

Chapter 4

Interaction with Local Communities and Japanese Citizens

Section 1 Collaboration with Local Communities

1 Activities in Civic Life and Contributions to Society

The MOD/SDF conducts activities to support the lives of citizens in a range of fields, in response to requests from municipal governments and relevant organizations. Such activities contribute to further deepening the trust in the SDF, and provide SDF personnel with pride and confidence.

The GSDF handles the disposal of unexploded ordnance found throughout Japan. In FY2014, there were 1,560 such cases (approx. 57.1 tons). In particular, cases handled in Okinawa Prefecture accounted for approx. 40% of the total cases. The MSDF clears and disposes of underwater mines and other dangerous explosives, and approx. 333 explosives (approx. 4.8 tons) were handled in FY2014.

The SDF camps and bases allow the local residents access to their facilities to the extent that it does not interfere with unit activities, thus striving to foster friendly interaction with local communities. The SDF also provides transportation and other assistance at a variety of athletic events. In addition, it supports regional medical treatment efforts by providing general medical care at some SDF hospitals as well as conducting urgent transport for emergency patients from isolated islands. Furthermore, based on national policy¹, the MOD and SDF will ensure

opportunities for local small and medium sized enterprises to receive orders, while taking efficiency into account, by such measures as the promotion of separated/divided ordering² and the securing of competition amongst companies within the same qualification and grade divisions³.



Blue Impulse flying over Himeji Castle at the "Ceremony Marking the Completion of the Preservation and Restoration Project for the Main Keep of Himeji Castle." (March 26, 2015)

See Reference 72 (Activities in Civic Life), Reference 73 (Activities Contributing to Society)

2 Cooperation from Municipal Governments and Other Related Organizations for the SDF

Amid the harsh recruitment and employment situation, the cooperation of local governments and relevant organizations is vital to secure highly qualified personnel and to assist the outplacement of uniformed SDF personnel who retire in compliance with the early retirement system of SDF. Furthermore, SDF camps and bases maintain close relations with local communities, and therefore,

various forms of support and cooperation from the local community are indispensable for the SDF to conduct its diverse activities, including training exercises and disaster dispatch. Moreover, units dispatched overseas for international peace cooperation missions and other duties receive support and assistance from the relevant organizations for the procedures involved⁴.

3 Activities for Securing Understanding and Cooperation of Municipal Governments and Local Residents

Regional Defense Bureaus make efforts to build cooperative relationships with local communities, through collaboration with SDF units and Provincial Cooperation Offices. Specifically, Regional Defense Bureaus provide explanations and conduct coordination regarding defense

policies and the realignment of the U.S. Forces in Japan. They also hold seminars on defense issues for local residents and host Japan-U.S. friendship programs for citizens who live near U.S. Forces facilities and areas in Japan, U.S. Forces personnel, and their families. Furthermore,

¹ The official name of the policy is "The Contract Policy of the Government regarding Small and Medium Enterprises" (Cabinet decision on June 27, 2014)

² For example, this is a method through which grouping of products etc. takes place when putting up the order for general competitive bidding, and then a successful bidder for the groups is decided.

³ Out of the bidding participation eligibility categorized into grade A-D, this refers to competition between grade C or D only, which comprise mostly of small and medium enterprises.

⁴ In addition to this kind of support, many letters of encouragement are sent from the public to the SDF personnel, which raise the morale of SDF personnel and reinforce their awareness of serving the people of Japan.

Regional Defense Bureaus conduct the necessary liaison and coordination in the event of disasters, accidents, or any

other emergency situations.

4 Measures to Promote Harmony between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas

1 Scale and Features of Defense Facilities

The uses of defense facilities⁵ are diverse, and they often require large volumes of land. Meanwhile, approx. 24% of the land area of the facilities and areas (for exclusive use) of the U.S. Forces in Japan is jointly used by the SDF under the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. In addition, problems related to restricted establishment and operations of defense facilities have emerged due to the urbanization of areas around many of the defense facilities. Also, another problem is that frequent aircraft operations such as takeoffs and landings cause noise and other issues, impacting the living environment of local residential communities.

