CHAPTER - V
IMPLEMENTATION OF NAKASONE'S IDEAS: II

It has been seen in the previous chapter that Nakasone was successful in breaking through the one per cent ceiling of defence expenditure, getting Japan to agree to technology transfer to the U.S., and in putting together a National Security Council. The present chapter deals with the areas which proved less successful for him namely sea lane defence and participation in the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) programme of the U.S. government.

I. SEA LANE DEFENCE

The defence of the seas surrounding Japan was another area where the Japanese government faced constant U.S. pressure to spend more. The U.S. government wanted Japan to assume more responsibilities in this regard. The issue however, was seen in different perspectives by the two sides. The Japan- U.S. Mutual Security Treaty does not put any obligation on Japan to safeguard the neighbouring seas. It only mentions about a common concern in the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East (Appendix - II). But for a long time the Japanese side did not attach much importance to the issue of the security of the seas surrounding the country. The issue was left mostly to the U.S. The Oil Crisis of 1973, the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in 1979 and the long Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, however, highlighted the crucial importance that the safety of the sea lanes held for Japan. The entire oil imports, food and materials need absolute safety of the sea lanes to reach the shores of Japan. But the Japanese leaders mostly highlighted the
general and economic aspects whenever they spoke of the need to keep the sea-lanes free. They were certainly aware of the strategic importance of the sea lanes. But they were only underplaying the strategic aspect of the question in order not to provoke a political controversy at home.¹

But the approach of the U.S. government to the issue had been different as it continued to highlight the strategic aspect. As the Afghan crisis and the Iranian Revolution of the late 1970s put pressures on the U.S. 7th Fleet, Washington had to adopt a tough policy with Tokyo and demanded that Japan should make greater security efforts. The demand found greater articulation as the Republican administration under President Reagan came to power in the U.S. In March 1981, Mike Mansfield, the U.S. Ambassador in Japan said,

“Japan should help to take up the slack in the defence of their home islands and territorial waters, because of shifting of elements of the U.S. fleet to the Indian Ocean, which is tied to the common security of both countries.²

SUZUKI’S PLEDGE

In April 1981, Omura Joji, the Director General of the JDA talking about on the issue of defence of sea lanes said that it should be possible for Japan to include the seas between Guam and the Philippines in its defence areas.³ In May 1981, following his meeting with President Reagan

¹ K.V. Kesavan, Japan's Defence Policy since 1976, (Canberra, 1984) p. 32.
² ibid., p. 33.
³ ibid.
during his Washington visit Prime Minister Suzuki said that Japan would try to assume responsibility for the defence of the sea lanes extending 1000 nautical miles from the Japanese shores. The Americans considered this as an official commitment of the Japanese government. Suzuki's declaration generated a great deal of discussion in Japan. Conflicting views were expressed by Japanese leaders on the issue. Suzuki himself tried to play down his Washington pledge. He denied that Japan had accepted any new commitments. He further clarified that the division of roles did not mean military roles and that Japan was not obliged to replace the U.S. forces in the event of the transfer of U.S. naval forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. He told the Diet in April 1982 that one important goal of his Government was to ensure the smooth supply of at least one third of Japan's food requirements under any circumstances. This led to a great deal of confusion among the Americans about the seriousness of the Japanese Government. However, they continued to stick to Suzuki's statement of insisting on the Japanese commitment to defend the sea lanes up to 1000 nautical miles.

The U.S. government put considerable pressure on Japan to

4 Japan Times (Tokyo), 10 May 1981.
7 Japan Times Weekly (Tokyo), 1 May, 1982.
enhance its capability to fulfill the pledge that Suzuki made in Washington. It was in the U.S. interest that Japan spent more on defence of the sea lanes. In March 1982 the U.S. Defence Secretary Weinberger told Ito Masayoshi the DG of JDA if Japan undertook the defence of the seas lanes, the United States would be able to throw more forces into the Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean theaters thus making clear that Japanese defence of sea lanes would serve to complement the U.S. global strategy.8

The issue was discussed in detail in the Hawaii conference held in June 1981. The U.S. side advised Japan to make efforts to possess 70 escort ships, 25 submarines, and 125 P3C anti-submarine patrol planes. It also wanted an increase of 100 F-15 class fighters for air defence on the seas.9 In the next conference held at Hawaii in September 1982, both sides agreed to conduct joint studies on the defence of the sea lanes including the evaluation of the threat to them, the types of defence, the capacity of the U.S. to assist and the nature of Japan's role.10

The advent of the Nakasone administration heightened the American expectations to a great extent. The Americans had long been demanding that Japan accounted for its own defence. The Americans had been facing compulsions which were economic as well as strategic. Most of the previous Japanese leaders had shied away from the task. But Nakasone's stand on many defence-related issues had been too bold to be appreciated

9 K.V. Kesavan, n. 1, p.34.
10 ibid.
by many Japanese. The Americans, however, were pleased at finding someone who mostly talked their language. During his first visit to the U.S. as Prime Minister, Nakasone stated that,

1. Japan should become like an "unsinkable aircraft carrier defending against the Soviet "Backfire" aircrafts.

2. Japan should exercise full control of the straits through Japanese islands to block the passage of Soviet ships and submarines.

3. Japan should secure and maintain ocean lines of communication to several hundred miles. It should be able to defend the sea lanes between Guam and Tokyo and between the strait of Taiwan and Osaka.11

As we have seen, the term "unsinkable aircraft carrier" created furore in the Japanese domestic political circles as well as in the media. Nakasone had to clarify his stand with great difficulty. Another controversial aspect of his statement was the possible closure of the straits of Tsushima, Tsugaru, and Soya, the exit points for the Soviet Pacific fleet from the Sea of Japan. He maintained that such an action on its part would be totally within the concept of self-defence. But he clarified that Japan would resort to this extreme step only when it was attacked by the Soviet Union or faced imminent threat.

**MSDF INADEQUACIES**

The 1986-90 MTDPE was designed to achieve the targets of the NDPO. But the targets as such were in need of revision due to various

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developments such as the Japanese commitment to a 1000 nautical mile sea lane defence as declared in 1981. Seeking the upgradation of the NDPO, the JDA asked for a more long-range capability for its aircraft including the possibility of air refueling tankers. It also pressed for the procurement of Over the Horizon (OTH) radar system which would give it detection capabilities up to 3000 kilometers and provide for both mainland and maritime air defence.\(^\text{12}\) The MSDF was particularly concerned with air defence over the seas in keeping with the expected sea-lane defence responsibility. Japan's own air defence system provided interceptor fighters and surface-to-air missile (SAM) of the ASDF for air defence over the Japanese islands. It also heavily depended upon the anti-aircraft guns mounted on the MSDF ships. But the capacity of the former was restricted because of poor radar coverage which was limited to about 250 miles. So far as the 1000 nautical mile sea lane defence was concerned, a lot of area remained uncovered by radar and hence air protection of ships was not possible.\(^\text{13}\) The ASDF possessed eight E-2C AEW aircraft to supplement ground based radar. In the 1986-90 MDTPE it announced plans to procure five more. These air craft still could not cover the 1000 nautical mile zone. The OTH, in this situation was the answer to the problem of providing radar cover to the specified area of concern in the 1000 nautical mile. Funding to carry out the siting and cost surveys was secured in the FY 1987 budget.\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^\text{14}\) Javed S. Maswood, n. 12, p. 63.
CONCEPT OF SEA LANE DEFENCE

The concept of "sea lanes" means sea routes passages for movement of ships. The sea-routes need not always be smooth and may pass through straits and water ways. Thus, the "defence of the sea lanes" can be described as the "defending of the safety of the ships, navigating the sea routes, linking one port to another, and passing through channels and ports." The government position was that the sea lane defence refers to, 'the maintenance of the safety of maritime transportation through wide ranging surveillance, escorts of vessels, defence of ports, harbours and straits and through the accumulated effect achieved by incorporating these various operations. As for the sea lane defence of Japan, maintenance of maritime transportation should be intended by Japan-U.S. joint maritime operations in case of an armed attack against Japan. Specifically, the Maritime Self Defence Forces (MSDF) will primarily conduct operations for the protection of major ports, harbours and straits in Japan; anti-submarine operations for the protection of ships and other operations in surrounding waters, all of which will be conducted within the framework of individual right of self-defence. U.S. naval forces will extend support to the Japanese SDF in their operations, and also conduct operations including those which may involve the use of task force as providing additional mobility and strike power, with the objective of repelling enemy forces.'

As for the geographical scope of the sea-lane defence, Japan had set its goal of having the ability to provide protection of sea-lines of

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communication in sea waters extending to about 1000 nautical miles or so from its shores in the event of establishing sea routes covering several hundred nautical miles in the surrounding waters of the country when an armed attack took place against Japan.\textsuperscript{17}

The concept entails keeping a few sea lanes open for free transit of merchant ships. Two sea routes have been determined as vital – the southwestern route stretching to Taiwan and the Southeastern route which is the main sea route carrying raw material and crude oil from Southeast Asia and the Middle East\textsuperscript{18}. The issue of sea lane defence was closely linked to the blockade of the three exit points from the Sea of Japan to deny access to the Soviet Pacific Fleet (SPF) that was deployed in bases located in the Sea of Japan. Initially, many Japanese were skeptical about the sea lane defence concept because that would entail a major defence build up and which would also invite the resentment of Southeast Asian countries. But the blockade issue raised certain important questions including the violation of the provisions of the peace constitution. Previous Japanese Governments had refrained from making any commitments on the issue. But things took a qualitative turn after Nakasone became the Prime Minister. With his Washington pledge to assume responsibility for the 1000 nautical mile sea lane defence, Nakasone sent a positive signal so far as the Japan-U.S. security alliance was concerned.

\textsuperscript{17} ibid.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATION

There were many misgivings regarding the sea lane defence concept. The question of right of self-defence was the issue which created too much confusions. Successive Japanese Governments took low defence postures putting the task of providing security of Japan to the U.S. even though the treaty talks of an alliance. The issue of the protection of U.S. vessels in the Japanese waters was of major concern to the Japanese Governments. They interpreted that Japan could not come to the rescue of the U.S. vessels as that would amount to collective self-defence which went against the principles of Japanese constitution. It is thus, relevant here to consider some of such issues and the Government's attitude towards those.

The Japanese Governments initially put emphasis on the issue of sea lane defence without linking it to the blockade of the straits during crisis. But any consideration of sea lane defence would inevitably mean closing the straits so that the enemy vessels would not move ahead. The Defence White Paper of 1984 highlighted the Government's thinking on some such crucial issues in order to provide a clear picture. As regards the defence of the straits, the While Paper held that in the event of an armed attack against Japan, the SDF would take steps to impede the passage of the straits by the ships belonging to the enemy nation within the scope of the necessary minimum requirement for the defence of the country. The White Paper further specified that submarines, surface vessels and aircrafts in general would be used in preventing enemy ships from the strait passage. Depending on the situation, mines might be laid. However,
it clarified that closure of the units would be done only when an armed attack took place against Japan and not during peace time.\textsuperscript{19} On the question of protection of U.S. vessels, the government's position was that, in the event of an armed attack against Japan, when U.S. vessels engaged in operations for defence of Japan, are attacked by other forces invading Japan, the SDF actions to repel such attacks as part of Japan-U.S., Joint Operations under the Security Treaty for the defence of Japan, could be recognised as the necessary minimum for self-defence of Japan. These actions would not lead to the exercise of the right of collective self-defence.\textsuperscript{20} As regards the protection of foreign ships with cargoes bound for Japan, it held that during an armed attack against Japan, if the aggressor tries to attack the vessels of third nations carrying cargoes vital for the existence of the people of Japan, the SDF actions to repel such attacks as part of defence operations for Japan could be considered as the necessary minimum for the defence of the country.\textsuperscript{21}

**NAKASONE'S INTERPRETATION**

Nakasone was the first Prime Minister who took a clear stand on the issues mentioned above. Speaking before the House of Representative Budget Committee he said that the Japanese forces could come to the aid of the U.S. Navy ships if attacked by a third country on their way to defend or while defending Japan in times of military assault on Japan.


