



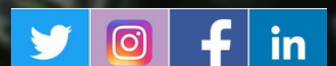
CENJOWS

ISSUE BRIEF

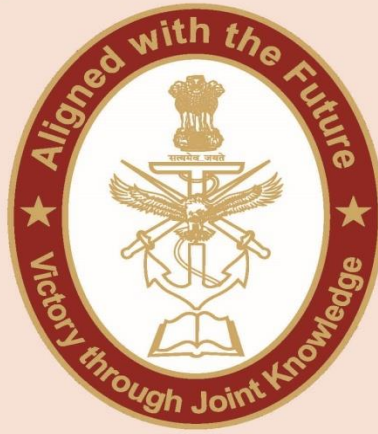
# EVOLUTION OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENCE FORCES (JSDF): LESSONS FOR INDIA

MS SHREYA MAMGAIN

[www.cenjows.in](http://www.cenjows.in)



# CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



## CENJOWS

### EVOLUTION OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENCE FORCES(JSDF): LESSONS FOR INDIA



Ms Shreya Mamgain, is a Research Intern CENJOWS, New Delhi.

#### Abstract

The JSDF or the Japanese Self Defense Forces can trace their evolution from the time of the 1868 Meiji Restoration<sup>1</sup>, when for the first time a modern military based on the model of the west was established<sup>2</sup>. Over the course of a long period, the Japanese military grew in power and was able to defeat its most powerful neighbours-China and Russia in two wars from 1894-1895 and 1904-1905 respectively. However, following its defeat in the Second World War the role of military in Japan was changed to self-defense. This essay attempts to understand the evolution of the JSDF and the lessons India can draw from it.

**Keywords-** JSDF, Meiji Restoration, Bakufu, Daimyō<sup>3</sup>, Article 9, SCAP, NPR, SDF, GSDF, MSDF, ASDF, MOD, UNPKO.

<sup>1</sup> It is an important historical event that overthrew the traditional Tokugawa Shogunate (Bakufu) and reinstated the Japanese Emperor on the throne. This event also marked the “Opening of Japan” to the Foreign Powers such as the United States of America.

<sup>2</sup> In the initial stages of the decline of the Bakufu, the Shogunate as a result of the reports regarding the Anglo-French attack on Peking in 1860 as well as the growing concerns over Russian probes in the Tsushima Island established arsenals to manufacture bronze canon, ordered a steam-driven warship from Holland, imported tens and thousands of small arms and sought western-primarily French military and technical experts to organise its forces into a modern army and navy. This is similar to the Princely State of Mysore under Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan using French Support to modernise their army against the growing threat by the British in the Indian Sub-continent.

<sup>3</sup> Daimyō were Feudal Lords who ruled most of Japan from their vast hereditary land holdings/Hans. They were subordinate to the Tokugawa Shogun and the Emperor. Some of the most famous Zaibatsu Companies such as Mitsubishi can trace their origins to powerful Daimyōs such as the Tosa (Present-day Southern part of the Island of Shikoku).

## Introduction

The history of modern Japanese military as we know it can be traced to the developments that took place from the late 1800s, when the Meiji Oligarchy (also known as Hambatsu) brought in sweeping changes in order to build a stronger and richer nation<sup>4</sup>.

Initially an ad hoc confederation, the army in Japan soon became the single most powerful institution. Its leaders wrestled with describing the army's role in the newly unified nation, defining its mission and defining its values<sup>5</sup>.

Subsequently, with Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the structure of the military changed to cater to the 1947 Constitution that "prohibits the maintenance of land, sea and air force, as well as other war potential for all time"<sup>6</sup>. However, in 1950 the SCAP pushed for Japan to have its Paramilitary National Police Reserve which paved the way for the National Safety Agency in 1952 and later establishment of the Japanese Self Defense Force in 1954<sup>7</sup>.

Since the Post-war period, the JSDF has played an important role as a quasi-military force in Japan. This paper aims to look at the evolution of the JSDF and the lessons India can draw from it.

## Historical Beginnings (1868-1945)



**FIG.1-** Untitled Drawing by Kuniyoshi Utagawa, 1855. (Image Taken From- <https://www.thecollector.com/oda-nobunaga-japanese-warfare/>)

The creation of an armed force on the lines of a European model in Japan can be traced to the developments that led to the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Prior to the Meiji Restoration there were attempts to modernize the traditional armies of daimyōs by providing weapons made in the west. For instance, Oda Nobunaga<sup>8</sup> was the first in Japan to introduce firearms, particularly the matchlocks and the harquebus, of which the latter is believed to have been brought to Japan by Portuguese traders in 1543. He is also credited with the import of saltpeter to produce gunpowder and the

establishment of manufacturing centers for artillery, ammunition, and cannons. While cannons were already in use amongst pirates, Nobunaga was the first to transition to

<sup>4</sup> The slogan used was Fukoku Kyōhei which means "Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Armed Forces".

