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**“Japan's New Security Strategy
and Its Implications for Korea”**

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Japan's New Security Strategy and Its Implications for Korea

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I . Foreword

The terrorist attacks of September 11 provided an important turning point for Japan's pursuit of a larger field of operation for the Self-Defense Forces. The unprecedented atrocity of this attack which resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and the consequent furor for effective responses against acts of international terrorism created an atmosphere favorable to any measure the Japanese government might choose to take in the name of combating terrorism. In marked contrast to the situation during the Gulf War, when the SDF could not even deploy transport aircraft for refugees, the September 11 incident led to the deployment of the SDF in the Indian Ocean within just two months. The Japanese government also expressed active support for the U.S.-led war in Iraq and finally sent its forces to join in the military campaign. This marks the first occasion since WWII that the SDF will be deployed in an overseas combat zone, and in fact exceeds the terms of Japan's avowed "exclusively defense-oriented" policy.

Today Japan is mending inadequacies in its defense posture resulting from the defeat in World War II and the public allergy to war and is expanding its security role at the global level, away from the traditional exclusively defense-oriented policy. To back this up, Japan is improving its defense capability and preparing for legal and institutional changes. With the end of the Cold War and the redefinition of the U.S.-Japan alliance, it has strengthened its alliance with the U.S. on the one hand, and is assertively pushing forward legal and institutional consolidation on the other hand, as can be seen in the debates over constitutional revision concerning the right of collective self-defense.

II. Changing Strategic Environments

Compared with the time when the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) was affirmed in 1995, the Koizumi Cabinet judges that Japan's strategic environment has changed greatly, and is pushing forward a revision of the NDPO by the end of 2004. The Japan Defense Agency (JDA) is seeking to build up defense capability that can effectively deal with real threats away from the Concepts of "Basic Defense Force," judging that the 1995 NDPO, which was based on the Cold War-type Concepts of Basic Defense Force, can hardly deal with sudden changes in Japan's strategic environment after the 9/11 terrorist incidents. According to the JDA, the Far Eastern Russian Forces had made large-scale reductions while China had made a drastic military buildup and North Korea's nuclear and missile threat had been materialized. In August 2001, therefore, it came to an assessment that the security situation surrounding Japan had changed considerably and announced that it would form a mid- to long-term defense strategy and revise the NDPO by 2005. The September 11 terrorist incidents accelerated the revision of the NDPO.

While maintaining the basic tenets of the 1976 NDPO based primarily on the U.S.-Japan Security Arrangements and the Concepts of Basic Defense Force, the current NDPO, which was revised in 1995, centers around the acquisition of new defense capability and qualitative improvement to counter threats after the Cold War. Even if the 1995 NDPO keeps the main framework of the 1976 NDPO, its main focus was placed on the building of a flexible defense capability that can respond to various situations.

The most noteworthy in the 1995 NDPO is the fact that Japan made it clear that it would change the then SDF deployment concentrated along the northern Japan like Hokkaido into the one that is evenly deployed across the country. This signifies that Japan's defense posture weighing heavily on the northern parts of the country has been shifted to the one along the western Japan to guard against contingencies in China and the Korean Peninsula. The 1995 NDPO, however, provides no rationale for such a change in defense posture including the even deployment of SDF units, and especially no description on China's military expansion. Moreover, the 1995 NDPO envisioned Japan's potential capabilities to respond immediately to various situations overseas as well as domestic by increasing the mobility and information-collecting capability of the SDF. Japan perceives the regional security environment in Northeast Asia has greatly changed since the establishment of the current NDPO in 1995. First of all, the potential threat posed by Russia who has long been a major focus in Japan's NDPO has diminished rapidly over the past few years. Russian military power in the Far East, for instance, has fallen to a mere quarter of what it was during the Cold War, and no longer figures as a potent threat to Japan's national security. On the other hand, China has significantly enhanced its armed forces and is continuing to invest in the military sector. Whereas Japan's defense budget is relatively unchanged since the 1990s began, China's has grown by an average of 13% each year, surpassing even its considerable rate of economic growth. Projections based on current figures indicated that China's real defense budget would exceed that of Japan around 2001, provided that the exchange rate and the rate of economic growth remain stable. In recent years, the Chinese government not only acquired such state-of-the-art vessels as the Sovremenny-