\textsuperscript{20} ibid., p. 76.

\textsuperscript{21} ibid.
This would be an act of self defence and would not conflict with the constitution that prohibits collective defence. These statements clarified the government's position that Japanese forces escorting or aiding U.S. vessels in times of war can be constitutionally allowed as an act of Japan's self-defence. The government under his predecessors had cautiously avoided this and said that such a situation though rare, would be possible. Going a step beyond, Nakasone further told the House of Representative Budget Committee that, Japanese forces coming to the aid of U.S. arships even on high seas constituted Japan's individual self-defence. He told that rescue operations by Japan for U.S. Navy ships coming to Japan in times of military assault would be constitutional. Nakasone hinted at the possibility of Japan-U.S. joint operations to blockade the strategic straits of Japan if attacked by a third country. While stressing that Japan would not become a tool of the U.S. strategy in the Far East, Nakasone said that Japan would cooperate with the U.S. to block the Soviet forces as it would not be able to cope with the Soviet forces alone. He held that Japan should serve as a "shield", the U.S. forces as "lance" and the defence strategies of the two countries were complementary to each other emphasizing that the two countries should jointly carry out their strategies against the then Soviet Union.

The U.S. Government had also been equally persistent in its effort to make Japan shoulder its responsibility on this issue. The U.S. demands

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23 Japanese Times, 6 February 1983.
went far beyond the traditional Japanese definition. Washington wanted Japan to play an important role in sea control that included the controlling of sea lanes and marked sea-areas. It urged the MSDF to engage in land attacks and landing operations. Japan was thus, expected to "undertake sea control covering the defence of sea areas around Japan and the sea routes up to 1000 nautical miles." Various statements by high ranking U.S. Government officials highlighted the importance that the U.S. Government attached to the issue. Francis J. West, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for International Security Affairs told a Congressional hearing in March, 1982,

'If Japan becomes able to cope with the threat of Soviet submarines and the threat of Soviet bombers in the next eight years, they will be in conformity with what Prime Minister Suzuki said'.

Casper Weinberger, the U.S. Defence Secretary, in his meeting with the JDA Chief Tanikawa Kazuo on 22 August 1983, urged Japan to spend more to be able to defend sea lanes extending some 1000 nautical miles out to the Southwest Pacific to cope with the increasing Soviet military menace in the Far East. The U.S. Defence Report 1982-83 also urged Japan to contribute to the regional stability by strengthening its air and sea defences and providing protection for the sea lanes up to 1000 nautical miles.

25 K.V. Kesavan, n. 1, p. 34.
26 Quoted in ibid.
27 Japan Times, 24 August 1983.
28 Quoted in K.V. Kesavan, n. 1, pp. 34-35.
U.S. DEMANDS

The U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee drafted in June 1983 a bill urging Japan to implement a 1000 nautical mile sea lane defence programme by 1990. The bill wanted, Japan as an ally of the U.S., must reinforce its efforts to further contribute to joint defence. It said Japan should raise its defence outlays to establish total and effective self-defence deployment including the sea lane defence by 1990. Admiral William J. Crow, Commander of U.S. Pacific Force urged Japan to spend more on defence of its sea lanes extending in to the Pacific. Richard Armitage, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, told a Congressional hearing on 12 June 1984 that the idea of blockading the straits around Japan should be considered as only one tactical means in Japan's overall sea lane defence strategy. He pointed out that military facilities far away from Japan, such as Camranh Bay of Vietnam, were available to the Soviet submarines and warships, indicating the U.S. view that blockading of the straits alone was not sufficient. Vice-Admiral James Hogg, the Commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, remarked on 10 October 1984 that Japan was not likely to develop a naval force capable of defending Pacific Ocean sea lanes for quite sometime to come.

The U.S. Senate passed a resolution on 11 June 1985, pressing

29 Japan Times, 10 July 1983.
31 Japan Times, 14 June 1984.
Japan to abide by its 1981 pledge to develop its capability to defend sea lanes 1000 miles off its coast. The House of representatives also unanimously passed a resolution on 11 July 1985 which said that 'Japan, in order to make a more effective contribution to its own defence in cooperation with the U.S., which would include among other efforts the development of a 1000 mile airspace and sea lane defence capability, should be strongly encouraged in its plans to develop and implement the 1986-90 mid-term defence plan.\textsuperscript{34}

Kato Koichi, the JDA Chief assured Weinberger, the U.S. Defence Secretary on 10 June 1985 that Japan would make its best efforts to strengthen air and sea lane defence as a reliable ally of the U.S., Kato told Weinberger that Japan was interested to introduce sophisticated equipments like the ultra-long-range OTH radar, E-2C, early warning planes, interceptors and Aegis ship borne missile systems. Kato requested the U.S. to provide Japan with technical data on those systems.\textsuperscript{35}

**JDA EFFORTS**

The main handicap facing the MSDF in its task of sea lane defence was that its naval ships lacked surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles. Procurement funds were made available for the SSM-1 in the 1986-90 MTDPE. The SSM-1 was a Japanese produced surface-to-ship missile with a range of about 150 kilometers. These missiles were to be deployed in Hokkaido. Given its long range, all navigable waters of the

\textsuperscript{33} Japan Times, 13 June 1985.

\textsuperscript{34} Japan Times, 13 July 1985.

\textsuperscript{35} Japan Times, 12 June 1985.
three straits would be within the striking distance of the SSM-1. The Patriot missile, scheduled to enter ASDF service around 1990, and the SSM-1 would make it extremely difficult for enemy ships to enter the straits.\[^{36}\] The MSDF also decided to acquire the Aegis air defence system to protect Japanese convoys from missile attacks by the Soviet backfire bombers. However, it was feared that Japan would take a long time to acquire sea lane defence capability. According to U.S. estimates, effective sea lane defence required further enhancement of the Japanese force structure including about 350 F-15s (as opposed to the projected 187 under the 1986-90 MTDPE), 70 destroyers, 25 submarines, and 125 P-3Cs.\[^{37}\]

Realizing the importance of the issue, Kato Koichi the JDA Chief put more emphasis on the 1987 budget to improve the SDF's ability to defend Japan's sea lanes (Table-8). He also called for increased capability to neutralize enemy forces at sea before they reached Japan in addition to enhanced combat sustainability and readiness. Nakasone was unequivocal in reiterating his commitment to fulfill Suzuki's pledge of defending sea lanes up to 1000 nautical miles, as can be seen from all his statements on the issue. But it was evident that the implementation required huge investments which his Government could not undertake. It was a sensitive issue both inside and outside Japan. The talk of enhancing the strength of the MSDF immediately evoked memories of the Pacific War in

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which the Imperial Japanese Navy had played the most important role in
the colonization and the subsequent cruel treatment of the people of the
neighbouring countries.

APPREHENSION OF NEIGHBOURS

The Southeast Asian countries were most alarmed at the Japanese
tries to increase its sea lane defence capability. They were in fact in a
dilemma. Obviously they could not object to Japan's right to self-defence.
But the varied interpretations of the right to self-defence in the context of
the issue of sea lane defence brought out their fear and anxieties as they
were the ones who had borne the brunt of Japanese attack during the
World War II. Marcos, the then President of Philippines and Suharto,

President of Indonesia voiced their concern at the Japanese
military build up efforts to the American leaders who had been urging
greater Japanese defence efforts, including the sea lane defence up to
1000 nautical miles from its coast. They informed President Reagan that
the Southeast Asian nations were opposed to any excessive military build
up and to the defence of sea lanes which could pose a threat to the secur-
ity of their countries. South Korea immediately followed suit voicing a
similar concern.38

Alarmed by the fears expressed by Asian neighbours, the Japanese
Foreign Ministry explained to Marcos, Suharto and other Southeast Asian

38 Japan Times, 3 January 1983.
leaders that Japan's intention was to protect only two vital sea lanes extending 1000 miles from its coast. The two sealanes stretch north of the Philippines and West of Guam. Japan had no intention of expanding its defence capability to cover other Southeast Asian Waters.39

The explanation assured the Southeast Asian nations to some extent, but not completely. Marcos, the Philippines President expressed his concern to the effect that, "Japan can become what it wants when it wants". The then Indonesian Ambassador to Tokyo, Sayidiman Suryohadiproja said, his country was not worried about Japan's defence build up efforts so long as those were designed only to allow Japan to defend itself. "However, we are concerned that there might be a change in Japanese intention as their defence capability is greatly improved in the future. The same capability can be used for other purposes if you have a different intention", the Ambassador said. The South Korean government had no objection to Japan taking up some responsibility for defending its own territory. But there were concerns among the Koreans that Japan might reemerge someday as a "military power". Singapore expressed no concern over Japan's military build up so long as such efforts were purely for self-defence, the Japan-U.S. security pact was maintained and as long as Japan possessed no nuclear arms. But the Singapore Government feared that Japan might try to fill the military vacuum if the U.S. decided to withdraw its troops from the Asian region.

39 ibid.
<table>
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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
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<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type-87 anti-tank guided missile launcher</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type-79 anti-ship, anti-tank guided missile launcher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type-64 81-mm trench mortar</td>
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<tr>
<td>155-mm howitzer FH70</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>203-mm self propelled howitzer</td>
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<td>Type-74 tank</td>
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<td>Type-82 command and communication vehicle</td>
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<td>Type-87 reconnaissance and petrol vehicle</td>
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<td>Anti-tank helicopter (AH-1S)</td>
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<td>Type-81 short-range SAM</td>
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<td>Fighter interceptor (F-15)</td>
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<td>Transport helicopter (CH-47J)</td>
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<td>Medium training aircraft (T-4)</td>
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<td>Rescue helicopter (V-107A)</td>
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<td>Rescue helicopter (UH-60J)</td>
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<td>Type-81 short-range SAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portable SAM</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
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</table>

Thus, it wanted Japan to explain in more detail the concept of its sea lane
defence to the Southeast Asian nations. Nakasone himself took urgent
steps to contact the leaders of the Southeast Asian countries including
China and Korea to dispel any doubts about the reemergence of Japan as a
big military power (discussed in Chapter III). His assurances had a
positive effect as most of the leaders showed their understanding of the
situation.

SLOW PROGRESS

During his 5-year tenure as the Prime Minister of Japan, Nakasone,
however, could not really do much in the field of sea lane defence. It was a
difficult task considering the fact that a number of sensitive issues like the
provisions of the constitution, popular perceptions, allocation of massive amount
of money to defence and apprehensions of the neighbouring countries had to
carefully considered before any decision could be taken on the issue.

There was however, some progress on the Japan-U.S. bilateral
negotiation front as both countries met a number of times on the issue of the sea
lane defence. In the 14th meeting of the Japan-U.S. Security Sub-committee
held on Honolulu in September 1982, both the countries agreed to a joint study
of the issue. Accordingly, a Japan-U.S. subcommittee for Defence Cooperation
met on 12 March 1983 for preparatory discussions on a joint-study of sea lane
defence. The joint study was aimed at coping with the situation when Japan
faced enemy attacks. After a series of meetings between the two sides, a joint
study conducted by military experts of both the countries on Japan's ability to
defend sea lanes within 1000 miles off its coast was signed by both the countries.