<sup>5</sup> Edward J. Drea, 2009. Japan's Imperial Army: It's Rise and Fall, 1853-1945. United States of America: University Press of Kansas.

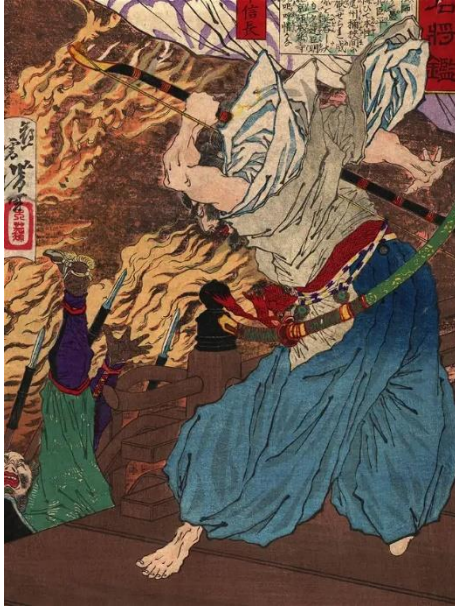
<sup>6</sup> James H. Buck, Vol. 7, No. 9, September 1967. "The Japanese Self-Defense Forces." Asian Survey pp. 597-613.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Goto-Jones. 2009. Modern Japan: A very Short Introduction. United States of America: Oxford University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Oda Nobunaga is one of the most important daimyōs in Japan during the Sengoku period/Warring States Period (that took place between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) and is considered as the "Great Unifier of Japan".

using them on land. He was also the first to use them on a large scale for both offense and defense<sup>9</sup>.

However, with the closure of Japan's borders to the west (with the exception of the Dutch who were allowed to take up residence in the tiny outpost of Dejima, in the Nagasaki harbour), all the attempts to westernise the army almost stopped.



**FIG.2-** Oda Nobunaga's Last Stand by Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (Taiso), 1878. [Image Taken from- <https://www.thecollector.com/oda-nobunaga-japanese-warfare/>]

With the forced “opening” of Japan following the threat by Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States of America in 1853, the Bakufu was overthrown. The Coronation of Crown Prince Mutsuhito (also known as Meiji) as the emperor led to many new advances one of which was the development of modern armed forces.

The Japanese army was transformed from an ad hoc confederation to the single most powerful institution. This situation persisted till 1945 when Japan was defeated in the Second World War.

### **Post-World War Two Situation & The Creation Of The JSDF**

Following its defeat in the Second World War, the Allied powers attempted to demilitarise Japan via the formalisation of the 1947 Constitution containing the **Article 9** which states- “Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice & order, the Japanese People forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized<sup>10</sup>.”

In 1950, General MacArthur, Supreme Commander of Allied Power (SCAP) ordered Japan to organise the NPR(National Police Reserve)- a 75,000 man paramilitary organisation that would assure Japan's internal security and to replace the U.S. Occupation Army that had moved to Korea to repel the North Korean army's aggression. In 1952, Japan gained its sovereignty following which the security treaty between Japan and the US took effect. It was in this year that the NPR was reorganised into a National Safety Force with a 110,000 manforce and a sea component was added<sup>11</sup>. In 1954, the Defense Agency Establishment Law and the Self-Defense Forces Law created the present triservice SDF(Self Defense Force) and

<sup>9</sup> Taken from: How Did Oda Nobunaga Change Japanese Warfare? by Andria Pressel for thecollector.com, published on 3 October 2021- <https://www.thecollector.com/oda-nobunaga-japanese-warfare/>.

<sup>10</sup> James H. Buck, Fall 1981, Vol. 8, Issue 1. "Japan's Defense Policy." Armed Forces & Society pp.79-98.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 80.

explicitly charged the force to defend Japan against any form of direct or indirect aggression<sup>12</sup>.

The policies in Japan have been guided primarily by Basic Policies for National Defense that were approved by the Cabinet in 1957 and were carried out in a series of what were called “Buildup Plans”<sup>13</sup>. These Basic Policies state the primary aim of the national defense is the deterrence of direct or indirect aggression. These policies and plans were based on the government’s perception of Article 9. The government has stated continuously that the Japanese masses desire peace. The Article 9 of the Constitution enshrines pacifism and prescribes the renunciation of war, the prohibition of war potential and the denial of the right of belligerency of the state. Japan’s status as an independent nation means that these provisions do not deny its inherent right of self-defense as a sovereign state.

Therefore, the Government interprets this Article as the constitutional right to possess a minimum armed force. Hence, Japan under its Constitution, maintains the SDF as an armed organisation; holding its exclusively defense-oriented policy as its basic strategy of defense, continuing to keep the force equipped and ready for operations<sup>14</sup>.

The Basic Policy<sup>15</sup> that has been used to govern the decisions of the Ministry of Defense/MOD and the SDF encompasses-

1. **Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy-** This means that the SDF is used only in the event of an attack, meaning that the extent of the use of defensive force and its capacity is kept to the minimum which is necessary for self-defense. This policy includes a passive defense strategy in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution.
2. **Not Becoming a Military Power-** In terms of an established definition there is none with regards to the concept of a military power. However, Japan aims to ensure that it does not become a military power which will threaten other nation-states. Hence, it would not possess and maintain military capabilities strong enough to pose a threat to other countries, beyond the minimum necessary for self-defense.
3. **Non-Nuclear Principles-** Japan follows a Three Principles Non-Nuclear Policy. These policies include: not possessing nuclear weapons, not producing them, and not allowing them to be brought into Japan. Japan adheres to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as a fixed line of national policy. As a Non-Nuclear state that is a party to the NPT(Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), it has an obligation not to manufacture and acquire nuclear weapons.
4. **Securing Civilian Control-**Civilian control refers to democratic political control of the military. Japan has adopted this principle since the end of the Second World War. The policy of Civilian control aims to ensure that the SDF is maintained and operated in accordance with the will of the people. A salient feature of this policy is the role played by the Diet, which represents the Japanese people and makes legislative as well as the budgetary decisions on matters such as the allotted number of the SDF personnel and main organisations of the MOD/SDF. The Diet also issues approval for defense

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> DEFENSE OF JAPAN 2020, Published by the Ministry of Defense, Japan, pp. 200.

<sup>15</sup> DEFENSE OF JAPAN 2020, Published by the Ministry of Defense, Japan, pp. 202-203.

operations of the SDF. According to the Constitution, the Prime Minister as well as the other Ministers of State, who constitute the Cabinet have to be Civilians. Thus, the civilian control system is a well established one. However, in order to ensure that the system achieves the desired results, it becomes imperative to continue making practical efforts in both political and administrative aspects along with a deep interest in national defense taken by the people.

Over time, the SDF apart from ensuring the safety and security of its nation has made contributions in other spheres.

One such area is PeaceKeeping. After the enactment of the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations or the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Act<sup>16</sup>. This law allowed the Japanese state to send its personnel from the SDF to UN Peacekeeping Operations/UNPKO. Japan's first substantial participation in a UN peacekeeping operation was in 1989. During this operation, 27 electoral observers were dispatched to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia<sup>17</sup>. However, most of Japan's contributions to the UNPKO has been either financial in nature<sup>18</sup> or in kind<sup>19</sup>. Some other examples of such engagement include- the dispatch of the SDF to South Sudan as a part of PeaceKeeping efforts which was primarily in engineering activities in the capital Juba and the surrounding areas; while coordinating with international organisations, troops from other countries, NGOs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>20</sup>.



**FIG.3-** Constructing a simple footbridge for an elementary school in Juba. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].



**FIG.4-** Water provision activities for IDPs. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].

<sup>16</sup> Hiromi Nagata Fujishige, Yuji Uesugi, Tomoaki Honda. 2020. Japan's Peacekeeping at a Crossroad: Taking a robust stance or remaining hesitant? Palgrave Macmillian.

<sup>17</sup> Taken from: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph2005.html>.

<sup>18</sup> According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, for the three-year period from 2022 to 2024, Japan's Peacekeeping Operations contribution rate is 8.0330%, making it the third largest financial contributor after the United States (26.9493%) and China (18.6857%).

<sup>19</sup> Japan has provided for instance, refugee relief materials such as tents and blankets for Kosovar refugees and Timorese displaced persons in 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Taken from: We are Tomodachi, Spring/Summer 2014- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html).



