

JAPAN'S CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION

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Executive Summary

1. The overall security environment that Japan is facing is a fluid one, especially with the North Korean nuclear test, even as Japan revs up its role as a robust peacekeeper.
2. Internally, the country is also managing non-traditional security issues like disaster relief that can possibly be a study case for other countries in East Asia coping with natural disaster.
3. In the North Korean test, Japan plays an extremely important role for the international community. Its sophisticated monitoring devices make Japan the premium site for determining if North Korea is genuinely closer to possessing hydrogen bombs.
4. While waiting for the results, the Abe administration in Japan has condemned the test, citing it as a threat to peace.
5. It also provides Japan with the opportunity to rally with South Korea against a common threat, in view of recent improvement in relations. Both sides could also share intelligence.
6. Japan also has common priorities with China in stopping nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia. The H-bomb test may end up as a common rallying point for bringing Japan, China and South Korea together.
7. To cope with hard security issues, with wide public support, Japan is making important contributions to peace-keeping operations through the new security bill.
8. Under the Abe administration, Japan has instituted a new security law that permits Japan to send armed soldiers to assist UN peacekeepers who may sometimes come under hostile fire.

9. Besides hard security issues, Japan is also managing softer non-traditional security issues such as disaster relief in post-311 at home.
10. Japan is also repaying the international community for its assistance during the 311 with its preventive expertise as well as actual experience in disaster relief.