Unfinished "Beyond-the-Threat Theory" —Japan's "Basic Defense Force Concept" Revisited—*

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Abstract

"The National Defense Program Outline" set forth on October 29, 1976 (the 1976 NDPO) introduced the "Basic Defense Force Concept" as the course of Japan's defense force. The introduction process of the concept has been described, on many occasions, as if the so-called "Kubo Concept" by Takuya Kubo had been formally adopted and incorporated into the 1976 NDPO in a straightforward manner. In reality, however, several interpretations emerged and coexisted in the process of formulating the Basic Defense Force Concept, such as an interpretation based on the Kubo Concept-like "beyond-the-threat theory," an interpretation based on "counter low-threat theory" similar to the "Constantly Maintained Defense Force" deriving from the "N Study Group," and an interpretation based on Seiki Nishihiro's "validation theory," the view that linked the preceding two interpretations.

Introduction

"The National Defense Program Outline (*Boei Keikaku no Taiko* or *Boei Taiko*)" formulated on October 29, 1976 (the 1976 NDPO) introduced the "Basic Defense Force Concept (*Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso*)" as the course of Japan's defense force. The NDPO set forth basic directions for a future defense force such as Japan's basic security policies and the significance and role of Japan's defense force, as well as the specific organization of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) based on such policies and role, and the deployment target for major equipment. The NDPO have been formulated five times so far, beginning with the 1976 NDPO developed under the Takeo Miki Administration, followed by the 1995 NDPO under the Tomiichi Murayama Administration (set forth on November 28, 1995); the 2004 NDPG (The NDPO changed its title as the "National Defense Program *Guidelines*" since 2004) under the Junichiro Koizumi Administration (set forth on December 10, 2004); the 2010 NDPG under the Naoto Kan Administration (set forth on December 17, 2010); and the 2013 NDPG under the second Shinzo Abe Administration (set forth on December 17, 2013). With regard to how Japan's defense force should be, the 1976 NDPO stipulated as follows: "The possession of the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistical support," "Japan will repel limited and small-scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance," "At this time, the present scale of defense capability seems to closely approach target goals of the above-mentioned concept," and

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Japan's defense concept "will be standardized so that, when serious changes in situation demand, the defense structure can be smoothly adapted to meet such changes."[1] These constitute what we call the Basic Defense Force Concept (however, the term "basic defense force" did not appear in the 1976 NDPO but was used in a commentary of Michita Sakata, then Director General of the Defense Agency, announced on the same day as the 1976 NDPO[2]).

The Basic Defense Force Concept is commonly understood as having its root in the idea proposed by Takuya Kubo, who had served as the Administrative Vice-Minister of the Defense Agency until right before the formulation of the 1976 NDPO.[3] In the 1960s and 1970s, Kubo held successive positions in the Japan Defense Agency (Now the Ministry of Defense) such as Director of the 1st Division of the Defense Bureau, Director-General of the Defense Bureau, and Administrative Vice-Minister. While serving as Director-General, Kubo wrote and distributed within the agency a paper titled "Concept for Japan's Defense Buildup (*Boeiryoku Seibi no Kangaekata*)" (also known as the "KB personal paper." "KB" stands for his surname) in February 1971. He went on to write the Defense Agency's view on "Defense Strength in Peacetime (*Heiwa Ji no Boeiryoku*)" (later recanted) made public on February 1, 1973, and the report entitled "A Framework to Consider the Arrangement of Japan's Defense Capabilities (*Waga Kuni no Boei Koso to Boeiryoku Seibi no Kangaekata*)" sophisticated "beyond-the-threat theory (*datsu-kyoi ron*)" in June 1974.[4] Until the arrival of the 1976 NDPO, the course of Japan's defense force had

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1 "The National Defense Program Outline for FY1977 and Beyond" (Approved by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet on October 29, 1976). The definition of the Basic Defense Force Concept is determined as follows in *Boei Hakusho* [*Defense of Japan*] *1977*:
"A) On the premise that those domestic and international situations …… will not undergo any major changes for some time to come;
B) Japan's defense structure should primarily possess the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistic support.
C) Such defense preparedness should enable Japan to maintain a full surveillance posture during peacetime, and cope effectively with conflict to the extent of limited and small-scale aggression [without external assistance].
D) This defense posture should be capable of adapting smoothly to meet any serious changes in the situation around Japan which might require such adaptation." *Defense of Japan 1977* (English version), p.52.

2 "With Regards to the Conclusion of the 'National Defense Program Outline' (Commentary by Director General of the Defense Agency)" (October 29, 1976).

3 Hideki Uemura, *Jieitai ha Dare no Mono ka* [The Self-Defense Forces: To whom do they belong?], Kodansha, 2002, pp.126-127; Akihiro Sado, *Sengo Nihon no Boei to Seiji* [Defense and Politics of Japan after the War], Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2003, p.260, p.284; Akihiko Tanaka, *Anzen Hosho – Sengo 50 Nen no Mosaku* [National Security – Struggle of 50 Years after the War], The Yomiuri Shimbun, 1997, pp.244-264; Yumi Hiwatari, *Senshu Boei Kokufuku no Senryaku – Nihon no Anzen Hosho wo Do Toraeruka* [Strategy to Overcome Exclusively Defensive Posture – A View on Japan's National Security], Mineruva Shobo, 2012, pp.65-66; Yoshimasa Muroyama, *Nichi-Bei Anzen Hosho Taisei (vol.2) – Nikuson Dokutorin Kara Wangan Senso Made* [Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements (vol.2) – From Nixon Doctrine to Gulf War], Yuhikaku, 1992, p.363. See also, Tsuyoshi Kawasaki, "Postclassical Realism and Japanese Security Policy," *Pacific Review* 14: 2, 2001, p.225.

4 Research Office of Akihiko Tanaka, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo, "Boeiryoku Seibi no Kangaekata [Concept for Japan's Defense Buildup]," *Detabesu Sekai to Nihon* [Database World and Japan]," [Online] Available at: http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/JPSC/19710220.O1J.html [Accessed May 21, 2012]; Takuya Kubo, "Waga Kuni no Boei Koso to Boeiryoku Seibi no Kangaekata [A Framework to Consider the Arrangement of Japan's Defense Capabilities]," in Kubo Takuya Iko / Tsuito Shu Kankokai (eds.), *Kubo Takuya Iko / Tsuito Shu* [Posthumous Manuscripts of Takuya Kubo / Memorial Tribute Collection] , Kubo Takuya Iko / Tsuito Shu Kankokai, 1981, pp.58-86. Kubo became the Secretary General of the Secretariat of the National Defense Council after completing his tenure as Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense and proposed the idea to establish a national security council which would later become the Japanese version of National Security Council (NSC). See, Yasuaki Chijiwa, *Kawariyuku Naikaku Anzen*

been directed by the "Required Defense Force Concept (*Shoyo Boeiryoku Koso*)." This concept has its origin in "counter-threat theory (*kyoi taiko ron*)" from the Meiji era, in which Japan determines the level of its defense force according to the strength of a hypothetical enemy. This means that the higher the threat is, the more defense force Japan needs to have. Kubo, however, proposed that, in peacetime, maintaining minimum necessary defense force would be enough to deal with whatever kind of threats, and that Japan could expand its defense force should the international tension rises. This theory of Kubo's, as an antithesis to the traditional Required Defense Force Concept, or counter-threat theory in other words, won the support of Michita Sakata who had assumed the office of the Director General of the Defense Agency on December 9, 1974 under the Takeo Miki Administration, and developed into the Basic Defense Force Concept adopted in the 1976 NDPO. This would be the textbook interpretation of how Kubo's proposed idea was adopted into the Basic Defense Force Concept.