**FIG.4-** Medical support at the SDF temporary aid station. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].

The SDF has been dispatched across the world to provide relief when Natural Disasters have caused havoc. Two examples that are highlighted here include the dispatch of the SDF to Nepal when the deadly 2015 Earthquake struck. The Japanese government dispatched the SDF as a Japan Disaster Relief (JDR)<sup>21</sup> Team to Nepal as well as a medical team<sup>22</sup>. The organisation of the Philippines International Disaster Relief Team following the Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines in November 2013 at the request of the government of the Philippines<sup>23</sup>. The team provided medical assistance, air support unit, maritime dispatched group, and airlift unit engaged in the disaster relief activities that include medical assistance, epidemic prevention and transport of relief supplies<sup>24</sup>.



**FIG.5-** Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) lands in Tacloban City, Leyte Island to carry out epidemic prevention activities. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].



**FIG.6-** The SDF unit carrying out epidemic prevention activities in Tacloban City, Leyte Island. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].

<sup>21</sup> Taken from-[https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000740.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000740.html).

<sup>22</sup> Taken from-[https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000743.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000743.html).

<sup>23</sup> Taken from: We are Tomodachi, Spring/Summer 2014- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html).

<sup>24</sup> Taken from: We are Tomodachi, Spring/Summer 2014- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html).



**FIG.7-** The medical assistance unit conducting medical assistances in the affected area. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- [https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international\\_contributions\\_of\\_apan.html](https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2014/spring-summer2014/international_contributions_of_apan.html)].

Thus, SDF's role has grown to include other aspects of security and defense.

### **Growing Threats & Responses By Japan**

With the growing number of threats across East Asia, various changes have been brought in the SDF. According to the contents of Japan's Defense Capability<sup>25</sup>, in order to fulfil the role of defense capabilities, the various components of the SDF-Ground Self-Defense Force/GSDF, Maritime Self-Defense Force/MSDF and Air Self-Defense Force/ASDF will maintain the following capabilities:

#### **GSDF**

- In order to be capable of rapid and effective systematic defense operations from the outset of aggression in any part of Japan, GSDF must deploy its divisions and brigades in a balanced manner that conforms to Japan's geographical and other characteristics.
- Possession of at least one unit of functional various types of forces used mainly for mobile operations.
- The possession of ground-to-air missile units capable of undertaking the air defense of divisions and other units, as well as vital areas is a must.
- In order to maintain a high level of proficiency and to rapidly counter aggressions and other situations, staff its units with regular Self-Defense Personnel in principle. Some of the units may be staffed by SDF Reserve personnel that are capable of being mobilized quickly.

#### **MSDF**

- Possession of one fleet escort force as a mobile operating ship unit for quick response to aggressive action at sea is a must. The fleet escort force must maintain at least one escort flotilla on alert at all times.
- MSDF must possess ship units assigned for coastal surveillance and defense as well as at least one escort ship division in each specified sea district.
- Maintenance of submarine units is a must as is the upkeep of patrol helicopter and minesweeping units in order to provide for capability for surveillance and defense missions and minesweeping at important harbors and straits.

<sup>25</sup> Taken from: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/security/defense96/contents.html>.



- Maintenance of fixed-wing patrol aircraft units to provide capabilities for surveillance, patrol and other operations in nearby seas.

## ASDF

- Possession of aircraft control and warning units capable of vigilance and surveillance throughout the Japanese airspace on a continuous basis. These units should also perform warning and control functions.
- Control of fighter units and ground-to-air missile units for air defence. These units would provide for the capability of maintaining a continuous alert and take appropriate steps immediately against violations of Japan's territorial airspace and air incursions.
- For the ASDF, the acquisition of units capable of engaging in the interdiction of airborne or amphibious landing invasions and air support for land forces is imperative.
- Units capable of effective operational support that includes- air reconnaissance, air transportation and other operations are crucial for the ASDF to possess.

The structure of command of the JSDF is reflective of their awareness of addressing the threats Japan faces<sup>26</sup>.

With the changes to the security situation across the world in recent times, we are seeing uncertainties with regards to the existing world order in terms of militaristic, political, and economic inter-state competition growing at a rapid speed. The growing technological progress has accentuated security concerns in the newly emerging domains of space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum. As a result, these domains have become increasingly important. New and innovative technologies such as AI/Artificial Intelligence, Hypersonic and High-Power energy technologies can drastically change the conduct of future warfare.<sup>27</sup>

Currently, no single country can face the changing nature of threats and new forms of security challenges head-on. Hence, the use of secure and stable new domains of technology such as space and cyberspace is needed to ensure the security of maritime traffic as well as to respond in an efficient manner to the proliferation of WMDs/Weapons of Mass Destruction and International Terrorism<sup>28</sup>. Following the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>29</sup> the growing threat of CBRN was also prioritised by most nations across the world.

