experience in order to foster staff members with broad views 2) Expanding basic workplace education, while reviewing the balance of workload and workforce within each section of the SDF, as well as reducing excessive workload in the workplace 3) Development of professionalism involving information communication and security, which is significant to the present security |
| Establishment of a management of works that prioritizes execution of duties, with the aim of total optimization | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establishment of cooperation structure based on a sense of unity between civilian and uniformed staff, and between the ASDF, GSDF, and MSDF 2) Establishment of voluntary PDCA (Plan – Do – Check – Act) cycle 3) While taking into account the "Best Practices" of the private sector, common efforts for improvement should be made by subordinates and commanders who lead an SDF unit, the basic unit to the Ministry of Defense 4) Mobile response to issues related to the policy plan by the Integrated Project Team (IPT) method 5) Full-scale introduction of IPT method in defense procurement 6) Further promotion of joint operations posture centered on the Joint Staff 7) In order to maintain the trust of the Japanese people, implementation of various press conferences and integrated public relations activities by units and central organizations |

3. Reform Proposal (2) – Organizational Reforms for Modern Civilian Control

The Reform Council proposed an organizational reform of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Defense so that the Ministry of Defense and the SDF can implement the above-mentioned three principles for reform steadily and effectively.

(1) Strategic level – Strengthening Command Functions of the Prime Minister's Office

The Reform Council proposed that the Prime Minister's Office should utilize the Security Council and other ministerial councils to strengthen the command functions by actively and comprehensively discussing the critical items for security. The specific measures are shown in Figure IV-1-3.

(2) Organizational Reforms to Strengthen Command Functions at the Ministry of Defense

The Reform Council proposed that while basically maintaining the current organization of the Ministry of Defense, a structure should be created through drastic reforms and restructuring of the various functions and responsibilities, so as to prevent a recurrence of incidents of misconduct, enable civilian control to function and enable the Ministry of Defense to implement more effective defense policies.

The specific measures are shown in Figure IV-1-4

Fig. IV-1-3 Measures to Strengthen the Command Functions of the Prime Minister's Office

| Measures | Outline |
|--|---|
| Development of the Security Strategies | Presenting the National Security Strategy that is to be the premise of defense policy |
| Use of Three Ministers Meetings (such as Chief Cabinet Secretary, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Defense) | Improve the assembly with daily/active discussions on important issues related to security, by efforts of Cabinet officials, such as the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defense |
| System for the Government Policy Plan on SDF's defense capability build-up | Make utilization of the Security Council to discuss important items for defense capability build-up. Establish a Cabinet-related assembly to discuss issues such as governmental policy on SDF's defense capability build-up and also establish a permanent system to support this assembly |
| Reinforcement of the support system for the Prime Minister | Reinforcement of Cabinet staff members in order to strengthen and expand the support system for the Prime Minister related to the issue of security |

Fig. IV-1-4 Structural Reform within the Ministry of Defense

| Measures | Outline |
|---|--|
| Expansion of Policy Decision-Making System which centers on the Minister of Defense | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Abolish the Support System by Civilian Defense Counselors and appoint Aides to the Minister of Defense 2) Explicitly establish the Defense Council by law, and advise the Minister of Defense on policy decision-making and responses to emergency situations through deliberation by politicians such as the Senior Vice-Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Defense, and civilian officials such as the Vice-Minister of Defense, and uniformed officials such as the Chief of Staff, Joint Staff 3) Establish a center which engages in information gathering and disaster management at the ministry |
| Functional reinforcement of the Bureau of Defense Policy | Attempt to improve the system of planning, drafting and implementing defense policies. Also, plan functional reinforcement that takes the actual situation into account in terms of operation by appointing SDF personnel. In particular, work to improve intelligence-analysis capabilities, and drafting projects such as international peace cooperation activities |
| Functional reinforcement of Joint Staff Office (JSO) | Abolish Bureau of Operational Policy and ensure the execution of operations under the Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, who receives orders from the Minister. Concerning important matters such as unit mobilization and operational planning, submit the matter for approval to the Minister of Defense, after obtaining suggestions from the Defense Council through the Bureau of Defense Policy |
| Unification of defense capability build-up sections | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In order to ensure optimization of defense capability build-up, arrange and realign the defense capabilities build-up sections of the Internal Bureau and the three Staff Offices of the ASDF, GSDF and MSDF. Then establish a defense capability build-up department that unitarily engages in build-up projects, and study how the department should specifically be. Maintain a posture able to conduct procurement by using the IPT method 2) Concerning Priority Build-up Items, the defense capability build-up department of the Ministry of Defense will prepare options, gain approval by the Minister of Defense via the Internal Bureau through discussion at the Defense Conference, and seek deliberation and resolution at the Cabinet level, based on the defense build-up plan of the Cabinet Office 3) Review local procurement to transfer it as much as possible to central procurement. Moreover, strengthen the frameworks for highly independent third-party verification |
| Other important measures | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Concerning the management sections, actively appoint SDF personnel familiar with the actual conditions of the unit while aiming at utmost integration 2) The ASDF, GSDF and MSDF Staff Offices will bear responsibility for issues related to personnel, education and training of the SDF. However, the Internal Bureau will assist the Minister of Defense in terms of system and policies |