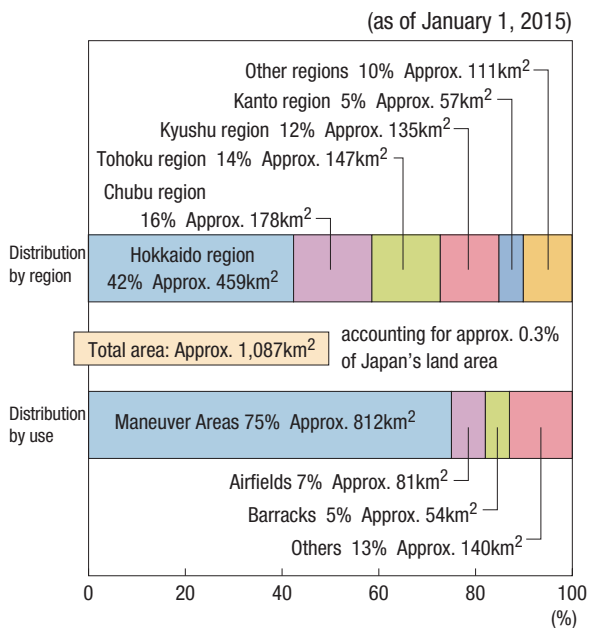
See Fig. III-4-1-1 (Status of SDF Facilities (Land Plots)), Fig. III-4-1-2 (Status of Facilities and Areas of U.S. Forces in Japan (Exclusively Used Facilities))

2 Initiatives to Promote Harmony between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas

Defense facilities, as the foundation that supports the defense capabilities of Japan and the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, are indispensable for our country's security. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain conditions for constant and stable utilization by ensuring harmony between the defense facilities and the surrounding areas as well as obtaining the understanding and cooperation of the local residents. For that purpose, the MOD has taken measures to promote harmony between defense facilities and surrounding areas since 1974, based on the Act on Improvement of Living Environment of Areas Around Defense Facilities (Living Environment Improvement Act).

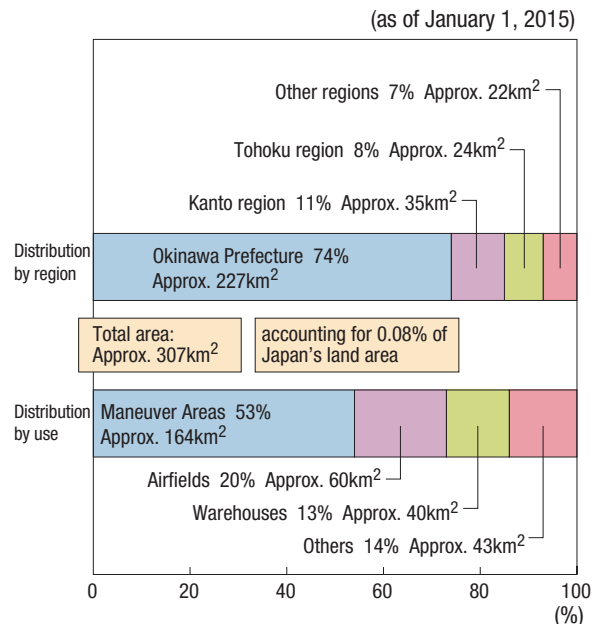
See Fig. III-4-1-3 (Measures for Harmony Between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas)
Reference 74 (Outline of Measures to Improve the Living Environment in the Areas Surrounding Defense Facilities)

Fig. III-4-1-1 Status of SDF Facilities (Land Plots)



Notes: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Fig. III-4-1-2 Status of Facilities and Areas of U.S. Forces in Japan (Exclusively Used Facilities)



Notes: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

⁵ This is a generic term referring to the facilities used by the SDF as well as the facilities and areas used by the U.S. Forces in Japan in accordance with the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

Fig. III-4-1-3 Measures for Harmony Between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas

Purpose	Measures	Description of Measures
Preventing Noise Problems	Subsidies to finance sound insulation work	○ Educational facilities such as elementary schools, junior high schools, and kindergartens; medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics; and welfare facilities such as nursery centers, day-service centers for the elderly, and special nursing homes for the elderly ○ Housing
	Compensation for relocations	○ Compensation for relocating buildings ○ Land procurement ○ Improvement of public facilities such as roads, water-supply systems, and sewage facilities in the area where housing, etc., is to be relocated
	Improving green belts	○ Planting trees, installing grass fields
Preventing Nuisances Besides Noise	Subsidies to finance trouble prevention work	○ Canals, reservoirs, roads, river improvement, television broadcast community reception facilities
Reducing Troubles Related to Living and Business	Subsidies for building facilities meant to stabilize people's lives	○ Roads, radio broadcast facilities, nursing homes, fire departments, parks, waste disposal facilities, welfare centers for the elderly, public facilities for learning, etc. ○ Agricultural facilities, fishing facilities
Reducing Impact on Surrounding Areas	Provision of specified defense facilities environs improvement adjustment grants	○ Improving public facilities such as traffic facilities, recreation centers, and welfare facilities ○ Medical expenses, operating costs of community buses, assessment fees for earthquake resistance for school buildings, etc.*

* Newly added due to the partial revision of the Act on Improvement of Living Environment of Areas Around Defense Facilities (effective as of April 27, 2011)

(1) Measures of the Act on Improvement of Living Environment of Areas Around Defense Facilities

Based on the Act on Improvement of Living Environment of Areas Around Defense Facilities, the MOD has implemented various measures to prevent, alleviate, and mitigate impediments such as aircraft noise in the surrounding areas caused by the SDF or U.S. Forces activities, or by establishing and operating defense facilities including airfields. Furthermore, taking into consideration the requests of the relevant municipal governments, the MOD partially revised the Living Environment Improvement Act in 2011, and conducted a review to make it possible for the specified defense facilities environs improvement adjustment grants to be applied to so-called soft projects, such as aid for medical expenses. In addition, the MOD added defense facilities to be eligible for these grants. Focused work is also underway to provide residential sound insulation and efforts are being made to ensure its further progress.

Regarding the specified defense facilities environs improvement adjustment grants, the MOD has implemented initiatives such as the 'PDCA Cycle' process since April 2014, aiming to increase the effectiveness of these grants.

See Reference 75 (Partial Amendment of the Law Concerning Adjustment, etc. of the Living Environment in the Environs of Defense Facilities)

Fig. III-4-1-4

FY2015 Costs for Countermeasures in Areas near Bases (Based on Expenditures)

Project	(100 million yen)	
	Mainland	Okinawa
Projects for preventing disturbances	103	19
Sound insulation projects	423	79
Measures related to relocations	37	3
Subsidies for stabilizing people's livelihoods	212	19
Road improvement projects	67	4
Environs Improvement Adjustment Grants	166	29
Other projects	18	6

(2) Considerations for Future Harmonization of Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas

In response to the requests by related municipal governments, the MOD continues to consider practical ways to achieve more effective and efficient measures to harmonize defense facilities and surrounding areas, in light of the severe fiscal situation.

See Fig. III-4-1-4 (FY2015 Costs for Countermeasures in Areas Near Bases (Based on Expenditures))

Section 2 Public Relations Activities, Information Disclosure, and Related Activities

1 Various Public Relations Activities

As the activities of the MOD/SDF cannot be carried out without the understanding and support of the Japanese people, it is important to be proactive in undertaking easily comprehensible public relations activities and to gain the trust and cooperation of the public.

According to a "Public Opinion Survey on the Self Defense Forces and Security Issues" conducted by the Cabinet Office (in January 2015), the public expectations and evaluations towards the SDF have been increasing

as the scope of MOD/SDF activities has expanded both domestically and internationally. In light of this result, the MOD/SDF will continue to conduct a variety of PR activities, thereby striving to ensure better understanding of the current status of the MOD/SDF.

See Reference 76 ("Public Opinion Survey on the Self Defense Forces and Defense Issues" (excerpt) (Public Relations Office of Cabinet Office: as of January 2015))