**Policy Proposal:**

**Allocating 1% of Japan's Defense Budget to UN Peacekeeping Operations**

**A New Integration of Multilayered Security Strategy and**

**International Responsibility**

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**Abstract**

Against the backdrop of Japan's increasing defense spending and declining UN assessed contributions, this paper examines the strategic significance of a policy to allocate 1% of Japan's defense budget to UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) and related international peace activities. This proposal aims to substantialize Japan's "proactive pacifism" in security policy and construct a comprehensive security strategy based on multilateral cooperation. The analysis demonstrates that this policy holds strategic value in restoring Japan's international influence, contributing to regional stability, and strengthening sustainable peacebuilding mechanisms.

**Keywords:** UN Peacekeeping Operations, Defense Budget, International Contribution, Multilateral Cooperation, Proactive Pacifism

**1. Introduction**

**1.1 Background of the Problem**

Looking at the international situation of the 21st century, we are acutely aware that we live in remarkably complex times. In addition to traditional military threats, new challenges that transcend borders—such as terrorism, cyber attacks, and climate change—are emerging one after another.

In this context, Japan decided to significantly increase its defense spending through the revision of the National Security Strategy in December 2022. The goal of raising defense spending to 2% of GDP by fiscal year 2027 represents a major turning point in Japan's postwar security policy.

On the other hand, there is a concerning trend. Japan's UN assessed contributions are declining due to the relative slowdown in nominal GDP growth. The assessment rate for the 2025-2027 period has dropped to 6.93%, which could affect Japan's international presence.

**1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Observing these contradictory trends raises one question: Are strengthening defense capabilities and peacebuilding through international cooperation truly incompatible?

This study examines a policy proposal to allocate 1% of Japan's defense budget to UN PKO and Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) activities as one answer to this question. This is not merely a fiscal matter, but a more fundamental inquiry into what kind of nation Japan should be in the 21st century.

**2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Research**

**2.1 Theoretical Foundation of Proactive Pacifism**

In Johan Galtung's peace studies theory, "positive peace" is defined as a concept that goes beyond the mere absence of violence (negative peace) to include the elimination of structural violence and the realization of social justice. Japan's "proactive pacifism" applies this theoretical foundation to foreign policy, emphasizing peacebuilding through international law and multilateral institutions.

**2.2 Contemporary Significance of Collective Security Theory**

The collective security system based on the UN Charter has acquired new importance in the multipolar international system following the end of the Cold War. In particular, UN PKO has developed as an integrated peace activity encompassing everything from preventive diplomacy to peacebuilding, playing a central role in preventing the internationalization of regional conflicts and institutionalizing sustainable peace.

**3. Historical Analysis of Japan's Contributions to UN PKO**

**3.1 Evolution of Financial Contributions (2000-2025)**

Japan's financial contributions to the UN PKO budget maintained the world's second-largest scale from the early 2000s to around 2015, contributing 18% at its peak, equivalent to 70-100 billion yen annually. This amount corresponded to 1.2-1.5% of Japan's defense-related expenses at the time, demonstrating Japan's substantial commitment to international peace.

**Table 1: Evolution of Japan's UN PKO Assessed Contributions**

| **Period** | **Assessment Rate** | **Contribution (100 million yen)** | **Ratio to Defense Budget** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2010-2012 | 12.5% | 850 | 1.4% |
| 2013-2015 | 10.8% | 720 | 1.2% |
| 2016-2018 | 9.7% | 680 | 1.1% |
| 2019-2021 | 8.5% | 620 | 1.0% |
| 2025-2027 | 6.93% | 420 | 0.7% |

**3.2 Diversification of Contribution Forms and Quality Improvement**

Japan's contributions to international peace have evolved beyond mere financial provision to multifaceted development. Particularly noteworthy is the development of the Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP).

**TPP's Multi-sector Initiatives**

TPP initially focused on technology transfer in the engineering (facilities) field, but has now expanded to encompass the following broad areas:

* **Medical Field**: Through the Field Medical Assistant Course (FMAC) and Training of Trainers (TOT), improving medical response capabilities of PKO deployment units and directly contributing to improved survival rates in the field
* **Engineering Field**: Technology transfer for infrastructure development including road construction, bridge building, and water supply system construction
* **Communications Field**: Training and equipment provision for information and communication technologies essential to modern PKO
* **Logistics**: Support for building efficient supply and transportation systems

These efforts are steadily contributing to building the foundation for African countries to independently conduct PKO activities.

**4. Current Situation Analysis: Strategic Implications of Declining Assessed Contributions**

**4.1 Quantitative Analysis**

The total UN PKO budget for 2025 is approximately $5.6 billion (about 840 billion yen), with Japan's assessed contribution being $420 million (about 63 billion yen). This corresponds to 0.72% of Japan's defense budget of 8.7 trillion yen for the same year, a significant decrease from the previous 1.2-1.5%.

**4.2 Multifaceted Assessment of Impact**

The decline in assessed contributions has brought about the following strategic impacts:

1. **Decline in Institutional Influence**: Weakening of Japan's voice in UN Security Council reform and PKO policy decision-making processes
2. **Spillover to Bilateral Relations**: Relative dilution of cooperative relationships with PKO-deploying countries
3. **Indirect Impact on Regional Stability**: Increased risk of instability in Africa and the Middle East regions

**5. Policy Proposal: Strategic Significance of Allocating 1% of Defense Budget**

**5.1 Overview of the Proposal**

This paper proposes that Japan allocate 1% of its defense budget (approximately 87-100 billion yen) to UN PKO and related international peace activities. This amount is approximately 1.5 times the current assessed contribution and would position Japan once again as one of the world's largest PKO support countries.

**5.2 Multilayered Analysis of Strategic Significance**

**5.2.1 Ensuring Integration of Security Strategy**

By simultaneously promoting defense capability enhancement and peacebuilding support, we can ensure consistency in Japan's security policy and realize the coexistence of "countering attempts to change the status quo by force" and "peacebuilding through cooperation."

**5.2.2 Restoration of Influence in Multilateral Diplomacy**

By restoring financial leadership in the PKO field, Japan can strengthen its policy initiatives in multilateral institutional reforms, including UN Security Council reform.

**5.2.3 Preventive Contributions to Regional Stability and Strengthening Peaceful Resolution Mechanisms**

For stabilizing the Africa and Middle East regions, Japan should simultaneously pursue two important approaches.

First is the continuation of post-conflict peace maintenance activities through traditional PKO support. However, more important is the second approach: strengthening the "peaceful settlement of disputes" mechanism based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

**Proposal for New Training Programs**

We propose expanding the TPP framework to create new training programs on "peaceful settlement of disputes" for African leaders and diplomats:

* **Preventive Diplomacy Training**: Learning methods to detect early signs of conflict and intervene before they develop into armed conflict
* **Mediation and Arbitration Techniques**: Integrated learning of traditional mediation methods and arbitration techniques based on international law
* **Dialogue Facilitation Techniques**: Facilitation techniques to promote constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders
* **Peacebuilding Planning**: Developing comprehensive planning capabilities for sustainable peacebuilding

Through such initiatives, we can chart a path toward fundamental solutions to transboundary threats such as refugee and migration issues, terrorism, and piracy.

**5.2.4 Promoting Domestic Political Consensus**

This can be expected to have the political effect of alleviating domestic and international concerns about defense spending increases and promoting national consensus as "increased spending for peace."

**5.3 Implementation Mechanism Design**

**5.3.1 Optimizing Fund Allocation**

The strategic allocation plan for 1% of the defense budget (approximately 87-100 billion yen) is as follows:

* **Direct Contribution to UN PKO Budget**: 60% (approximately 60 billion yen)
* **Expansion of TPP Programs**: 25% (approximately 25 billion yen)
	+ Strengthening traditional engineering and medical fields
	+ Newly established "Peaceful Settlement of Disputes" training programs
	+ Promoting South-South cooperation between Asia and Africa
* **Regional Organizations and Training Institution Support**: 15% (approximately 15 billion yen)
	+ Regional organizations such as AU (African Union) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)
	+ CCCPA (Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding)
	+ Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (Ghana)
	+ Other African regional peacekeeping training institutions

These regional training institutions provide practical training that leverages the characteristics of their respective regions, and Japanese support is expected to further strengthen their functions.