However, administrative documents, personal documents of the people involved in this matter and oral history recordings made available in recent years indicate that the adoption process of the Basic Defense Force Concept was more complex. Haruo Natsume, the then Director of the Defense Division of Japan Defense Agency who was involved in this matter, says "Kubo might have been an excellent critic or scholar, but that is the reason why his policies never saw the light. Later on, Sakata came up with a similar idea, but it was an adaptation of Kubo's."[5]

Noboru Hoshuyama, who was deeply involved in the formulation of the 1976 NDPO as a senior staff of the Defense Division, went even further by saying "we were often asked in the United States and Japan when and by who the Basic Defense Force Concept was created. I always answered to these questions by suggesting that Seiki Nishihiro (who succeeded Natsume as Director of the Defense Division) and I created the concept, and Sakata and Kubo named it."[6]

This article will reexamine the process in which the Basic Defense Force Concept, not as a personal idea of Kubo but as an official policy of the Japanese government, was adopted into the 1976 NDPO by putting aside the idea that the Kubo Concept was formally adopted as the Basic Defense Force Concept into the NDPO in a straightforward manner, but rather by clarifying a relative position the Kubo Concept held (in other words, by relativizing "Kubo's view of history") in the entire formulation process of the 1976 NDPO. Doing so will help us understand the background that made it possible for the concept to hold in place for such a long period of time (that intention to finally break away from the Basic Defense Force Concept was expressed at the formulation of the 2010 NDPG) and what has made this concept so elusive,[7] offering insights into security policies in the future.

Hosho Kiko – Nihon Ban NSC Seiritsu he no Michi [Security Organs Subordinate to the Cabinet in Transition – Path towards the Establishment of the Japanese Version of National Security Council], Hara Shobo, 2015.

5 National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies [hereafter GRIPS] (eds.), *Natsume Haruo Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Haruo Natsume], GRIPS, 2004, p.151.

6 Noboru Hoshuyama, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso no Umi no Oya? [The Mother of the Basic Defense Force Concept?]," *Nihon no Kaze* [Wind of Japan] (vol.1), March 2005. [Online] Available at: http://www1.r3.rosenet.jp/nb3hoshu/KibanBoUmioya20041213.htm [Accessed on May 21, 2012].

7 For instance, the often used definition of the Basic Defense Force Concept "Japan is to possess the minimum necessary level of basic defense capability as an independent nation so that it would not become an unstable element in this region by becoming a power vacuum rather than aiming at directly countering a military threat to the country" was first used in *Defense of Japan 1992*. *Defense of Japan 1992* (English version), pp.110-111. This also leaves an impression of tautology.

1. "The Kubo Concept" and the "Constantly Maintained Defense Force"

As discussed, the outline of the Kubo Concept was created in the early 1970s. What drove this development was the wandering and derailment of the "4th Defense Build-up Plan (*Dai 4 Ji Boeiryoku Seibi Keikaku*)" from its original intentions.

Before the 1976 NDPO was set forth, the course of Japan's defense force had been determined by long-term defense build-up plans. The formulation of a long-term defense build-up plan was one of the agendas agreed between Shigeru Yoshida, the then Prime Minister of Japan, and Mamoru Shigemitsu, the then president of the *Kaishinto*, an opposition party, during a meeting held on September 27, 1953 for discussing the inauguration of the SDF. Act for Establishment of the Defense Agency which was enacted on June 9, 1954 after it was suggested at the meeting that the National Defense Programs Outline be discussed in the National Defense Council (*Kokubo Kaigi*), an organization to be established as a minister level council meeting chaired by Prime Minister to discuss important matters related to national defense. However, what was actually formulated was a 5-year plan called the "Defense Build-up Plan" or DBP. The Defense Build-up Plan was developed four times: the first Defense Build-up Plan on June 14, 1957 under the Nobusuke Kishi Administration; the second one on July 18, 1961 under the Hayato Ikeda Administration; and the third and fourth ones on November 29, 1966 and February 8, 1972, respectively, under the Eisaku Sato Administration. The plans are abbreviated as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th DBP (only the 1st DBP was a 3-year plan and the FY1961 was a single-year plan).

The original draft for the 4th DBP was compiled under the supervision of Yasuhiro Nakasone, the then Director General of the Defense Agency under the Sato Administration, and made public on October 21, 1970 (the draft is now known as the "Nakasone Concept"). However, the draft required an estimated 5.2 trillion yen budget, which was double the amount of the 3rd DBP, and thus came under criticism by the opposition parties and the public. As a result, the 4th DBP resorted to an unusual development process in which the outline were set forth first on February 8, 1972, and the 4th DBP itself was presented as the one whose scale had been drastically reduced from the draft and inaugurated on October 9 of the same year under the Kakuei Tanaka Administration. Moreover, other factors such as recession dealt a blow to the 4th DBP and the plan eventually expired without fulfilling its objectives. Moreover, the world was going through the era of "Détente" or easing of Cold War tensions between East and West which emerged in the late 1960s. These factors made it difficult for Japan to establish a conventional long-term defense build-up plan based on the Required Defense Force Concept and finally, it became virtually impossible to envision prospects for Japan's future defense policies following the 4th DBP. This is what we call the "Post-4th DBP problem."

The Kubo Concept was born out of the struggles and efforts made to break the stalemate over the feared stagnation of Japan's defense buildup. After that, Kubo repeatedly insisted in his works including the KB personal papers that, based on the idea that traditional counter-threat theory has failed, Japan should not strive to build a defense force that was practically impossible to establish but instead, in view of striking a balance between what is militarily reasonable and what is politically viable, should aim to develop a defense force that can function as a "resisting force (*teiko ryoku*)," namely, a defense force that has various defense functions, that is balanced in terms of functions and geographic dispersal, that is capable of coping independently with a limited war as a possible threat, and that is complete and expandable in times of heightened tension. Kubo also

added that Japan already acquired such defense force in terms of size.

Recollections of the personnel involved in the matter suggest that Kubo had begun working on this concept 10 years before he published the Kubo Concept the way described above, since when he was still the Director of the 1st Division of the Defense Bureau (August 1960 – April 1964). Seishi Tamaki who directly worked under Kubo at that time as a staff in the 1st division recalls that Kubo, who was writing something in his office almost every day, called Tamaki into his office one day around the fall of 1962 and said, "I believe that the defense capabilities to be maintained by Japan would have to be equipped with various functions, all at the minimum necessary level, and they should go through continuous training. This way, they can be expanded in times of high alert so that they can respond to the situation immediately. Am I wrong to think that way?" Kubo did not use the term "Basic Defense Force" at that time, but instead he described it as "expandable in a contingency." Tamaki says of the background as to how Kubo came up with such idea, "it was just one of Kubo's thoughts. It did not have any particular background. I may sound mean, but he was very much fixated on the act of coming up with unique concepts."[8]

In fact, Kubo was not the only one who was seeking a new defense concept after having recognized the limitations of the Required Defense Force Concept. Another study had already been taking place within the Internal Bureau of the Defense Agency at a staff level several years before Kubo compiled the KB personal paper in February of 1971.[9] Evidence of such study can be seen in the "quasi readiness" theory described in a document titled "Material for Discussion on the 4th DBP" that Nishihiro and Hoshuyama, senior staff and staff attached to the Planning Officer of the Defense Bureau respectively, compiled on October 22, 1969 as part of a study conducted in 1969 within the agency on long-term plan for a ground defense force. The theory proposed a structure "that comprises sufficient units to provide the required defense capabilities, with only a part of them being fully staffed and combat ready with the SDF personnel and all the other units by the SDF personnel only in their key personnel positions; and that can turn into a fully combat-ready position through the urgent recruitment and incorporation of the SDF reserve personnel (including provision of necessary education and training), and other measures such as emergency procurement of staff while gearing up for a specific operation."[10] Based on this theory, the document argued that "there is a concern that such quasi-readiness" posture will not fulfill the role of a defense force given the nature of modern warfare. At the same time, this posture is born out of a compromise between full readiness posture and non-readiness posture, and therefore the inefficiency of the former and the risk that comes with the latter will reduce, making the theory more convincing, but it can turn closer to non-readiness on some situations." With that said, the document concluded that "under the current circumstances, we may opt for quasi-readiness."