Japan faces many threats- some old and some new in these times of growing uncertainties.

China, for instance, aims to build a “world-class military” by the mid-21st century. Over the course of time, its defense budget has been increased and has engaged in the rapid improvement of its military power in qualitative and quantitative terms with focus on nuclear, missile, naval and air forces. For building a “world-class military”, China is enabling “intelligentised warfare” through the use of technologies such as AI and the

---

<sup>26</sup> The structure is presented towards the end of the essay as a part of the Appendix.

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Defense, Japan. 2020. 2020: Defense of Japan-Defense White Paper Digest. Ministry of Defense, Japan.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Defense, Japan. 2020. 2020: Defense of Japan-Defense White Paper Digest. Ministry of Defense, Japan.

<sup>29</sup> The JSDF posted videos providing awareness about the pandemic.

advancement of the national strategy of Civil-Military Fusion (CMF) development strategies which aim towards acceleration of two-way transfer of military and civilian resources<sup>30</sup>.

The growing partnership between Russia and China is a huge cause of concern for Japan. The two countries have participated in military drills together. For example, the Chinese and Russian warships conducted joint exercises that circled around Japan in October 2021. They have also participated in joint bomber flights and joint warship sails and portray such cooperation as a form of “Strategic Cooperation”.

Apart from this partnership, Russia as a part of its “Strong State” model has been accelerating the production and deployment of new weaponry such as hypersonic cruise missile (Zircon) as well as the improvement of asymmetric warfare capabilities through electronic warfare (EW) equipment<sup>31</sup>.

North Korea’s constant development of its missile technology is another major threat. It is believed that it possesses capabilities to attack Japan with ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons. A series of ballistic missiles with irregular trajectories and missiles that are called “hypersonic missiles” have been launched while the country has been diversifying its capabilities to include rail-launched and submarine-launched missiles. It is also thought that North Korea is focusing on improving its capacity to breach missile defense networks<sup>32</sup>.

These developments have been a source of constant concern to Japan and the JSDF<sup>33</sup>. In order to address these threats, Japan and the SDF have been responded in the following ways-

1. The Defense Buildup Program/ Medium Term Defense Program lists seven areas to focus for the upgradation of JSDF capabilities which include- StandOff Defense, Integrated Air & Missile Defense, Unmanned Defense, Cross Domain Operations, Command & Control Intelligence, Mobile Deployment & Civil Protection as well as Sustainability & Resiliency.
2. The Defense Buildup Program (which is a part of the Defense-Related Expenditures), in sync with the “National Defense Strategy,” wants Japan to fundamentally reinforce its “Multi-Domain Defense Force”. This should be achieved through synergy of organically integrated capabilities including space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains and is capable of sustained conduct of flexible and strategic activities spanning from peacetime to armed contingencies, focusing on the capabilities of its opponents and new ways of warfare. By Financial Year 2027, Japan will reinforce its defense capabilities in a manner such that it is able to take the primary responsibility for dealing with any form of invasion and disruptions while gaining support of its ally and other nations<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Defense, 2022: Defense of Japan Booklet-Defense White Paper Digest 2022

<sup>31</sup> 2020: Defense of Japan-Defense White Paper Digest, 2020, Ministry of Defense, Japan.

<sup>32</sup> 2022: Defense of Japan Booklet-Defense White Paper Digest, 2022, Ministry of Defense, Japan.

<sup>33</sup> These threats are also discussed briefly in a video issued by the JSDF -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG7cuS5ZLZ8>.

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Defense, Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: “First Year” Budget for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities-Overview of FY2023 Budget 2023