class destroyers and the Kilo-class submarines, but also acquired and/or indigenously developed aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and missile destroyers, thus taking giant steps toward building an ocean-going navy. The PLA Air Force has also been equipped with the SU-30 long-range attack aircraft, further contributing to the dramatic increase in the PLA's long-range power projection capability. In addition, China is exerting serious effort into modernizing its nuclear arsenal, including the development of the DF-31 ballistic missile. Although the PRC's military power in the 21st century may not be equal to that of the U.S. or Japan in terms of quality, it will likely become the strongest in the region before too long.

The second significant change affecting regional security in Northeast Asia is North Korea's development of weapons of mass destruction. Japan views North Korea's nuclear and missile programs as serious threats. Pyongyang has already test-fired the Rodong missile and the Daepodong missile toward Japan, and even indicated that these missiles were designed to target Japan itself as well as U.S. military bases within Japan. North Korea has reportedly deployed some 100 to 200 Rodong missiles in locations capable of covering the entire Japanese islands.

The third consideration in Japan's assessment of regional security is the shift in U.S. alliances following the September 11 terrorist attacks. The events of 9/11 demonstrated the fearsome power of international terrorism to the entire world, and prompted the U.S. to seek a new international order for the prevention and management of such threats. In pursuing its war on terror, the Bush administration adopted a unilateral policy and revised both the concept and character of its alliances with foreign nations. Abandoning the traditional emphasis on achieving deterrence

against invasion through defensive cooperation, the U.S. began to regard a particular country's willingness to participate in its anti-terrorism and anti-WMD activities as a key criterion in distinguishing its allies.

III. Revision of NDPO

In 2001, the Japanese government decided to revise the 1995 NDPO to reflect the various changes in the regional security environment over the past six years. In September of that year, the "Defense Capability Review Committee," headed by the director general of the Defense Agency, was formed; it has since been working to establish a long-term defense strategy and amend the National Defense Program Outline. As a result of such efforts, the Japanese government is fundamentally revising the defensive scheme upheld since the formulation of the 1976 outline, which specified that Japan was to "possess the minimum level of basic defense capability as an independent nation." In particular, the Cold War-era defense policy designed with standard warfare against foreign countries in mind is being transitioned to a "threat response" policy capable of meeting diverse new kinds of threats.

Eschewing its former posture, which was predicated on limited response to direct invasions, Japan has assumed a new defense posture geared toward responding to such new kinds of threats as missile strikes, infiltration by guerrillas and armed spy boats, and large-scale terrorist attacks. The 2003 Defense White Paper stresses that "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles and the presence of dictators and terrorists have completely changed existing conceptions of war," and that "Japan must aim to become a country that can quickly and

capably respond to these types of threats." The white paper also emphasizes the importance of responding to new threats including cyber warfare, attacks by guerilla or special operation units, and nuclear/biochemical weapons in outlining the future direction of defense armaments. It states, "It is necessary to enhance the ability to offer a considered response to such asymmetrical attacks as international terrorism and missile strikes, to attacks from terrorist organizations and other non-state actors, and to illegal acts." As the current system of the Self-Defense Forces does not provide sufficient response capacity against asymmetrical attacks, Japan is exerting much effort into acquiring anti-asymmetrical warfare capabilities.

