

JAPAN'S SELF DEFENSE FORCES

ADMIRAL ISHIKAWA CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT STAFF COUNCILS



The post 9-11 period has been one of tremendous change globally and this is particularly so in Japan where the government and the Self Defense Forces have taken extraordinary measures to permit Japan to make a contribution to the war against terror. Linked to this is the complex issue of post-war Iraq and how to support that country on its road to democracy. Further complicating the issue for Japan, is the increased contribution to peacekeeping operations at various places throughout the globe and the need for internal restructuring of Japan's Self Defense Forces. Before his recent retirement as Canada's Defence Attaché in Japan, Capt(N) B.R. Brown interviewed the Chairman of Japan's Joint Staff Council, Admiral Ishikawa, about his plan of action.

Units of the MSDF (Maritime Self Defense Force) were dispatched to the Indian Ocean so that the SDF (Self Defense Forces) could provide rear support in the fight against terror. Could you tell us how things have developed so far, Admiral Ishikawa?

The destroyers Kongo and Ariake as well as the support vessel Hamana are currently in the northern Indian Ocean providing cooperative support based on the *Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law*.

Between December 2, 2001 and Jun 30, 2003, they conducted 265 fuellings supplying approximately 312,000 kilolitres of ship fuel to navy vessels of the USA, the UK, France, New Zealand, Italy, Holland, Canada, Greece, and Spain. On February 21, 2002, they transported goods for US vessels. To help prepare US military (Air Force) bases in Afghanistan in February and March of this year, MSDF transport and other vessels carried heavy construction equipment belonging to the Thai Army



JAPAN DEFENSE AGENCY

January 03 –
Admiral Ishikawa
inspects Honour Guard.

Engineering Corps to intermediary ports on the Indian Ocean coast between Thailand and Afghanistan.

Minesweeper tenders and other ships transported tents, blankets, and other items to Pakistan in November and December of 2001 in response to a request from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as refugee relief under the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law.

We believe that these activities have great significance for Japan in that they demonstrate Japan's awareness that the fight against international terrorism is Japan's problem too. They also show that Japan stands ready to make its own active contribution to the international community's efforts to prevent and eradicate international terrorism.

Can we expect some kind of change or expansion of the contribution the SDF is making in the region?

The current SDF actions in the region are based on the *Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law*, which came into force November 2, 2001 (and has just been extended to November 2005). Its aim is for Japan to make its own active contribution to international efforts to prevent and eradicate international terrorism and help secure peace and security for the international community of which Japan is a part.

So as long as they continue to be in accord with those aims, the MSDF's activities in the Indian Ocean will continue as Japan's own active contribution to the international efforts.

Recent events suggesting that North Korea may have acquired nuclear weapons and the means of sending them long distances are fuelling great apprehension. What is the SDF doing in response to improve its surveillance and ballistic missile defense capabilities?

We are very aware that a thorough assessment of the ballistic missile threat, system components, technical capabilities, and other factors involved must be made from a wide-ranging and comprehensive point of view. From 1995 to 2001 we examined the technological limits of our BMD system with the cooperation of the United



PHOTO BY MCPL FRANK HUDEC, CANADIAN FORCES COMBAT CAMERA

April, 2003 – Gulf of Oman, Arabian Gulf Region. A crew member of the destroyer HMCS IROQUOIS watches a replenishment at sea (RAS) with the Japanese tanker JDS Tokiwa in the Gulf of Oman. HMCS IROQUOIS is the flagship for coalition Task Force 151 which is responsible for escorting ships, intercepting and boarding suspect vessels and guarding against attacks on shipping, in support of Operation Apollo, Canada's contribution to the international campaign against terrorism.

States in an exercise entitled "A General Study of the State of ... Japan's Air Defense System..." The study covered sensor systems, weapons systems, BM/C31 (battle management, command and control, communication and intelligence), etc. We have the results of that study and studies are now continuing.

