

# Japan's Diversifying International Peace Cooperation

*Japan is continuing its efforts to fulfill a responsible role as a “peace-fostering nation” that contributes to global peace and stability. Its international assistance efforts are centered on seeking permanent resolutions to conflict in regions around the world and on post-conflict peace-building, not only through official development assistance but also through United Nations peacekeeping operations. Below, **Masami Oka**, director of the Ministry of Defense's International Operations Division, discusses Japan's international peace cooperation activities.*

Improving international security is important for the peace and safety of Japan, and it is from this perspective that efforts are being made to contribute to international peace. Specifically, Japan is contributing to United Nations peacekeeping operations based on the International Peace Cooperation Law (PKO Law) enacted in 1992.

Japan is also cooperating with international initiatives based on UN resolutions that are outside the PKO Law through enactment of special measures laws for each initiative. Japan's replenishment support activities in the Indian Ocean are based on such a special measures law. While the Self-Defense Forces' mission in Iraq has been completed, it, too, was based on a special measures law for that country's humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

## Primary Missions

In addition, the activities of Japan Disaster Relief teams consisting of members of the SDF following large-scale natural disasters, such as the Sumatra earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami, are also considered part of international peace cooperation. SDF personnel are

currently involved in three UN peacekeeping operations: the UN Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights (UNDOF), the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), and the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).

In the past Japan has successfully participated in PKOs in Cambodia, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, and elsewhere. In January 2007, the SDF redefined the legal status of international peace cooperation activities from “supplementary activities” to “primary missions” under the SDF Law.

## Replenishment Support Activities in the Indian Ocean

Dealing with terrorism has become a major issue for international society since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Discussions on what Japan could do were held, and the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law was enacted in 2001 for cooperation, including maritime replenishment support activities, in the light of the needs of relevant countries.

Since January 2008, Japan has been providing support for maritime interdiction operations of various countries to crack down on the movement of terrorists and the smuggling of weapons and drugs



Masami Oka

under the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law.

Continuously deploying supply vessels in the Indian Ocean is not an easy task. Refueling operations are conducted under harsh climatic conditions. The supply ships must continue navigating at the same speed and maintain the same orientation as the ships of other countries that they are refueling. The ships are quite vulnerable at such times, so things can get very tense. Countries with the ability to perform such maritime refueling operations on an ongoing

basis are limited, and many countries have expressed gratitude to Japan for these contributions.

In Iraq, the Ground Self-Defense Force set up a camp in the southern city of Samawah to provide such support as medical care and school repairs. The Air Self-Defense Force, meanwhile, was based in Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait to provide transport assistance. ASDF planes regularly transported UN and coalition force personnel and supplies to Ali (Talil), Baghdad, and other places.

Before Iraq, Japan did not have experience in providing humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in regions of post-conflict situations or stages. There was considerable debate on what Japan should do. In the light of local needs, ODA was coordinated with the activities of the SDF. The security and safety of the GSDF contingent was ensured not only with our own equipment but also with the help of information obtained from other countries. I believe that through these efforts, the mission in Iraq was completed quite successfully.

### Cooperating with Nation-Building


International peace cooperation



Members of the SDF provided humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in post-conflict Iraq. ©AFP-JUI

involves activities that are broader in scope than traditional UN peacekeeping operations, entailing not only maintaining ceasefires but also post-conflict nation-building activities. The PKO in Sudan involves some 10,000 people, many of whom are providing nation-building assistance. Nation-building activities involve not only military aspects of assistance but also a

larger role for civilians, including nongovernmental organizations.

Cooperation will be important not just within the Japanese government but with other organizations as well. A future issue for Japan will be to respond to the changing global environment while actively pursuing further involvement in international peace cooperation activities. (Current as of April 30) 

### Japan's International Cooperation Activities Based on the PKO Law

Peacekeeping Operations	Humanitarian Relief	Election Monitoring
Angola (Sept. 1992)	Rwanda (Sept. 1994)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Aug. 1998)
Cambodia (Sept. 1992)	East Timor (Nov. 1999)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (March 2000)
Mozambique (May 1993)	Afghanistan (Oct. 2001)	East Timor (Aug. 2001)
El Salvador (March 1994)	Iraq (March 2003)	Kosovo (Nov. 2001)
Golan Heights (Jan. 1996)	Iraq (July 2003)	East Timor (April 2002)
East Timor (July 1999)		Democratic Republic of the Congo (July 2006)
East Timor (Feb. 2002)		
Timor-Leste (Jan. 2007)		Timor-Leste (March 2007)
Nepal (March 2007)		Nepal (March 2008)
Sudan (Oct. 2008)		

Note: Dates in parentheses indicate start of operations.