

Japan now has a Ministry of Defence

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, January 10, 2007

The Times of India 9 January 2007

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

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Japan's conservative government upgraded the defence agency to a full ministry on Tuesday, in line with prime minister Shinzo Abe's push to give the military a greater profile.

The upgrading of the defence agency, formerly under the cabinet office, passed parliament last month without significant opposition, propelled by deep concern in Japan over North Korean missile and nuclear weapons development. The move is also part of an agenda that, through such moves as requiring schools to teach patriotism and attempting to revise the constitution, has raised concerns for some about the state of Japan's postwar pacifism.

At a formal ceremony on Tuesday, defence agency chief Fumio Kyuma was named defence minister and then took the reins of a new ministry with greater budgetary powers and prestige. The enhancement is a reversal for a military establishment that has kept a low profile since being discredited by Japan's disastrous wartime defeat.

Abe and Kyuma marked the occasion by reviewing a Japanese honour guard on the parade grounds outside the new ministry. Also in attendance were military representatives from 22 countries, including US Marine Corps Maj Gen Timothy Larsen, deputy commander for US Forces Japan.

"I'm truly proud today on this occasion as the prime minister to have inaugurated a defence ministry — an organization with the responsibility for defence that is a nation's inalienable sovereign right," Abe said.

Meanwhile, China said that it hopes Japan will continue its peaceful post-war policies despite launching its first full-fledged defence ministry since World War II.

"We feel that if Japan maintains its direction of peaceful development, it is in line with Japan's own basic interests," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a regular press briefing. "We also hope that whatever structural changes Japan makes it can continue on the path of peaceful diplomacy."

10

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