

Transformation of Defense Capabilities

(Ministry of Defense briefing material)

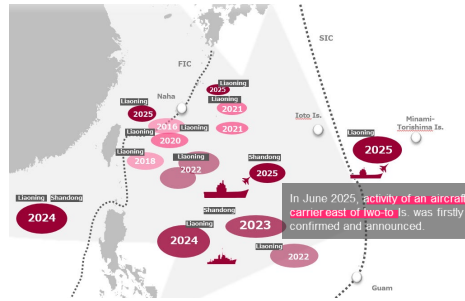
June 8, 2026

“New Ways of Warfare” and the Domestic and International Situations of Japan

- ◆ The security environment surrounding Japan is changing, with China in particular rapidly strengthening its military capabilities and swiftly expanding its activities.
- ◆ Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has been prolonged and has revealed new ways of warfare and challenges.
- ◆ Amid the decline in the population eligible for recruitment in Japanese society, a reduction in the number of SDF personnel is unavoidable in the mid- to long-term.

01 Changes in the Security Environment Surrounding Japan

- Challenges to the free and open international order based on the rule of law are becoming increasingly severe.
- China is broadly and rapidly strengthening its military capabilities and swiftly expanding and intensifying its activities, including in the Pacific.
- Military cooperation between China and Russia, as well as between Russia and North Korea, has been making significant progress.



02 Battlespace Awareness, Decision-Making, and Cognitive Warfare

- Collection of vast amounts of data through the networking of various assets
- Advanced data processing and analysis using AI, enabling accelerated decision-making
- Increasing sophistication of cognitive warfare

03 Mass Deployment of Drones and Countermeasures (*See also the following page)

- Large-scale attacks combining ballistic and cruise missiles with large numbers of drones
- Responses employing not only expensive interceptor missiles but also a range of air defense assets



04 Prolonged Warfare

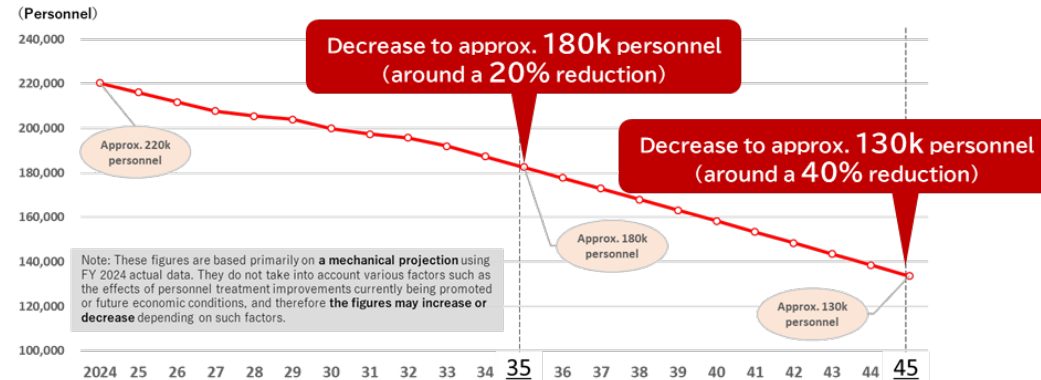
- A large amount of all types of equipment and ammunition are consumed, making the scale and capabilities of the defense industry all the more important.
- It is important to stockpile equipment and ammunition on a regular basis and develop a system to increase production in the event of war.

05 Population Decline

- As the number of applicants and recruits for the SDF decreases in line with the shrinking recruitment-eligible population, maintaining an organization of the current size becomes unrealistic in the mid- to long-term.

Projected Trends in Personnel Strength through 2045

(Automatic projection based on FY2024 actuals and population decline rates)



(Reference) Status of UAV Development in Surrounding Countries and Regions

- Led by **China**, countries and regions surrounding Japan are accelerating the development and acquisition of a wide variety of unmanned systems. These include **technologically advanced** platforms and systems **capable of long-range operations**. Alongside increased procurement, **expansion of production bases** is also accelerating.

