

Japan's Defense Posture Review Interim Report of 26th July 2013 has attracted much favourable comment for its speed (six months after commissioning), timeliness (so quickly after the main report was published, it's responding to changing conditions) and brevity - the summary below, in a provisional translation, comes on two sides of paper.

Background

Given the following developments, the Government of Japan decided to review the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) by the end of 2013, and its Ministry of Defense (MOD) established the "Defense Posture Review Commission" in January 2013.

-The regional security environment has become more tense, as seen by China's increasing activities in Japan's vicinity as well as North Korea's missile launches

-The U.S. is emphasizing its presence in the Asia-Pacific area in cooperation with allies including Japan

-Lessons from the Self Defence Force's (SDF) activities following the Great East Japan Earthquake need to be addressed

-The Commission focused on development of joint operations and made an interim report about the directions and issues through its deliberations.

The main points are on the next page.

Main points from interim report

1. Security environment: Global and surrounding security environment of Japan Various security issues and instability factors have emerged and intensified since the 2010 NDPG, while the importance of preparing for large-scale disasters has been reconfirmed domestically.

- Prolonged gray zone situations or possibility of deterioration of the situations

- China's lack of transparency in its broad and rapid military modernization as well as rapid expansion and intensification of maritime activities

- North Korea's further nuclear and missile development

- Increased possibility of obstruction of stable use of cyber space etc.

2. Japan's own efforts: Strengthen government-wide comprehensive efforts

3. Strengthen Japan-U.S. alliance:

- Further strengthen defense cooperation through discussions of roles and missions Japan should carry and review of Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation

- Steadily proceed with realignment of U.S. Forces Japan, maintain U.S. deterrence while mitigating local impact in particular on Okinawa

4. Promote cooperation in Asia-Pacific region and stabilize global security environment:

- Strengthen cooperation with U.S., Australia, South Korea; promote dialogue and exchanges

with China and Russia; expand capacity building assistance

- Stabilize security environment in cooperation with international community including NATO; actively promote international peace cooperation activities

5. Defense posture:

- Conduct capability assessment based on joint operations to ensure effectiveness of defense posture in responding to various contingencies. Based on the assessment so far, areas to be emphasized for defense build-up are as follows:

-Strengthen ISR capabilities

-Respond to BM and guerilla attacks

-Respond to large-scale natural disasters

-Strengthen intelligence capabilities

-Strengthen capability to operate overseas

-Respond to attacks on remote islets

-Respond to cyber attacks

-Strengthen joint operations

-Promote use of outer space

-Active efforts for maritime security

6. Foundations for defense capabilities:

-Exercises and training: Continuously verify various contingency response plans through regular exercises in peacetime; make full use of environment that enables sufficient exercises (i.e. Hokkaido)

-Operational foundation: Strengthen resilience of bases and others; maintain facilities/lodgings; secure ammunition; raise operational rate

-Human resources: Deepen consideration of various human resource management measures (including expanding reserves)

-Military medicine: Modernize and functionally upgrade military medicine; improve medevac capabilities in contingency situations

-Defense production and technology base: Maintain and strengthen defense production and technologybase; examine status of implementation of three principles on arms exports and take necessary measures; conduct future-oriented R&D including on unmanned equipment such as robots, cyber, and outer space

-Strengthen cooperation with local communities: consider status of local offices

-Public relations

7. Linkage with MOD reform:

-MOD reform being discussed in separate "MOD Reform Commission" established in February this year

-To prevent recurrence of incidents of misconduct and make SDF more active and efficient, promote reforms to ensure that civilian and uniformed staff work together, strengthen joint operations, and pursue an efficient workflow and organization for defense build-up with optimal resource allocation from joint and whole-of-SDF perspective. (Beyond individual service-led resource allocation)

1. 8.Direction of SDF defense build-up to be prioritized

Given the increasingly tense environment, MOD has conducted capability assessment based on joint operations, focusing on SDF's functions and capabilities as a whole, to draw out functions and capabilities that should be prioritized, in order to pursue more effective defense build-up. MOD will conduct truly effective defense build-up from a joint and overall perspective, by clarifying prioritized issues for future defense build-up. These include :

- Strengthen ISR capabilities

Improvement of early detection capability of various contingencies. In this vein, consider such measures as introducing HALE-UAVs that would contribute to strengthening wide-area persistent ISR capability.

- Respond to attacks on remote islets

To effectively respond to attacks on remote islets, air superiority and command of the sea must be maintained. To rapidly deploy troops as the situation unfolds, mobile deployment capability and amphibious capability ("marine corps" functions) are also important.

To steadily build-up such mobile deployment capability, consideration of optimal deployment posture of troops and equipment, joint transport, utilizing civilian transport capacity, creating supply bases, and strengthening the new amphibious unit are important.

- Respond to ballistic missile and guerilla/special force attacks

Given North Korea's improved ballistic missile capability, consider strengthening deterrence and response capability by improving Japan's comprehensive defense posture against ballistic missile threat, and hence enhance comprehensive response capability. In addition, consider building operational foundation in case of simultaneous special force attacks that occur under ballistic missile attack, as well as capability to protect critical infrastructure such as nuclear power plants.

- Respond to cyber attacks

As no organization can single-handedly defend itself from cyber attacks, consider appropriate division of responsibilities among government ministries as well as strengthening coordination and cooperation with countries such as the U.S. and with the private sector. Additionally, consider policies to steadily introduce necessary equipment and train specialists.

- Respond to large-scale natural disasters

•Secure necessary transport capacity to enable large-scale, rapid deployment of troops, and enhance training and exercises, in order to be fully prepared for earthquakes such as the Nankai Trough Great Earthquake and Tokyo Inland Earthquake that are expected to occur in the future.

- Strengthen joint operations

Given the importance of joint operations, reconsider the capabilities and the role of the Joint Staff, and deepen consideration of establishing a central command organization of the GSDF and defining the relationship of this organization with the regional Army organizations.

- Strengthen intelligence capabilities

Consider strengthening human intelligence collection functions including defense attachés, expanding collection functions including geospatial intelligence, and fundamentally strengthening securing and training analysts.

- Promote use of outer space

Deepen consideration toward use of outer space to strengthen C4ISR* capabilities, through such means as coordination with countries such as the U.S. on space situational awareness and effective use of various satellites (*C4ISR: Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance)