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Regarding the security environment surrounding Japan, although the danger of a full-scale invasion has decreased more than 10 years after the end of the Cold War, Japan is facing urgent new threats to peace and security and diverse situations, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as international terrorist activities.



Sept. 11, 2001; World Trade Center buildings hit by hijacked airliners



March 11, 2004; Madrid train bombings



July 7, 2005; London subway bombings

In consideration of these situations and from the standpoint that the national government is inherently obliged to ensure the peace and independence of the nation and maintain the safety of the nation and the people in armed attack against Japan from the outside, the Law for Peace and Independence of Japan and Maintenance of the Nation and the People's Security in Armed Attack Situations etc. (Armed Attack Situation Response Law) was enacted in June 2003. In June 2004, the Law concerning the Measures for Protection of the People in Armed Attack Situations etc. (Civil Protection Law) was enacted to make the whole nation fully prepared for these situations and to thereby implement appropriately and promptly measures to protect the people in such situations, along with the Armed Attack Situation Response Law.

Meanwhile, the "National Defense Program Guideline, FY2005-" was adopted at a cabinet meeting in December 2004. The Guideline sets forth two objectives of Japan's security policy;

- Preventing any threat from reaching Japan and, in the event that it does, repelling it
- Improving the international security environment so as to reduce the chances that any threat will reach Japan.

To this end, the Government of Japan will make diplomatic efforts to support United Nations activities for international peace and security, and to promote cooperative relationships with other countries and further develop its close cooperative relationship with the United States based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements. In this way, the Government will combine its own efforts and its cooperative efforts with Japan's alliance partner and those with the international community in an integrated manner.

As to Japan's own efforts, the Government of Japan will utilize all appropriate means to prevent any threat from reaching the country. In the event that these efforts fail to prevent a threat from reaching Japan, the Government of Japan will make an integrated response. To this end, the Government will establish civil protection systems and promote mutual cooperation between the central and local governments.

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Against such background, the Basic Guidelines for Protection of the People, which set the basic policy for implementation of measures to protect the people, was adopted at a cabinet meeting in March 2005 with the aim of promoting appropriate and smooth implementation of the Civil Protection Law. Based on the Basic Guidelines, Civil Protection Plans of designated administrative agencies were developed in October 2005 and Civil Protection Plans of all prefectural governments in March 2006. Municipal governments are currently developing their Civil Protection Plans and designated public institutions are developing their Civil Protection Business Plans.

Should an armed attack or terrorism etc. against Japan from the outside occur, the Government of Japan will address the situation in cooperation with prefectural and municipal governments etc. However, it is extremely difficult to anticipate when, where and how such a situation would occur. The Cabinet Secretariat has prepared and released "For Protecting Ourselves from Armed Attack or Terrorism etc.," describing how the people should act in such a situation and what things the people should prepare for such a situation on a routine basis.

What would you do if armed attack or terrorism etc. against Japan from the outside should occur? It may be difficult for you to see such a situation as a real problem. However, we believe that preparations for such a situation should be fully discussed in peacetime. "Civil protection" is highly important and directly related to your lives and property. The Government of Japan intends to make the whole nation fully prepared for such a situation. We hope that you will further increase your understanding.