

# Japan bolsters its military capacity

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## **Japan to bolster warning system to defy China**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japan will strengthen its surveillance and warning capabilities with new aircraft to cope with China's growing assertiveness at sea and in airspace, and drop the word "modest" to describe the country's defense power in upcoming defense program guidelines, government sources said Wednesday.

In a clear departure from Japan's defense policy since 1995, the move highlights Tokyo's vigilance against China, as well as North Korea's missile and nuclear development programs, the sources added.

The government eyes Cabinet approval next Tuesday of medium and longer-term defense program guidelines as well as the country's first overarching security strategy.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is trying to redefine the country's defense posture, especially as China continues to send patrol ships and aircraft to the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. China claims the uninhabited islets and calls them Diaoyu.

The expected change of expression in the guidelines also comes as Abe aims to enable Japan's Self-Defense Forces to play greater security roles.

To achieve "modest" defense forces, past defense program guidelines have said since 1995 that Japan's defense policy is designed exclusively for defense purposes, and put under civilian control.

The past guidelines have also made it clear that the country will not become a military power and uphold the three non-nuclear principles — not possessing, producing or allowing the presence of nuclear weapons.

These principles will be retained under the new guidelines, but Japan will aim for more effective and integrated defense forces, according to the government sources.

Speaking at a meeting of security experts at the prime minister's office, Abe said the new defense program guidelines will be a "historic document" to shape Japan's security strategy.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei called on Japan to pay heed to concerns of

its Asian neighbors.

“China is closely watching Japan’s security strategy,” Hong told a regular press conference. “Japan’s hyping of the so-called China threat theory has ulterior political motives.”

China’s recent declaration of a new air defense identification zone added to bilateral tensions, stoking fears of contingencies, as Tokyo and Washington criticized Beijing for its unilateral move to change the status quo.

To beef up the lineup of defense equipment, Japan will introduce early-warning aircraft, airborne warning and control systems, and surveillance drones, according to an outline of the medium-term defense program for the five years from next April.

The medium-term program focuses on China, as the government plans to reorganize and increase troops at the Air Self-Defense Force’s Naha Air Base to protect the Nansei Islands including the Senkakus.

The outline says the SDF will have an amphibious unit to protect remote islands from attacks, and new brigades within the Ground Self-Defense Force.

To speed up the troops’ mobility, Japan will also introduce aircraft capable of short takeoff and vertical landing, having the U.S. military Osprey transport aircraft in mind.

In Wednesday’s meeting at the prime minister’s office, the government panel appointed by Abe approved the basic outline of Japan’s new security strategy that will serve as the basis for policy making in diplomacy and defense by the newly launched National Security Council.

The draft security strategy warns against China’s lack of transparency in its rapid and extending military buildup, and its attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas. It cites as examples Beijing’s intrusions into areas around the Senkakus and its declaration of the air defense zone.

Japan needs to deal with China’s moves “in a resolute and calm manner,” while seeking to build relations that are mutually beneficial, the draft strategy says.

**Kyodo News**, December 12, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131212p2g00m0dm045000c.html>

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## **Japan set to expand midterm defense outlays after 2 terms of cut**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — The Japanese government is planning to set aggregate spending under the next five-year Mid-term Defense Program from fiscal 2014 to around 24.4 trillion yen (\$238 billion), marking the first increase following the two consecutive periods of cuts, government sources said.

Given increasing activities by the Chinese military in the East China Sea and North Korea’s nuclear and missile development programs, the government believes it necessary to beef up defense, the sources said.

Officials from the Defense and Finance ministries have been working out details before the Cabinet decides on the plan on Tuesday.

The midterm budget guideline peaked at 25.16 trillion yen in the period from fiscal 2001 and was cut in the following two terms.

After taking power last year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided to scrap the program for the last period from fiscal 2011, which was devised by the Democratic Party of Japan.

