

**Getting Involved:
Relocation, Overseas deployment and Spouse clubs
for Japan Self Defense officers
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Introduction

While the studies of the armed forces and gender, and research into military spouses, families, and woman soldiers have been actively pursued (Rohall, Segal & Segal 1999, Ender 2002, Cline 2003, Leyva 2003, Woodward & Winter 2004, Miyanishi 2004, Frühstück 2004), they are still lacking in some areas. Papanek coined the term “two-person single career” (1973) to describing the vicarious achievements American women who support their husband’s work to meet a special combination of formal and informal institutional demands, particularly within the armed forces. In institutions, certain expectations may be communicated to the wives of the employees. Reinforcing the husband’s commitment to the institution and encouraging a certain type of role performance from the wife, these expectations often serve a dual function. Mady Segal (1988) has further characterized the armed forces as “greedy institutions” and points out that the armed forces require military families to align their domestic circumstances with the duty to the armed forces of the enlisted family member, while also noting that these policies were becoming increasingly inconsistent. Similarly, Stanley, Segal and Laughton (1990)

reiterated that Army policy has lagged behind social trends and that the family remains the junior partner in any relationship with the military. From the 1970s through to 1988, having an appropriately supportive wife was often a great aid to professional success. In some instances, to better meet its expectations. The military has even pressured the working wives of officers to quit paid employment. Even in more recent times, Harrell (2001) says that within the armed forces officers' spouses still come under pressure, for example, to become members of a spouse club or to participate in volunteer activities.

Why is it better for the Armed Forces to win the devoted participation of the spouses of its officers? Harrell mentions three reasons: to preserve of military culture and tradition; to cope with the changing demographics of the military—the more married enlisted men there are, the more family problems; and, in the current post-Cold War environment, reduced defense budgets have to be stretched to cover an increased number of missions and deployments—spousal absence and family transfers put more strain on families. While a large private corporation would hire professional consultants to deal with these strains, many armed forces officers find themselves spending a great deal of time helping their troops with family problems. The thinking in the armed forces seems to be that this somehow better preserves military culture and readiness; consequently, officers try to mediate in family issues. As a result families are inextricably involved in military activities and superiors in the workplace may be intrusively involved in family affairs. Harrell points out that this diverts time and attention away from the military

project. In the existing system, military experts are unable to totally devote themselves to battle training and other military objectives. Harrell's point is that if officers participate in activities other than their professional duties, the proper operations of the military are compromised. Furthermore, it is moot whether or not the current modes of family consultation effectively support the armed forces organization.

To date, there has been no published study of the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) families or spousal involvement from the perspective of Harrell's argument. Does the JSDF rely on spouses? Do spouses join spouse clubs of their own volition? Or do they feel compelled to join? In this paper, I will discuss how military spouses view their serving partners' duties and what kinds of thing they do to support it. In particular, I consider three factors: wide-ranging relocation; overseas deployment—such as in Iraq; and senior officer spouse clubs. Most of the data was collected during interviews conducted with the spouses (20 women, 2 men) of 22 Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) officials and with one spouse (man) of a former JGSDF official who was on high readiness as a JGSDF Reservist. To understand how officers are assigned to positions, I also interviewed JSDF officials: ten JGSDF officials (women 5, men 5)¹, two Japan Air Self-Defense Force officials (both women), one Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force official (woman) and two JGSDF officials (both women) on high readiness, and three JGSDF Reservists (women) on high readiness. In total, I interviewed 41 officials and spouses.

¹ The 5 women JGSDF official's husbands are included in the 22 spouse interviews.

1 Relocation

High-ranking JSDF officials get rotated every one or two years, at which time they are transferred to anywhere in Japan or overseas. In this paper, I focus on the Ground Self-Defense Force officials and their families, and their response to relocation.

1-1 Relocation for high-ranking official's spouses

High-ranking² officials are regularly transferred or and this often involves relocation, often for short-term assignments. Consequently, almost all live in military official residences off base, mostly 3LDK. Once children reach junior or senior high school age and school and university entrance exams become important to the family, many families decide to purchase a house or otherwise house the wives and children in a settled residence, but until then, the families usually live together in military housing. Life in this type of housing is, therefore, normal for high-ranking officers. As the wife of a major general put it, families have no control over, and are given little notice about, where they are sent:

Personnel assignments are decided sequentially from the chief of staff downwards. Lower-ranking personnel transfers are decided last, so the unofficial announcement is slow, too. Lieutenant colonels and below,

² In this paper the high- ranking is general, colonel and major rank in JSDF.

when they are transferred in March, unofficially know where they are going in early February. In some circumstances, however, the Colonels and lower ranks are only informed unofficially two days before the transfer. That's why I always begin packing for a move when the move is still a rumor. But I don't know where we'll be relocated. I cannot make housing reservations, and at the time of the transfer, I always worry about housing. I'm dissatisfied that we don't know until just before it happens. Sometimes, an official residence is not available.”

When a family vacates military housing, the duties corps conducts a strict inspection to ensure that the residence is restored to its original condition. Another major general's wife pointed out that there was waste in the moving system:

It is strange to take all the things which we brought in. We must remove even the air-conditioner. Though the next person will also need a screen door, if we installed one we have to remove it.

Ventilation fans are different in different official residences, so some people move with all kinds of ventilation fans. The widths of gas rings also vary depending on the official residence. If we can meet the next tenant personally we can leave things behind, but otherwise we must remove it.

One of the problems of the relocation is education of the children. The children of most military families attend the public elementary school junior high schools at the places to which the family is transferred. The break comes with senior high school, which is the final stage before university entrance examinations. Many families acquire a settled family home around this time. Usually a property is purchased and the husband relocates leaving his family behind. Another alternative, which one family considered because their child so hated moving, is boarding school.

1-2 Relocation to a foreign country of a high-ranking official

If a Self Defense Force official is sent abroad as a defense attaché, a liaison officer or to study overseas, for example at a military staff college, they tend to take their family along to assist in special duties. Of the 19 high-ranking officers I interviewed, four studied abroad at military staff colleges, two acted as defense attachés, and one was a liaison officer. All were accompanied overseas by their wives and children.

On these postings, the education of the children is taken into account. Studies at military staff colleges are undertaken for less than two years. During that time the children attend local schools or study the Japanese curriculum at home in a correspondence course. Defense attachés are usually resident abroad for three years, and their children are sent to local Japanese schools or to private overseas educational institutions.

On overseas postings, the work of a self-defense official overlaps much

more with private life than in Japan. For example, it is often expected that parties will be held at home to introduce the family to local co-workers. This increases the public exposure of the family. Moreover, as the wife of a member of the military officer corps, there are numerous public events that a wife is expected to attend. Consequently, before accompanying her husband overseas, a wife must attend classes run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One wife whose husband was posted to Europe described a course:

“I took lessons in the local language and received information about daily life, public safety, and public hygiene. A former ambassadress instructed me about my duties and a doctor told me about vaccinations. I also learned how to prepare buffet-style parties at home, how to write party invitations, how to put out glasses and the uses for different designs of glass, the basics of wine, the issues of Islam and alcohol, protocols for seating, and so on. I also learned how to write thank-you letters to ambassadresses.”

Overseas, in Japanese Embassies, there are meetings of the wives of secretaries from each ministry and each government office. The ambassadress encouraged her to “actively participate in various events”, and to “acclimatize ... to the new environment.” There were also opportunities to make the acquaintance of the military attaché wives from other countries at official events like National Days and informal tea parties:

“I talked with wives of officials from various countries ... I deepened my friendship with wives when given such an opportunity. I thought that it was important and it was easy to become familiar with what I needed to know. I felt it was important to adapt myself to new circumstances early. Having children helped because it was something I had in common with the other parents. Thanks to that, I was able to get to know others immediately. Before coming back to Japan my husband took me aside and said, ‘Thanks to you, I was able to go out with a person in this country who is usually hard to get information from. However, I could do this because you were friends with the other wives.’”

In this way, the husband appreciated that his wife had performed her role well, and seemed to be fairly satisfied that she could help her husband. She went on to mention a small tea party that other members were not invited to, but she was. She certainly had a strong sense that she should support her husband’s career and took satisfaction from her ability to contribute.

2 Overseas troop deployments

The JSDF has dispatched troops overseas since 1991 when, in a peace keeping operation (PKO), Marine SDF troops carried out minesweeping in the Persian Gulf. From January 2004 until July 2006, in one of the biggest deployments so far, the Ground SDF (JGSDF) dispatched a total of 5,600

troops for Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group, which was based Special Measures for Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance Act.

2-1 Institutional support for spouses

Before the troops were dispatched to Iraq, each soldier and families of soldiers were required to attend briefing sessions held by the JSDF. There they were informed about how the family would be contacted if soldiers got injured. Otherwise, daily information would come in the mail. They were also informed that families were allowed to send unaccompanied baggage once a month. When officers received extended leave during this overseas deployment, family members would also be able to join them on holiday in neighboring countries.

Among the 23 spouses I interviewed before the most recent deployment to Iraq, six were married to men (ranking from colonel to second lieutenant) who were posted to Iraq. According to one major, when his mother learned that he would be dispatched to Iraq, she regretted that she herself had advised her son to enlist. She got angry, and said, "I'm against to Mr. Koizumi." The major took his mother's words seriously and, indeed, wondered whether his mother would have suggested enlisting had she known he would face active duty in hostile territory.

After attending the family briefing session, the major's mother felt less tense and his wife, too, was no longer seriously worried. One second lieutenant's wife also was no longer worried about the mission to Iraq. Some people around her worried more than she did and asked her about extra pay

allowances for the mission. She said that she found this distasteful. In Japan, many people still feel uncomfortable when such an active interest is shown in matters of payment.

One colonel's wife, whose husband was a something responsible commander and therefore decided which of his subordinates, would be sent to Iraq, made an effort to talk with the families of soldiers to hear what everybody was worried about.

Her husband bound for Iraq as a chief of operations, another colonel's wife said, "I hope my husband will come back without incident, but the feeling that I should pray for the safety of all soldiers is stronger than before." She decided to give priority to participating in support association events and military unit events: "There was a wife in the neighboring dining room, where the soldiers usually come to events, so I tried to remember her face and say, 'Hello.'" Her husband had previously done a PKO tour of duty in Southeast Asia: "At that time, I was only concerned about my family. However, now that my husband is a field commander, I can't behave in the same way as before". Her sense of responsibility is following the trajectory of her husband's position.

2-2 Informal support

A considerable mental burden was put on military families with members being dispatched to Iraq on their first overseas mission. The wife of another colonel who had previously seen overseas PKO expressed explained her concern at that time: "If my husband is involved in battle, how should I

handle it?”

On almost every level of life, wives left behind are reminded of the absence of their husbands. The wife of a major, whose children were grown up, recalled:

“The parking lot near military housing empties on weekends after payday. It seemed that everyone except us was going out to dinner as a family. Anyway, they all seemed to be out somewhere as a family somewhere. I hated seeing the empty car park, so I would drive off with the children. Then the neighbors started offering support. Once another JSDF officer invited me and my children to his house to eat homemade *udon* (noodles) he had made. On Christmas day, a neighbor in the same housing complex invited us to a party. Sometimes I invited people over to my house. I got more help from neighbors than from my far-off parents. My neighbors helped me to get through seven hard months.”

When interviewed, she several times said that only the family left behind when missions are sent overseas understand this state of mind. Despite the neighbor’s support, this woman found the experience painful:

“When I faced difficulties, I was couldn’t talk things over with my husband. I was living under a strain. After all, I think that if a person has never experienced having a family member deployed overseas, they

cannot understand what I was going through ... Everybody cared about me and invited me to various places; but I was always aware that my husband was away. They sympathized with my feelings, and so invited me to their homes. My loneliness was constantly present.”

The major’s wife continued:

“When my husband was in Iraq, my children had grown up, and I had time to myself. Because there was time to think, I worried seriously. Often, I just wanted to be alone and arranged a room which suited being alone. I didn’t suffer about the dispatch but I wanted to be alone. I could persuade myself everything was all right, but sometimes couldn’t help thinking that the worst might happen”.

Another colonel’s wife, whose husband was also dispatched to Iraq as a field commander, found support within her extended family. Her father-in-law, who lived far from the family, said that he prayed for his son’s safe return. Moreover, he also stopped drinking as a pledge to Shinto deities. These actions made her realize that here anxiety was shared by others beyond people in the family that she saw every day.

