

# **Strengthening Japan's Defense Diplomacy**

## **An SPF Policy Proposal**





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**Security Studies Program**  
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## About This Policy Proposal\*

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Strengthening Japan's Defense Diplomacy draws on research conducted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation's Defense Diplomacy Project to offer proposals on urgent issues confronting Japan's defense and foreign policy. The nine proposals presented here have been drafted by seven authors with diverse areas of expertise and points of view—including former senior officials of the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces—following a process of extensive debate and mutual review.

Proposals 1 to 3, broadly speaking, address issues that require consideration from a strategic perspective, while Proposals 4 to 9 consider more practical matters aimed at enhancing the implementation of defense diplomacy. The proposals do not seek to examine an exhaustive range of defense diplomatic issues but selectively focus on particularly crucial items. While Proposals 2 and 3 both touch on the role of the National Security Council, for example, they approach the topic from different angles—namely, defense diplomacy and strategic communication.

\*this report is originally published in Japanese (October 2021). Original in Japanese by each author and translated by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

<https://www.spf.org/security/publications/20211015.html>

### About the Defense Diplomacy Project

<https://www.spf.org/en/security/programs/V20190143.html> (English – Project Outline)

Building on the knowledge amassed through private-sector programs for defense exchange among Japan-China and Japan-Vietnam field officers and Japan-South Korea retired generals, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation launched a research project in fiscal 2018 to study the policy implications of Japan's defense diplomacy, which has seen a dramatic expansion in terms of both quantity and quality. Reports (in Japanese) published under the project include an outline of the aims and activities of defense diplomacy and case studies of initiatives being undertaken by six countries (Australia, Britain, China, France, South Korea, and United States) that are actively promoting defense diplomacy.

<https://www.spf.org/security/programs/V20190143.html>

The project also published an academic book (in Japanese) on logic and practices of Defense Diplomacy. 「防衛外交とは何か－平時における軍事力の役割」(Defense Diplomacy – A Role of the Military Force in Peacetime). Keiso Shobo. October 2021. ISBN: 978-4-326-30307-6

<https://www.spf.org/security/publications/20211102.html>

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## **Proposals to Strengthen Japan's Defense Diplomacy**

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Proposal 1. Adopt a Defense Diplomacy Strategy

Proposal 2. Create a Cross-Ministerial Command Center for Defense Diplomacy

Proposal 3. Place Strategic Communications at the Center of Defense Diplomacy

Proposal 4. Promptly Build a Framework for Joint Exercises and Collective Action

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Proposal 6. Expand the Intellectual Foundations for Overseas Transfers of Defense Equipment

Proposal 7. Create an Initiative to Systematically Advance Security Cooperation

Proposal 8. Establish an Indo-Pacific Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats

Proposal 9. Bolster Contributions to International Peace Cooperation

## Authors (alphabetical order)

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Chiyuki Aoi, Professor, University of Tokyo

Kohtaro Ito, Senior Research Fellow, Canon Institute for Global Studies

Goro Matsumura, Lieutenant General (Ret.), and Former Northeastern Army  
Commanding General, Japan Ground Self-Defense Force

Ippeita Nishida, Senior Research Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Hideshi Tokuchi, President, Research Institute for Peace and Security;  
Former Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs

Michito Tsuruoka, Associate Professor, Keio University

Tsuneo Watanabe, Senior Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

## Preface

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### Overview

Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic expansion and strengthening of international security cooperation involving Japan's Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces (SDF). Japan now holds two-plus-two meetings of foreign and defense ministers with several countries other than the United States, resulting in policy discussions at all levels and the conclusion of an array of defense agreements. The SDF are regularly engaged in exchange, joint training, and joint exercises with the militaries of other countries—even after the outbreak of COVID-19—and are expanding the use of such tools as the provision of capacity-building assistance and used defense equipment to foreign forces.

Such “defense diplomacy” among defense authorities has become a global trend. A variety of initiatives are undertaken by the United States, the countries of Europe, Australia, China, and many others to build favorable relationships with other militaries. Efforts to build stronger defense ties and create a desirable security environment are becoming increasingly important as strategic confrontation in the Indo-Pacific between Washington and Beijing escalates into great power competition and heightens political uncertainty not only in East Asia but also in the areas between the Middle East and Western Pacific.

