

The 2002 Defense Ministry White Paper: Full speed ahead to the national warfare state

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Former Defense Ministry analyst Maeda Hisao warns of the emergence of a national warfare state and the further decimation of the provisions of Japan's peace constitution. He targets for criticism two Koizumi administration documents: The Defense White Paper of summer 2002 and the War Contingency Bills currently tabled for debate in the legislature. Maeda critiques the transformation of Japan's "self-defense" policy into one of aggressive "pre-emptive defense" as its defense perimeter is extended far beyond the Japanese islands. In contrast to the careful legislative analysis of Maeda Tetsuo (also available at Japan Focus), this manifesto by a former military establishment insider offers a blunt criticism of Japanese leaders. While warning of the consequences of an aggressive Japanese defense posture, the author, like a number of other SDF insiders, is equally critical of the consequences of the usurpation of the autonomy of Japan's Self-Defense Forces, that is, its subordination to American global military designs. From Gunshuku (Disarmament) in November, 2002.

The second Defense White Paper (hereafter WP) of the Koizumi administration was announced at a cabinet meeting on 1 August. Originally scheduled for early July its appearance coincided with the end of the legislative term as the three bills known together as the "War Contingency Bills" were introduced; the debate has been postponed to a later session. This year's WP is in five parts with a budget, bibliography, and glossary. The chapters are as follows: 1) The International Military Situation 2) Our Country's Self-Defense Policy 3) National Sudden Response and Facilities of the US-Japan Alliance 4) Disaster Response and Contributions to a More Stable Environment and 5) The Populace and Self-Defense.

I. 9.11 and the War Against Terrorism

9.11 In Context This year's WP begins with last year's terrorist attack on the US. It describes the attack as an "unforgivable act of terrorism" and "a challenge to the democracy, peace, and freedom of the international

community, including our country." However, this statement is somewhat questionable since the attack clearly targeted the US, and the WP does not attempt to explain the rather vague concept of "international community" nor even question why the US might have been the target. The terminology simply mimics US policy statements, the logical conclusion being that any US military campaign is a "just war."

A Makeover of the US Afghan Campaign The WP blindly gilds the attack on Afghanistan as "led by cutting-edge military technology." The effectiveness of cruelly destructive weaponry such as "cluster bombs" and "daisy cutters" are highlighted in special descriptive columns, and the US military is further elevated for its "specially guided weapons that minimize civilian casualties," although all told the civilian casualties may outnumber those who died in the 9.11 attacks. Furthermore the first paragraph of the WP proudly puffs that Japan's own anti-terrorism legislation, applauded by Washington for allowing the dispatch of refueling ships [Translator's note: and currently the Aegis radar ship] to the Indian Ocean "was supported by the majority of the citizenry as a fulfillment of international responsibility." It is anathema to criticize the conflict as a US "dirty war."

II. The Military in the Asia Pacific Region

Unclear and Unresolved 9.11 notwithstanding, analysis in the present WP of regional affairs shows little change from last year's report, which is to say that the end of the Cold War has brought no change in security arrangements with large-scale military forces including nuclear armed contingents, remaining the order of the day. In addition, economic growth has led to increased defense expenditures and modernization of the military. Other countries in the region have given China special consideration as an economic and political super-power. The showdown between North and South Korea continues unabated despite the meeting between Secretary Kim Jong Il and President Kim Dae Jung, and closer to home Japan's competing claims with Russia over the islands north of Hokkaidō, Takejima/Dok-do islands with South Korea, and the Spratly Islands with China remain unresolved. In short, the region is anything but stable and there is a pressing need for peaceful resolution. In the worst-case scenario, full-scale war on the Korean peninsula remains a possibility.

Given this situation, the WP asserts, "The allied and friendly relations between Japan and the US are the basis for US military presence in the region that provides safety and stability." This statement is made without touching on the fact that since 9.11 the US has branded Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil" and maintains a posture that does not preclude pre-emptive strikes, opening the possibility for Japan to be drawn into a US-led conflict.

North Korea According to the WP, North Korea, in addition to developing and deploying weapons of mass destruction and guided missiles, maintains a 100,000-strong special-forces contingent active in all forms of activity from espionage and sabotage to guerilla warfare. Therefore, "DPRK action raises the level of military tension on the peninsula and is also the main agent of instability in the entire East Asian region." "The DPRK continues R&D on long-range missiles," the WP continues, and the Nodong, with a range of 1300 km capable of reaching Japanese territory, has already been perfected. There are also orders to deploy Taepodong #2 with a range of 3500-6000 km, greater than the 1500 km Taepodong #1 which over-flew northern Japan three years ago. A two-stage Taepodong #2 could reach Alaska and an improved three-stage version could also possibly reach the US mainland, the WP states ominously.