3. In order to fight the growing threats in a timely manner, Japan prepared the FY2022 annual budget and the FY2021 supplementary budget together as one integrated “Defense-Strengthening Acceleration Package.” In addition to this, in order to secure greater technological superiority over its adversaries, Japan has significantly increased investment in potentially game-changing technologies and has increased the expenditure on Research & Development/R&D to a record high level<sup>35</sup>.
4. The MOD is believed to be planning to set out guidelines for defense technologies that the country will prioritize for development, citing a dozen areas including innovations in miniaturized robotic technology<sup>36</sup>. It is believed that these guidelines are intended to encourage increased cooperation between government agencies, private players and research institutions in order to develop key defense technologies over the next decade as a part of the efforts to counter Chinese and Russian state-of-the-art weaponry.
5. The ASDF has also begun to expand its operations in space in order to protect Japan’s satellites which have become increasingly important tools for its security strategy from “junk,” “killers” and “stalkers.”<sup>37</sup> However, these attempts go back to 2020, when Defense Minister Kōno Tarō, announced the launch of Japan’s first space operations unit within ASDF to monitor threats to Japanese satellites in outer space. The aim of the MOD has since then been to establish a space monitoring system in collaboration with Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the U.S. forces.
6. Japan-US Cooperation in defense has strengthened in recent years. Following the 2015 reinterpretation of the Constitution by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the JSDF was allowed to defend Japan’s allies though in limited capacity. The two nations have since then also worked on the development of ballistic-missile technology and are committed to work together to improve space, cyber, and maritime awareness capabilities and deepen the science and technological cooperation by focusing on defense applications of unmanned systems and AI<sup>38</sup>. As recent as January 2023, the two countries have unveiled plans to strengthen their security cooperation due to the growing Chinese threat. For instance, NASA’s plans to sign a cooperation deal with Japan<sup>39</sup>.
7. The MSDF and JCG/Japan Coast Guard carried out a joint drill<sup>40</sup> that was based on a manual on procedures for the defense minister to take control of the JCG

---

<sup>35</sup> Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: “First Year” Budget for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities-Overview of FY2023 Budget 2023 by the Ministry of Defense Japan

<sup>36</sup> As reported in news outlets such as the Mainichi Shimbun-  
<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230617/p2g/00m/0na/045000c>.

<sup>37</sup> As reported in news outlets such as the Asahi Shimbun-<https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14937301>.

<sup>38</sup> Lindsay Maizland and Nathanael Cheng, 2021. The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance. November 4. Accessed July 4, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-japan-security-alliance#chapter-title-0-3>.

<sup>39</sup> Taken From- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/12/us-japan-agree-to-strengthen-security-ties-amid-china-worries>

<sup>40</sup> As reported in news outlets such as the Mainichi Shimbun-  
<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230623/p2g/00m/0na/016000c>.

in the event of an emergency in the month of June 2023. The manual was released earlier this year and aims to provide procedures for the defense minister to take command of the JCG if Japan is attacked by a foreign country.

8. Some of the areas (Main Programs) wherein the MOD would like to put in attention as a part of its 2023 budget include-strengthening interception assets like Aegis System Equipped Vessel (ASEV) and strengthening of Sensor Networks where in focus would be on reinforcement of warning and control capabilities, procurement of Early Warning Aircraft (E-2D) and the procurement of Mobile Warning and Control radars (TPS-102A)<sup>41</sup>.
9. Unmanned Defense Capabilities are being given importance in the 2023 Defense Budget. The primary focus is on strengthening Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting (ISRT) Functions<sup>42</sup>.



**FIG.8-** A conceptual image of Unmanned assets that the JSDF is planning to acquire. [IMAGE TAKEN FROM- Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: “First Year” Budget for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities- Overview of FY2023 Budget 2023 by the Ministry of Defense Japan, page 16].

Apart from these efforts, it is apparent that national defense of Japan cannot be achieved without an overall national defense architecture that integrates all aspects of Japan’s diplomatic, intelligence, economic and technological policies as well as by systematically combining all of the above-mentioned policies<sup>43</sup>. A huge emphasis is therefore, placed on<sup>44</sup>:

- Strengthening the US-Japan alliance, enhancing deterrence and response capabilities that include nuclear, information security, cyber security. Simultaneously, there would be implementation of realignment and relocation of US forces in Japan.
- Promotion of Free Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) through cooperation with others actors such as Quad and Japan-US Alliance which includes the expansion as well as improvement of free and fair economic zones, maritime security, connectivity and diplomatic engagements.
- Normalisation of relations with China, North Korea, Russia and conclusion of peace agreements where required.

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Defense, Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: “First Year” Budget for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities-Overview of FY2023 Budget 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> National Defense Strategy [Provisional Translation] published on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

<sup>44</sup> National Security Strategy [Provisional Translation] published on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

- Strengthening efforts for arms control, disarmament and Non-Proliferation<sup>45</sup>.
- Promotion of measures against terrorism, information collection & sharing.
- Strengthening of Defence Architecture and ensuring the ability to respond to new ways of warfare such as standoff and counter strike capabilities to deter invasion.
- Improvement of mobility, securing ammunition and fuel and hardening of defense facilities.
- Upgradation of defence production and technology bases as well the promotion of public-private sector participation and promotion of technology transfer.
- Thus, we see that the JSDF's response to the newly emerging as well as traditional is in the form of technology leveraging, organisational as well as policy changes and is underwritten by requisite a budgetary support.