### What Is Defense Diplomacy and Why Does It Matter?

Defense diplomacy, as used by our research group, refers to “the use of the assets of the national defense authorities and armed forces to cooperate with other countries mainly in peacetime to create an environment conducive to the achievement of foreign policy and security objectives.” Among the activities carried out by Japan's Ministry of Defense that fall into this category include not only “security cooperation,” “defense exchange,” and “defense cooperation” but also the dispatch of troops and personnel for international peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), as well as the overseas stationing of such personnel as defense attachés (called military attachés by other countries). As the UK Royal Navy's dispatch of a carrier strike group to the Indo-Pacific in 2021 illustrates, defense diplomacy, unlike conventional diplomacy, employs hard, military power as a diplomatic tool to communicate and advance its strategic interests.

More specifically, defense diplomacy enables cooperation with other countries in crisis management and areas of common interest by fostering friendly relations built on mutual understanding and trust. With countries that share strategic interests, defense diplomacy can enhance operational capability and deterrence, as coordination is strengthened through military cooperation frameworks and improved interoperability of forces. Joint military activities in politically disputed regions, such as the South China Sea, for example, can be a powerful form of strategic communication, sending a message to China and the littoral countries alike. The armed forces in many emerging and developing countries are often powerful enough to exert an influence on both external relations and domestic politics. Defense diplomacy can thus provide a direct

diplomatic channel for military-to-military relations, with capacity building assistance and the transfer of equipment serving as important means of deepening relations with target countries.

Countries that recognize the role defense can play in forging international relations actively use their military capabilities to cooperate with other nations to enhance their influence and build a desirable security environment. The network of security cooperation that the United States formed with allies and partners during the Cold War continues to this day, while Britain has expanded strategic military cooperation as part of its defense engagement in the post–Cold War period. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army, too, has been strengthening its “military diplomacy” in recent years under President Xi Jinping’s leadership. It was only after the end of the Cold War that Japan began international peace cooperation activities and started defense exchange with countries other than the United States, but it now regards strengthening security cooperation as a pillar of its basic defense policy.

That said, Japan is a relative newcomer to security cooperation and is still feeling its way forward. It has yet to formulate integrated policy guidelines for the SDF’s overseas activities, for example, and lacks an interagency headquarters to coordinate the activities of the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. The effectiveness of existing initiatives, moreover, could be greatly enhanced through institutional and operational improvements. The nine proposals elucidated in this report are aimed at addressing these and other urgent issues in Japan’s defense diplomacy.

When Japan formulated its first National Security Strategy in 2013, it was expected to remain applicable for around 10 years. But today, just 8 years later, the country finds itself confronting a vastly transformed geopolitical reality. Given such uncertainties, defense diplomacy and other peacetime efforts will be indispensable in ensuring a secure future for Japan. We hope that the proposals presented here will help advance such efforts.

Ippeita Nishida and Tsuneo Watanabe

On behalf of all co-authors



## Adopt a Defense Diplomacy Strategy

**Given the expansion of Japan's defense diplomacy and defense engagement, the need for an overall strategy to direct such initiatives is growing. A government-wide defense diplomacy strategy in line with the National Security Strategy and National Defense Program Guidelines is necessary to better coordinate the activities of the National Security Secretariat, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. First and foremost, the strategy needs to make clear that defense diplomacy is a means of raising Japan's external influence. In concrete terms, it is intended to identify the goals to be achieved, establish regional and functional priorities, allocate assets and resources accordingly, and indicate the direction of intragovernmental coordination and cooperation.**

The National Security Strategy of December 2013 and the National Defense Program Guidelines of December 2018, the two most significant documents in Japan's security and defense, make references to defense engagement and related activities. The latter specifically calls for the promotion of security cooperation in the section outlining the "Roles that defense capability should play," noting that the "SDF will strategically promote defense cooperation and exchanges such as: joint training and exercises, cooperation in defense equipment and technologies, capacity building assistance, and service-to-service exchange." This was a major step forward for Japan and helped lay the groundwork for the expansion of joint training and other activities in recent years. However, as the scope of the NDPG is limited to the activities of the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces, it cannot be seen as a national strategy.

Other official sources of Japan's policy on defense diplomacy include a directive regarding the strategic implementation of defense cooperation and exchange, issued in August, 2020, by the administrative vice-minister of defense. This, however, does not outline a strategy or policy but merely prescribes the establishment of new bodies, such as a review committee and working group, to facilitate decision-making within the Defense Ministry.

What Japan must do is to establish an approach for the use of its defense assets, principally the SDF, as tools for the furthering of its national interests. This will require a set of principles to guide the activities not only of the Ministry of Defense but also other agencies, particularly, the National Security Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Defense equipment cooperation with other countries, including arms export, needs to be put in the context of defense diplomacy. Political dialogue and development assistance could also be conducted in close coordination with defense diplomacy. The formulation of a defense diplomacy strategy would provide essential guidelines for these aims.

At the same time, by clearly identifying the assets and resources needed to achieve its goals in accordance with regional and functional priorities, the strategy would also help secure necessary budgetary resources.

(Michito Tsuruoka)

## Create a Cross-Ministerial Command Center for Defense Diplomacy

**A cross-ministerial command center is indispensable in seamlessly advancing defense diplomacy under a whole-of-government approach, particularly in coordinating the activities of the Foreign and Defense Ministries. Its role must go beyond coordination, though, and include the drafting and execution of policy measures encompassing several ministries, as well as the formulation of budget requests. Such a center can be set up as a new “security cooperation department” within the National Security Secretariat (NSS), but liaison offices would also need to be created within the Foreign and Defense Ministries.**

Defense diplomacy cannot be implemented by the Ministry of Defense alone. The experience of other countries that have applied their defense resources to further their diplomatic goals indicates that close cooperation between the authorities for defense and foreign affairs is essential. In Britain, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office are jointly responsible for defense engagement, from strategy formulation to execution. And the United States pursues a flexible policy whereby the State Department carries out projects originally budgeted by the Pentagon, and vice versa, depending on the activity. Japan should similarly pursue an effective and flexible approach. For this, a security cooperation department should be set up within the National Security Secretariat—a cross-ministerial coordinating body—to provide comprehensive coordination among the Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare; Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry; and Ministry of Finance.

There have been marked improvements in coordination among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and the Japan Coast Guard as barriers to interagency coordination have been lowered since the NSS was established. An economic division has now been created within the NSS, given the rising importance of security cooperation in such forms as the overseas transfer of defense equipment and capacity building assistance and the growing need to ensure economic security through “economic statecraft,” whereby economic tools are used to further diplomatic and security ends. Defense diplomacy will further require coordination with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, which have jurisdiction over maritime law enforcement and cyber defense; the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare to address pandemic- and bioterrorism-related issues; and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Ministry of Finance, which are responsible for economic policy. A new department should thus be created within the NSS to spearhead comprehensive, cross-ministerial coordination for defense diplomacy. To ensure its effectiveness, moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense should assign liaison personnel to work with the department. Specifically, officers in charge of coordinating security cooperation should be placed in the International Peace and Security Cooperation Division of the Foreign Ministry’s Foreign Policy Bureau and in the International Policy Division of the Defense Ministry’s Bureau of Defense Policy.

As a footnote, it should be noted that bureaucratic reforms to strengthen defense diplomacy will have little meaning unless the prime minister, defense minister, foreign minister, and other political leaders have an understanding of and fully endorse such changes. To that end, effort must be made to acquaint members of political parties who have defense and foreign policy responsibilities (in the case of the Liberal Democratic Party, this would apply to members of the National Defense Division and the Foreign Affairs Division in the Policy Research Council) of the importance of defense diplomacy.

(Tsuneo Watanabe)

## Place Strategic Communications at the Center of Defense Diplomacy

**In order for Japan to augment the strategic character of its defense diplomacy, Japan must ensure that its defense diplomacy is advanced as strategic communication. A command center responsible for strategic communications for all aspects of Japan's defense and foreign policy should be created within the National Security Secretariat, to be headed by an NSS deputy director. The role and relevance of defense diplomacy within Japan's overall foreign and defense policy should be clarified, and the establishment of a command center should help ensure consistency in strategic communication in all policy stages, from planning and implementation to after-action assessment.**

Strategic communications entail the use of verbal and behavioral cues to influence the attitudes and behavior of intended targets in advancing foreign policy and security goals. Defense diplomacy is an important component of such communication, enabling the demonstration of will and capabilities to other countries and the building of foreign relations and cooperative partnerships.

Strategic communications play a key role in creating a “security environment desirable for Japan,” which is the first objective of national defense, according to the 2019 National Defense Program Guidelines. Unfortunately, it is currently not fully operationalized. This should be rectified by creating a command center within the National Security Secretariat, headed by an NSS deputy director general and positioned above other NSS units, to oversee and coordinate all of the government's strategic communications activities as part of the Cabinet Secretariat. This will clarify the strategic importance of defense diplomacy and ensure it has a place in strategic communications. From the outset, defense diplomacy practitioners should draft defense diplomacy plans and activities from a strategic communications perspective that will help achieve political objectives vis-à-vis specific countries and organizations and work closely with the command center to maintain interagency consistency.