China

- **A broad spectrum of unmanned systems is being developed**, ranging from small reconnaissance and loitering munitions to large UAVs capable of high-altitude, long-endurance operations.
- **Technologically advanced** unmanned systems - such as stealthy and electronic warfare-capable attack UAVs - are being developed and deployed.
- Development is underway for some of the world's largest **unmanned surface vessels**, as well as unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned ground systems such as tanks and self-propelled artillery. Mothership-type unmanned platforms capable of carrying and deploying small UAVs are also being developed.
- China is the world's largest producer of commercial UAVs, with a **strong dual-use production base shared between civilian and military sectors**.
- The Chinese military primarily employs UAVs for ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) and early warning. However, it has been pointed out that they may increasingly be used for **coordinated attacks with manned systems** and for **saturation attacks through swarm control of large numbers of low-cost small UAVs**.



North Korea

- Develops and possesses unmanned reconnaissance aircraft and attack UAVs.
- Recently, NK has also been placing emphasis on the development of loitering munitions, positioning the **utilization of unmanned systems** as a **top-priority issue** in adapting to "modern warfare."



(Reference: United States)

- Acquires **technologically advanced** unmanned systems for a wide range of missions, including intelligence gathering, strike, and operational support.
- In addition to major defense contractors, **startup companies** such as Anduril and Shield AI **participate in development and production**.
- The Secretary of the Army has announced plans to procure **at least one million unmanned systems within the next several years**.

Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

Three approaches to accomplish defense objectives

Strengthening Japan's own architecture for national defense

Reinforcing joint deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Reinforcing collaboration with like-minded countries and others

◆ In light of the “new ways of warfare” and the increasingly severe security environment, the following points must be considered.

01

Japan's Unique Response to the “New Ways of Warfare”

02

Ensuring Sustained Operational Capability

03

Further Enhancing Deterrence and Response Capabilities, Including Activities on Japan's Pacific Side

04

Strengthening the Deterrence and Response Capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance
Further Enhancing Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries

05

Strengthening Responses to Cognitive Warfare in Peacetime in Light of the Spread of Disinformation etc.

Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

01 Japan's Unique Response to the "New Ways of Warfare"

- In light of changes in the security environment surrounding Japan and its characteristics as a nation surrounded by the sea, it is necessary to **dramatically strengthen defense capabilities to enable asymmetric responses based on the following concepts and to build the ability to respond even in the event of an invasion by an adversary that may be superior in terms of "quantity."**

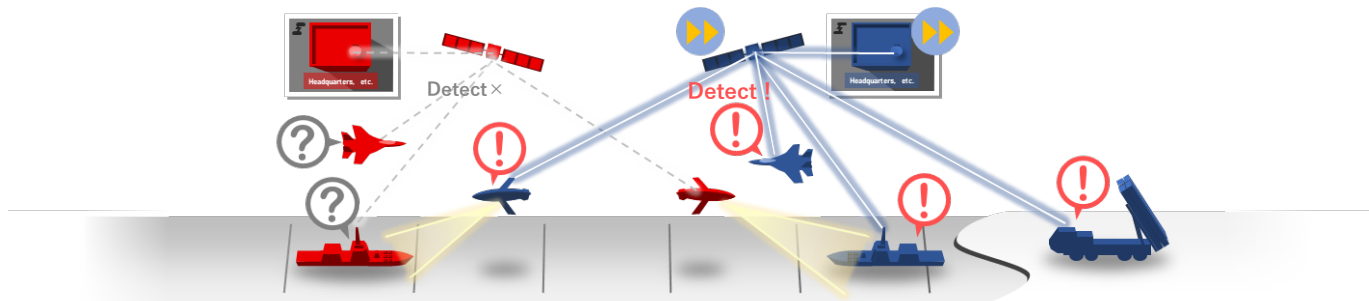
- ① Ensuring an environment in which the SDF can secure battlespace awareness and make decisions from a position of advantage
- ② Reducing the cost of defense against aerial threats
- ③ Imposing significant costs at sea by leveraging Japan's geographical advantages

①

Ensuring an environment in which the SDF can secure battlespace awareness and make decisions from a position of advantage

Creating a Situation in Which Decision-Making Is Faster and More Accurate than an Adversary

- By maintaining the ability to function across the space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains—through measures such as the development of resilient communications networks, including satellites—secure the command and control and communications infrastructure of the SDF.
- Through the development of data infrastructure, acceleration of data processing using AI, and enhancement of communications in terms of speed and capacity, realize real-time battlespace awareness and decision-making.
- By disrupting the adversary's command and control, and communications infrastructure, delay and confuse its decision making process.



Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

01

Japan's Unique Response to the "New Ways of Warfare"

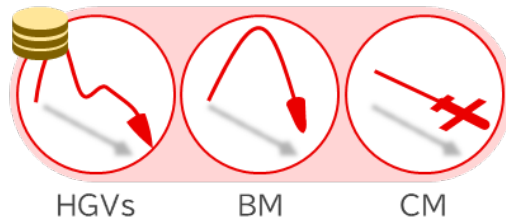
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Reducing the cost of defense against aerial threats

Creating a Situation that could Offset the Adversary's Quantitative Superiority

- Establishing a **multi-layered air defense posture** that combines interceptor missiles capable of countering high-end threats with **cost-effective intercept means**, such as lasers, capable of countering low-end threats
- Improving survivability by promoting **passive defense measures**, including dispersal, deployment of decoys, and enhancement of the resilience of facilities
- Deterring further attacks through **strengthening both the quality and quantity of counterstrike capabilities**, including the development of stand-off missiles and long-range unmanned systems that can be employed for counterstrikes and submarines equipped with vertical launching systems (VLS) as launch platforms

High-Cost Category



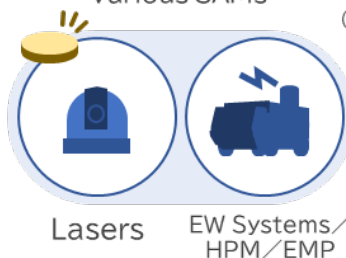
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Low-Cost Category



VS



Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

01

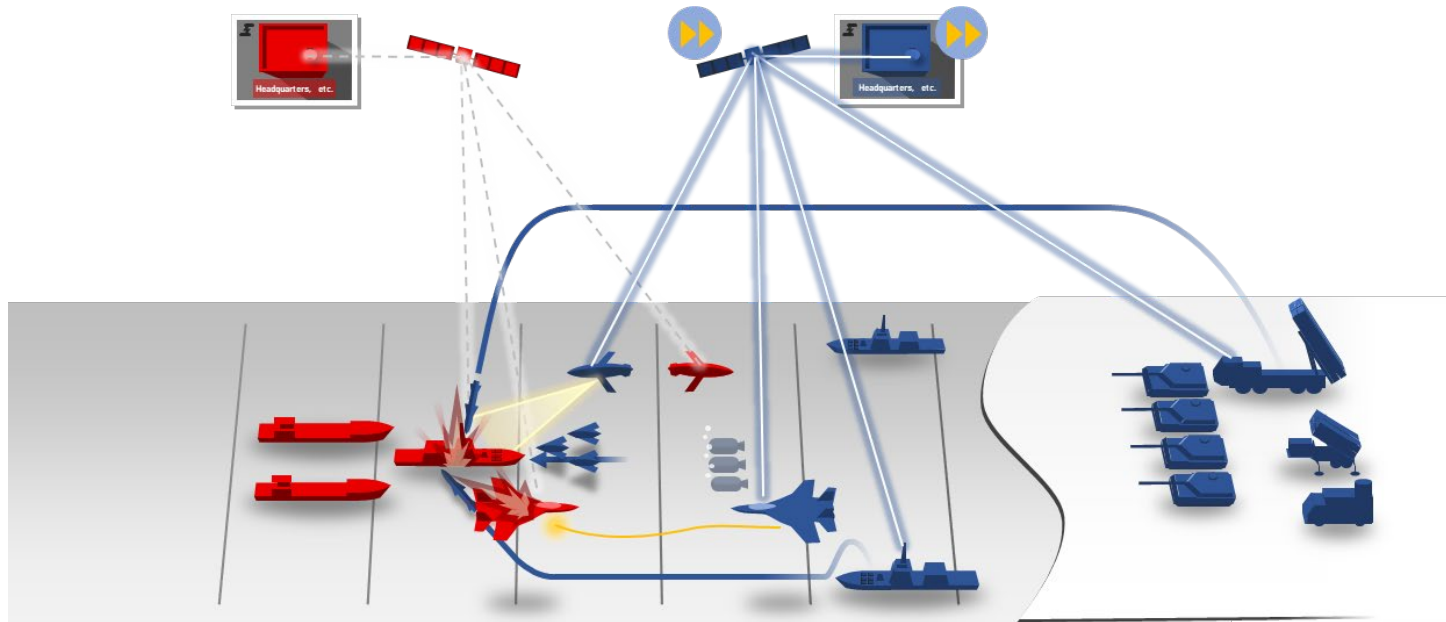
Japan's Unique Response to the "New Ways of Warfare"