### **Lessons for India**

As seen from the above-mentioned points, the way forward for the JSDF is through development as well as the procurement of latest technological innovations in order to defend Japan from any perceived threats. The ability of the JSDF to master technology and innovation is a result of the historical decision taken by the Meiji oligarchy to imitate the western industrialization at a large scale as well as to develop new technologies indigenously as means of survival of their nation<sup>46</sup>. An aspect that has helped the JSDF is its organisational structure and the cooperation between all the components which also include elements such as the JCG.

The role played by the Joint Staff is crucial in this aspect. The Joint Staff is in charge of all matters related to the GSDF, ASDF and MSDF<sup>47</sup>. These matters include-

1. Defence and Security Planning which also includes training policies and plans for the smooth execution of the Joint Operation missions.
2. Action plan.
3. Education and Training, Organisation, Equipment, Deployment, Accounting, Acquisition, Logistics, Health and Hygiene, and Human Resource Planning and Execution needed for the execution of the aforementioned Plan.
4. Research and Investigation for efficient operation of the services required that relate to the above articles.
5. Management of affairs for the forces and coordination of the operations needed for the execution of the services in charge.
6. Matters related to services in charge, execution of policy and plan set by the Minister of Defense.
7. Liaison and adjustment is needed for the execution of affairs relating to services.
8. Miscellaneous items ordered by the Minister of Defense.

---

<sup>45</sup> Japan has undertaken various measures for the same. These include 2000 NPT Review Conference, Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Taken from- [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pamph2000\\_archive/arms.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pamph2000_archive/arms.html).

<sup>46</sup> Martin E. Weinstein, November 1994, Vol. 53, No. 4. "Book Review- "Rich Nation, Strong Army: National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan by Richard J. Samuels." The Journal of Asian Studies , pp. 1278-1279.

<sup>47</sup> Taken From: <https://www.mod.go.jp/js/jurisdiction/index-en.html>.

In recent times, with the changing nature and growing numbers of threats the usage of technology has become imperative. The greater emphasis on use of technology by the SDF like the usage of UAV. As has been reported, SDF has thinking of using such vehicles especially drones to intercept that intrude on Japan's airspace<sup>48</sup>. The opening of units that are dedicated for Spacial as well as Cyber<sup>49</sup> Securities is also a move towards providing better and overarching protection to Japan and its citizens.

The methods used by the JSDF to respond to the newly emerging as well as the older threats, provide India with important lessons. For instance, the MOD's insistence on growing cooperation between the JSDF and JAXA can be used by India as well to ensure cooperation between our armed forces and our space agencies. Also, the greater cooperation between the different wings of the SDF as well as other agencies such as JCG means that threats can be dealt in more effective manner. The recent changes made such as the creation of manual that includes procedures for the defense minister to take command of the JCG if the country is attacked by a foreign country. These changes can be used as important teaching moments for India.

Currently India and Japan have agreed to diversify their defence cooperation in new and emerging areas such as cyber and space as a part of consolidation of the overall strategic engagement. This decision has been taken in the seventh edition of India-Japan Defence Policy Dialogue that took place in Delhi on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. During these dialogues, India also invited Japanese defence industries to look at investment opportunities in India under the 'Make in India' initiative<sup>50</sup>.

Apart from the above mentioned dialogue, there are service exchanges as well as Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation through Joint Working Group on Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation (JWG-DETC) and High-Level visits<sup>51</sup>. For the survival of any nation, development of new technologies is a necessity. This has been well displayed by Japan throughout its history especially by the JSDF. JSDF's strides to ensure the safety of Japan can be used as important lessons by India's Armed Forces.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The paper is author's individual scholastic articulation and does not necessarily reflect the views of CENJOWS. The author certifies that the article is original in content, unpublished and it has not been submitted for publication/ web upload elsewhere and that the facts and figures quoted are duly referenced, as needed and are believed to be correct.