Last October, Japan's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, a private advisory panel to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, submitted its final report on the proposed future direction of the country's security policy at the beginning of the month. The report, entitled "The Vision for Future National Security and Defense Capability," deserves special attention. It will be the basis for the Japanese government's new national defense program outline due by year's end, and in line with this, Tokyo will announce a revision of the National Defense Program Outline. Claiming the proliferation of ballistic missiles and terrorism as the two main threats to Japan's security, the panel's report demonstrates Tokyo's strong interest in a shift in its definition of defense. the **report** stressed that the SDF should be well prepared to deal with a large number of potential emergency situations or take part in various international missions.

Under the new NDPO, Japan's new defense policy departs from the conventional notion of deterrence, focusing instead on assuming an "effective defense posture" in the following ways:

(1) Effective missile defense: Japan is working to establish a two-step missile defense system within an expedited time frame. The Aegis destroyer, currently in construction, will be capable of intercepting theater missiles in high altitudes, while the acquisition of new Patriot III missiles will allow Japan to intercept low altitude missiles from the ground.

(2) Enhanced strategic intelligence capability: Japan is reinforcing its early warning and surveillance systems by dramatically enhancing its strategic intelligence capability, including the launching of several surveillance satellites and the fortification of intelligence analysis functions.

(3) Countering new threats: In order to respond effectively to such threats as terrorism, guerilla warfare, and infiltration by armed spy ships, a new special operations unit has been created within the SDF, capable of responding to international military conflicts. Efforts are also underway to acquire new missile ships and patrol helicopters.

(4) Improved overseas projection capability: The acquisition of tanker planes (which greatly expands the flight range of fighter-bombers) and large-scale supply ships (which enables the long-distance deployment of naval fleets) are radically enhancing the SDF's overseas projection capability. Furthermore, plans to acquire the new C-X transport aircraft, in addition to the deployment of the Osumi-class amphibious warfare ship, is expected to raise the SDF's transportation capacity to a new level.

(5) Systemic enhancements: Japan is fundamentally revamping the structure and equipment system of the SDF to facilitate swift response to diverse emergencies, as well as maintaining/reinforcing the C4I system to enable the efficient and comprehensive operation of the Japanese armed forces.

(6) Legislative measures: The Japanese government is taking legislative measures to better respond to new kinds of threats. The recent Emergency Law provided legal grounds for deploying the SDF in cases of military invasion, while various other laws including the PKO Law, the Law on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, and the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq are expanding the SDF's range of operation outside of Japan. In particular, efforts to legalize the overseas deployment of the SDF (formerly enabled through limited, temporary legislations) on a permanent basis are also under way.

To sum up, Japan is shifting its defense policy to enable effective responses to new kinds of threats, effectively moving beyond its traditional adherence to an "exclusively defense-oriented policy."

IV. Push for Constitutional Revision and the Right to Collective Self-Defense

A so-called "conservative-leaning" trend is rising in Japanese society today, as Cabinet members' remarks in support of constitutional amendment, the prime minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the authorization of a right-wing history textbook, and the

emergency legislation. This trend is partly due to Japan's decade-long economic stagnation that bruised its pride, but mostly due to Japan's pursuit of a normal state.

The biggest change in Japan of late is the consensus on its need for a certain amount of military force. The dominant mood of peace was shattered when North Korea's Daepodong missile shot through the Japanese territory, showing how vulnerable it was. Despite the end of the Cold War, not only the parties that had participated in conservative coalition, but even main opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party of Japan seem unopposed to obtaining a certain level of military forces. While maintaining its defense expenses at 1 percent of its GNP, Japan plans to pursue high-technology military forces, such as its joint development of theater missile defense (TMD), and also improve the legal framework regarding its Self Defense Forces, namely by pushing for the revision and legislation of the Emergency Law.

Alongside this movement, the most critical movement in present Japan's political situation is the debates on constitutional amendment. In the early 1990s the main streamers in Japanese politics centering around Ichiro Ozawa tried to resolve the problem through interpretation without revision of the Constitution, and today those who argue for Constitutional revision are becoming the main stream in Japanese politics. The latest debate over such a move holds significance in that it was maintained by not only conservatives, but reformists, such as its Democratic Party. In 1999, the parliamentary law was revised so that Research

Commissions on the Constitution could be installed to deliberate the constitutional amendment issue in the Diet. The Commissions were activated in January of 2000 and deliberations on the constitutional amendment has since been under way in the Diet.