40 ibid.
41 Japan Times, 13 March 1983.
The Japanese side signed it on 19 December 1986, whereas the U.S. side signed on 24 December 1986. The joint study used computers to predict how Japan and the U.S. could jointly defend the sea lanes if Japan was attacked. The JDA did not disclose the results of the analysis as those were earmarked as confidential.\textsuperscript{42}

Despite Nakasone's best efforts to undertake responsibility to provide for sea lane defence up to 1000 miles, a lot remained to be done by the time he completed his tenure. According to U.S. estimates, Japan was required to expand its defence expenditures by around 10 per cent a year for ten years to acquire effective sea-lane defence capabilities.\textsuperscript{43} Budgetary constraints made such large increases impossible. During the period 1982-87, Japan's defence budget increase on a nominal basis, was over 6.5 per cent a year and that to at a time when the overall general accounts budget remained more or less constant (See Table-9). During Nakasone's administration, Japan appeared to have moved towards a strategy which emphasised off-shore and sea-lane defences. For example, a new pattern was set, if not as an enunciated policy, for the reallocation of resources, from the GSDF to MSDF and the ASDF (See Table-10).

\textsuperscript{42} Japan Times, 26 December 1986.

Table - 9

Changes in Defence Expenditure (Original Budget)
(Unit $ 100 Million, %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item FY</th>
<th>GNP (Initial forecast (A))</th>
<th>General Account (original (B))</th>
<th>Growth from Previous year</th>
<th>Defences Budget (original) (C)</th>
<th>Growth from Previous Year</th>
<th>Ratio of Defence Budget to GNP (C/A)</th>
<th>Ratio of Defence Budget to General Account (C/B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>75,590</td>
<td>9,915</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>13.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>281,600</td>
<td>36,581</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>3,014</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>8.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,585,000</td>
<td>212,888</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>13,273</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
<td>6.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,681,000</td>
<td>242,960</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>15,124</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>6.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,928,500</td>
<td>285,143</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>16,906</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>2,106,000</td>
<td>342,950</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>19,010</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2,320,000</td>
<td>386,001</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>20,945</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,478,000</td>
<td>425,888</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>22,302</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2,648,000</td>
<td>467,881</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2,772,000</td>
<td>496,808</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>25,861</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2,817,000</td>
<td>503,796</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>27,542</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2,960,000</td>
<td>506,272</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>29,346</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>3,146,000</td>
<td>524,996</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>31,371</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3,367,000</td>
<td>540,886</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>33,435</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td>6.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3,504,000</td>
<td>541,010</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>35,174</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3,652,000</td>
<td>566,997</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>37,003</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table - 10

**Budget Allocations Among The Three SDFs (Percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>1987</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSDF</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASDF</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDF</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The totals do not add up to 100 per cent; the balance included expenditure for the Defence Facilities Administration Agency and Others.

II. THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE (SDI)

The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated in the 1980s. Detente was replaced by the New Cold War or the Second Cold War. The international image of the U.S. had suffered a lot during the late 1970s. The mishandling of the Iranian hostage crisis and then the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan had put a question mark over the status of the U.S. as a world power. Taking stock of the situation, President Reagan took measures to raise the image of the U.S. among its allies committing more money for defence spending and in research and development of effective and sophisticated weapon systems. By the time, Reagan completed his first term in 1984, the U.S. had developed quite an effective deterrent capability and the prestige of the U.S. among its allies and other countries grew to a new high.

The growth of the U.S. military strength coincided with the decline of the Soviet Union as a Super Power. The internal contradictions of the communist rule came to the forefront. Massive economic crises threatened almost all the communist countries. In the Soviet Union itself, serious power struggles took place following the death of Leonard Brezhnev, the man who had dominated the communist empire for nearly two decades. A series of leadership changes occurred which did no good to the country. The intervention of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan proved very costly in terms or men, money and materials. The entire Eastern Bloc countries faced great economic hardships and voices of dissent could be heard in some countries like Poland. The communist system had lost its appeal due to its failure in tackling the serious economic malaise. It was at such
a crucial juncture, when the morale of the western bloc was at a high and the Soviet Union and its allies were beset with problems of various kinds in internal as well external front that President Reagan informed the world about the U.S. desire to implement the concept of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

The first formal statement on the SDI was made by President Reagan on 23 March 1983. Speaking to the nation on the television, Reagan called for a crash effort to develop a space-based protective umbrella to destroy incoming soviet missiles and to end U.S. reliance on retaliation as a deterrent to nuclear war.\(^{44}\) The declaration, however, was not without controversies. It gave the impression that the initiative, when successfully deployed, could nullify the strategy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and replace the U.S. retaliatory force. There were doubts regarding the technological practicability of the project as well as the strategic intentions of the United States.\(^{45}\) They were removed somewhat with the rephrasing of the statement to the effect that the SDI was to enhance the deterrent i.e., not to negate the utility of the retaliatory force or doctrine per se. The correction was done on 5 January 1985 nearly two years after the initial pronouncement.\(^{46}\)

\(^{44}\) *Japan Times*, 25 March 1983.


A CONTROVERSIAL CONCEPT

The idea, when declared, created a lot of confusion and skepticism regarding its applicability. A great deal of discussion followed in political as well as media circles all over the world. Japan was no exception. There were guarded reactions from the government side, sharp criticisms from the opposition and mixed reactions from the business as well as the media. The description of the concept as 'Star War' by most of the media circles created a negative impression in the minds of the people.