**5.3.2 Building an All-Japan System**

The success of this policy proposal requires an "All-Japan" approach that brings together not only government agencies but also Japan's knowledge and experience.

**Government Coordination System** A cross-ministerial coordination mechanism centering on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Finance will ensure policy consistency.

**Collaboration with the Private Sector** However, to realize truly effective initiatives, collaboration with the following diverse actors is important:

* **Academic and Research Institutions**
	+ Japan Association for United Nations Studies: Policy proposals and evaluation from academic perspectives
	+ Sasakawa Peace Foundation: Practical peacebuilding research and local networks
	+ Other peace research institutions: Providing specialized knowledge and human resource development
* **Civil Society**
	+ United Nations Association of Japan: Promoting national understanding and grassroots-level support
	+ NPOs and NGOs: Practical activities in the field and bridging with civil society
* **Private Companies**
	+ Cooperation in infrastructure development, technology transfer, vocational training, etc.

Through such multilayered partnerships, international contributions that utilize Japan's comprehensive capabilities beyond mere financial provision will become possible.

**6. Expected Effects and Challenges**

**6.1 Expected Strategic Effects**

1. **Restoration of Institutional Influence**: Enhanced policy voice for Japan in the UN
2. **Strengthening Bilateral Relations**: Expansion of defense cooperation and capacity building support with PKO-deploying countries
3. **Promoting Cooperation with the Private Sector**: Advancement of public-private partnerships in peacebuilding
4. **Contributions in Academic and Research Fields**: Expansion of Japan's intellectual contributions in peace studies and conflict research

**6.2 Implementation Challenges and Response Measures**

**6.2.1 Addressing Budget Constraints**

It is necessary to avoid duplication with existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets and establish efficient resource allocation mechanisms.

**6.2.2 Difficulty in Measuring Results**

Since the results of peacebuilding activities are strongly long-term and qualitative, development of appropriate evaluation indicators and establishment of continuous monitoring systems are required.

**6.2.3 Ensuring International Coordination**

Policy coordination with other major contributing countries (US, Germany, UK, etc.) and ensuring fair burden-sharing are important.

**7. Conclusion**

**7.1 Comprehensive Assessment of the Policy Proposal**

Let us reconsider our proposed "allocation of 1% of Japan's defense budget to UN peace activities." I believe this proposal has great significance in the following points:

1. **Policy Consistency**: Rather than viewing defense capability enhancement and international cooperation as opposing forces, it shows a path to harmonize both
2. **Strategic Use of Influence**: Not just providing money, but using it to make Japan's voice heard more strongly in the international community
3. **Importance of Prevention**: Investing in efforts to nip the buds of conflict rather than dealing with problems after they become serious
4. **Reaffirming Japan's Character**: Continuing and developing Japan's journey as a peaceful nation in a contemporary form

**7.2 Future Challenges and Prospects**

Of course, there are still challenges to consider for realizing this proposal:

1. **Specific Implementation Mechanisms**: How to operate efficiently
2. **How to Measure Results**: Methods to appropriately evaluate the effects of peacebuilding
3. **Cooperation with Other Countries**: How to develop this as an effort by the entire international community, not just one country
4. **National Understanding and Support**: Devising ways to help the public widely understand the significance of this policy

However, we should not stop moving forward just because these challenges exist. In the complex world of the 21st century, Japan needs a balanced approach that values both military deterrence and peaceful resolution.

I sincerely hope that this proposal will serve as a starting point for constructive discussions with many people about such new-era security policies. Peace is not built in a day, but I believe it can surely be realized by taking steady steps forward one by one.

**References**

*[Note: In an actual academic paper, a detailed reference list would be included here]*

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