At a press conference on April 27, 2001, newly elected Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stressed the Cabinet's stance in support of constitutional amendment by being the first prime minister to propose a public election of the post. Defining the Self-Defense Forces as armed forces, he also called for the amendment of Article 9 of the Constitution in order to recognize Japan's right of collective self-defense.

The focus of the debate over constitutional amendment lies in whether or not to allow Japan the right of collective self-defense. The right of collective self-defense means a right to repel an armed attack when a friendly nation comes under armed attack and even if it is not under direct attack. Up until today, the Japanese government's official position is that it denies such rights on the grounds that Article 9 of the Constitution should be interpreted as prohibiting the possession of arms beyond the minimum necessary. But at the end of the Cold War as the U.S.-Japan alliance began to shift toward an alliance for regional peace and stability, the logic is gaining momentum that recognition of the right of collective self-defense is inevitable to maintain the security arrangements, while constitutional amendment is a necessity. In a proposal on March 23, 2001, the Defense Committee of the LDP called on the need for the right of collective self-defense to secure trust of the U.S.-Japan

alliance and to minimize the factors impeding cooperation and support in areas surrounding Japan.

Since the inauguration of the Koizumi Cabinet, political reforms including constitutional amendment have been actively discussed in Japan. And as the public's concern about security has grown by the 9/11 terrorist incidents, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the North Korean nuclear crisis, etc., intense debates are going on over constitutional amendment. According to a Yomiuri Shimbun survey on April 1, 2003, for example, 54 percent of the Japanese favor an amendment of the Constitution including Article 9, constituting a steady majority for 6 consecutive years since 1998. In January 2003 Research Commissions on the Constitution established four subcommittees on security and international cooperation, governing organizations, etc. They are deliberating major issues including constitutional amendment, the right of collective self-defense, and the emperor system, and are scheduled to report the result of their deliberations to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Speaker of the House of Councillors.

The LDP's study panel on the Constitution recently issued the "the original draft for Constitutional Amendment" that deal with the possession of military units, approval of exercise of the right of collective self-defense, strengthening of the prime minister's authorities in contingencies. While leaving the clause renouncing war unchanged, the draft proposes the Constitution allow Japan to have a "minimum military capability to exercise the right to individual and collective self-defense." It also says the envisaged

military force would be able to make international contributions by relying on military power.

V. South Korea's Response: How to deal with Japan's New Security Strategy

Japan already revised its northern-oriented strategy vis-a-vis the former Soviet Union and adopted a new defense posture that puts special emphasis on the defense of the western Japan and the metropolitan area. Reflecting the changes in its strategic environment such as the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the rising threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles, and the strengthening of Chinese military forces, Japan has shifted its military strategy from a northern-oriented one focusing on Hokkaido to an evenly dispersed deployment across the nation, pointedly West Japan and the metropolitan area that lies in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula. In the past, Japan's role during emergency situations on the peninsula had been limited to providing its SDF bases to the U.S. armed forces, but according to the 1998 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, the SDF was authorized to take more active part in support operations for the U.S. Even if an SDF unit takes action in high seas, not in combat areas, Japanese military activities will be more prominent around the Korean Peninsula. As the SDF's power projection capability improves gradually, the likelihood of conflicts between Japan and China would increase in areas surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Also, Japan is moving in the direction of building up its defense

capability to respond more effectively to new emerging threats-- such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terror and guerrilla infiltration--beyond the realm of the exclusively defense-oriented policy.