We believe that joint technical research with the USA of sea-based midcourse defense deployed high-altitude systems are the most efficient and effective means of assessing the technical feasibility of our BMD system. Accordingly, on December 25, 1998, with the approval from the Security Council of Japan, the government formally decided to begin a Japan-US joint technical study of ballistic missile defense. Japan-US Joint Technical Research have been in progress since fiscal 1999, and they continue to the present.

In our August 2003 budget request, we have sought initial funds for the deployment of a missile shield starting in 2006. This request includes the funds for the conversion of the first of four KONGO class destroyers to a Standard Missile 3 capabil-

ity and for the acquisition of a land based PAC 3 missile capability.

Would you please tell us about the mutually supportive relationship between the SDF and US forces in general, and about cooperative relations with respect to North Korea in particular?

The SDF and the US military have a mutually supportive relationship based primarily on the Japan-US Security Treaty.

Overall, our mutually supportive relationship was formed in 1978 and is currently being realized based on the "Japan-U.S. Defence Cooperation Guidelines" revised in 1997. The Guidelines call for cooperation at all times, for a response in the event of an armed attack on Japan, and for cooperation in the event of a situation in surrounding areas that could seriously affect Japan's peace and security (a regional contingency).

"Cooperation at all times" includes Japan's maintenance of defense capabilities commensurate with its self defense needs and America's maintenance of a nuclear deter-

rent, forward deployed military forces in the Asia-Pacific region, and other military forces ready to come and assist. There is also supply and logistics cooperation under the Japan-US Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement as well as technical cooperation under the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. There are other kinds of cooperation as well, including measures to help with the financial burden and make it easier for the US to station troops in Japan.

"A response in the event of an armed attack on Japan" refers to a strategy under which the Self Defense Force will employ mainly defensive tactics while US forces employ tactics to complement and support that defense. It is envisioned that American units with striking force would be employed as necessary in the event of an attack by guerillas or Special Forces or in the event of an attack with ballistic missiles.

Regional contingency cooperation includes helping each other with things like rescue operations and refugee assistance, search and rescue missions, evacuation of non-combatants, activities to ensure the effectiveness of economic sanctions, surveillance (information exchange), and mine removal. It also includes support for action by US forces through such

means as provision of facilities and territory as well as rear support.

Cooperation in the event of a contingency involving North Korea will take place, fundamentally, within the above framework. We believe it is of the utmost importance to work at picking up warning signs as early as possible by, among other things, strengthening intelligence-gathering arrangements of all kinds along with vigilance and surveillance.

There have now been many incidents of suspicious North Korean ships off Japan's coast. Would you please explain the SDF's role in responding to those incidents and tell us what the SDF is doing together with the Coast Guard?

Protecting life and property and maintaining security at sea is first and foremost the duty of the Japan Coast Guard, a policing institution. When it is impossible or obviously very difficult for the Coast Guard to cope with a situation, the MSDF deals with it as a Maritime Security Operation.

Dealing with suspicious ships falls under the same framework. If a situation is obviously very difficult for the Coast Guard to deal with, a Maritime Security Operation will be ordered before the opportunity is lost. The MSDF, in partner-

ship and together with the Coast Guard, will stop, board, and inspect the ship or take other action.

Even before a Maritime Security Operation is ordered, the MSDF and the Coast Guard will share appropriate information regarding suspicious ships in the early stages. SDF ships will be dispatched as part of initial operations to deal with possible spy ships to prepare for unexpected incident.

Several additional measures were taken to strengthen the partnership between the SDF and the Coast Guard as a result of the lessons learned and reflected upon following the March, 1999 incident of a suspicious ship off the Noto Peninsula. In December of that year a manual for joint responses to suspicious ships was drawn up. Coast Guard patrol boats and SDF vessels are now continually involved in communications exercise for information exchange and joint exercises for responding to suspicious ships.

The legal situation surrounding Japanese peacekeeping operations was recently changed, enabling Japan to take on important duties in East Timor. Could you explain what the changes were, and what significance they have as far as SDF participation in future peacekeeping operations is concerned?

