

## Chapter 2

## The New National Defense Program Guidelines

Until now, Japan has developed its defense force and conducted its defense program based on the most appropriate methods, in line with the international environment, current situation of the SDF, conditions in the countries around Japan, and economic and fiscal conditions. The National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) set forth the basic policies for Japan's security, as well as a basic guideline for Japan's defense force in the future, including the significance and role of Japan's defense force, the specific organization of the SDF, and the target levels of major defense equipment to be built up.

In this chapter, Section 1 describes the history of the NDPG, and Sections 2 and 3 describe the contents and the background to the formulation of the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and beyond (the new NDPG), approved in December 2010.

**Reference** Reference 7, National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and beyond

## Section 1

## History of the National Defense Program Guidelines

After 1958, Japan developed its defense force gradually based on four versions of defense development programs and “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY1977 and beyond<sup>1</sup>” (1976 NDPG) was first approved by the National Defense Council<sup>2</sup> and the Cabinet in October 1976 to clarify the level of defense force which the country ought to maintain and as a guideline for matters including the modality for developing Japan's national defense capabilities. Thereafter, in view of significant changes in international relations represented by the end of the Cold War and rising expectations for the role of the SDF, including in areas such as international activities, “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY1996 and beyond<sup>3</sup>” (1995 NDPG) was formulated in November 1995. Further, in light of the fact that issues

such as activities by international terrorist organizations and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles were becoming shared concerns within the international community, “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2005 and beyond<sup>4</sup>” (2004 NDPG) was drawn up in December 2004. Both the 1995 NDPG and the 2004 NDPG were approved by the Security Council and the Cabinet. Based on these NDPG, Japan has drawn up its Mid-Term Defense Program every five years since 1986 and has built up, maintained, and operated its defense capabilities to the present day.<sup>5</sup>

(See Fig. II-2-1-1)

This section sets out the points of the NDPG that Japan has formulated until the present day.

<sup>1</sup> See <[http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho\\_data/1977/w1977\\_9110.html](http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho_data/1977/w1977_9110.html)>.

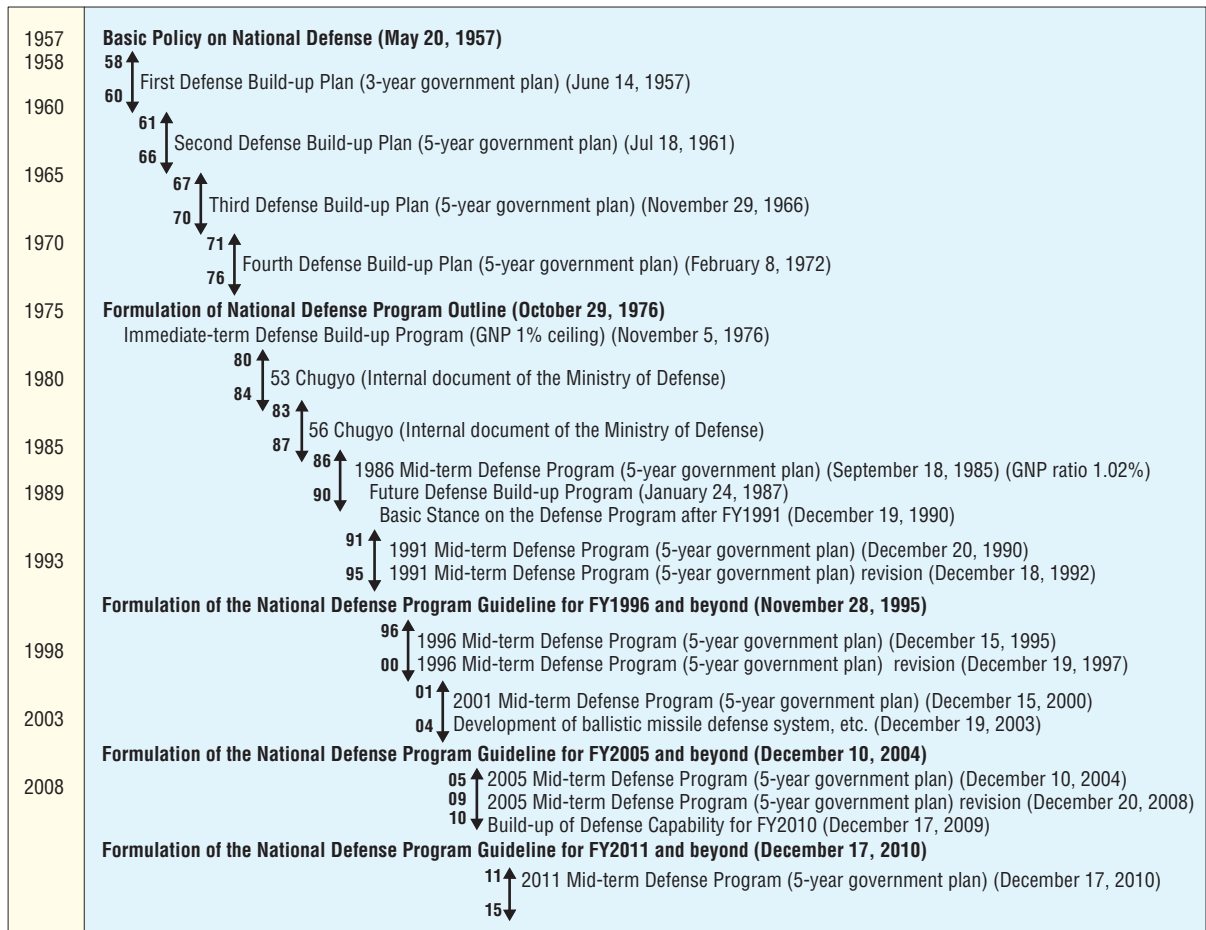
<sup>2</sup> The functions were taken over by the Security Council in 1986.