2-3 Outside the range of support

Despite the support offered by others, there were some families who still

found it hard to cope with the burden of overseas deployment. When a lieutenant colonel who, accompanied by his wife, had studied at a Military Staff College in Europe said he was applying for duty in Iraq, his wife cried out in shock. At that time, the birth of their first child was approaching, so his superior officer turned down the request. When he later applied again, his wife understood that she could not oppose it. During her husband's seven-month deployment in Iraq, where he worked for the JSDF on a U.S. base in Baghdad, the wife stayed at her parents' house, out of contact with other JSDF families. Seven months after her husband returned to Japan, he was hospitalized with chronic stress disorder:

“His character completely changed. It gradually became apparent after he came back to Japan. Since Iraq, he has kept irregular hours. He has had symptoms of stress, too. The doctor put him on tranquilizers, so he is always sleepy at home. His always seemed preoccupied ... He told me to go back to my parents' home, and I was glad to get away. I went to my parents' home once a month. I learned that when one family member has a stress disorder, the rest of the family also builds up stress. When I spoke with my husband I chose my words with great caution. Sometimes, when I thought he was in a good mood and talked with him, he would suddenly get into a temper. One day, for something to do, we visited one of my relatives, and husband came left before us. He stayed alone at home and the next day he went absent without leave. A colleague

wondered and came to see what had happened. He went to the hospital with my husband. My husband was then hospitalized for a few months. After a few months, he gradually came back to himself. Now he has recovered. In those days his character was completely different. And as for me, I lost sight of myself. I had to pay a lot of attention to my husband ... When he was in the house, I was depressed. When I could talk with him, I felt relieved. However, I was not able to talk with my husband often. He became sensitive to the slight nuance of words and would react strongly to what I said. If my arm strayed over his pillow when he was in bed, he would suddenly lose his temper.”

A doctor recommended that this wife get counseling, but she was already busy with childcare, and she declined. Sometimes she regrets this decision:

“During my husband’s illness, I sometimes went out with my friends to take my mind off things. It would have been unendurable if I had not had that kind of diversion ... However, I’m not actually sure whether my husband understands how difficult those times were for me. Still today, he often takes offence and falls silent. Unable to endure his attitude, I recently had a serious argument with him. I doubt that he can understand my situation. He always puts the blame on his illness. Every time he mentions it, I have to suppress my anger. I wanted him to appreciate my efforts, but he didn’t. I should have taken counseling, too.”

The husband has recovered now, but the wife has learned something – that his illness could not be blamed for everything. The problem remains unresolved.

The wife of another major, who had previously completed a nine-month assignment in a PKO, was upset when she was informed that he was being dispatched to Iraq. She tried to understand this operation, but it was difficult:

“I thought I should tell him that he has no need to worry about me. I thought I should not lay bare my true feelings. Instead, I repressed my feelings. However, when I heard the sound of a ventilation fan or an explosion in a movie, I was scared. My husband became nervous, too.”

She was so anxious that she eventually developed nervous gastritis. Five months into the PKO assignment, the United Nations gave him a holiday and he was able to spend a week in Europe with his wife. The Iraq operation ended three months later. When his tour of duty ended, it was shorter than his first PKO deployment. The wife’s anxiety was relieved, but the husband suffered from depression from overwork after returning from Iraq:

“He said that his problems were not all caused by work in Iraq. Normally, when a soldier comes back from Iraq, they get some time off, but he was not given a holiday. Instead, he immediately went on military maneuvers.

When he returned, I noticed that he was in a somewhat strange state. That was about one month after his return from Iraq ... In Iraq, he did not have many subordinates, so he had to handle most of the work on his own. He was so busy that he often slept only for two or three hours a day. When he was not able to return to his living quarters to lie down, he slept on newspapers in his work place. I think the cause of his illness was over work, not frightening experiences. Because we didn't want the SDF to know about his illness, he visited a hospital in a neighboring town for psychiatric treatment.”

It was the wife that offered to take him to the hospital.

When this woman became mentally unstable before the PKO, her husband had told her to go to the hospital; she reminded him:

I panicked at the sound of a ventilation fan. I hyperventilated. Please listen, you had better visit a hospital for treatment whether you are abnormal or not. After I talked with a doctor of psychosomatic medicine and I soon relaxed.

It was a while before the woman sought help. She tried to cope on her own with what she felt were private, family matters.

“His hands trembled while he was working. He lost his enthusiasm. He

said he didn't want to go to work. He looked depressed. He didn't want to go outside ... At first, when he came back from Iraq; our life was a happy one. After a while, these symptoms started appearing. I seemed to catch his depression; I suffered from depression, too. We endured it for three months (he went to Iraq) for each other, and encouraged each other. When we quarreled, it would turn into an emotional conflict. We unleashed our emotions for a moment and let out a stream of abuse ... We received a check sheet from the JSDF to report our psychological problems, but I didn't think it was right for me to write about it, I felt it was private."

The examples show that the personal knowledge and abilities of spouses to deal with the stresses and strains of their partners' military occupation vary and that the type of support provided by the military is neither active nor proactive.