Organizational changes should also be made within the Ministry of Defense to enable plans for SDF activities from a strategic communications perspective. Specifically, a Defense Communication Office should be established within the Bureau of Defense Policy; the office would be responsible for the strategic communications of both the Ministry of Defense and the SDF and coordinate its activities with other ministries and agencies. To nurture communications specialists, Defense Ministry officials and SDF officers should be dispatched to specialized training programs in Japan and abroad, and courses should be held at the Joint Staff College and the National Defense Academy.

(Chiyuki Aoi)

## Promptly Build a Framework for Joint Exercises and Collective Action

**One impediment to conducting joint training in Japan with foreign forces is the absence of status of forces agreements. While a Reciprocal Access Agreement has been concluded in principle with Australia, the process has been slow. Work must be expedited, especially in view of the need to forge similar agreements with Britain and France, which are increasing their engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Legal frameworks are also needed to enable cross-decking and officer exchange on a larger, more expanded scale.**

The lack of a legal framework—such as a status of forces agreement—for joint training with the militaries of countries other than the United States is a serious shortcoming. This is because without legal guidelines, there will be a need to deal with accidents on an ad-hoc basis. Japan has signed an in-principle Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) with Australia and should seek similar accords with Britain and France, with whom joint training has increased in recent years, and potentially also with India and other partners in the future. This will place exchange with foreign militaries on a stronger legal footing.

Finalizing the Japan-Australia RAA has been a time-consuming process due to reasons on both sides, but the biggest hurdle has been a lack of understanding on its strategic importance in Japan. Political leadership from the prime minister on down is required, as is greater awareness of its necessity in the bureaucracy. Given the rising importance of joint training and maneuvers for Japan, it is in Japan's national interest to expedite the process of establishing legal frameworks for such activities.

Frameworks are also needed for cross-decking and officer exchange, which have proliferated in recent years among the major countries. To date, Japan's involvement in cross-decking has largely been limited to the landing of shipboard helicopters on the naval vessels of other countries, but the United States, Europe, and Australia regularly dispatch helicopters and related personnel for joint maneuvers to foreign ships for extended periods at a time. Such dispatches of equipment and personnel by Japan may not be feasible at present, but hosting foreign aircraft may be a realistic option. Cross-decking is seen on a large scale, for example, during the Pacific Partnership, a multinational preparedness mission led by the US Indo-Pacific Command. This allows countries that are unable to dispatch naval vessels on their own to take part, and offers Japan opportunities for fuller participation.

As for the exchange of officers, the mutual exchange of flag officers—often to serve as a deputy-commander—is an established practice among close allies, including the countries of Europe and between the United States, Britain, France, and Australia. Japan is not likely to embrace such a custom anytime soon, but it should start examining what challenges exist in dispatching high-ranking and other officers to the United States and perhaps other countries as well and how such issues may be overcome. This should start with an analysis of existing case studies—a task that will mean studying the latest forms of cooperation among the armed forces of leading countries.

(Michito Tsuruoka)

## Promote Civilian Control through Capacity Building Assistance

**Capacity building assistance is an important tool of defense diplomacy. As part of such support, the Ministry of Defense and SDF should offer educational programs in developing countries with fragile democratic institutions to raise awareness of civilian control among the members of the military, thereby contributing to the stability of the rules-based international order.**

Civilian control of the military is a cornerstone of the democratic system of government. Should a military turn against its civilian leaders and disregard the will of the people, the result will likely be regional instability and chaos, as was the case in Myanmar following the coup d'état of February 2021.

In the era of competition between political systems, a crisis in the democratic style of government could give authoritarian regimes like China room to exert their influence, further destabilizing the rules-based international order premised on the rule of law. This order is modeled on the democratic political system of the West, and any regression or stagnation of this system will weaken its appeal and, in turn, adversely affect Japan's security.

In Japan today, civilian control is internalized in the SDF both institutionally and operationally. That the general public feels a strong affinity toward the SDF is a testament to the merits of its education system aimed at creating a military that honors freedom and discipline and does not betray the trust of the people. This is a great achievement that Japan can share with developing countries as part of its capacity building assistance.