Thus, if only to prevent in advance situations that may occur due to unnecessary misunderstandings and distrust between Korea and Japan, it is necessary to secure a direct channel of security cooperation between Seoul and Tokyo. In particular, in preparations for the weakening mediator role of the U.S., a gradual strengthening of security cooperation between South Korea and Japan will be increasingly necessary. The security cooperation of the two countries for the 21st century will be needed to promote their common interests on the basis of free democracy and market economy rather than a military alliance. The Republic of Korea needs to consider the following three aspects in assessing the direction of its new security policy.

First, because Japanese security policy including the expansion of military role tends to be decided in a broader dimension of the U.S. world strategy, South Korean perceptions on Japan's expanded military role would depend on how South Korea views the U.S. world strategy. In other words, the South Korean position on the expansion of Japan's military role would depend on whether or not America's world strategy and its strategy toward Northeast Asia are in South Korea's national interest.

Second, depending on how South Korea assesses China, views in South Korea on the expansion of Japan's military role could also change. At present, while Japanese external policy has kept a

considerable degree of transparency in international norms and has been controlled within the framework of the U.S.-Japan security arrangements, there has been no control whatsoever on China. Japan has considerable military potential, and so does China. Also, South Korea's assessment of Japanese external policy would differ, depending on its judgment on whether or not Sino-Japanese competition is beneficial to it.

Third, depending on how it assesses North Korean military threat, South Korea would have different perceptions of Japan. If the South assesses that North Korean military threat is serious and contingencies are highly likely on the peninsula, it would take positive positions on the use of military bases within Japan, which is a vital interest to South Korea, and Japan's expanded military role centering on rear-area support for U.S. forces in Japan. However, if North Korean military threat is not serious and contingencies are not likely on the Korean Peninsula and if South Korea places top priority on exchange and cooperation with North Korea, then Japan's expanding military role under the pretext of the North Korean military threat and the revised Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation would be taken as contributing to rising tensions on the peninsula.

Since the 9/11 terrorist incidents, Japan has dispatched naval fleets including Aegis destroyers into the Gulf area in the name of assisting the U.S.-led war on terror and also dispatched SDF units to Iraq as well. Now, Japan has become capable of deploying forces beyond the region to anywhere in the world. Related to this, suspicions are rising that the U.S. is encouraging Japan's

rearmament rather than playing the role of a cork in the bottle. However, it should not be overlooked that alliances have changed in the post-9/11 era. The key to alliances before the 9/11 terrorist incidents was defense or deterrence, while that after the incidents is participation in U.S. activities to combat terrorism. Japan appears to be well understanding of the changing nature of alliances after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Of course, Japan is clearly taking advantage of this change to become a normal state, that is, to expand its military role. One thing clear is that only the United States is able to control Japan as a normal state. Without the U.S.-Japan alliance in place, Japan's current movements would be viewed by many South Koreans as considerable threat to their national security. After all, if the U.S. and Japan maintain their alliance and if the ROK and the U.S. maintain a robust alliance, Japan as a normal state within the framework of its alliance with the U.S. would be viewed as a stabilizing factor.

While the U.S. can control Japan, South Korea has no power to deal with Japan. From a South Korean perspective, a multilateral security framework that can constructively digest the expanding military role of Japan, along with the U.S.-Japan alliance, is worth considering. The countries surrounding the Korean Peninsula are all powerful ones that Korea alone can hardly deal with. In fact, while South Korea is concerned about Japan's pursuit of a military power, China's military expenditures are known to have outpaced Japan's, thanks to its high economic growth in recent years. It is necessary to build a multilateral security regime in East Asia through regional confidence building and arms control, lest major

powers exercise their influence on South Korea in a negative manner. Moreover, the growing power of Japan and China needs to be constructively absorbed within the framework of cooperative security. Promoting economic cooperation at the regional level also deepens inter-dependence among regional countries and builds confidence, thus contributing to regional peace and prosperity. Construction of a multilateral economic cooperative forum at the regional level is an excellent scheme to alleviate the concerns about Japan's path.