At the end of 2001, a revision of the International Peace Cooperation Law was carried out in Japan's Diet (Parliament) with regard to "removal of the freeze on PKF operations" and "use of weapons." Since the principal work of Japan's PKO in East Timor has been the maintenance and repair of roads, bridges and the like, it has in no way been affected by the revision of the law. The revision of the law indicates that Japan is going to be actively involved on behalf of international peace, centred around the UN.

"Use of weapons" does not yet mean a usage of weapons commensurate with UN standards. Japan cannot be said to be fully prepared to carry out PKF operations. I believe we need more discussion in the Diet and more study based on a realistic understanding of PKOs.

JAPAN (July, 2003) – Canada's Chief of Defence Staff, General Henault meets with Admiral Ishikawa of Japan.



JAPAN DEFENSE AGENCY

The current midterm defense program outline calls for purchase of air tankers. How will that midair refueling capability be used? Does it signify a change in Japan's self-defense plans?

We intend to use the tankers in emergencies to fuel our CAP (Combat Air Patrol—interceptors for air defense) for greater efficiency and to refuel interceptors that take off from runways shortened by damage.

Japan has a passive defense strategy with defensive capability only. To have a complete air defense, it is important to maintain readiness to take immediate and appropriate measures against invasion by air. Because that is true, and to be able to deal with the enhanced stealth of invading aircraft and the improved range of the air-to-surface missiles they carry, we believe early adoption of air tankers is necessary for our interceptors to carry out effective CAP.

During peacetime, the tankers can be used to make advanced interceptor training more effective, to improve safety, to reduce noise around bases by reducing the number of takeoffs and landings, and for

transport during international cooperation operations.

There is, therefore, no change in Japan's defense plans.

Many countries send units of their military forces to disaster sites. What has the SDF done to respond to natural or man-made disasters?

The SDF has been dispatched for wide-ranging activities when disaster strikes. These include, to name a few, searching for and rescuing disaster victims, rescuing ships and aircraft in distress, flood prevention, medical treatment, disease prevention, and transportation of people and provisions. Major recent examples would include the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake and the subway sarin incident in 1995, the criticality accident at a private uranium-processing plant at Tokai-mura, Ibaraki-ken in 1999, the eruption of Mt. Usu in 2000, and the accidental sinking of the Ehime Maru in Hawaii in 2001.

There were 845 SDF dispatches in 2001 involving 44,045 personnel, 2,881 vehicles, 1,117 aircraft, and 270 ships.

During the past two years, the SDF has been studying a variety of military structure schemes with the goal of consolidating operations. How far have things come?

The Director-General referred to is the Director-General of the Defense Agency (equivalent to our MND).

The study was aimed at a scheme for SDF operations in a new age where the security environment affecting Japan and the world has changed, SDF duties have diversified to include international peace cooperation and other responsibilities, and technology has progressed.

A speedy response to the changed circumstances and a radical solution of the SDF's operational problems requires moving from a situation where "each SDF branch operates basically on its own" to one where "operations are basically joint operations," i.e. one in which the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self Defense Forces operate as a single organism from the start. Based on that view, the study presented the following framework for a new joint operating scheme:

Internet Access | Website Hosting | Server Colocation | Managed Services | Website Development



“know me”

Some companies try and sell the government more Internet services than they really need.

Ridiculous.

Magma takes time to understand the government's needs and then provides solutions that meet them.

I like that.



Magma Communications
EXCEPTIONAL INTERNET

www.magma.ca/frontline | 613.688.1920

- A "Master Chief of Staff" (tentative title) will report to the Director-General and serve as a single representative of all SDF branches with respect to operations.
- The Director General's leadership of SDF operations will be through the Master Chief of Staff (tentative title). He will carry out the Director-General's orders concerning the SDF.
- A new joint staff organization will be set up, and a system permitting joint operation of SDF units will be created.