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8 Interview with Seishi Tamaki conducted by the author and others. National Institute for Defense Studies [hereafter NIDS] (eds.), "Tamaki Seishi Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Seishi Tamaki] in *Oraru Hisutori Reisenki no Boeiryoku Seibi to Domei Seisaku (1) – Yojibo Made no Boeiryoku Seibi to Nichi-Bei Anpo Taisei no Keisei* [Oral History, Defense Buildup and Alliance Policy During the Cold War (1) – Defense Buildup Until the 4th DBP and Formation of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangement], NIDS, 2012, pp.52-54.

9 GRIPS (ed.), *Hoshuyama Noboru Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Noboru Hoshuyama] (vol.1), GRIPS, 2005, p.93.

10 "Yojibo Shingi Shiryo (Rikuji Kankei no. 01) Rikuji no Jyoji Iji Subeki Taisei ni Tsuite [Material for Discussion on the 4th DBP (with Regards to the GSDF No. 01) Posture the GSDF Should Maintain at All Times], Hoshuyama Noboru Kankei Bunsho [Documents Related to Noboru Hoshuyama] (6-1), pp.3-4 [Archived in Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room of the National Diet Library in Japan].

Nishihiro and Hoshuyama's quasi-readiness theory, however, was shelved as Motoo Shishido, the then Director General of the Defense Bureau, disapproved of the idea after being briefed about it.[11] The theory was proposed only as a reference in the discussion about the quota issue of the Ground Self-Defense Force by working-level staff. However, the two staff, Nishihiro and Hoshuyama, came to play important roles later on as the Director and senior staff of the Defense Division in formulating the 1976 NDPO.

The failure of Nishihiro and Hoshuyama's quasi-readiness theory in December of 1969 was followed by a series of developments such as the announcement of the Nakasone Concept in October 1970; Kubo's assumption of the position of Director General of the Defense Bureau in the following month; the production of the KB personal paper in February of the following year; the formulation of the 4th DBP a year later in February of 1972; the announcement of the Defense Agency's view on "Defense Strength in Peacetime" in February 1973 which reflected the Kubo Concept (the view assumed that a defense force in peacetime be made up of the GSDF 5 Armies, 13 Divisions and 180,000 persons; the MSDF 5 Districts, 4 or 5 Escort Flotillas, about 250,000 to 280,000 tonnage worth of ships; and the ASDF 3 Air defense Forces, 8 Air Wings, 1 Air Composite Division, about 800 aircraft)[12]; and the production of another KB personal paper in June 1974. The month after Kubo finished writing "A Framework to Consider the Arrangement of Japan's Defense Capabilities," he left the Internal Bureau to become the Director General of the Defense Facilities Administration Agency.

On October 28, 1974, with Kubo gone from the Internal Bureau, a meeting group called the "N Study Group" was established in the agency under then Director of the Defense Division Natsume to study how the "Post-4th DBP" should be (N came from Natsume's initial).[13] The deadline for the "Post-4th DBP" was drawing closer; it was set at the time when the budget for FY1977, which is the following year of 1976, the final year of the 4th DBP, was compiled (the end of 1976). Hoshuyama, who was transferred to the Defense Division in June of 1974 (served as senior staff from May 1976 through April 1978) and a member of the study group, recalls that the group met eight times in total with working-level staff from the Defense Bureau and the Staff Offices of respective service branches sharing ideas about long-term plans.[14]

Natsume, who was also aware of the limitations of the traditional Required Defense Force Concept, said "I invented the term *Constantly Maintained Defense Force* [*Jyobi Subeki Boeiryoku*], which, again, sounded rather small (emphasis in italic is by the author). He continued to say that "the visions of defense buildup the people in uniform and we had in mind was impossible to realize. … We discussed if there were reasonable ways to persuade the people in uniform."[15] On the other

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11 "Rikuji Kankei Keikaku no Mondaiten to Seiri no Hoko [Problems in the Plans Related to the GSDF and Directions for Consolidation]," Hoshuyama Kankei Bunsho (7-1); Hoshuyama, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso no Umi no Oya?"

12 Minister Keikichi Masuhara's response during the 3rd Budget Committee of the 71st House of Representatives, the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors, Kokkai Kaigiroku [Minutes of the Diet] [Online] Available at: http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/swk_dispdoc.cgi?SESSION=25715&SAVED_RID=1&PAGE=0&POS=0&TOTAL=0&SRV_ID=4&DOC_ID=15469&DPAGE=1&DTOTAL=6&DPOS=6&SORT_DIR=1&SORT_TYPE=0&MODE=1&DMY=25791 [Accessed on May 21, 2012].

13 GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.1), p.146.

14 *Ibid*., p.146.

15 GRIPS (eds.), *Natsume Oraru Hisutori*, p.157, p.181.

hand, Natsume speaks of the concept which was being studied inside the Defense Division as: "it was by coincidence that the concept had a similar name to Kubo's idea" and "the concept was probably similar to what Kubo had in mind for a defense strength in peacetime." Having said that, Natsume added that "the concept, in principle, did not deny the presence of possible threats" but rather "it incorporated the presence of possible threats."[16] The reason why the N Study Group tried to distance itself from Kubo's beyond-the-threat theory is evident in a document titled "Current Challenges and Guidelines for the Next DBP (Draft)" which Hoshuyama submitted as a counter argument to the KB personal paper during a meeting held by Ko Maruyama, the then Director General of the Defense Bureau (who succeeded Kubo in June), on December 12 to discuss work guidelines on the development of the Post-4th DBP.[17]

> "2) I or anyone should have no objection to the basic perceptions and recognized problems proposed in the KB personal paper [("A Framework to Consider the Arrangement of Japan's Defense Capabilities")], assuming that the paper proposes that the significance and roles of Japan's defense force be presented in a manner that is more acceptable to the public, and defense capabilities be developed in a way that not only fulfills this need but also has military significance. Personally speaking, I have basically no objection to the basic perceptions, the significance and roles of the defense force, and the premise for the development of a defense force that are presented in the paper. Yet, there is an issue with the paper. Just as it was so in the first phase of developing the 4th DBP, if we are to measure or evaluate the validity of the quality and quantity of the defense force Japan currently maintains or plans to develop by using the significance and roles of the defense force like the ones presented in the report as evaluation standards or criteria, we will face a great challenge. The paper, however, does not propose any solutions to address this issue. Therefore it is impossible to understand in an objective sense the statements such as 'Japan's defense force should neither be too large nor too little' (p. 36) and 'the defense force needs to be as effective resistance force as possible' (p. 37) because no evaluation criteria are presented in the paper. For this reason, we find it difficult to evaluate a defense force or calculate a targeted defense force based on this paper as we proceed with the current preliminary work;
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> 3) Based on such understanding, our preliminary work will take a traditional approach of evaluating and calculating a defense force based on the traditionally Required Defense Force. And at the same time, we will also launch a study which will allow us to find a common ground between the significance and roles of a defense force presented in the paper and a defense force based on the Required Defense Force."[18]

Hoshuyama decided to "take a traditional approach of evaluating and calculating a defense force based on the traditionally Required Defense Force" to develop the Post-4th DBP, for it was

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16 *Ibid*., p.163, p.157.

17 "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Koso no Haikei, Sakutei Keika Kanren Memo [The Background of the 'Basic Defense Force' Concept and the Process of Its Formulation]," in GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.2), p.249.

