

## **Section 3. The Basis of Defense Policy**

### **1. Basic Policy for National Defense**

Under the Constitution, Japan has adhered to its Basic Policy for National Defense<sup>2</sup>, which was adopted by the National Defense Council and approved by the Cabinet in 1957.

The national defense objectives provided in the Basic Policy for National Defense are to prevent direct and indirect invasions of Japan, eliminate threats for the remote chance that Japan is invaded, and thus protect the independence and peace of Japan as a democratic nation. In addition, the Basic Policy lays down the following four items as a basic policy for achieving these objectives.

- 1) Support the activities of the United Nations, cooperate with other nations, and aim to achieve world peace.
- 2) Establish the foundation necessary to ensure a stable quality of life for the people, boost nationalism, and guarantee the nation's safety.
- 3) Progressively develop efficient national defense capabilities to the necessary limit for self-defense in accordance with national power and circumstances.
- 4) Deal with foreign invasions of Japan based on security arrangements formed with the United States until the United Nations becomes able to effectively prevent said threats.

(See Reference 6)

### **2. Other Basic Policies**

Under the Basic Policy for National Defense, Japan has been building a modest defense capability under the Constitution purely for defense purposes without becoming a military power that could threaten other countries, while adhering to the principle of civilian control of the military, observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, and firmly maintaining the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

#### **1. Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy**

The exclusively defense-oriented policy means that Japan will not employ defensive force unless and until an armed attack is mounted on Japan by another country, and even in such a case, only the minimum force necessary to defend itself may be used. Furthermore, only the minimum defense forces necessary for self-defense should be retained and used. This exclusively defense-oriented policy is a passive defense strategy that is consistent with the spirit of the Constitution.

#### **2. Not Becoming a Military Power**

There is no established definition for the term “military power.” For Japan, however, not becoming a military power that could threaten the security of other countries means that Japan will not possess more military force than is necessary for self-defense and that could pose a threat to other countries.

#### **3. The Three Non-Nuclear Principles**

The Three Non-Nuclear Principles are that Japan: will not possess nuclear weapons, will not produce nuclear weapons, and will not allow nuclear weapons into Japan. Japan adheres to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as a fixed national policy.

Japan is prohibited from manufacturing or possessing nuclear weapons also under the Atomic Energy Basic Law<sup>3</sup>. In addition, Japan ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and as a non-nuclear weapons state, is not permitted to produce or acquire nuclear weapons<sup>4</sup>.

#### 4. Ensuring Civilian Control

Civilian control of the military means the precedence of political will over the military in a democratic state, and hence democratic political control over the military.

Learning lessons from World War II, Japan has adopted the following system of uncompromising civilian control that is entirely different from those under the former Constitution<sup>5</sup>. Civilian control ensures that the SDF is operated in accordance with the will of the people.



Prime Minister Kan delivering an address at the meeting to exchange views with Chiefs of Staff of the SDF and other senior officials [Cabinet Public Relations Office]

The Japanese people are represented in the Diet, which makes legislative and budgetary decisions on matters such as the authorized number of uniformed SDF personnel and principal institutions of the SDF. The Diet also approves defense operations.

As part of its general administrative functions, the Cabinet has entire authority related to defense. The Constitution requires the Prime Minister and other Ministers of State in the Cabinet to be civilians. The Prime Minister, acting on behalf of the Cabinet, is the supreme commander of the SDF. The Minister of Defense, who is exclusively in charge of national

defense, exercises general control over SDF activities. The Security Council of Japan<sup>6</sup> within the Cabinet discusses important defense matters.

At the Ministry of Defense, the Minister of Defense is in charge of administrative work related to national defense and controls the SDF. The Minister of Defense is assisted in planning policies by the Senior Vice-Minister and two Parliamentary Secretaries.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, in August 2009, in relation to important affairs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense, the positions of special Advisors to the Ministry of Defense were created to fulfill such functions as offering advice to the Minister of Defense based on their own insight. Furthermore, the Defense Council — a meeting composed of the political appointees, civil servants and uniformed SDF personnel of the Ministry of Defense as well as the Minister of Defense to deliberate on important policies under the ministry's jurisdiction — was established. In this way, the Ministry of Defense is working to enhance the advisory system for the Minister of Defense and further enrich the civilian control system.

(See Part III, Chapter 4, Section 1)

As mentioned above, the civilian control systems are well-established. The success of the system depends on ongoing political and administrative efforts, as well as a keen interest among Japanese citizens in defense issues.



The top three politicians' meeting

**Notes:**

- 1) Signifies the relationship between Japan and the United States in which they, as nations that share fundamental values and interests, work together on political, economic, and security issues, based on the Japan–U.S. Security Arrangements. (See Part III, Chapter 2, Section 2)
- 2) The function of this Council was taken over by the Security Council of Japan in 1986.
- 3) Article 2 of the Atomic Energy Basic Law states that “The research, development and utilization of atomic energy shall be limited to peaceful purposes, aimed at ensuring safety and performed independently under democratic management.”
- 4) Article 2 of the NPT states that “Each non-nuclear weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes....not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices...”
- 5) The Cabinet’s control over military matters was limited.
- 6) Members of the Security Council are the Prime Minister (chairman); Minister designated pursuant to Article 9 of the Cabinet Law (Minister of State pre-designated to perform duties of the Prime Minister temporarily when the Prime Minister is absent, involved in an accident, or in a similar situation); Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications; Minister for Foreign Affairs; Minister of Finance; Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry; Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; Minister of Defense; the Chief Cabinet Secretary; and Chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission.
- 7) In addition, to help the Minister of Defense effectively handle administrative work related to national defense and to reliably manage the SDF, other systems to assist the Minister have been established. See Part III, Chapter 4, Section 1 for the organization of the SDF, including such advisory systems to the Minister.