3 Spouse clubs

There are clubs for the wives of SDF officials, but I have not heard of any clubs for the husbands of female SDF officials.

3-1 Senior officer spouse clubs

The JSDF has social clubs for spouses. One spouse club, the Mihato-kai [Beautiful Pigeons Club], is open to women whose husbands who are generals

or admirals in any of the three branches, or a secretary in an intra-ministerial bureau, a director of a research institute or university, or a self-defense official working in the Tokyo, Saitama, or Chiba area. Women whose husbands are major general or above in the JGSDF are eligible to join the Rikuei-kai [Ground Prosper Club]. The Hinoki-kai (the Defense Agency was formerly located in Hinoki-cho, which was the place name) is for women whose husbands are colonels or ranked as section chief or above, and work in Ichigaya, Tokyo. While the Staff Office of the Director General does not directly manage these clubs, it does maintain a list of the members. The purpose of those clubs is to cultivate mutual friendship.

The Mihato-kai comprises five sections related to the military occupation of the spouse: intra-ministerial bureau; Ground SDF, Maritime SDF, Air SDF; and Defense Facilities Administration Agency. The head of this club is the wife of the Director-General of the Defense Agency. The enrollment fee is 1,000 yen. This club does not actually perform any social activities. In the latter half of the 1970s, when the number of retired senior Ground SDF officers and their wives were double those of the Naval and the Air branches, the JGSDF wives formed an independent club known as Sakura-kai [Cherry Blossom Club].

The Rikuei-kai, a name chosen by a vote among the founders, was started in 1964 by the wives of the Chief of Staff and the vice-director of the JGSDF. As of 2003, it had a membership of 122 women. This club was basically set up as a sister club to one that the wives of the Air SDF had successfully

established in 1957. The Rikuei-kai holds an annual convention.

The Hinoki-kai is a small club with a membership of around 40 persons. The wife of the Director-General of the Defense Agency heads the club. They have meetings twice a year. When a new Director General is instated, they hold a meeting to welcome him to the new post. One of the annual meetings typically visits a Defense Ministry-affiliated institution, is a lecture and lunch meeting.

One major general's wife recounted a story that she had heard about the wife of a superintendent general:

“She was not very good at talking, and told her husband ‘I am not good at talking, so I don't want to attend any meetings.’ The superintendent general replied, ‘You can tell people your name. If you can tell them your name, you can attend such a meeting. Don't worry about it.’ After that the wife didn't worry about it.”

The major general's wife also had no enthusiasm for the meetings, but said that she tries to attend. When I asked the reason she replied:

“If I am put in position where I have to speak sometime, I want to be prepared so I don't have any problems. I must learn from the more experienced wives. My husband never forces me to participate in these clubs, but I know he wants me to.”

If a husband becomes the director-general or the superintendent general, the probability that the wife will be asked to make a speech increases. Wives know that appearing in public is an opportunity to create a favorable impression and that how she is evaluated will influence her husband's career. Advice given by more senior high-ranking officer's wives can greatly affect the behavior of other wives.

Junin-kai, which roughly translates as Ten Person Society, performs administrative duties and event planning for the Rikuei-kai, Hinoki-kai, and carries out other organizational tasks. Junin-kai members comprise the wife of the Chief of Staff of the JGSDF, the wife of the vice-president of the Chief of Staff, and the wives of the directors of each section and the inspectors.

To plan events, working from morning to evening, they will gather in the home of the Chief of Staff, work out the details and write invitations. According to need, they may gather many times in a single month. If somebody suggests a plan, she must have a budget, planning schedule, and event program to propose at the next meeting. Later different plans or revisions may be put forward and the most suitable plan is decided. According to one member of Junin-kai, meetings were held weekly. Even if a member had part-time employment, the wife of the Chief of Staff told them they had to attend events. The husbands of the members of the Junin-kai also form a group called the Kinyo-kai [Friday Club]. The Junin-kai holds a farewell party with the Kinyo-kai, when members of Junin-kai are replaced.

According to one member who wrote an opinion piece that appeared in a magazine commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Rikuei-kai in 2004, their club should be more relaxed about the requirements today. She wrote,

“Our way of life has changed, and more women are working women. In the future this club should make participation optional, like the JMSDF and JASDF, not a duty. In the wake of change, the club should simplify the events and mementoes.”