18 Defense Division, Bureau of Defense, "Jikibo no Tomen no Kadai to Hoshin (An) [Current Challenges and Guidelines for the Next DBP (Draft)]," (December 12, 1974), Hoshuyama Kankei Bunsho (9-2), pp.5-8.

impossible to do the same based on the KB personal paper. That is to say that their work would be based on metrical study results (so-called "*akahon"*) known as operations research (OR).[19] Unlike Kubo who was allowed to think freely as the Director General of the Defense Bureau, the personnel in charge of the Post-4th DBP had to consider concrete plans for unit organization and equipment procurement, apart from ideals.

Then, how is the concept of a Constantly Maintained Defense Force different from the Required Defense Force Concept which is a traditional counter-threat theory? The concept of a Constantly Maintained Defense Force is different from the Required Defense Force Concept in that it revises a recognized level of threat downward and lowers a targeted level of the defense force. Hoshuyama is quoted as saying, "the relationships with what already exist will not change. What will change are the targets."[20] With that in mind, "Current Challenges and Guidelines for the Next DBP (Draft)" will allow a "study to find a common ground between the significance and roles of defense force the KB personal paper presented and defense force based on the Required Defense Force" to be conducted. The term "Constantly Maintained Defense Force" appeared in a written request titled "Study on the Constantly Maintained Defense Force (Request)" issued to the Joint Staff and the Staff Offices of Ground, Maritime, and Air branches on February 15, 1975 under the name of Director of the Defense Division Natsume, in a document titled "Study on the Constantly Maintained Defense Force (Notice)" issued on April 7 under the name of Administrative Vice-Minister Kazumasa Tashiro, and in the "2nd Order from the Director General of the Defense Agency," which will be mentioned later in this article.[21]

Taizo Terashima, who was part of the N Study Group as a staff in the 3rd Operation Planning Section of the Ground Staff Office at that time, said that although the group did not produce a conclusion, deliberations in the group had some impact on the work of the Defense Division.[22] Yasutomo Mitsui who joined the Defense Division as a staff in March 1975 shortly after Terashima recalls that there was an atmosphere of "putting the KB personal paper aside" in the division in those days.[23] As mentioned earlier, Kubo was not in the Internal Bureau then. And Hoshuyama, who was a member of the N Study Group and critical of beyond-the-threat theory, would later become involved in the formulation process of the 1976 NDPO. Hoshuyama stated that the Constantly Maintained Defense Force was the "precursor of the Basic Defense Force Concept."[24]

2. Path towards the National Defense Program Outline

Then, on December 9, 1974, three days prior to the discussion with Director General of the Defense Bureau Maruyama in which Hoshuyama supposedly argued that the Kubo Concept would not

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19 GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.1), p.67.

20 *Ibid*., p.167.

21 "Jyobi Subeki Boeiryoku no Kento ni Tsuite (Irai) [Study on the Constantly Maintained Defense Force (Request)]," Bo Bo No. 556, (February 15, 1975), Hoshuyama Kankei Bunsho (9-6); "Jyobi Subeki Boeiryoku no Kento ni Tsuite (Tsutatsu) [Study on the Constantly Maintained Defense Force (Notice)]," Bo Bo Bo No. 1529, (April 7, 1975), Houshuyama Kankei Bunsho (9-8).

22 NIDS (eds.), "Terashima Taizo Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Taizo Terashima], in NIDS (eds.), *Oraru Hisutori Reisenki no Boeiryoku Seibi to Domei Seisaku* (4), NIDS, 2015, pp.78-79.

23 Interview with Yasutomo Mitsui conducted by the author and others. NIDS (eds.), "Mitsui Yasutomo Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Yasutomo Mitsui]," in *Oraru Hisutori Reisenki no Boeiryoku Seibi to Domei Seisaku* (4), p.282.

24 Hoshuyama, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso no Umi no Oya?"

serve as guidelines for the work[25], the Miki Administration was inaugurated and Michita Sakata was appointed as the Director General of the Defense Agency. Sakata, a politician with ties to educational policy, had no prior experience in defense policies. On the other hand, his experience of handling the campus disputes made him recognize the importance of getting a "consensus of the public," which he strongly emphasized in security policies as well.[26] Sakata established his personal advisory board called "Committee to Study Defense (*Boei wo Kangaeru Kai*)" on March 2, 1975. The committee meeting was held six times between April 7 and June 20. The work by the Defense Bureau was suspended at Vice-Minister Tashiro's direction who believed the Defense Bureau should wait for a conclusion by the committee.[27] Sakata issued an order titled "Director General's Order Regarding the Development of Defense Build-up Plans After 1977," also known as the "1st Order from the Director General of the Defense Agency," on April 1, a week before the Committee to Study Defense held its first meeting.[28] The order incorporated ideas similar to the Kubo Concept such as "limited armed conflict" and "balance with front defense force."

On July 15, Kubo returned to the Defense Agency to relieve Tashiro of Administrative Vice-Minister. Kubo's assumption of office brought a change to the atmosphere in the agency surrounding the Post-4th DBP issues. Tamaki, who had worked under Kubo when Kubo was Director of the 1st Division of the Defense Bureau and who was Deputy Vice-Minister at that time, recalled "there was a time when Kubo's expansion theory was brought up but was immediately turned down as something impossible. However, things were different now that the KB personal paper is what the Administrative Vice-Minister believed in."[29]

Moreover, the Kubo Concept coincided with Sakata's taste.[30] Then, "denial force (*boshi ryoku*)," a notion close to the Kubo Concept, was proposed in a report submitted by the Committee to Study Defense on September 30. The denial force proposed in the report differs from the deterrent force in that it refers to "an effect on potential foes that makes them recognize that invading Japan would bring about significant sacrifice and high costs, which make them think twice before resorting to the use of force."[31] Thus, the Kubo Concept came to gain more importance in the agency with Sakata who approved of the concept serving as the Director General of the Agency, Kubo as the Administrative Vice-Minister, and the Committee to Study Defense report in favor of the concept.

However, that did not mean the subsequent formulation of the Post-4th DBP was carried out based on the Kubo Concept; it was not that simple. On September 5, about three weeks before

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25 GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.1), p.148, p.159.

26 Michita Sakata, *Chiisakutemo Okina Yakuwari* [Small Organization, But Big Role], Asagumo Shimbunsha, 1977, p.5.

27 GRIPS (eds.), *Natsume Oraru Hisutori*, p.168, p.181.

28 "Showa 52 Nen Iko no Boeiryoku Seibi Keikaku An no Sakusei ni Kansuru Chokan Shiji [Director General's Order Regarding the Development of Defense Build-up Plans After 1977]" (April 1, 1975), in GRIPS (eds.), *Ito Keiichi Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Keiichi Ito] (vol.2), 2003, pp.265-270.

29 Seishi Tamaki, Hiroshi Shinohara, Katsumi Takeoka, Yoshimasa Nakajima, "Kubo San wo Shinobu [In Memory of Kubo]," in *Kubo Iko / Tsuito Shu*, p.422.

30 "Sakata Michita Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Michita Sakata]," 1996, p.4, U.S. – Japan Project, Oral History Program, National Security Archives [hereafter NSA], [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/sakata.pdf> [Accessed on February 7, 2013].

31 Committee to Study Defense (eds.), *Wagakuni no Boei wo Kangaeru* [Study Japan's Defense], Asagumo Shimbunsha, 1975, pp.42-43.

the committee submitted the report, Seiki Nishihiro had returned to the Defense Division as its Director to succeed Natsume.

Nishihiro, who proposed the quasi-readiness theory with Noboru Hoshuyama in the Defense Division, had been away from the frontline of defense policies while taking up positions such as Director of Finance positions in Technical Research and Development Institute and the Accounting Bureau. Kazuo Fujii, a staff in the Administration Division of the Director General's Secretariat at that time, stated "Natsume succeeded Nishihiro as Director of the Defense Division. I believe this was a turning point."[32] While Kubo took more of a theoretical approach to the issues related to the Post-4th DBP, Nishihiro's way of thinking was more pragmatic. Nishihiro was struggling to create a new method of developing defense force other than 5-year plan or single-year plan while also working on an ideological question of whether to choose beyond-the-threat theory or counter-threat theory.[33] Nishihiro stated, "My predecessor [Natsume] was hesitant about creating [a 5-year plan] knowing it would be pathetic," "I wanted to take the easy way out by chanting some sort of mantras."[34] The "mantra" Nishihiro chose was the "National Defense Program Outline" which had been an agenda on the National Defense Council but never been set forth with a specific name.[35] The National Defense Program Outline differ from traditional 5-year plans in a sense that they do not have a specific term of years and they were not included in the prescribed budget. Thus prospects for formulating the National Defense Program Outline as the Post-4th DBP in place of traditional 5-year plans emerged right after Nishihiro's assumption of office as Director of the Defense Division through 1976.[36] Unlike Kubo who pursued a new defense concept like a "seeker after truth" (Mitsui),[37] the urgent task for Nishihiro who was in charge of the Post-4th DBP as the Director and his boss Maruyama was to come up with a new method for developing defense force other than 5-year plan and single-year plan within a limited time. The Basic Defense Force Concept was apparently used to justify their decision to transfer to a new method, the NDPO method. In fact, it was becoming a consensus among the personnel involved in the process that the Required Defense Force Concept, which demands constant evaluation of the latest military power of the neighboring countries, was not the right concept to use for formulating a long-term plan with no specific time period.[38]

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32 "Fujii Kazuo Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Kazuo Fujii]," 1997, pp.12-13, U.S. – Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA, [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/fujii.pdf> [Accessed on January 10, 2013].

33 Yasutomo Mitsui, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso Mosaku no Koro [Time around We Explored the Basic Defense Force Concept]," in Nishihiro Seiki Tsuito Shu Kankokai (eds.), *Tsuito Shu Nishihiro Seiki* [Memorial Tribute Collection for Seiki Nishihiro], Nishihiro Seiki Tsuito Shu Kankoukai, 1996, p.134.

34 "Nishihiro Seiki Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Seiki Nishihiro]," 1995, p.9, U.S. – Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA, [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/nishihiro.pdf> [Accessed on February 7, 2013].

35 "Maruyama Ko Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Ko Maruyama]," 1996, pp.5-6, U.S. – Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA, [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/maruyama.pdf> [Accessed on February 7, 2013].

36 Interview with Mitsui conducted by the author and others. NIDS (eds.), "Mitsui Oral Hisutori," p.281; GRIPS (eds.), *Ito Oraru Hisutori* (vol.2), p.152.

37 Mitsui, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso Mosaku no Koro," p.134.

38 Noboru Kousa, "Meikakuka Sareta 'Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso' – 'Boei Keikaku no Taiko' no Tokucho to Kadai [Clarified 'Basic Defense Force Concept' – Characteristics and Challenges of the NDPO], *Kokubo* [National Defense], no. 26-1, January 1977, p.40. "Noboru Kousa" is Hoshuyama's pen name.

Sakata issued the "2nd Director General's Order Regarding the Development of Defense Buildup Plans Beyond 1977" on October 29, a month after Nishihiro assumed the position of Director of the Defense Division. The order established "the significance of maintaining defense force in security policies and the way defense force should be, including the structure of defense force to be developed in response to the power status and situation of the nation," which was slated to be presented following the 1st Director General's Order in April. The term "constantly maintained defense force" developed in the N Study Group was used along with "basic" to discuss new defense concepts in the 2nd Director General's Order.[39] Just around this time, disagreement in the interpretation of the Basic Defense Force Concept started surfacing among the personnel concerned. The Defense Division sorted out the matter by responding to questions in the document they submitted to the Diet on October 28. The document explained that "what we are considering now is 'defense force to be maintained constantly,' which means defense capabilities that Japan needs to have constantly, and given that nature, it is safe to say it can be described as 'Basic Defense Force' because that it has a basis that can be smoothly changed to form a required defense structure."[40] While the Defense Division led by Nishihiro described the "nature" of the Constantly Maintained Defense Force as the "Basic Defense Force," Kubo believed these were two different things. Minutes of a Defense Councilor meeting held on March 29, 1976 show that Kubo, asked if "the Constantly Maintained Defense Force and the Basic Defense Force are the same," answered "no."[41]

Moreover, Kubo supposedly made a comment during the series of meeting which gave an impression that he agreed to tone down the nature of his theory from that of beyond-the-threat theory to counter "low-threat" theory. Hoshuyama noted "Administrative Vice-Minister Kubo is not content" in his memo regarding "coordinating views on the 2nd Director General's Order among the main parties and the minister" which took place on October 13 through 16, 1975.[42] Kubo would not have expressed his discontent had his proposal been accepted. Admiral Hiroichi Samejima, Chief of the MSDF at that time, testified: "We came to a conclusion, after deliberation [regarding the 2nd Director General's Order], that not beyond-the-threat but counter low-threat would be a goal for defense force" and Kubo eventually "agreed to tone down the nature of his proposal from that of beyond-the-threat to counter low-threat."[43] Counter low-threat theory allowed room for compromise with the people in uniform.

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39 "Showa 52 Nendo Iko no Boeiryoku Seibi Keikaku An no Sakusei ni Kansuru Dai 2 Ji Chokan Shiji [2nd Director General's Order Regarding the Development of Defense Build-up Plans After 1977]" (October 29, 1975), in GRIPS (eds.), *Ito Oraru Hisutori* (vol.2), pp.271-274.

40 Defense Division of the Bureau of Defense, "Shu Yo Tai Chokan 50. 10. 28 Yamada Taro (Ko) Toi 2-4 [Budget Committee of the House of Representatives vs. Director General 50. 10. 28 Taro Yamada (The *Komeito*) Question 2-4]," Historical Division of Defense Agency, *Kokkai Toben Shiryo Dai 76 Kai (Showa 50 Nen) 2/4* [Reference for Responding in the 76th Diet (1975) 2/4] (Main building-4A-034-00/2005 Defense 01212100) [Archived in National Archives of Japan].

41 "Hakusho (Dai 2 Sho Posuto Yojibo) ni Kansuru Sanjikan Kaigi Gijiroku Yoshi [Abstract of Minutes from Councilors Meeting on Defense White Paper (Chapter 2 Post 4th DBP)], (March 29, 1976), Historical Division of Defense Agency, *Sanjikan Kaigi Giji Yoroku (Showa 51 Nen)* [Abstract of Minutes from Councilors Meeting (1976)], p.1174 (Main building-4A-034-00/2005 Defense 01212100) [Archived in National Archives of Japan].

42 "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Koso no Haikei, Sakutei Keika Kanren Memo," p.250.

43 "Samejima Hiroichi Oraru Hisutori [Oral History of Hiroichi Samejima]," 1997, p.5, p.7, U.S. – Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA, [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/samejima.pdf> [Accessed on February 7, 2013].

Defense of Japan, which was published only once under Nakasone when he was the Director General of the Defense Agency, was again to be published at Sakata's discretion. Based on Sakata's belief that the formulation process of the NDPO should be open to the public, it was decided that the way of thinking for the Basic Defense Force Concept at that time would be made public in the paper prior to formulating the NDPO.[44] Kubo was passionate about drafting *Defense of Japan 1976*, but he again went back to his original belief, which created disagreement between him and the people in uniform who considered the Basic Defense Force Concept as a form of counter low-threat theory. The then Chief of the MSDF Admiral Teiji Nakamura (succeeded Samejima) criticized the paper by saying "the paper makes me wonder if it was really compiled by the Defense Agency" during a Defense Councilor meeting held on March 19, 1976 to discuss the paper.[45] Nakamura says "a very clear gap in views appeared" between Kubo and the people in uniform who believed the SDF's raison d'etre lies in its ability to respond to an invasion.[46]

The personnel concerned were so fixated on the difference between beyond-the-threat theory and counter low-threat theory not only because it had a lot to do with their principles but also because, at that time, it was believed the size of defense force would possibly be different depending on which theory to adopt. Hoshuyama stated that the formula of "the Required Defense Force > the Constantly Maintained Defense Force > current defense force > the Basic Defense Force" was shared among the personnel concerned at that time.[47] Hoshuyama also said "the term 'Basic Defense Force' was unpopular because the advocate of the concept acted as if he envisaged something smaller than the current defense force when he used the term."[48]

Defense of Japan 1976 was published on June 4. Not only did the paper bring back the phrase "Defense Strength in Peacetime," it also used expressions including "rather than capable of handling a specific, imminent threat of invasion" and "based on a peacetime conception," which heavily hinted beyond-the-threat theory, and which was not used in the NDPO. Kubo successfully incorporated expressions that carried a sense of beyond-the-threat theory despite the opposition from the people in uniform. Despite this, Kubo was forced to leave the Defense Agency right after the paper was published as a result of a careless comment he had made about four months earlier.