To translate the results of the study into reality, we are now conducting further studies, from an overall standpoint as well as from statutory, organizational, and compositional points of view, on how to ready a system capable of delivering effective defence capability.

Interoperability with the US and other allies is important to future operations. As one of the USA's most important allies, what is the SDF doing to maintain and improve interoperability?

Because Japan's defense policy is exclusively defensive, the United States is our sole ally as far as treaties are concerned.

We are endeavoring to maintain and improve interoperability with the United States by building a mechanism for promoting Japan-US talks and coordinating policy (grand mechanism) and a mechanism for coordinating strategy and combat (coordination mechanism) as well as through US-Japan joint exercises. The grand mechanism involves not just the SDF and the US military, but all defense-related organizations of the two governments. Its goal is to draw up plans and procedures for smooth and effective response to situations. The coordination mechanism, on the other hand, is for coordination of actual Japan-US action during emergencies.

US-Japan joint exercises are conducted to improve interoperability between the SDF and the US military by constantly deepening our mutual understanding and communication about military technology and other important issues.

We conduct about twenty joint exercises a year including command post drills, action training by ground units, antisubmarine and minesweeping training by marine units, air defense combat training by flying units, etc.

We are making active efforts to build trust and interoperability through joint exercises with other friendly countries as well.

Historically, there has been a lot of cooperation between Canada and Japan. How do you see the relationship between the militaries of the two countries, and what are the next steps that could be taken to keep the relationship growing?

Canada has expressed its will to make an active contribution to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region, and I believe that Canada and Japan share many basic values as far as security is concerned. So coordination of all of Japan's policies with Canada is important, and we need to be constantly deepening our cooperation and collaboration and always be ready to communicate.

We are also aware of Canada's leading role in peacekeeping operations, an area where it has demonstrated exceptional initiative. Japan has learned a lot, especially, by serving together with the Canadian military in UNDOF and benefiting from Canada's abundance of information and rich experience.

Defense contacts between Canada and Japan have been steadily progressing through high-level talks and exchanges of all kinds. We would like to continue to conduct high level talks, PM & MM talks, staff talks, and trainee dispatches on a regular basis.

I also think that in areas where we can coordinate our policies such as anti-terror support in the Indian Ocean, we should do so actively with the goal of eventually building a situation where we will be able to act together through policy tie-ups and further expand trust through such activities as joint drills by our units.

A number of countries, including Canada, seem to be having trouble with recruitment lately though it seems that the SDF does not. Is that perception correct, and if it is, why has SDF recruitment been successful?

At present, the SDF is recruiting the necessary number of personnel. One background reason might be that with Japan's economy in a slump, there is a stronger tendency for people to desire a stable occupation, and more young people hope to get government jobs, including SDF service. But the birth rate in Japan is going down, and I believe the tendency to have fewer children is going to grow stronger and stronger. We expect the recruitment environment to grow tougher.

Is recruitment to the National Defense Academy also going well?

Yes, we have the necessary number of students at the Defense Academy.

The Defense Agency's Technical Research and Development Institute and Canada's Defence R&D community have agreed to share information. How do you see such agreements in terms of importance?

I understand that the Technical Research and Development Institute and the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo have been exchanging publications containing general technical information since September of 1999. Such exchange of technical information is significant and I believe it needs to be continued.

Admiral Ishikawa, you assumed your post this past January. What are your most important priorities as Chairman of the Joint Staff Council?

I consider it my top priority to establish a "new consolidated operating scheme" under which the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self Defense Forces operate as a unit. At present, each responds to situations basically on its own. That system has its limits when situations have to be responded to quickly and effectively. The SDF no longer responds only to traditional invasions. In order to respond quickly and effectively to a variety of new situations, we need a system in which operations are consolidated and where the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self Defence Forces operate as a single organism. We are rapidly moving forward with studies on how to bring about this new consolidated operating scheme. **FL**



Captain (N) B.R. Brown recently completed his third year as Canada's Defence Attaché in Japan. He is retiring from the CF after a career spanning 37 years.