Japan's capacity building assistance had hitherto centered on technical items like disaster relief and maintenance, but it should henceforth include educational initiatives that lead to heightened awareness of civilian control in the recipient country's military. Potential channels for such activities include exchange programs with foreign militaries and receiving of foreign students.

The shape of civilian control is likely to vary from country to country, and such differences need to be respected, but the provision of technical assistance alone is unlikely to bolster feelings of affinity between the public and the military. There are certainly limits to what defense authorities can do to promote civilian control, inasmuch as it is a political matter involving all institutions of government, including the legislative branch. But there are also advantages that the SDF can tap, such as direct access to members of the military.

Such assistance has the added benefit of communicating the firmly established nature of civilian control to the Japanese public. It can be expected to promote regional stability and the rule of law, moreover, and is consistent with Japan's cooperation with Western countries to maintain and strengthen the liberal international order.

(Hideshi Tokuchi)

## Expand the Intellectual Foundation for Overseas Transfers of Defense Equipment

**To clearly position Japan's exports of defense equipment as part of its defense diplomacy and to globalize the country's defense industry in keeping with its diplomatic and security interests, a research institution should be established to monitor not only technological developments but also international trends in the defense market.**

The export of defense equipment not only results in economic benefits for the defense industry; it can also help build trust at high levels through the ancillary provision of training and technical cooperation. It could result in stronger political relations as well and is indispensable to Japan's efforts to advance defense diplomacy. The 2014 establishment of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology was expected to usher in a new era of arms exports. But to date, the only success in the area of finished defense products has been an August 2020 contract with the Philippines to deliver an air radar system.

Turning equipment exports into an instrument of defense diplomacy requires an industry-wide effort to market not only finished products but also a broad range of related components. Hints may be gleaned from the experience of South Korea, which has significantly boosted its exports of defense equipment since the 2000s. Contributing greatly to its enhanced competitiveness and expanded global sales was a concerted marketing push to trigger demand in other countries and a research infrastructure both in government and the private sector enabling close analysis of international defense market trends.

On April 27, 2021, members of the Integrated Innovation Strategy Council met at the Prime Minister's Office and reportedly agreed to create a think tank that would conduct research and analysis on ways to prevent the outflow of proprietary technology and ensure Japan's economic security. There is no question that such an organization is needed, but rather than narrowly focusing on safeguarding technology, attention should also be given to actively promoting exports of defense equipment—even if it includes highly sensitive technology—to trusted partners after establishing appropriate protection mechanisms. This would be consistent with current trends toward international joint development of military equipment. To globalize Japan's defense industry, a think tank should be established with not only a natural scientific understanding of technology but also a social scientific grasp of political and social conditions in countries around the world, thereby providing an intellectual foundation for national security.

(Kohtaro Ito)

## Create an Initiative to Systematically Advance Security Cooperation

**The strategic, active, and flexible implementation of defense diplomacy requires budgetary resources that the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces and the various divisions of the Ministry of Defense can draw on as needed. Japan should adopt an organized approach to defense diplomacy by creating an initiative similar to Australia's Defence Cooperation Program.**

Defense diplomacy takes many forms and involves a broad range of activities. For defense authorities, it consists mainly of policy dialogue and mutual visits and exchange, while military units typically engage in joint training and exercises, coordinated activities on international missions, and assistance for the forces of developing countries, such as capacity building and equipment transfer. The institutional and budgetary resources to support these activities, however, are inadequate. If Japan is to promote security cooperation, as called for by the National Defense Program Guidelines, and respond strategically to the increasing requirements of defense diplomacy, such resources need to be expanded in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Enhancing budgetary allocations, in particular, is a matter of great urgency. At present, nothing is earmarked for the Self-Defense Forces to conduct security cooperation. Apart from expenses for the joint training and exercises with US forces, which have long been part of SDF operations, the costs for the growing instances of exchange and collective action with foreign militaries have had to be secured on an ad hoc basis. While this allows for flexibility, it can hardly be called strategic, for it could adversely affect traditional operations. While allocations are available for capacity building assistance conducted by civilian bureaus, they cannot be utilized to procure equipment for use in seminar or other instructional settings, making their impact quite limited.