The Russian Far East "Since its peak period the number of Russian forces has been reduced substantially," with a scaling back of funding, training exercises, and the number of ground troops "limited to a special-response unit". The WP attributes these changes to the disarray and contraction of the Russian economy, a relaxation of military tension with the US, the reduced necessity of showing military strength in the Far East, and an easing of tensions with China. It concludes, "In the foreseeable future there is little possibility of the Russian Army returning to the posture of the Cold War Soviet era," but all the while contends, "There is still reason for caution." With ground troop deployments reduced from roughly 400,000 to 110,000, available naval detachments of 1,500,000 tons to 800,000 tons, and the air force reduced to one-third its former strength (2,000 to 680 aircraft), the WP sees the present Far Eastern Russian Army drastically reduced in strength compared with just ten years previous.

III. "The China Threat" Theory

Increased Defense Spending The WP suggests that Chinese defense spending has increased 10% a year in the 14 years since 1989 and this fiscal year shows a large 17.6% jump, but the budget figures made public by Beijing are only a small part of total expenditures for the armed forces. Additionally, the fiscal review reported in the National People's Congress notes increased expenditures for "modern technology, especially to strengthen high-tech defense capability."

Comparisons With Other Countries The WP provides statistics compiled by the UK International Institute for Strategic Studies entitled "Changes in Defense Spending". China's expenditure was \$41.2 billion, in fact 8% less than Japan's \$44.4 billion. Japan ranked third behind the US (\$294.7 billion) and Russia (\$58.8 billion). China was fourth, ahead of France (\$34.3 billion), the UK (\$33.9 billion), and Germany (\$28.2 billion).

Fear of the Modernization of the Chinese Military Concerning China's nuclear capability, in addition to the estimated 20 ICBMs concerning which last year's WP asserted "the whole of Asia including Japan falls within their range", are the medium-range missiles. Last year's figure of 100, disputed by China, has been updated to 130-150, plus an entry for the first time of 335 short-range missiles, suggesting a buildup in the Taiwan straits. The WP offers the following analysis concerning land, sea, and air power. Since 1985 with an eye on modernization there have been attempts to reduce manpower and to heighten the effectiveness of various systems, reorganize the infantry by uniting various units, and attempts to create quick-response special forces with great mobility. The navy has been transformed from a force to protect coastal areas to one that can protect coastal waters from long distance. In air power there has been concerted progress in the licensed production of Russian fighter planes, acquisition of in-flight re-fueling systems, an early-warning system, and guided missile system development.

Summarizing, the WP issues the following warning: Modernization of China's armed forces extends beyond defense. It portends a wider scale of action and bears close watch in the future. To my mind, however, this conclusion alludes to the sort of military view of the world that Japan has supposedly foresworn with its disavowal of war as an instrument of foreign policy.

IV. The Imperial Army Mentality of the Current Defense Ministry

Fantasies of victimhood in the name of peace and security Thus the WP offers the following conclusion: "To self-reliantly maintain our country's peace and independence in the present international milieu necessitates a defensive posture that assures response to all varieties of military action from nuclear devices to threats of invasion." However, in addition to being economically unfeasible, building such an infrastructure is not an appropriate political stance for Japan. I would emphasize that such statements must include the following: "A posture is required that meets our legitimate defense needs, one that is functional in light of the bilateral relationship with the US which possesses a huge military force and with whom we have deep economic ties, one that maintains our concerns for peace and stability in the region, and is grounded in democratic values that respect human rights and freedoms."

Viewing a world at war The WP, evoking images of "survival of the fittest," asserts that, given the opportunity, "evil invaders" are "prepared to pounce at any time." If this is the world view of the defense establishment, Japan would necessarily have to become a heavily armed and fortified country. "The last line of a country's stability is its defensive capability, and nothing else can take over this function"; "defense capability" should be read as "military power." One would think that the lesson learned from defeat in the last war is that a country that becomes lost in its own prioritization of military power can only bring harm to its citizenry.

Japan and the US as different countries To go on about how Japan and the US "have the same values" smacks of fantasy. While both spout similar phrases of "freedom, democracy, and human rights" they pursue these ideals in entirely different ways. What characterizes the US approach is the view that these ideals, under the auspices of American power, are fundamentally for the greater good and must be pressed upon other countries. Japan has, on the basis of its constitution, renounced war and armed conflict and the possession of a military force. The US on the other hand, to fulfill its ambitions, boasts the most powerful military force in the world and can use nuclear weapons at a whim. It is a country that still defends the justice of the atomic attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and proclaims the Vietnam War a "just war." Can we say that it has "the same values" as Japan? Our country will surely encounter danger if we ally too closely.

V. Toward the "Warfare State"

The US-Japan Security Pact (AMPO) as the core of the problem. The WP declares that Japan and the US "both are committed to working together to maintain the peace and stability of the Far East." It is talk that does not appear to be borne out in current circumstances. To that end, the US has employed arms to control the region, inspiring China, the DPRK, and Russia to defend their own interests, making a kind of military diplomacy the order of the day. Entering into an alliance with such a country will mean being embroiled in possible conflagration. Japan has come to be targeted by Chinese and DPRK missiles because this country provides a foothold for the US in the region and is the whipping boy for the support it provides.