During a regular news conference held on February 9 of the same year, Kubo stated in relation to the Lockheed scandal that the decision was made to call off the plan to start domestic production of a future anti-submarine patrol aircraft (PX-L) in a National Defense Council meeting on October 9, 1972 a result of a negotiation among Prime Minister Tanaka, Chief Cabinet Secretary Masaharu Gotoda, and Director General of the Budget Bureau of the Ministry of Finance Hideyuki Aizawa right before the meeting. Kubo made this comment to emphasize that the Defense Agency

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44 *Defense of Japan 1976*, pp.2-3.

45 "Rinji Sanjikan Kaigi Gijiroku Yoshi – Hakusho Kankei (Dai 1 Sho) [Abstract of Minutes from Extraordinary Councilors Meeting – on White Paper (Chapter 1)]," (March 19, 1976) *Sanjikan Kaigi Giji Yoroku (Showa 51 Nen) 1/2* [Abstract of Minutes from Councilors Meeting (1976) 1/2], p.104.

46 NIDS (eds.), *Nakamura Teiji Oraru Hisutorii* [Oral History of Teiji Nakamura] (vol.2), NIDS, 2006, pp.221-222.

47 Noboru Hoshuyama, "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Seisaku Kettei Katei ni Kansuru Ichi Kosatsu ni Taisuru Komento [Commentary on a View on the Policy Making Process of the "Basic Defense Force"] (August 3, 2011), *National Defense Observation Center*, [Online] Available at: <http://www1.r3.rosenet.jp/nb3hoshu/Kibantekiboueiryoku%20Bouken.html> [Accessed on November 5, 2012].

48 Ibid.

had been effectively excluded from the talk by the time the plan was called off amidst the growing consequences of the Lockheed scandal that seemed likely to affect not only the introduction of a commercial cargo aircraft Tristar but also the PX-L. Despite the original intention, his comment was perceived as implying Tanaka, Gotoda, and Aizawa did have a part in the Lockheed scandal and caused wide repercussions in various fields. Sakata gave Kubo an admonition on February 21.[49] Kubo left the Defense Agency on July 16, a month after the defense paper was published, without witnessing the completion of the NDPO 1976. Masamori Sase who wrote a biography of Sakata pointed out: "there is no denying the fact that Kubo's imprudent comment moved his retirement date forward."[50] This is how Kubo left the Defense Agency without having any part in the final phase of formulating the NDPO.

3. Introduction of the Basic Defense Force Concept and "Validation Theory"

The formulation work of the NDPO was carried out at Sakata's discretion on April 5 with the Defense Bureau in lead, while the Staff Offices of Ground, Maritime, and Air branches came up with development targets and plans.[51] "Defense Bureau's Draft" was submitted to the Defense Agency Councilors and then reported to the Director General of the Defense Agency in the end of May, and "Drafting Defense Bureau's Plan for the Constantly Maintained Defense Force (Plan of June 1, 1975) (Classified)" was compiled on June 1, which was three days before *Defense of Japan 1976* was published.[52] Furthermore, a tentative plan for the NDPO ("Basic Guidelines for Defense Buildup Beyond 1977 (Tentative Plan as of June 5, 1977)") was compiled inside the Defense Division on the 5th of the same month, a day after the defense paper was published, based on what had been studied so far.[53] This tentative plan was sent to the Defense Division on the 11th, to the Defense Bureau on the 14th for deliberation, and to the Staff Offices of each service branch on the 17th for coordination, before Sakata was given an interim report on the plan on the 24th.[54] After the Administrative Vice-Minister of the Agency and the Director General of the Defense Bureau have been replaced on July 16 (Maruyama relieved Kubo of the Administrative Vice-Minister of the Agency and Keiichi Ito relieved Maruyama of the Director General of the Defense Bureau), the "Framework to Consider 'Basic Defense Force Development' (Defense Bureau's Tentative Plan)," the first "draft proposal" for the NDPO, was submitted to the Secretariat of the National Defense Council on July 24 as a Defense Bureau's tentative plan, together with a tentative "attached table (*beppyo*)" showing a concrete plan for unit organization and equipment procurement.[55]

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49 *Asahi Shimbun* [Asahi Newspaper], February 22, 1976.

50 Masamori Sase, *Mushiro Shiroto no Ho ga Yoi – Boeicho Chokan Sakata Michita ga Nashitogeta Seisaku no Dai Tenkan* [It is Better with an Amateur – Pivotal Turn in Policy Director General of Defense Agency Michita Sakata Accomplished], Shinchosha, 2014, p.174.

51 Committee on Compiling the 50th Anniversary of the JMSDF (eds.), *Kaijo Jieitai 50 Nen Shi, Honpen* [50 Years of the JMSDF, Original Story], Boeicho Kaijo Bakuryo Kanbu, 2003, p.123; "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Koso no Haikei, Sakutei Keika Kanren Memo," p.250.

52 "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Koso no Haikei, Sakutei Keika Kanren Memo," p.250.

53 "Showa 52 Nendo Iko no Boeiryoku Seibi no Kihon Hoshin (52. 6. 5 Shian) [Basic Guidelines for Defense Buildup Beyond 1977 (Tentative Plan of June 5, 1977)]," Hoshuyama Kankei Bunsho (16-2).

54 "'Kibanteki Boeiryoku' Koso no Haikei, Sakutei Keika Kanren Memo," p.250.

55 Ibid.

On July 12, Prime Minister Miki made inquiries to the National Defense Council concerning the NDPO based on Article 62 of the Act for Establishment of Defense Agency.[56] The National Defense Council meetings to discuss the NDPO were held seven times in total, with the first one convened on the 13th, the following day of Prime Minister Miki's inquiries, followed by the ones held on August 10 and 20, October 13, 20, 27, and 29, respectively. Formal and informal member meetings, and councilors meetings of the National Defense Council, which had been held on a regular basis since the 2nd Director General's Order was issued in October in the previous year, continued to be held since July 13 along with National Defense Council meetings. And a draft for the NDPO was drawn up based on the "Framework to Consider 'Basic Defense Force Development'" in the Secretariat of the National Defense Council.[57] The topics discussed in the National Defense Council were narrowed down to: whether to adapt the Basic Defense Force Concept; whether to make a transition from the traditional 5-year plan to the NDPO; and whether to set a defense budget after the 4th DBP within 1% of GNP. After the members of the National Defense Council were briefed about the international situation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Defense Agency in a meeting held on August 10, the National Defense Council meeting was called again on August 20 to have the council members briefed on the Basic Defense Force Concept which was being deliberated in the Defense Agency.[58] In a meeting held on October 13, the members on the Council basically agreed on proceeding further deliberation along the lines of the narrative of the Basic Defense Force Concept and also on not having a specific time period on future development plans,[59] while the question of whether to cap 1% of GNP for national defense was decided to be left for further deliberation.[60] It was in a National Defense Council meeting held on October 20 that the contents and structure of the NDPO were decided.[61] A National Defense Council meeting on October 27 approved the draft for the NDPO prepared by the Council secretariat after making some changes (on the Escort Flotillas of the MSDF),[62] and decided to deal with the issue of whether to cap 1% of GNP separately from the NDPO.[63] Thus, the 1976 NDPO (National Defense Program Outline for FY1977 and beyond) was officially approved in the National Defense Council and the Cabinet on October 29 and the Basic Defense Force Concept was adopted.

