



Recommendations to Enhance Effectiveness of Japanese PKO Activities

January 2013

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Summary

The year 2012 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations, which was passed in 1992. In the intervening years, Japan has revised this law twice and made repeated operational improvements.

In addition, it is now around 20 years since the end of the Cold War, during which time the nature of conflict has shifted from traditional war between states to internal struggles and ethnic conflicts, and the nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO) has undergone a radical transformation. Japan, however, has not been able to keep pace with these changes.

Based on a review of this subject, this article marks the twentieth anniversary of the start of Japanese PKO by offering a set of recommendations that will enable Japan to conduct more effective and full-fledged PKO activities.

Strategy and policy—nationwide formulation and execution of policy

The PKO law sets out the procedures and conditions for Japanese participation in PKO activities. However, it does not elucidate any principles or strategy to guide Japan's involvement in such activities.

For this reason, the cabinet must set out basic principles regarding the nature of Japanese participation in PKO and agree on a “Charter on International Peacekeeping Activities” that can serve as a blueprint for the construction of a nationwide cooperative system. As part of this Charter, the cabinet should set out fundamental principles and a medium- to long-term course based on its policy determinations. It should also stipulate that the cabinet will establish a liaison committee consisting of heads of ministries and agencies, under the direction of the deputy chief cabinet secretary, that will serve as a system for government-wide cooperation, and that the cabinet will periodically engage in consultation and coordination regarding policy and operational matters. This will enable a wide range of officials (including those responsible for policing, judicial affairs, human rights, and development, as well as those responsible for foreign policy and defense) to share information and to jointly analyze and evaluate it.

Reviewing legal regulation and changing the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution regarding international peacekeeping activities

Japan's so-called Five Principles for Participation in Peacekeeping Operations and its own legal interpretation of logistics support and weapons use (which is regarded as being in contradiction with the notions of the “use of force” and the concept of

“Ittaika”ⁱ) do not accord with UN standards and impose various constraints on the nature of Japanese PKO participation and on the specific PKO activities that Japan may undertake.

For this reason, Japan should adjust its interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution to the following: “When Japan, in the universal interest of maintaining international peace and security, participates in measures taken pursuant to a resolution of the United Nations Security Council or with the authorization of it, such activities are not taken as implementation of the sovereign right and thus do not constitute “the threat or use of force” prohibited by Article 9 of the Constitution.” By doing so, Japan will establish a legal foundation for engaging in the same PKO activities (with the same perceptions) as other nations that contribute troops, and thus for making a more active commitment to these efforts.

Expanding the scope of participation by the Self-Defense Forces

In recent years, the military component of UN PKO missions has required greater military capability and more advanced equipment and materiel than ever before. In the past, Japan’s contribution has principally consisted of dispatching engineering units; however, there is scope for making wider ranging use of the abilities of the Self-Defense Forces. In more specific terms, deployment of multi-purpose logistical units, observation/surveillance (including high resolution) units, and units in charge of instruction and training represents potentially promising options whereby Japan could make a significant contribution. These are specializations in which the risk of casualties is relatively low and only the industrialized nations are really equipped to dispatch the appropriate personnel. In terms of the quality of their equipment, their proficiency, and future trends in military technology, Japan’s Self-Defense Forces would be well able to dispatch these types of units—although challenges do remain.

Participation by civilian police

In recent years, the requirement for civilian police in UN PKO activities has grown, and over 13,000 civilian police are presently deployed on the 15 current missions. However, Japan is not currently contributing a single civilian police officer to these efforts—a woefully inadequate state of affairs given Japan’s power as a nation.

For this reason, Japan must make civilian police work part of the primary duties of the police and, above all, must develop a system based on the collaborative training of personnel, so that Japanese police can rapidly and effectively participate in civilian police activities. Specifically, Japan will need to conduct training—led by veterans of PKO deployments and specialists from various countries—at international police centers and develop a registration system for those who wish to apply for deployment overseas.

Encouraging civilian participation

Despite the fact that both the importance of civilian activities in UN PKO missions and the accompanying personnel requirements have increased rapidly in recent years, Japanese civilians account for approximately only 0.3% of the total civilian personnel deployed—an extremely low proportion. If Japan were to assist in nation building in the areas of democracy and the rule of law, this would increase Japan’s degree of

ⁱ An argument that logistics support, such as supply and medical services, etc., is construed as an unconstitutional use of force when deemed to be an integrated part of the use of force by a third country.

contribution to a meaningful level. The following initiatives will be necessary in order to encourage civilian participation: first, centers must be established for the training of personnel (including civil servants as well as private citizens) based on the “Charter on International Peacekeeping Activities” mentioned above; second, the central government must prevail upon public institutions, including local governments, universities, and research organizations, to take steps that are favorable to the employment of people who have taken part in PKO activities; third, people who are already working for an organization and who aspire to participate in UN PKO activities must be granted the possibility of doing so with the guaranteed right to return to their former posts afterwards.

Contributions in senior posts

Since the time of Yasushi Akashi and Sukehiro Hasegawa, no Japanese has served in a senior post such as force commander or special representative of the UN secretary-general. The appointment of a Japanese to a senior position would serve to increase interest in PKO activities domestically in Japan and to showcase the best of Japanese leadership. To achieve this end, Japan will have to engage in the strategic training of personnel.

Promoting female participation in PKO activities

Great importance has come to be placed on an increasing female presence among personnel engaged in UN PKO activities in recent years, since the female perspective has proved indispensable in all aspects of operations.

For this reason, Japan should actively select as many female personnel as possible for deployment as police officers. In order to increase the proportion of female civilian personnel, the government must also promote exchanges between, on the one hand, female NGO staff and female researchers in the fields of peace and development, and, on the other hand, women who have been deployed in PKO activities. The government must also develop a mentoring system.

Establishing a Center for International Peace Activitiesⁱⁱ

In response to the changes that have occurred in the nature of UN PKO activities in recent years, Japan must establish a Center for International Peace Activities that will serve as a hub for personnel training so as to enable the various components of operations (military, police, and civilian) to cooperate cohesively on the ground. This center must be able to fulfill the following four functions: teach the military, police, and civilian components of PKO activities in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion, serve as an academic center for research and investigation, maintain the capability to gather and disseminate information on an international scale, and pool and swiftly deploy trained civilian personnel.

Cooperation with ODA activities

Undeniably, cooperation between PKO and ODA activities has, in the past, been reliant to a great extent on ad hoc initiatives on the ground. In order to achieve cooperation that makes the best use of the respective strengths of the military and civilian components, it would be desirable to maintain a framework that in time of peace allows the various organs of government to work together in unison to make policy, supervise operations, share information, and accumulate experience. One specific idea would be to establish a small-scale unit that would prescribe cooperation with ODA activities in accordance

ⁱⁱ Provisional name.

with the “Charter on International Peacekeeping Activities,” to which operatives from relevant government bodies such as the Ministry of Defense, the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JICA (the Japan International Cooperation Agency) would be seconded.

As rules and systems are devised for the international community, Japan must continue to maintain a voice that will suitably reflect its own interests as well, so that the nation can continue to enjoy peace and prosperity amid the continuing expansion of globalization and interdependence between nations. In that sense, it is advisable for Japan to increase its participation in PKO activities that assist countries and regions where conditions are the most desperate. Numerous reform measures have already been suggested (including those presented in this set of recommendations), and many government officials and politicians have been made aware of the issues involved. What Japan still requires is the political will to put these suggestions into practice.