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BRIEFING PAPER

ON

US-JAPAN DEFENSE COOPERATION

DECLASSIFIED • E.O. 12958 SEC. 3.8

WITH PORTIONS EXEMPTED

E.O. 12958 SEC. 1.5

state dec 9/5/07; OSD dec 10/2/07
MRDT-82, B1; NSC Review 7/20/01

Background

BY del NARA DATE 9/5/08

The US-Japan defense relationship is a sound one, not troubled by major differences. We have some operating problems, but these are generally settled through well-established government-to-government machinery in Japan. We doubt the Japanese will raise specific issues, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Given the weakness of the Japanese government we do not suggest you take up specific defense issues. Rather, we suggest you reiterate that the Mutual Security Treaty and defense cooperation remain key elements in US-Japan relations and that we have no plans to modify our basic defense posture in Asia.

Despite the smoothness of our defense relationship with Japan, we have some concerns. One involves public discussion about Japan's defense role. The lack of a better public dialogue in Japan concerning Japan's defense role and responsibilities impairs our operating ability and general defense cooperation. The Japanese government is afraid to do too much in this area out of fear of adverse public reaction. Improvement can only come from major efforts of the top Japanese leadership.

We are also concerned that Japan's own defense program is being eroded by inflation and lack of public support. Japan presently spends less than 1% of her GNP for defense, and we would urge a modest increase, but at least no backsliding in her defense efforts.

The rising cost of US military operations in Japan could impair our ability to operate there. Wages are climbing at annual rates of 30% and more. While Japan's contributions to the common defense, such as rent-free bases, are considerable, we nevertheless want to share with the GOJ the problem of severely rising costs of operations in Japan. A dialogue is just beginning and progress at best will be slow.

On their side the Japanese government is worried about our willingness and determination to maintain major force deployments in Asia. They fear we will take major steps involving our forces in Northeast Asia without consulting them. They also are concerned about a variety of problems connected with our base tenure.

Talking Points

If defense cooperation issues are raised, recommend you:

- Reiterate that US policy will continue to emphasize the importance of Japan, and the maintenance of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty. Express the hope that the Japanese government will gain greater public acceptance of US-Japanese defense cooperation.

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- Inform them that we have no plans to significantly modify our deployments in Asia. We will consult with them should we consider major changes.
- Emphasize the need to improve the already substantial US-Japan defense cooperation, and express the hope that we can work out a better definition of each country's role in the mutual defense effort. (See brief discussion at Tab A.)
- Emphasize the importance of continuing with plans to improve and upgrade Japan's defense forces.
 - For example, expanded anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability should be emphasized.
- Reiterate appreciation for Japan's cooperation in resolving base problems, assure the GOJ of continued US cooperation, and emphasize importance of bases in Japan to both US and Japan defense interests. (See brief discussion at Tab B.)
- Seek Japan's cooperation in sharing the problem of rising costs of US military operations in Japan.