<sup>3</sup> See <[http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/1996\\_taikou/dp96j.html](http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/1996_taikou/dp96j.html)>.

<sup>4</sup> See <<http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2005/taikou.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> Excludes FY2010. See Section 2.2.

Fig. II-2-1-1 Past Changes in the Defense Program



## 1 “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY1977 and beyond” (1976 NDPG)

The characteristics of the 1976 NDPG were that it incorporated the Basic Defense Force Concept as the basic concept behind the defense program, and, at the same time, it stipulated clearly the specific goals or levels of defense capabilities that should be built up under this concept.

The 1976 NDPG was formulated against the background of the détente in the 1970s<sup>1</sup>, and recognized the state of international relations at the time as follows: 1) Generally, there was a low possibility for a full-scale military conflict between the East and the West, given various efforts to stabilize international relations; and 2) In Japan’s neighboring regions, the balance among the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, as well as the presence of Japan–U.S. security arrangements, played a significant role in preventing an actual

invasion of Japan.

Based on the premise that these conditions would not undergo any major changes for the foreseeable future, the 1976 NDPG set forth the following as the defense force that Japan should have:

- 1) to be equipped with the various functions required for defense,
- 2) to focus on keeping a balanced posture in that organization and equipment, including the logistics support organization;
- 3) with that, to be on full alert even during peacetime, and, at the same time,
- 4) to be able to handle situations up to limited and small-scale invasions effectively, and

<sup>1</sup> A series of measures to ease Cold War tensions, including the “Basic Principles” declaration that touted peaceful coexistence and equality between the United States and the Soviet Union.

- 5) when the situation escalates and a new defense posture is needed, to be able to make a smooth transition to the necessary state of defense.

The above were laid out under the Basic Defense Force Concept. The defense capability, which had developed gradually based on four defense capability development programs, was then considered to be at almost the same level as the goals of this concept, in terms of its scale.

Furthermore, in the 1976 NDPG, as part of the “Concept of Defense,” the fundamental point concerning the defense

of Japan was that it should forestall and prevent the invasion of Japan through the possession of an appropriate scale of defense force and build up a defense system that is capable of dealing with any form of invasions, alongside with the Japan–U.S. security arrangements.

In other words, the Basic Defense Force Concept introduced in the 1976 NDPG was the notion that focused on preventing invasions to Japan and centered on the deterrence effect.

## 2 “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY1996 and beyond” (1995 NDPG)

The 1995 NDPG, drawn up approximately 20 years after the 1976 NDPG, was formulated in consideration of rising expectations for the role of the SDF, in view of significant changes in international relations such as the end of the Cold War, U.N. peacekeeping operations and responses to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Disaster.

Stating that, until then, Japan’s defense force had been developed based on the Basic Defense Force Concept of owning the minimal basic defense capabilities needed by an independent country, not to become a power vacuum that produces instability in the region, rather than directly confronting military threats to Japan, the 1995 NDPG continued this concept.<sup>1</sup>

After the end of the Cold War with the nominal and virtual collapse of the Soviet Union, a review was carried out with the following results: 1) in the future, various efforts to stabilize international relations, despite being fraught with opacity and uncertainties, would continue, and 2) the Japan–U.S. security arrangements will continue to play an important role with regard to Japan’s security as well as the peace and stability of the surrounding region. Based on these assessments, it was judged that the premises behind this concept remain unchanged, and it was decided that Japan should take the same fundamental stance as in the 1976 NDPG.

On the other hand, with regard to the contents of the defense capabilities that Japan should have, while keeping a close eye on cuts of military forces and changes to the

military situation in some of the countries close to Japan, it was deemed necessary to review the concrete posture and to establish the most efficient and appropriate defense force. In addition, in consideration of changes in internal and external conditions as well as the position that Japan is placed in among the international community, on top of its main role of ensuring the defense of Japan, the SDF should also take on the roles of responding to various contingencies such as large-scale disasters and contributing to the creation of a more stable security environment, as and when necessary and in an appropriate manner.