The regional situation and collective self-defense Japan continues to draw itself deeper into US global military stratagems. The so-called "New Guidelines" for "US-Japan Defense Cooperation" in 1997 dictated "military cooperation to meet situations in the region", a change from the old 1978 agreement mandating cooperation only if Japan itself were attacked. The New Guidelines establish the parameters of Japan's cooperation were the US to launch an attack from Japan. They provide the basis for the three pieces of legislation known as the "Regional Security Preservation Law" passed in May 1999. But "regional"

remains undefined. Neither is clarification offered for "situations that strongly influence the peace and stability of the territory of our country." And yet it is taken as a given that the SDF will support foreign armies throughout the region whereas previously self-defense justified its existence. Therefore we don't know to what extent the "support" concept will be applied. Although support will ostensibly be limited to "non-combat zones", under present wartime conditions there is little differentiation between "front lines" and "rear support." Without a doubt the real meaning of "collective self-defense" is that Japan will support US troops throughout the region beyond Japan even when the country itself is not under attack.

In a statement following the 9.11 attack, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro stated that the government "was singularly committed to and aware that fighting terrorism is the preservation of peace for our country," and introduced an anti-terrorism bill in October 2001 that became law that month. A provision provided the condition that Self-Defense Forces "would not enter combat areas, nor was there any fear of doing so." Following the US lead, however, material support has been dispatched to the Indian Ocean.

VI. The Unconstitutionality of the War Contingency Bills

In April 2002 the Administration submitted three pieces of legislation to the Diet - "Emergency Legislation to Deal With Military Attacks from Abroad", "The Self-Defense Revision Law", and "The Security Council Revision Law" - which taken together constitute the War Contingency Bills. These laws are destined to transform Japan into a country that participates in war. Since the Constitution lays down the three great basic laws, the renunciation of war, the refusal to take part in combat, and the refusal to bear arms, the three bills are unconstitutional.

"Emergency Legislation to Deal With Military Attacks from Abroad" If they became law, new conditions would be created allowing the SDF to be deployed in a military situation; that is, not only if Japan itself were attacked, but if there existed "the fear of attack", and even "a situation in which the conditions for an attack are seen to be likely." However, according to the government's explanation, "an armed attack from abroad" is not only a direct attack on Japanese territory but also an attack on SDF stationed abroad. In short, this law and the "Special Anti-Terrorism Law" passed last year would free the SDF to engage in combat when stationed abroad.

SDF Revision Clause 103 of the Self-Defense Law passed in 1954 provides wide authority to the SDF to conscript and use people, materiel, and land during mobilization "in the course of effectively and smoothly fulfilling its mission". In reality regulations for the procurement of civilian resources during wartime have until now been so vague as to practically render the law impractical. The revision, in addition to clarifying the wording, creates special measures

that would force any government office or agency to meet the demands of the SDF (see below). If it became law the freedoms, rights, and products of citizens would be transgressed by the SDF.

Related legislation Passage of the above legislation would also result in the establishment of a system to broadcast warnings and issue evacuation instructions; "Citizen Protections Laws" designed to minimize the influences on the economy and livelihood of the citizenry; detentions; use of radio waves; and regulations of sea and air transport that would ease restrictions on movement for both the SDF and US forces.

The footsteps of war are nigh War could come to Japan at any time were this legislation to pass, and the possibility will not diminish as long as US forces are stationed in Japan.

Major Points of the War Contingency Bills

I. "Emergency Legislation to Deal With Military Attacks from Abroad"

An act of armed aggression is defined as an attack from any country, the fear that such an attack may occur, or a situation in which an attack is likely to occur

"The rights and freedoms of the citizenry guaranteed by the Constitution" can be limited as necessary

The Prime Minister can order regional authorities or public organs to take appropriate actions

The public organs subject to this authority are: Bank of Japan, Japan Red Cross, NHK, and all other public organizations including electricity, gas, transport, and broadcasting

After passage within two years the following bills would also be implemented: measures for evacuation and casualty management of citizens; SDF use of radio airwave

communications; provisions easing movement restrictions of the US military in Japan

II. "The Security Council Revision Law"

The Prime Minister could convene a special panel to deal with any military situation

The above panel would allow for the special attendance of cabinet officials in addition to elected Diet members

A special committee of military affairs experts would be established

III. "The Self-Defense Revision Law"

The SDF can take possession of privately-held properties

Existing structures on the property can be re-located

In the event of construction of military facilities, to assure security the use of weapons will be permitted as necessary

Anyone found to be illegally storing fuel or provisions will be liable to prison sentences not to exceed six months and/or fines not to exceed 300,000 yen

Individuals employed in the medical profession, construction or land management industries, or transport can by prefectural authority be ordered to render service

During SDF mobilization to facilitate its mission the following special measures will be enacted: 1) Infrastructure and transport to aid the movement of troops, 2) Measures pertaining to forests, docks, and land use to secure property, 3) Construction and fire prevention for the building of facilities, 4) Medicine and narcotics for health and hygiene, 5) grave sites and funeral services for the handling of the war dead.

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