The surest way to prevent Japan from becoming a military nation is to maintain a multi-dimensional free democracy. Militarism cannot take root in a multi-dimensional democratic society. After all, one should be reminded that standing firm to the ideologies of free democracy and market economy shared by South Korea and Japan is the surest way to prevent Japan's militarism and to deepen cooperation between the two nations.

VI. Conclusion

Reflecting the changing strategic environment following the end of the Cold War, Japan has sought to overcome several inadequacies in its defense posture that had stemmed from the defeat in World War II and public allergy to war and has sought to expand its security role from the defense of Japan to cover both regional and global defense. To achieve these goals, Japan is building up its defense capability and preparing for legal and institutional changes. In 1995, Japan revised its NDPO, the basis of

its defense policy, and in the following year Japan issued the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security that redefines the U.S.-Japan alliance. Also, Japan revised the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation in 1997. As the JSDF dispatched units to the Gulf area under the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, it will dispatch units to a combat zone for the first time after the end of World War II under the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq. And in 2003, with the passage of the emergency legislation including the Law Concerning Measures in a Situation of Armed Attack, Japan entered a new phase in its pursuit of a normal state.

Changes in Japan's defense policy can be summarized as follows. First, Japan is seeking to revise the 1995 NDPO again to reflect the changing strategic environment after the end of the Cold War. Second, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks Japan has built defense capabilities that enable it to take effective responses to new emerging threats. Third, Japan, reaffirming the importance of the U.S.-Japan security arrangements, is seeking to expand its military role within that framework. Fourth, Japan is pursuing rationalization and efficiency of its defense capability and seeking to improve various elements of its defense capability, such as long-range power projection capability, missile defense capability, and counter-terrorism/guerrilla warfare capability. Fifth, Japan is seeking to establish a military system appropriate for a normal state by introducing the emergency legislation and recognizing the right of collective self-defense. Sixth, Japan is seeking to build a

system in which the JSDF can respond to various international conflicts.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the debates on Japan's defense policy is Japan's effort to secure the sphere of external military activities in which it can use SDF units without restraint to protect its national interest. The Constitution bans the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, but Japan is moving in the direction where it can make all SDF's ex-territorial activities *faits accomplis*, through discussions on the expansion of the U.S.-Japan alliance, the revision of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, the passage of the Law on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, dispatch of SDF units into the war on terrorism, and the recognition of the right of collective self-defense, in addition to movements in favor of constitutional amendment. Accordingly, the SDF is showing a tendency to acquire weapons systems that exceed the realm of the exclusively defense-oriented policy. Amphibious units capable of assault landing operations overseas, large supply ships that can deploy fleets and attack planes over a long-range, and aerial refuelers, combined with legislation such as the PKO Law, the Law on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, and the Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law are all part of Japan's efforts to transform the SDF into overseas-deployable forces.

In the past, Japan maintained its way to "peace state" while blinking indifferently at the Cold War as if it were none of its business. Japan has been out of harm's way from severe regional conflicts as well as potentially volatile regional circumstances--

such as Korean War, Vietnam War, Taiwan Strait crisis, and China's nuclear test. With the advent of post-Cold War era, however, Japan is swiftly undergoing a significant change toward enabling itself to utilize its military power.

Now, almost sixty years have passed since the end of Second World War. There is no doubt that Japan has been transformed from a militant nation to a liberal democratic state. And, the tradition of "civilian control over military" is also well established. Nevertheless, Japan's neighboring countries who had bitter historic experiences of the Japanese militarism still feel uneasy about the recent rapid changes in Japan. The Peace Constitution and the doctrine of "exclusively defense-oriented policy" are the two important pillars keeping Japan as a peace state for nearly sixty years. They are also the two major rationales that Japan have used to reassure and persuade its neighbors that it would remain as a peace state and never go to militarism again. However, it seems only a matter of time that Japan would abandon the two important pillars. Although Japan tries to justify the extension of its military role as indispensable requisites for maintaining alliance with the United States and to become a normal state, it seems hardly reassuring to its wary neighbors.