3

Imposing significant costs at sea by leveraging Japan's geographical advantages

Leveraging geographical advantages as a maritime nation, and as an organization that values the lives of its personnel most in the world, impose significant costs at sea and in the air while limiting personnel attrition

- By further strengthening the capabilities required for the operation of **stand-off missiles** and enhancing **coordination with unmanned systems**, effectively block and eliminate maritime invasions at an early stage and from long range, from outside the adversary's sphere of threats.
- Within the adversary's sphere of threats, conduct operations in depth with **unmanned assets** - including underwater and surface - taking the lead across multiple domains, thereby imposing asymmetric costs on the adversary.



Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

02 Securing Sustained Operational Capability

- Drawing on the lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it is necessary to assume that once a contingency occurs, it is likely to continue for an extended period of time.
- Taking into account the time required for surge production at home and for assistance from allies and like-minded countries, it is essential to secure sustained operational capability in advance. (→ Cooperation with allies and like-minded countries is discussed later.)



Further Strengthening the Defense Production and Technological Base

- **Expanding state involvement, including public investment and government ownership of manufacturing facilities for critical equipment for which ensuring stable supply has become difficult**
- **Enhancing supply chain resilience through diversification of procurement sources, development of alternative materials and technologies, and stockpiling**
- **Promoting new market entry by startups and others**, and introducing more flexible contracting systems
- **Strengthening cooperation with national research institutes and universities to incorporate cutting-edge science and technology into defense systems**
- **Developing missiles and other systems using commercially available products, and strengthening supply capacity** to respond to increased demand (including maintenance and sustainment)
- **Strengthening production systems through the promotion of defense equipment transfers**



Enhancing the Resilience of the Operational Foundation

- **Improving the resilience of defense facilities (including relocating facilities underground) and dispersing critical functions**
- **Procuring and stockpiling munitions and other supplies capable of providing sustained and persistent protection of the nation and its people, among other measures**



Limiting Personnel Attrition

- **Further strengthening** stand-off defense capabilities and **unmanned defense capabilities**
- **Enhancement of medical functions**

Direction of Further Enhancement of Defense Production and Technology Base

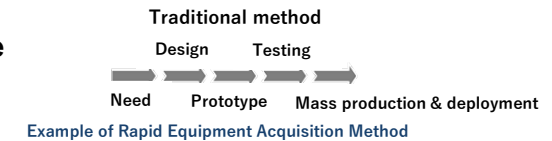
Efforts to Securing Production, Sustainment, and Maintenance Capabilities

Capable of **Providing Sustained and Persistent Protection of the Nation and its People**

- With a view to industry restructuring, the government will strengthen its direct involvement, including government investment and ownership of manufacturing facilities for critical defense equipment for which stable supply cannot be ensured due to limited commercial demand.
- Promoting investment to secure reserve production capacity, with a view to leveraging overseas defense demand and civilian demand.
- Strengthening supply chain resilience through diversifying procurement sources, developing alternative materials and technologies, stockpiling, increasing cooperation with allies and partners, and enhancing supply capacity for materials and components, including dual-use items.