International security cooperation should be budgeted so that Japan may actively and flexibly implement defense diplomacy, particularly to advance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in such key areas of common concern as maritime security and the rule of law, working collaboratively with foreign militaries, assisting with education and training, and providing defense and related equipment. Japan would do well to model such an effort on Australia's Defence Cooperation Program (DCP). That country has a GDP that is just a fourth of Japan's and spends less than 70% on defense, but the DCP is allocated an annual budget of roughly 6 billion to 12 billion yen that is flexibly used to support mainly Southeast Asian and Pacific Island countries by furnishing newly built patrol boats and used aircraft and ships, as well as by offering training opportunities in Australia. Consideration should be given to creating and earmarking budgetary resources to a DCP-like initiative in Japan, under which security cooperation can be advanced in a systematic manner by the Ministry of Defense and the SDF.

(Ippeita Nishida)

## **Establish an Indo-Pacific Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats**

**Japan's Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs should spearhead an effort to establish an Indo-Pacific Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats as a multinational organization. By collecting and sharing information, conducting analysis and research, considering countermeasures, and supporting execution of exercises, the institute can actively promote a coordinated, regional response to this growing security threat.**

Ong Wei Chong, assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, described hybrid warfare and gray-zone conflicts as “multi-dimensional approaches that allow adversaries to achieve specific strategic objectives without resorting to overt conflict”. In the Indo-Pacific as well, such new threats are becoming a serious concern.

Hybrid actors seek to achieve their aims by simultaneously and adaptively employing a mix of military and nonmilitary methods—such as unmarked troops; cyber, electromagnetic, and space operations; trade, foreign aid, and other means of exerting economic pressure; and cognitive attacks like influencing operations and disinformation.

Traditional forms of defense diplomacy had consisted largely of activities like joint training that contribute directly to improved military capability or those designed to build trust and a stabler international security environment, including defense dialogue and military exchange. Due to the recent rise of hybrid threats, however, a third domain spanning both military and nonmilitary forms of interstate cooperation is becoming more important.

To actively advance defense diplomacy in this emerging domain, the Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs should partner with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region to establish a center to counter hybrid threats. The institute should invite government, military, academic, and think tank specialists, including from non-sponsoring countries, to (1) collect and share information, (2) conduct academic analysis and research, (3) jointly consider countermeasures, and (4) support exercises that can boost each country's response capacity. The center's effectiveness would be further enhanced by partnering with the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats established jointly by the EU, NATO, and a number of member-state governments.

(Goro Matsumura)



## Bolster Contributions to International Peace Cooperation

**Japan should expand its international peace cooperation as a means of elevating its international standing and maintaining the rule-based international order. To enhance the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, Japan should contribute in new ways, such as airlift support and the provision of related equipment to simultaneously strengthen bilateral and multilateral defense diplomacy.**

Participation in UN peacekeeping operations and other multinational security missions is a key component of defense diplomacy. The show of presence and the shouldering of requisite burdens can also help prevent regional conflicts that could adversely affect Japan's national interests and create a desirable security environment by elevating Japan's international standing and influence. Such missions will also provide valuable field experience for participating troops, access to overseas territories and defense-related information, and opportunities for collaboration with foreign forces.

The United Nations, in particular, is a body embodying a rule-based international order, and the discussions and resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly are directly linked to Japan's own security. At present, however, Japan's engagement in PKOs is limited to the dispatch of SDF personnel as staff officers at mission headquarters. Given the growing needs for contributions in such essential areas as transport, facilities, medical and C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance)—where Japan can offer quality support—new forms of assistance should actively be considered.

Airlift support for other countries' forces is one potential area. The Royal Australian Air Force, for instance, helps transport Vietnamese troops and equipment to PKO operations as part of its bilateral and multilateral defense engagement. Japan's Air Self-Defense Force aircraft are already registered to be used in enhancing the quick reaction capabilities of PKO missions, and they should be promptly deployed in providing air transport assistance from the Indo-Pacific region.

The United Nations has a framework for accepting contributions of defense-related equipment. Japan has a good supply of equipment relating to medical care, facilities, and transport, and it should actively provide them as part of its peace contribution and international cooperation efforts. Japan can also reinforce its bilateral and multilateral defense diplomacy by refurbishing decommissioned equipment to meet UN specifications and offering them to countries wishing to participate in peacekeeping missions.

Japan has been a leader in a UN capacity building project called the Triangular Partnership Program, contributing both financially and through the dispatch of instructors in the provision of professional training for foreign forces. Japan should consider increasing the number of recipient countries and coordinating such assistance with other forms of cooperation like airlift support and equipment transfers.

(Ippeita Nishida)







The Sasakawa Peace Foundation Bldg. 1-15-16  
Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8524, Japan  
Phone: +81-3-5157-5430 | URL: <https://www.spf.org/en>

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