

In recent years, risks relating to stable access to Global Commons¹, such as sea, space and cyberspace, have become a new security challenge.

These issues are attracting much attention from the perspective of security due to the fact that activities in such domains as space and cyberspace, which cannot be fully understood based on a conventional geographical perspective are becoming a vital foundation for national security and people's livelihood given the further advancement of military science and rapid development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in recent years. In addition, securing the safety of maritime traffic, which has been emphasized as a fundamental means for supporting international trading, has attracted more attention since it has been pointed out that stable utilization of the seas may be obstructed due to such events as frequent acts of piracy in recent years as well as through the holding of discussions related to the freedom of navigation. From this perspective, in recent years, various countries have been implementing concrete initiatives, including the reorganization of governments and related institutions, in order to deal with cyber attacks on a range of information and communication networks, which could have a serious impact on the function of a state and people's daily lives. Moreover, with regard to the seas, the international community has also been dispatching naval vessels, etc. to conduct anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, as well as affirming the importance of the freedom of navigation at international conferences.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), such as nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons, and ballistic missiles that serve as the means of delivery of WMD remains a significant threat to the international community. In particular, there are continuing concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by North Korea and the acquisition and use of WMD by non-state actors such as international terrorist organizations. Moreover, with regard to issues over Iran's nuclear program, the U.S. and the European Union (EU) have strengthened sanctions, while also engaging in discussions with Iran: However, no major progress has been made and Iran has moved forward with and even expanded its uranium enrichment. On the other hand, some initiatives which focus on nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament are progressing, such as the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) entering into force between the U.S. and Russia in

February 2011.

There is an ongoing tendency for the offshoots of international terrorist organizations dispersing across the globe, as well as regional terrorist organizations and individuals sympathetic to their ideologies, to carry out their activities. They remain a security threat to the international community, even after the death of Osama bin Laden. There are also indications that countries in North Africa and the Middle East that are vulnerable in terms of their governance capacity are being used as bases for the activities and training of international terrorist organizations and other groups. They are engaging in cross-border terrorism, as seen in the case of the January 2013 terrorist attack in Algeria, in which Japanese nationals were killed.

There is still a diverse range of regional conflicts across the globe, with complex backgrounds and in complicated forms. The international community is undertaking intensive efforts to deal with these conflicts and resolve them with its focus especially on the Middle East and the African region. Moreover, there is a growing tendency towards so-called "gray-zone" conflicts, which relate to territory, sovereignty or economic interests but do not reach the stage of armed conflict. At the same time, as the problems of climate change and competition between sovereign states to secure resources and energy are becoming increasingly tangible and causing regional disputes, there are signs that there is a new possibility that they could become a new factor that has an impact on the global security environment. Furthermore, military forces have also been tasked to take on various missions such as prompt response to large-scale disasters and epidemics.

As seen above, the international community today faces diverse, complex and multilayered security issues and destabilizing factors. These challenges could even occur simultaneously or compound one another. In addition to deterrence and handling of armed conflicts, the roles of military forces in responding to these challenges are becoming so diverse that they include a broad spectrum of activities from the conflict prevention to reconstruction assistance. Moreover, as the opportunities for military forces to play such an important role are increasing, comprehensive responses are required that combine military capacity with other capacities such as diplomacy, law enforcement and justice, intelligence and the economy.

¹ The global commons, in this context, refers to territories and other entities not bound to exclusive jurisdiction that are connected and shared globally, on which security and prosperity of all nations are depended. U.S. "National Security Strategy" (released in May 2010), etc.