---

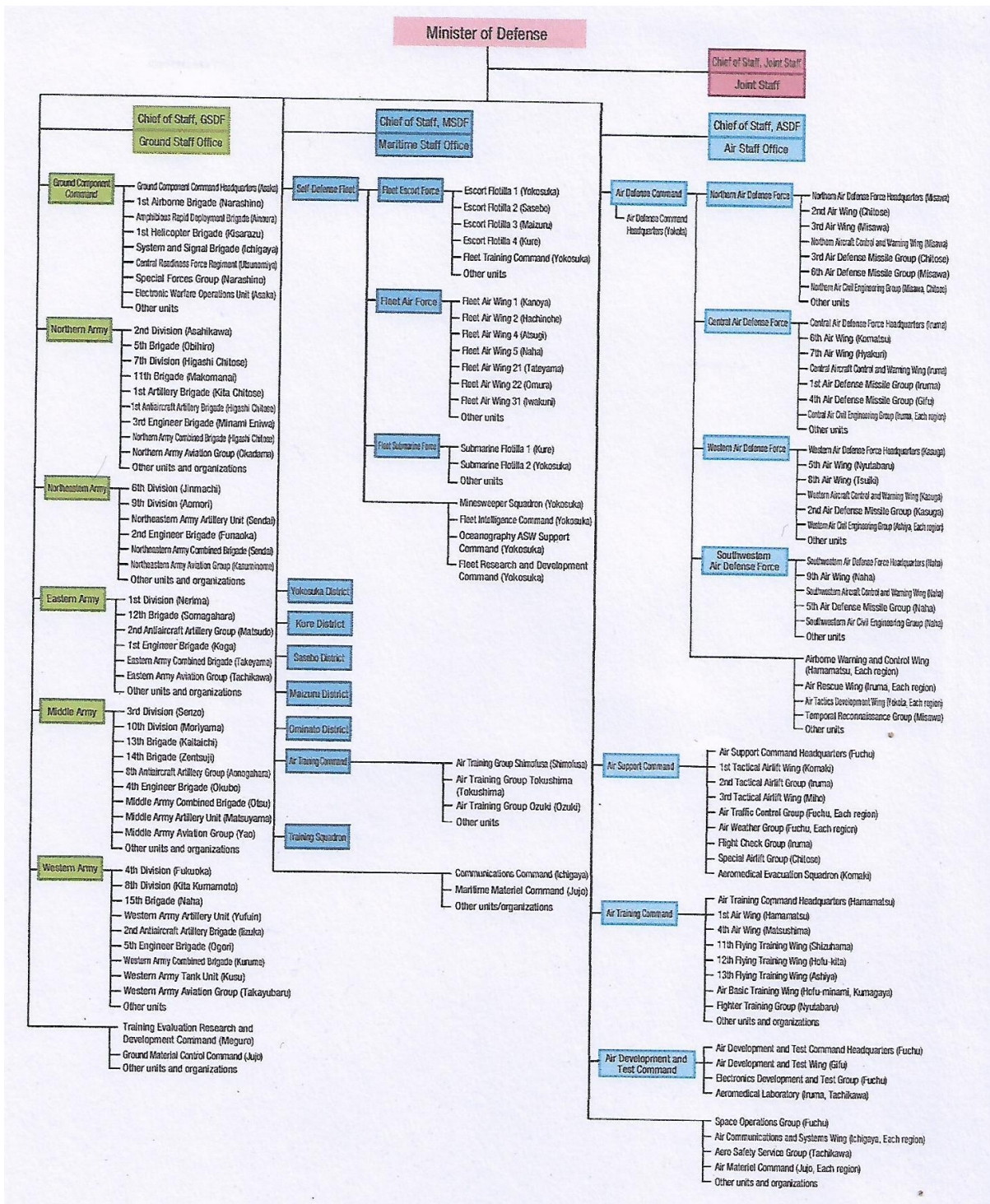
<sup>48</sup> Taken From: <https://asiatimes.com/2023/03/japan-mulls-drones-to-deter-rising-chinese-intrusions/>.

<sup>49</sup> Taken From: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/03/17/national/sdf-cyberdefense-unit/>.

<sup>50</sup> As reported in News Outlets such as The Hindu and NewsonAIR-  
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-japan-agree-to-diversify-defence-cooperation-in-new-emerging-domains/article66702780.ece> and <https://newsonair.com/2023/04/05/the-7th-india-japan-defence-policy-dialogue-held-in-new-delhi-both-nations-agreed-to-further-enhance-bilateral-cooperation/>

<sup>51</sup> Taken From: [https://www.indembassy-tokyo.gov.in/eoityo\\_pages/NzE](https://www.indembassy-tokyo.gov.in/eoityo_pages/NzE),

**Appendix: Organisational Diagram Of SDF**



(TAKEN FROM-2022: Defense of Japan Booklet-Defense White Paper Digest, 2022, Ministry of Defense, Japan)