Japan's Unique Response to the "New Ways of Warfare" (**Collaboration with Start-Ups (SU), National Research Institutes, Universities, and the Utilization of Dual-Use Technologies**)

- Promotion of market entry of start-ups with promising technologies through the expanded use of Fast Pass Procurement (Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), agile procurement, etc.)
- Development and production of missiles and unmanned systems through the extensive use of commercial off-the-shelf components
- Consideration of projects that set ambitious targets based on operational needs and span a wide range of activities from basic research to technology demonstration
- Consideration of establishing secure defense research infrastructure at national research institutes, universities, and other relevant entities in fields of particular importance to defense



Promotion of **Defense Equipment Transfer** to Enhance Regional Deterrence

- Further promoting defense equipment transfers in light of the revisions of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines, which in principle allow the transfer of all finished products
- Developing new systems to promote equipment transfers, including not only finished equipment but also materials and components
- Enhanced government involvement in transfers and hands-on support from contracting to implementation
- Diversifying support to partner governments

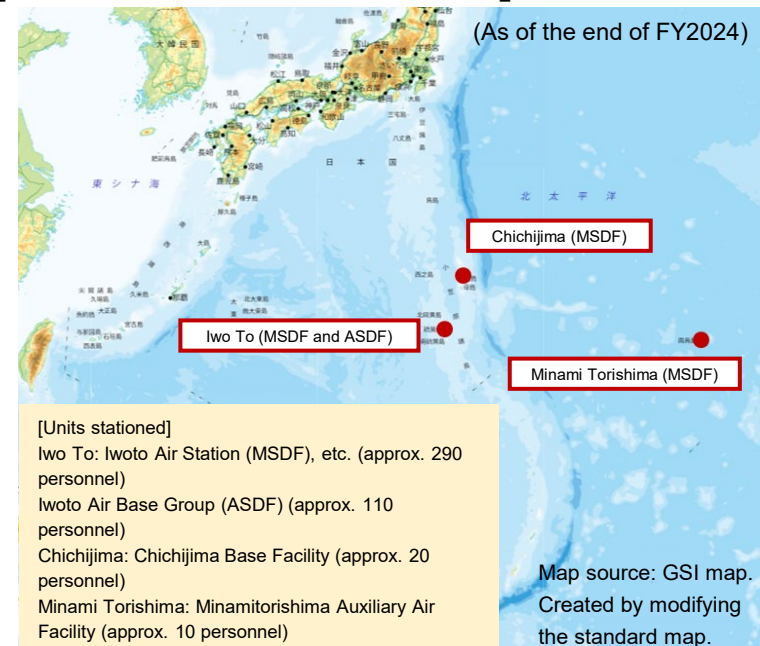
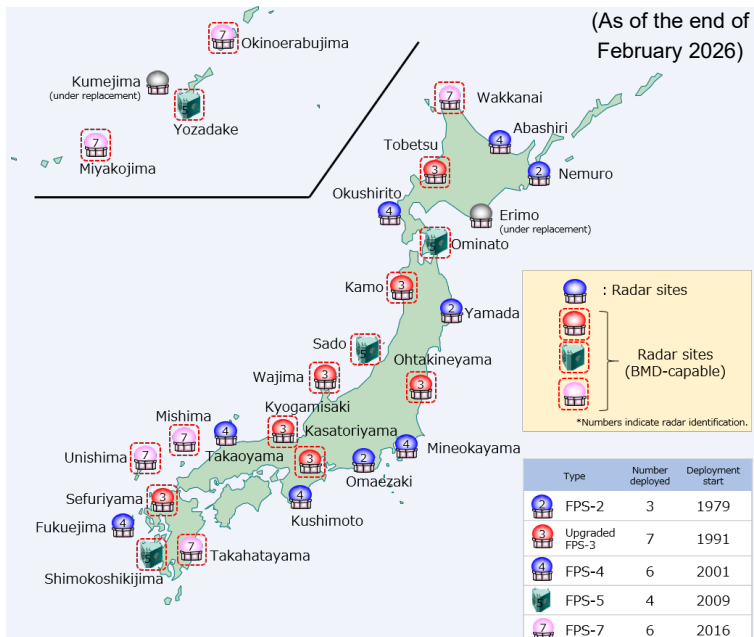


Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

03 Further Enhancing Deterrence and Response Capabilities, Including Activities on Japan's Pacific Side

- As a maritime nation surrounded by the sea, Japan relies on overseas imports via sea lanes for the vast majority of the raw materials that underpin food, clothing, and shelter. Ensuring the stable use of sea lanes as a whole is therefore indispensable, not only for the SDF but also for sustaining the daily lives of the population.
- Meanwhile, in recent years, military activities by neighboring countries on Japan's Pacific side have become increasingly active.
- At present, continuous and persistent airspace surveillance capabilities over the Pacific Ocean are insufficient, resulting in limitations in the information collection and warning and surveillance capabilities of the Ministry of Defense and the SDF.

Further Strengthening the Defense Posture on Japan's Pacific Side Is an Urgent Challenge [Deployment of warning and control radars] [SDF bases in the Pacific]



Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

04

Strengthening the Deterrence and Response Capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance



- In its National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS), the United States clearly states that the **defense of the U.S. Homeland** is the top priority. In the NDS, the United States calls for **detering China** in the Indo-Pacific by building a denial defense along the First Island Chain. The United States also **advocated burden-sharing** with allies and partners in **defense spending**.
Note: The NDS states that “[a]lready, President Trump has set a new global standard for defense spending at NATO’s Hague Summit - 3.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) on core military spending and an additional 1.5% on security-related spending, for a total of 5% of GDP. We will advocate that our allies and partners meet this standard around the world, not just in Europe.”
- In an increasingly severe security environment, the Japan-U.S. Alliance continues to be the **cornerstone of Japan’s national security policy**.
 - By strengthening **the deterrence and response capabilities of the Alliance**, Japan seeks to build a seamless defense posture, and enhance **effectiveness** in contingencies from peacetime.
 - Enhance the **“indispensability” of the Japan-U.S. Alliance** in all aspects for realizing the United States’ vital national interests. Based on the unwavering cooperative relationship between Japan and the United States, **ensure sustained U.S. engagement** necessary for **the defense of Japan and for the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region**.

Key Considerations for Future Direction

○ Accelerating the Modernization of the Alliance

Enhancement of command and control frameworks in line with the phased upgrade of U.S. Forces Japan

○ Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Alliance

Expansion of more realistic training (including in the southwestern region); extended deterrence; deployment of advanced and cutting-edge assets; joint use of facilities and areas

○ Strengthening the Alliance’s Activities and Foundations

Joint FDO (Flexible Deterrent Options); co-development and production of missiles and other systems; co-sustainment of vessels and aircraft; strengthening supply chain resilience; further strengthening coordination for activities between the SDF and U.S. forces

○ Strengthening Cooperation on Defense of Pacific Theater and Sea Lanes

Enhancing the Alliance’s intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and defense capabilities in the Pacific areas surrounding Japan

○ Further Strengthening Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries, Centered on the Japan-U.S. Alliance



Expansion of realistic training



Cooperation with like-minded countries, centered on the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

04 Further Enhancing Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries

- Collaboration with like-minded countries is identified as **one of the approaches for realizing Japan's defense objectives and has made considerable progress through bilateral and multilateral efforts**. Japan has also steadily concluded Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA), Reciprocal Access Agreements (RAA), Information Security Agreements (ISA), and Defense Equipment and Technology Transfer Agreements (ETTA), which are institutional foundations of defense cooperation and exchanges.

➤ “Multilayered web of interconnectivity” (2025 ADMM Plus)

Strengthen respective voluntary initiatives, and interconnect various areas of defense cooperation, such as joint exercises, people-to-people exchanges, capacity building, and defense equipment and technology collaboration, layer after layer, **creating strong synergies** to weave a **multilayered web of interconnectivity** across the region, thereby fostering a **flexible, resilient, and stable regional order**.

【Status of Major Security-Related Agreements】 * In addition to the below, Japan has also concluded ETAs with the United States, Sweden, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mongolia, and Bangladesh.