Here is a close look at whether the Basic Defense Force Concept is in fact a beyond-the-threat theory or a counter low-threat theory by taking the now official 1976 NDPO and official documents related to the Outline into consideration. As mentioned earlier, disagreement on whether

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56 Ibid.

57 Interview with Noboru Hoshuyama conducted by the author (Tokyo, March 8, 2013).

58 Defense Division of the Bureau of Defense, "'Boei Keikaku no Taiko' ni Kansuru Sotei Mondo (An) [Expected Questions Regarding the "NDPO" (Draft)], (November 2, 1976), Historical Division of Defense Agency, *Kokkai Toben Shiryo Dai 78 Kai (Showa 51 Nen) 2/2* [Reference for Responding in the 78th Diet (1976) 2/2] (Main building-4A-034-00/2005 Defense 00490100) [Archived in National Archives of Japan].

59 Ibid., p.1717

60 *Tokyo Shimbun* [Tokyo Newspaper], October 13, 1976.

61 "'Boei Keikaku no Taiko' ni Kansuru Soutei Mondou (An)," p.1718.

62 Ibid.

63 *Tokyo Shimbun* [Tokyo Newspaper], October 27, 1976 (Afternoon ver.). One week after the cabinet approval of the NDPO, the cabinet approved "With Regards to Defense Buildup in Meantime" and decided to "not allow the total of the fiscal year's defense budget to exceed 1% of GNP in meantime in building a defense force." "With Regards to Defense Buildup in Meantime" (Approved by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet on November 5, 1976).

to interpret the concept as a beyond-the-threat theory or a counter low-threat theory began to arise among the personnel concerned around the fall of 1975, about a year earlier to the establishment of the 1976 NDPO. Such disagreement was apparent in the drafting process of *Defense of Japan 1976* as well. While narratives that were reminiscent of beyond-the-threat theory and the Kubo Concept such as "with international and regional stability as a premise, emphasizing the posture of being on alert in peacetime rather than countering a specific threat" (comment by the Director General of the Defense Agency at the time of the 1976 NDPO formulation), "[T]his approach, which centers on quantitatively assessing defense capability based on peacetime defense preparedness" and "[I]t aims at developing a defense structure of clearly defined mission, with specific target goals and attainable with the foreseeable future" (*Defense of Japan 1977*) were used in the NDPO and its related documents,[64] ideas such as "resistance force" and "denial force" that were present in the KB personal paper and the report compiled by the Committee to Study Defense were not expressly mentioned in them. Furthermore, neither Kubo's thoughts nor the idea of consistency proposed in *Defense of Japan 1976* were mentioned at least in the main body of the NDPO 1976. Not only that, there were expressions suggestive of counter-threat theory such as "[T]he essential, universal nature of defense is preparedness to meet external threat. Obviously, any defense system which disregards external threat is inherently untenable" and "[T]he qualitative requirements of the Standard [Basic] Defense Force are defined as those elements of defense capability needed to confront threat" (*Defense of Japan 1977*).[65]

Actually, during the process of introducing the Basic Defense Force Concept, an attempt was made in the Defense Division to find the middle ground between beyond-the-threat theory and counter low-threat theory. It was also Nishihiro who managed to come up with ideas for the attempt. Mitsui is quoted as saying: "I believe the idea of beyond-the-threat was never Nishihiro's true intention. That is why Nishihiro focused on transforming beyond-the-threat theory into something acceptable as a realistic policy while claiming to uphold the theory." And he added:

> "Then validation theory (*kensho ron*) was born as a result of his efforts. Basically, Basic Defense Force is stand-alone; it elicits an answer from its own perspective with no ties to threats. Then its significance in terms of defense is validated by comparing it to threats surrounding Japan. Since we were able to confirm that the Basic Defense Force would be capable of effectively countering a 'limited and small-scale aggression' and, on top of that, the international situation was improving, we concluded that the Basic Defense Force was 'good enough' in this context even though it was not as extensive as the 4th DBP and DBPs before that had envisioned. This way of thinking was far from what bureaucrats would usually show, but this logic allowed us to conveniently say the Basic Defense Force was for both beyond-the-threat and counter-threat, and it gave comfort to the people in uniform."[66]

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64 *Defense of Japan 1977* (English version), p.49, p.53.

65 *Ibid*., p.52, p.74.

66 Mitsui, "Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso Mosaku no Koro," pp.134-135.

In essence, the logic of "validation theory" is that comparison between two sets of defense force derived based on beyond-the-threat theory and counter low-threat theory demonstrated that the two defense forces were approximately at the same level (according to Mitsui, validation theory was a very well-crafted logic, like a card up their sleeve, to give the finishing touch to bring the philosophy behind the NDPO to perfection. For this reason, Nishihiro and other members did not particularly focus on promoting the theory).[67]

In the first place, the Kubo Concept was not strictly a beyond-the-threat theory although it said it was. Because the Kubo Concept did envisage "threats," albeit on a small scale, such as a limited war, indirect invasion, and a surprise attack to which Japan would need to respond on its own. In other words, if we focus on the expression of "limited and small-scale," the notion of "repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance," a component of the Basic Defense Force Concept, could be interpreted as the opposite of the Required Defense Force Concept because, for example, it envisions such situation unilaterally. However, when emphasizing the expression of "repelling aggression (without external assistance)," it is a counter-threat theory. Because of this logical imperfection found in beyond-the-threat theory, the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance was proposed in validation theory as a bridge to link beyond-the-threat theory with counter low-threat theory.

4. Controversies following the formulation of the 1976 NDPO

The Defense Division of the Internal Bureau published a commentary titled "Regarding the NDPO" in November, which was right after the 1976 NDPO was set forth. In this commentary, the Basic Defense Force Concept was explained as "the thinking outside the box of counter-threat theory that proactively determines the size of the defense force, and aims to build defense force of the determined size and construct a small yet effective defense structure by utilizing this defense force in a contingency."[68] Moreover, comments such as "determining the size of a defense force mainly based on how much defense force is necessary in peacetime" and "(we) attempted to consolidate a defense posture that is achievable in a foreseeable future and realistic in a consistent way that has a certain meaning" which appeared in *Defense of Japan 1977* can be interpreted as having more in common with beyond-the-threat theory and the Kubo Concept. Kubo, who had already retired from the Defense Agency, continued to publish articles in specialty journals and in such writings, he intentionally included comments suggesting that the Basic Defense Force Concept in the NDPO 1976 was born out of "what Kubo have been proposing" (Hoshuyama).[69]

While the Basic Defense Force Concept was interpreted along the lines of beyond-the-threat theory in the commentary by the Defense Division, *Defense of Japan 1977*, and Kubo's commentary, there were people who found such treatments uncomfortable. Haruo Natsume, a former Director of the Defense Division (he was a councilor in the Director General's Secretariat at that time), commented on *Defense of Japan* by saying "the more we explain about it, the closer it gets to what is said in the KB personal paper. … The more we comment on it, the more we will

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67 Interview with Mitsui conducted by the author and others. NIDS (eds.), "Mitsui Oraru Hisutori," pp.309-310.

68 Defense Division of the Bureau of Defense (eds.), "'Boei Keikaku no Taiko' ni Tsuite [Regarding the NDPO]," *Boei Antena* [Defense Antena], no. 196, November 1976, pp.11-12.