The concept generated intense debates in political and business circles in Japan. Some sections showed keen interest in the concept while others vehemently opposed it. The Japanese government under Nakasone from the very beginning adopted a cautious approach by not committing officially anything on it. However, it seems the government had a positive attitude on the question of Japanese participation in the project. Abe Shintaro the Foreign Minister told the Diet on 20 February 1985 that the government would positively cooperate with the U.S. in its efforts to beef up its "Star War" (as the SDI was popularly known) defence capabilities by providing Japanese technology to the U.S. The space defence programmes envisaged laser beams to destroy enemy ICBMs. Abe told that Japan would provide such technology to the U.S. if it helped in improving Japan-U.S. security set up.47

NAKASONE’S “UNDERSTANDING” OF SDI

When Nakasone visited the U.S. in January 1985, President Reagan explained to him that the SDI was a non-nuclear defence system aimed at total elimination of nuclear weapons from the earth, and sought Japan’s cooperation in the project. Nakasone told Reagan that Japan understood the system as one designed to ensure the security of the west as a whole, to be developed as part of the comprehensive arms control efforts. Nakasone requested the U.S. to closely consult with Japan about the system so that Tokyo could study how to cope with its constitutional and political constraints. Thus, Nakasone was adopting a very cautious path. By just showing an “understanding” of the concept, he was trying to gauge the public mood on the sensitive issue. He was also analysing various constitutional and political constraints that always limited the options of the Japanese leaders. Nakasone, however, had positive inclination towards the project, which is evident from the opinion he gave few days after his U.S. trip. He thought the project was worthy of serious consideration because it was defensive in character and aimed at elimination of nuclear weapons ultimately.

Nakasone’s statements drew instant reactions from the JSP. It alleged that Nakasone gave virtual endorsement to the star wars plan which it claimed was dangerous as it would make outer space a venue for nuclear warfare. Komeito, the centrist opposition party also questioned


49 Japan Times, 7 January 1985.
the advisability of Nakasone's understanding attitude towards the SDI. It warned "PM Nakasone's remarks on the matter may pave the way for the U.S. to seek Japanese cooperation in materializing the new defence plan". The DSP criticising Nakasone said that he lacked prudence in showing understanding of the concept, which had the potential to destroy the nuclear equilibrium in the world. Nakasone, however, clarified on 14 February 1985 during a Diet debate that Japan would cooperate in the SDI programme within the existing agreement with the U.S. on Japan's transfer of high technology for military use. He further added that the decision would be made within the existing framework of the constitutional constraints, government policies and principles and the 1969 Diet Resolution against military use of space.

**FORMAL U.S. REQUEST**

On 28 March 1985 Casper Weinberger, the U.S. Defence Secretary wrote letters to the U.S. allies including France, Israel, Japan and Australia inviting them to participate in the SDI R & D. The letter conveyed the U.S. intention to cooperate with its allies to secure enhanced security against military attacks not only on the U.S. but also on its allies. The U.S., wanted to conduct joint research with its allies on technologies that could contribute to the SDI research without violating any international agreements including the 1972 ABM treaty. The letter

50 See, n. 48.

51 *Japan Times*, 5 February 1985.

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49 *Japan Times*, 7 January 1985.
further requested Japan to suggest within 60 days its most promising research areas if Japan was interested in the SDI joint research. The U.S. showed its willingness to brief Japan about the SDI scheme.

The letter evoked mixed response in Japan. As already seen, the government was favourably inclined towards the project. But, for obvious reasons, it could not take an affirmative decision immediately and it had to wait for a favourable time.

The SDI got a bad response from the press from the beginning. The attachment of a time limit in Weinberger's letter was labeled by the media as an ultimatum normally served to an adversary prior to a declaration of war. The ultimatum of 60 days was subsequently cancelled by the U.S. But it had cost the U.S. considerable damage in terms of its public relations in Japan. Things got further complicated because of certain phenomena, leading to the indecisiveness in official and private circle in Japan. There were at least three phenomena relevant to the discussion here. First, the use of the term “Star War”. The derisive labeling reduced the public perception of the SDI to the point of a dirty joke. Academics and journalists could not argue about the system objectively and seriously without risking their professional reputation. Second, the scientific technological complexity coupled with the esoteric and futuristic nature of the SDI alienated many people who otherwise would have supported it. It was due to the fact that both the U.S. and Japanese

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54 Momoi Makoto, n. 45, p. 119.
governments had done precisely little in disseminating data and easy to-understand materials on SDI. Third, the bureaucrats by nature are reluctant and cautious in dealing with any case without precedent. They remain indifferent when they are faced with cases of technological complexities. Thus, the confusion so generated, helped in the continuation of the inertia.\textsuperscript{55}

**IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPAN**

The SDI proposal, however, had certain implications very relevant to Japan. First, the SDI proposal meant an alliance obligation for Japan. Given the nature of Japan-U.S. security relations, Japan was expected to respond positively to the U.S. request. It was an opportunity to further consolidate Japan's ties with the U.S. and integrate Japan into western military alliance-network. Second, the SDI was viewed as having great potentials for invention of new technologies. It offered opportunities for research and development of new materials and discoveries of unknown potentials in the zero gravity environment. Third, a strategic spin-off. Some analysts believed that the U.S. due to massive spending in the SDI R& D, might ask Japan to share a bigger burden or disengage its forces from the bases in the Far East. Some believed that if the SDI was deployed, its global surveillance and detection system might be made available for a regional security purpose.\textsuperscript{56}

Various economic arguments were also put forward to justify

\textsuperscript{55} ibid., pp. 120-121.

\textsuperscript{56} ibid, pp. 123-124.
Japanese participation in the research side of the SDI. A number of companies concerned about significant American progress in some high-technology fields, voiced their anxiety that if Japan did not join the programme, then they would be left behind by a new phase of technological progress. In such areas of technology as lasers, optics and computers, the developments promoted by SDI had already revolutionized quite a few products. 57

There were, however, many in Japan who vehemently opposed participation in the SDI. The opposition political parties were totally against it. The private sector business circle was divided on the issue. The non-availability of adequate information further added to their confusion. There were many academics who raised their voice against participation in the SDI. 58

U.S. CLARIFICATION

The Japanese government on its part was rather subdued in responding to the U.S. request. The adverse publicity had also been the reason for this caution. It adopted a very cautious approach and moved very slowly on the proposal. As an initial step, Japan requested the U.S.