	AUS	UK	PHL	IDN	SGP	IND	FRA	GER	ITA	CAN	UKR	ROK	NZ	NATO
ISA	○	○				○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
ETTA	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○					
ACSA	○	○				○	○	○	○	○				
RAA	○	○	○											

- **In order to ensure that Japan is fully prepared for its own defense, including by securing a posture capable of providing sustained and persistent protection of the nation and its people, and to enhance deterrence in the region, it is necessary to advance collaboration with like-minded countries in a highly effective manner.**

E.g. 1: Support and cooperation from allies and like-minded countries during the aggression against Ukraine

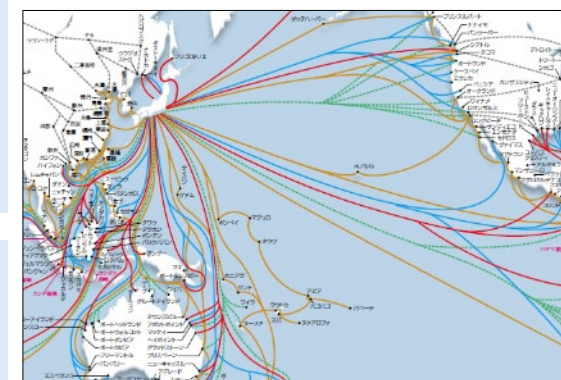
- In the event of a prolonged situation, **continued support from allies and like-minded countries and bilateral and multilateral initiatives to share the production and supply of defense equipment, as well as to secure common maintenance and logistics bases are important.**

Defense assets announced to be provided to Ukraine



【Maritime routes in the Pacific*】

*Source: “Japan’s Shipping: SHIPPING NOW 2025-2026,” ed. Japan Maritime Public Relations Center. The image has been partially modified for reference.



E.g. 2: Cooperation with allies and like-minded countries in sea lane defense

- In addition to ensuring the stable use of all sea lanes, maintaining conditions that allow civilian vessels to navigate safely, particularly in the Pacific, is indispensable not only for SDF operations but also for sustaining the daily lives of Japanese citizens.
- **Cooperation with allies and like-minded countries is essential to ensure the stable use of Japan's extensive sea lanes.**

Issues Requiring Consideration toward Defense Capability Transformation

05

Strengthening Responses to Cognitive Warfare in Peacetime, Including in Light of the Spread of Disinformation

【Current State of Cognitive Warfare (Examples from Cognitive Warfare in Russia's Aggression against Ukraine)】

【Russia】

- Use of fake accounts : Russia created sophisticated impersonation websites designed to resemble credible Western media outlets and disseminated fabricated articles through fake social media accounts.
- Use of fake videos, including deepfakes : The dissemination of a fabricated video showing President Zelenskyy calling for surrender

【Ukraine】

- Strategic Communications to Domestic and International Audiences : Ukraine established the Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security (SPRAVDI), which is responsible for monitoring disinformation, and has proactively conducted strategic communications. (Initiatives such as the rapid release of a video filmed by President Zelensky himself on the presidential compound to counter disinformation claiming that he had fled.)
- Support and Participation by Private Entities : Private companies and NGOs supported Ukraine through activities such as cyber defense and fact-checking.

【Approach to Cognitive Warfare (Future Direction)】

○ Strengthening Structures for Information Dissemination

- Enhance societal resilience against statements that undermine the reputation of Japan's activities, while **proactively and multilayeredly disseminating** the necessity and legitimacy of Japan's defense policies and initiatives **to domestic and international audiences** in coordination with the ally and like-minded countries on a regular basis in order to secure support from the international community.
- Prepare in advance for cognitive warfare, propaganda aimed at causing domestic unrest or weakening alliances, and the **spread of disinformation**, while **ensuring rapid response**.
- In coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, **strengthen the structures for cognitive warfare-related dissemination** necessary to realize these efforts.

○ Utilization of AI Across the Cycle from Information Collection to Information Dissemination

- Collect large volumes of open source information widely and efficiently from social media and other sources. (OSINT)
- **While appropriately incorporating the latest technologies and actively leveraging external expertise, utilize AI throughout the entire cycle from information collection to information dissemination.**