The 1995 NDPG reviewed the scale and functions of Japan’s defense capability in line with the abovementioned considerations. By further rationalizing, streamlining, and compacting defense capabilities while taking steps to enhance the necessary functions and make qualitative improvements to defense capabilities, it would be appropriate for Japan to develop defense capabilities that could effectively respond to various contingencies, and, at the same time, which could ensure an appropriate degree of flexibility in order to respond smoothly as the situation changes.

As described above, the characteristic of the 1995 NDPG was that it reviewed the scale and functions of defense capabilities while continuing the Basic Defense Force Concept. On top of that, it placed the focus on utilizing the capabilities of the SDF not just for Japan’s defense, but also in various other fields.

<sup>1</sup> It is stipulated in the 1976 NDPG that “Japan will, in principle, independently fend off limited and small-scale invasions.” In consideration of the expanded role of the defense capabilities, this stipulation was considered inappropriate as it focused solely on invasions of Japan, and was thus removed.

### 3 “The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2005 and beyond” (2004 NDPG)

The 2004 NDPG was formulated based on the assessment that new guidelines on Japan's security and defense capabilities were necessary, in view of the need to respond to new threats and a multitude of issues, such as the increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as activities by international terrorist organizations. The characteristics of the 2004 NDPG are as follows.

#### 1) Basic principles of security policy (Two objectives, three approaches)

The basic principles of security policy, premised by the modality of defense force, have the following two objectives: 1) prevention of direct threats from reaching Japan and, in the event that they do, repelling them and minimizing any damage, and 2) improvement of the international security environment to reduce the potential that threats will reach Japan. In order to achieve these two objectives, the objectives were combined with three approaches in an integrated manner. The three approaches were Japan's own efforts, cooperation with alliance partners, and cooperation with the international community.

#### 2) New concept for defense force (shifting emphasis from “deterrence effects” to “response capability”)

Under a new security environment and in consideration of the facts that 1) the previous “deterrence effect” would not necessarily function effectively due to the possibility of the sudden occurrence of new threats and a multitude of events that are difficult to predict, and that 2) in order to consolidate peace and safety in Japan, peace and stability in the international community is essential, and it is necessary to participate in international peace cooperation activities voluntarily and actively, the 2004 NDPG assessed that it was becoming difficult to develop defense capabilities based solely on the Basic Defense Force Concept that focuses on the deterrence effects of owning defense capabilities and was centered around the defense of Japan.

With regard to future defense force, while retaining the effective parts<sup>1</sup> of the Basic Defense Force Concept, it was deemed necessary to develop capabilities that could respond effectively to new threats and various contingencies and that

could participate in international peace cooperation activities voluntarily and actively.

Furthermore, even as the role of defense force became more diversified as described above, there was a need to pay attention to issues such as the decrease in the size of the young population in tandem with low fertility rates, and increasingly difficult financial conditions.

In view of the above, Japan's defense force needs “multi-functional, flexible, and effective defense capabilities” that are equipped with high readiness, mobility, flexibility, and versatility, and reinforced by advanced technology in line with trends in military technology standards and intelligence capabilities and that can respond effectively to various contingencies through the flexible deployment of SDF units and multifunctional defense equipment, aimed at achieving greater results with limited resources.

With the assessment of a decreasing likelihood of full-scale invasions against Japan, fundamental reviews of equipment and personnel that had been maintained against full-scale invasions were carried out, and efforts were to be made to streamline. At the same time, in light of the fact that the primary role of defense force is to respond to full-scale invasions, and that such capabilities cannot be reconstructed over a short period of time, it was decided that the most fundamental part of such capability was retained.

#### 3) Other

In both the 1976 NDPG and 1995 NDPG, the target period for achieving defense capability objectives as set out in the Guidelines, as well as the review of the Guidelines themselves, were not stipulated clearly. However, the 2004 NDPG stated clearly that the modality of the defense force should be taken for the next ten years, while the Guidelines should be reviewed and revised as necessary five years after formulation, or in the event of significant changes to the situation.<sup>2</sup>

As described above, the characteristics of the 2004 NDPG are that it clearly stipulated the basic principles for Japan's security policy, and laid out the modality for the new defense force based on these basic principles and that it put a stronger emphasis on “response capability,” while retaining the effective parts of the Basic Defense Force Concept.

<sup>1</sup> The factors considered effective and retained are as follows: 1) Japanese defense force should not directly counter military threats, and 2) in order to forestall and prevent invasions, Japan should maintain a defense force that takes into consideration the strategic environment and geographic characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> In addition, in the statement issued by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on the formulation of the 2004 NDPG, with regard to the case of BMD systems as an item pertaining to the management of arms export, he stated that from the perspective of contributions to the effective operations of the Japan–U.S. security arrangements and contributions to Japan's security, in the event that joint development and production was carried out, it would not be dependent on the Three Principles of Arms Exports on the premise of strict export management. At the same time, with regard to joint development and production with the United States and items contributory to support for anti-terror and anti-piracy measures, the statement provides that a conclusion will be reached upon the review of each individual case, according to the basic principle of a peaceful country to avoid the promotion of international conflicts in the future.