58 To know about the opposite viewpoints on the SDI, see, Toyoda Toshiyuki, *A study on Military R&D: Concerns About Japan's Participation in the Strategic Defence Initiative* (Japan 1988).
to send SDI researchers to Japan for a briefing on the project. A team of U.S experts visited Japan in the third week of April 1985 and explained to Japanese officials various aspects related to the SDI research. Briefing the Japanese officials, the U.S. team clarified:

- The U.S. was not seeking military supremacy over the Soviet Union.
- The U.S. was only conducting research on the programme. Deployment of space weapons would have to subject to negotiations with the Soviet Union under the 1972 ABM Treaty.
- The SDI would not weaken deterrence against a first strike. It would enhance the deterrence effect.
- The U.S. intended to reduce the level of offensive weapons possessed by itself as well as the Soviet Union through negotiations using the SDI as a bargaining chip.
- The U.S. was compelled to conduct SDI research because the Soviet Union had been conducting similar research and had developed particle beam weapons similar to the ones envisaged in the SDI programme.
- Since the accuracy of the Soviet ICBMS had improved greatly, the U.S. had to protect its own allies by going forward with SDI to ensure that the U.S. could preserve a second strike capability.

NAKASONE'S FIVE PRINCIPLES

Nakasone reiterated his understanding on the SDI when he met President Reagan at the Bonn Summit in May 1985. He enunciated five principles on which his understanding was based:

1. The SDI should not seek military superiority over the Soviet Union.
2. It would maintain and reinforce western deterrence.
3. It should aim at reducing offensive nuclear weapons.
4. It should be within the terms of the ABM treaty.
5. Any development or deployment of SDI system should be preceded by consultation with allies and negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Most of these principles were already accepted by the Americans. Still, the Japanese government was in no hurry to make any major commitments on the SDI at that stage. Britain and West Germany had given clear indication about their willingness to join the programme. West Germany in fact had made it clear that German business firms were

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62 Ibid.
63 These were mostly agreed by both USA and Britain when president Reagan and Prime Minister management Thatcher met in December 1984. For details, see Wayland Kennet, “Star Wars: Europe's Polite Waffle”, in Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (Chicago), vol. 41, no.8, September 1985, p. 7.
free to participate in the SDI research.\textsuperscript{64} The business houses in Japan were however mostly reluctant to join the project. They were afraid that the secret military nature of the SDI research might prevent them from developing civilian spin-offs. They were not sure about the possible commercial profit aspect of SDI. There were, however, some sections working in ministries and industries who believed that Japanese businessmen could not afford to be complacent because of the technological and economic success achieved till then. They thought that the SDI could accelerate the pace of technological development beyond Tokyo's reach and feared that a failure to join could mean being left behind commercially.\textsuperscript{65}

The signing of the 1983 Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. on weapons technology transfer had opened the door for export of weapons technology to the U.S. Given that the SDI participation was also an issue of technology transfer, the memorandum provided an important bridge to the SDI technological cooperation. Some Japanese companies were participating in SDI research in the absence to Tokyo's endorsements. It was reported that Hitachi Magnetics was providing magnetic components in a particle beam weapon research project conducted by the U.S. Los Alamos Research Centre. Sumitomo Electric which conducted advanced research in fibre optics and Mitsubishi which

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Japan Times}, 5 July 1985.

had developed a posture control mechanism adaptable to stabilising space based reflectors, were interested in SDI research.\textsuperscript{66} The ruling LDP was also pressing the foreign ministry to let private companies decide on their own if they wanted to join the SDI.\textsuperscript{67}

The Japanese industrialists, however, viewed participation in the SDI with less urgency as compared with their European counterparts, who thought participation as essential in order not to fall behind U.S. technologies. It was in fact too much to expect that the Japanese companies, which had been brought upon under the guidance of the government would be able to take such a major decision themselves.

Despite the sluggish reaction from the government as well as the private sector, Prime Minister Nakasone in his personal capacity had been favourably inclined to the SDI research as was evident from his numerous statements on the issue. He viewed the security relationship with the U.S. as the keystone of Japan’s foreign policy. He had cultivated a special relationship with President Reagan, which he greatly valued. Reagan had been pushing for Japanese participation in the SDI. Nakasone was aware of the fact that Japanese participation would greatly help in improving Japan-U.S. defence cooperation. Despite the public resistance of some key members of his cabinet like Foreign Minister Abe, Nakasone

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} (Hong Kong), 13 February 1986.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Mainichi shimbun} (Tokyo), 14 February 1986.
repeatedly pressed for Japanese participation.\(^{68}\) The government had to be careful because of the nuclear component of the SDI research. The government maintained that the goal of the SDI was a non-nuclear defence directed at eliminating nuclear weapons.\(^{69}\) Nakasone, at a personal level, however, maintained that a nuclear-based system would not exclude Japanese participation because the three non-nuclear principles (non-possession, non-manufacture and non-introduction of nuclear weapons) were, not applicable outside Japan’s territorial sovereignty.\(^{70}\)

SERIOUS GOVERNMENT EFFORT

It was after the autumn of 1985 that a full scale examination by the Government of Japan about joining the SDI research was carried out. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Defence Agency, the Science and Technology Agency (STA) and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) were mainly involved in this investigation. Then there were the Bureau of Defence policy and the National Institute for Defence Studies, which conducted studies on various implications of the SDI. Three information gathering missions were sent to the U.S. one in

\(^{68}\) Japan times, 21 February 1986. Abe was a key challenger to Nakasone for the Prime Minisitership and this differences with naskasone on the SDI was seen as mainly tactical.