**Kyodo News**, December 12, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131212p2g00m0dm046000c.html>

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### **Govt to procure drones for 1<sup>st</sup> time**

The government plans to procure three unmanned surveillance drones for the first time for the Air Self-Defense Force amid growing airspace tensions after China's claim of an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea, officials said.

The plan was included in a medium-term defense buildup program over the five years from fiscal 2014, officials said Friday. The government plans to adopt the program at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

The Defense Ministry is considering procuring three U.S.-made Global Hawk drones, the officials said.

It is also looking at the introduction of three new aerial refueling planes in a bid to expand the range of scrambled fighter jets.

Furthermore, the ministry plans to introduce three small high-speed destroyers for the Maritime Self-Defense Force to prepare for activities in shallow seas around remote islands.

To be better prepared for North Korea's ballistic missile launches, the ministry will build two new Aegis destroyers, equipped with missile defense systems, and five new submarines.

Also under the midterm plan, the Ground Self-Defense Force will newly deploy 99 combat vehicles with high maneuverability and 52 amphibious vehicles to prepare for missions to recapture remote islands occupied by enemies.

It will introduce 17 tilt-rotor transport aircraft, likely to be the U.S. Marine Corps's MV-22 Osprey.

The government plans to allocate ¥24.67 trillion for the medium-term defense program.

**Jiji Press**, December 14, 2013

<http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0000870565>

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## **SDF allowed to carry wider range of arms abroad**

The government decided Friday to allow Self-Defense Forces personnel engaging in emergency ground transportation of Japanese nationals abroad to carry a wider range of arms than previously permitted.

The move came after the Diet passed a bill earlier this month to allow the SDF to use ground vehicles to transport Japanese during emergencies abroad, in addition to aircraft and ships. The legislative action followed the death of 10 Japanese people during a hostage crisis in Algeria in January. Previously, the arms that SDF members could carry overseas were limited to pistols, rifles and machine guns under a cabinet decision made in 1999.

At a Cabinet meeting Friday, the government abolished the 1999 decision.

Instead, the government decided to allow SDF members engaging in such ground transportation to carry the arms necessary and appropriate to protect people they transport as well as themselves. Such ground transportation carries greater risks, the government said.

The decision means that SDF troops will be able to choose arms depending on the security situation in countries where they will be dispatched. The use of arms will remain limited to self-defense and emergency escape.

Recoilless guns are on the list of permitted arms, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said at a press conference, referring to the weapon that the Ground SDF brought into Iraq during reconstruction support there.

**Jiji Press**, November 30, 2013

<http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0000834345>

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## **Japan eyes deployment of 300 high-speed wheeled combat vehicles**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japan plans to include the deployment of 300 high-speed maneuver combat vehicles armed with cannons in its new defense program guidelines to bolster defense capabilities around the Senkaku Islands and other islets in Okinawa near China and Taiwan, a government source said Thursday.

The vehicles can be sent to remote islands by air as they weigh less than conventional tanks. They have wheels just like cars and can travel at a maximum speed of 100 kilometers per hour.

The Ground Self-Defense Force is likely to start using the vehicles from fiscal 2016 following trials, the source said. A prototype of the vehicle, now being developed by the Defense Ministry and the Self-Defense Forces, was unveiled in October.

With the deployment of the new vehicles, the GSDF plans to reduce the number of its tanks from the current 740 to 300 over the next decade starting fiscal 2014, according to the source.

The Cabinet is expected to approve the revised guidelines, a pointer to the country's longer-term defense policy, in mid-December.

Japan is also considering introducing high-speed small escort ships to counter the threat of sea mines and submarines, the source said.

The cost of building such a ship — the U.S. Navy's littoral combat ship — is estimated at 60 billion yen apiece. The LCS features advanced telecommunications and stealth capabilities.

Also going to the guidelines is an increase in the number of Aegis destroyers capable of intercepting ballistic missiles to eight from six at present.

**Kyodo News**, November 22, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131122p2g00m0dm042000c.html>

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