69 GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.2), p.59; *Ibid*. (vol.1), p.89; See also, Takuya Kubo, "Boei Hakusho Atogaki – Shiken [Afterword for *Defense of Japan* – Personal View]," in *Kubo Iko / Tsuito Shu*, p.107.

have to explain how the idea of beyond-the-threat was important and necessary at that time. In other words, we would end up upsetting the people in uniform." Natsume also admitted that there were complaints made by the people in uniform including: "the NDPO was acceptable, but not *Defense of Japan*" and "we understand that they had no choice but to issue the NDPO, but why further confirm it in *Defense of Japan* too?"[70] Indeed, leaders of the people in uniform did publicly express their dissatisfaction in meetings on *Defense of Japan* 1977 in the agency. Minutes from an extraordinary Defense Councilor meeting held on May 6, 1977 show that Chief of the GSDF General Hiroomi Kurisu commented, "I believe last year's NDPO was wrong because they did not envision any threat."[71] In the same meeting, Chief of the MSDF Admiral Nakamura is also quoted as saying "the way the NDPO determined quantity is wrong (premised on the size of the force in peacetime and a limited and small-scale aggression). In the essence of defense, the size of force must be calculated based on threats" and "(NDPO) was set forth without getting a consensus on whether to employ beyond-the-threat or counter-threat," The Admiral went on to state confidently, "we could overlook other things, but we could never concede our philosophy that the essence of defense is in counter-threat."[72] Upon witnessing these arguments, Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense Ko Maruyama commented "(NDPO) is not necessarily beyond-the-threat."[73] It should be noted that there was still an argument going on in the pivotal part of the agency about "whether to determine the size of force from a perspective of peace time or from a perspective of counter-threat" even in May 1977, which was over a half year after the NDPO 1976 was set forth.[74]

The Office of Planning Officer of the Defense Bureau made a plan in response to a "Mid-term Planning Estimates (*Chuki Gyomu Mitsumori*)" (Estimates on the main work of the SDF for the next 5 years) compiled by the people in uniform in the fall of 1977. "Position Statement by Joint Staff Office and Staff Offices of Respective Services," a counter argument to this plan, criticized the Director General of the Defense Agency for saying "with international and regional stability as a premise, emphasizing the posture of being on alert in peace time rather than countering a specific threat," and it went even further to comment "the Director General's commentary made at the time of the formulation of the NDPO, and the briefing materials for external use that stated that 'quantity and threat do not correlate' are based on the unilateral misunderstanding on the Internal Bureau side and the Staff Offices have nothing to do with it."[75] Minutes from a Defense Councilor extraordinary meeting held on May 6, 1977 quote Admiral Nakamura as saying "the phrase 'not to counter a specific threat' was brought up during the National Defense Council. In response, we stated our thoughts and managed to have the phrase removed but it remains in the commentary of the Director General of the Defense Agency and public relations magazines (discontent)."[76]

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70 GRIPS (eds.), *Natsume Oraru Hisutori*, p.116, p.248.

71 "Sanjikan Kaigi Gijiroku [Minutes from Councilors Meeting]," Historical Division of Defense Agency, *Sanjikan Kaigi Giji Yoroku (Showa 52 Nen) 1/2* [Abstract of Minutes from Councilors Meeting (1977) 1/2], p.306, p.314 (Main building-4A-034-00/2005 Defense 01214100) [Archived in National Archives of Japan].

72 Ibid., p.305, p.309, p.312.

73 Ibid., p.314.

74 Ibid., p.310.

75 "'Keikaku (Toku ni Chugyo) Sakusei no Kihon Hoshin' (Keikakukanshitu An) ni Taisuru Tobaku Kaku Baku Iken [Position Statement by Joint Staff Office and Staff Offices of Respective Services on 'Basic Guidelines for Formulating Plans (Especially Mid-term Planning Estimates) (Plan by the Planning Officer's Office)" (November 16, 1977), Hoshuyama Kankei Bunsho (12-6).

76 "Sanjikan Kaigi Gijiroku" (May 6, 1977), pp.307-308.

In response to an interpretation of the Basic Defense Force Concept along the lines of beyond-the-threat theory, Hoshuyama, for instance, described the nature of the concept as a "defense theory in countering a small-scale, limited threat" and a "concept of the required defense force for a limited threat" in his report published in January of 1977.[77] Moreover, Hoshuyama later gave an explanation that the Basic Defense Force Concept was born by putting "makeup" on the "*akahon*" generated from counter low threat theory.[78]

Mitsui spoke of these controversies surrounding the Basic Defense Force Concept by saying "the concept is reasonably vague and what makes it unique is that such vagueness allows various interpretations."[79] He recalls the sentiment abound after the formulation of NDPO 1976 as follows:

> "Frankly speaking, the Basic Defense Force Concept says beyond-the-threat on one hand and aspires to respond to a limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance on the other hand. The question is which theory is given more importance. The people in uniform focused more on the countering a limited and small-scale threat part and the possibility of expansion suggested in the concept gave them some comfort. Other people, however, regarded the same part as a mere afterthought, and felt that idea of beyond-the-threat was the most important characteristic of the NDPO."[80]

These controversies show that the disagreement in whether the Basic Defense Force Concept should be interpreted along the lines of beyond-the-threat theory or counter low-threat theory was never quite resolved even after the NDPO 1976 was set forth.

Conclusion

The introduction process of the Basic Defense Force Concept has been described, on many occasions, as if the so-called "Kubo Concept" by Takuya Kubo had been formally adopted and incorporated into the 1976 NDPO in a straightforward manner. However, it is necessary to distinguish the concept of basic defense force Kubo personally upheld from the Basic Defense Force Concept the Japanese government adopted as an official guideline. In other words, "Kubo's view of history" needs to be understood in a relative sense. In reality, multiple interpretations emerged and coexisted in parallel including an interpretation along the lines of beyond-the-threat theory similar to the Kubo Concept, an interpretation similar to the Constantly Maintained Defense Force derived from the N Study Group (i.e. "the concept of required defense force for a limited threat") which is reminiscent of counter low-threat theory, and an interpretation similar to Nishihiro's validation theory which bridged the preceding two interpretations.

The Basic Defense Force Concept broke the stalemate after the 4th DBP lost its way and became deadlocked, and went on to play its role as a bridge to link the diverging views on how Japan's defense force should be structured. The NDPO 1995 "followed" the Basic Defense Force

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77 Kousa, "Meikakuka Sareta 'Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso'," p.40.

78 GRIPS (eds.), *Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori* (vol.1), p.67; "Hoshuyama Oraru Hisutori," U.S.-Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA, 1996, p.11.

79 Yasutomo Mitsui, "Taiko no Genten Kibanteki Boeiryoku Koso [Origin of the "NDPO," The Basic Defense Force Concept]," *Securitarian*, no. 398, April 1992, p.13.

80 Interview with Mitsui conducted by the author and others. NIDS (eds.), "Mitsui Oraru Hisutori," p.316.

Concept[81] and the NDPG 2004 "inherited" its "effective part."[82] The concept had remained as Japan's guidelines for defense for 34 years until the NDPG 2010 reviewed the concept saying "(the NDPG) should no longer be bound by the traditional 'Basic Defense Force Concept'."[83] During this time, explanations of the concept given by the Japanese government changed, and sometimes the concept became elusive as a defense concept, and at times, it brought about conceptual confusion or misunderstanding. It seems that that the way the NDPO 1976 was formulated has to do with how the Basic Defense Force Concept had remained as Japan's defense concept for such a long period of time and why it became elusive as a defense concept.

81 "National Defense Program Outline for FY1996 and Beyond" (Approved by the Security Council of Japan and the Cabinet on November 28, 1995).

82 "National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2005 and Beyond" (Approved by the Security Council of Japan and the Cabinet on December 10, 2004).

83 "National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and Beyond" (Approved by the Security Council of Japan and the Cabinet on December 17, 2010).