\(^{70}\) Jane’s Defence Weekly (Surrey), 9 March 1985.
September 1985, the second in January 1986 and the third in April 1986. Of these three, the first two missions consisted of representatives from the important ministries only, while the third one had representatives from both the government and private sectors.\(^71\)

By March 1986, the Government of Japan, having studied the reports of the first two fact-finding missions and one American mission to Japan, had almost determined what laws to apply to protect military secrets and how to justify Japanese participation, either by private corporations or by government agencies.\(^72\)

However, it was waiting for the report of the third mission having both government and private sector representatives. The third mission consisting of 55 government officials and private sector engineers, was led by Watanabe Makoto, Deputy Director General of Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau. The government officials consisted of representatives from Foreign Ministry, the Defence Agency, the STA and the MITI. Forty-six representatives came from 21 leading private companies, such as Daikin industries, Fuji Heavy Industries, Fujitsu, Hitachi, Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy industry, Japan Aviation Electronics, Kobe Steel, Mitsubishi Electric, Mitsubishi Heavy industries, Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding, NEC. Nissan Motors, NTT, Oki Electric, Sony, Sumitomo Electric, Sumitomo Heavy Industries, Japan Steel works, Toray, Toshiba and Kawasaki Steel Industries. The mission was divided

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\(^72\) *Japan Times*, 18 March 1986.
into three groups taking into consideration their fields of concern - directed energy weapons (DEW), kinetic energy weapons (KEW) and surveillance acquisition tracking kill-assessment (SATKA). The mission visited Lincoln Laboratories of the Massachusetts, the Massachusetts institute of Technology (MIT), Los Alamos National Laboratory, the U.S. Army's Strategic Defence Command, the University Texas, the Hughes Aircraft corporation, the Lockheed Missile and Space Corporation. 

REPORT OF GOVERNMENT - BUSINESS MISSION

The fact-finding mission of the government business combination reported that participation in the SDI research programme could have a very favourable impact on the advancement of related technologies, thus, supporting Japan's participation in the project. Some of the findings of the report were as follows

- The SDI aimed at rendering ballistic missiles impotent by using non-nuclear defensive means. Its ultimate aim was to abolish nuclear weapons by making their possession meaningless.

- The SDI was not a plan for the development and deployment of a defence system. It was only a set of many research programmes intended to provide necessary technological information to determine if sophisticated anti-missile defence system should be developed and deployed.

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73 Japan Times, 19 March 1986.
- Japan's technology remained at a basic level, except in electronics and some other fields, which exceeded those in the U.S. If the massive U.S. programme produced new technologies, the technology gap between Japan and the U.S. would widen farther. As they were applicable to both military and non-military fields, the research results would have a considerable effect on related technological fields.

- The possible spin-offs in the radar research section of SATKA could be used for such civilian fields as air controller radars and remote sensing. The new technologies obtained from infra-red sensor research could be used for medical equipments, industrial measurement machines and small freezers. Other spin-offs could cause a rapid advance in computer and software processing technologies.

- Findings from KEW research would greatly accelerate the innovations in aircraft technology by aiding the manufacture of small sensors, inertia equipments, processors, light-weight systems and new materials. Spin-offs from rail-gun research were expected in a wide range of areas from super conduction of electricity to high quality alloy and metal processing.

- In DEW research areas, research on high-powered lasers and particle beam lasers might produce results which could be applied to energy-related technology and chemical reaction processes.

- In technologies for components and other materials, Japan was capable of making adequate contributions towards the SDI.

The report concluded, “If Japan participates in the SDI research plan in a way that will enable Japan to use its results in a proper manner,
it may greatly improve the levels of related technologies in this country."\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{THE DECISION TO PARTICIPATE}

The report was submitted to a meeting of five key cabinet ministers namely Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotoda Masaharu, the Foreign Minister Abe Shintaro, the Director General of the Defence Agency Kato Koichi, the Director General of the STA Kono Yohei and Minister of MITI Watanabe Michio. The ministers despite meeting five times in between April and July 1986 could not take any decision. Nakasone also did not try to push things. Ostensibly he had a legitimate reason. His government could not take any major foreign policy decisions prior to the lower and upper house elections scheduled for early July 1986.

The Government formally decided to participate in the SDI research programme on 9 September 1986. The decision was reported in the form of a statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotoda. The statement said that the proposed participation would not violate the 1969 Diet resolution banning military use of space (Appendix-VIII). It held that SDI was a 'non-nuclear' defence system aimed at transforming global security order into "mutually assured security" (MAS) through total eradication of nuclear weapons. It also reaffirmed that the proposed participation would be carried out within the framework of the nation's domestic laws and bilateral arrangements between Japan and the U.S.\textsuperscript{75} The decision came after Gotoda and the key cabinet ministers met for their sixth meeting on the issues.

\textsuperscript{74} Japan Times, 24 April 1986.

\textsuperscript{75} Japan Times, 10 September 1986.
Government level negotiations then started between Japan and the U.S. to discuss all the complex issues related to the SDI project. Issues such as participation of government as well as private laboratories, use of research results of the SDI, modes of contracts, classification of data, patent rights, royalty, maintenance of secrecy etc., were thoroughly discussed between the two sides. Finally Japan and the U.S. signed the agreement on 22 July 1987 providing for Japanese participation in the SDI research project.76 (see Appendix IX).

Nakasone had adopted a vary cautious stand throughout these 18 months so as not to give the impression that he was overzealous to push Japan into a speedy acceptance of the U.S. invitation to join the SDI research project. He took his time to analyse all possible options and gauge the public mood. The reluctance to speed up things was perhaps based on a tactic of incrementalism, designed to accustom the Japanese people to the idea of participation in the programme. The government had its own rationale in joining the programme as was explained in the statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotoda. But one important reason for the decision, which was not declared, could be found in the political stance held by Prime Minister Nakasone - attaching importance to unity with western democracies in working out Japan’s foreign policy. The United Kingdom and Federal Republic of Germany had already decided to participated in the SDI research programme during 1985 and Israel joined in May 1986. These moves seemed to have influenced considerably the decision of the Japanese Government.

76 For a detail analysis of Japan’s decision to join the SDI, see, Momoi Makoto, “Kokusai Anzen Hosho e no Sekkyoku Teki Sanka” (Positive Participation in International Security) in Nakasone Naikakushi, (History of Nakasone Cabinet), vol.1, pp.237-243.