3-2 High-ranking officers’ spouse clubs in provincial districts

Every headquarters of the JGSDF has spouse clubs for the wives of officers above the rank of chief. They have usually had two or three meetings per year. The events they hold are very similar to those described above for the Rikuei-kai. However, in provincial areas, there are no spouse clubs such as those described above.

One major general’s wife told me of her experience in a provincial district:

“Every time I attended the club this autumn, it was a lecture. If I, as the wife of the commander, attend a celebratory party at the army post, I can get acquainted with women who are the chairpersons of committees like the Defense Forces’ Mother’s Association, and the wives of the local celebrities. In my previous spouse club we visited local women’s

associations and local groups of women celebrities or women presidents. We tried to get to know each other better. In this provincial area, such activities seem to be rare.”

During my research, I have yet to come across any social group for husbands who work in the private sector, but such husbands do exist. One husband, whose wife is a captain in the JGSDF, works for a chemical manufacturer. He always closely reads JGSDF PR magazines. If there are things he does not understand, he asks his wife about them straightaway. His wife does not him to read it, but he said, “Because it is a rare magazine, I read it.” He told his fellow workers that his wife was a JSDF officer when they first got married. He has long expected to be transferred by his company but this has not yet happened:

“Twice they have mentioned transferring me to Tokyo, however I was not chosen ... because my wife would not be able to go; the company considered how the children would react without her.”

He says he often talks about the JSDF at his place of work. His fellow workers are gradually learning a lot about the JSDF, too. They can now understand the technical language:

“When I’m in my office, they asked me about the true intentions of the

JSDF. When the North Korean Taepodong affair became public knowledge they asked, 'Did they make an urgent call to your wife?', 'How will the SDF deal with this?' I asked her about those things when I got home. When we talked about the recent diplomatic dispute, I gave my opinion, which was different from wife, and we quarreled. I've never felt that my wife's job has caused any problems in getting along with my colleagues. Compared with other ordinary people, my co-workers are extremely aware of Japan's defense and foreign affairs; I think it is due to me. When international incidents occur, I'm the first person they ask."

Another husband, whose wife is a sergeant, is extremely busy running an IT company. However, he has tried to understand the wife's job, and made time to visit her work place.

Conclusion

When the spouses are wives of male officials, if the husband is a colonel or above, the wives are aware of their husbands' careers, and actively support their work by attending spouse clubs. By contrast, the wives of lieutenant colonels and below do not have any organizations with regular meetings, such as spouses clubs, where they can get to know each other. This lack denies them the opportunities to behave, in front of a critical peer group, explicitly as officer's wives. By attending spouse clubs, the wives of higher ranking officers become more aware of themselves and the other members as officers' wives

and acquire a sense of belonging.

When the spouses are husbands of female military personnel, there is no apparent difference depending on the rank of the wife. All the husbands I interviewed seemed to appreciate their wives' work as JSDF officials. They expressed hope that every experience would contribute to her career, and expect their wives to work until JSDF retirement age. They have attended inspection parades and have visited their wives' place of work. They apparently understand and take an interest in their wives' work.

Because official residences are convenient for bringing up small children, wives who have children aged less than 12–15 years old (that is, below high school age) are given priority for relocating with their husbands. These are usually good places to raise children and it is easy to get cooperation from the neighbors. Even so, wives sometimes express of kinds of dissatisfaction peculiar to the facilities. Of housing in a metropolitan area, the wife of a high-ranking officer said:

“A few months ago, someone left a bomb in the official residence, but we weren't told to evacuate. However, the people in the neighboring building and two buildings away in the military housing complex received official advice to evacuate. I was puzzled.”

If this were a private apartment house, this non-uniform evacuation would be unthinkable, but these families are required to accept SDF procedures.

On overseas assignments, success depends partly on the husband's performance and partly on how much effort his wife exerts. These wives understand that adjusting to an overseas environment is difficult and give special consideration to their children while they mix with the families of other military attachés'. They recognize their ability to socialize is important to their husbands.

In the cases of overseas deployment that were mentioned earlier, wives whose husbands were commanders in Iraq expressed similar concerns. They supported their husbands, but also felt they had a role to play with the families of corps personnel. Then their anxiety didn't become an issue. Iraq, however, was very different to former places of deployment. It went beyond the cross-cultural experiences troops had encountered before. Evidence of the strain that it put on officers in the field and the effects of this on their families shows that greater awareness of mental health issues is necessary for the military. From what was reported during my interviews, it seems that the SDF has very low awareness. The combination of overwork, a particularly challenging work environment and, for senior officers, isolation, can quickly lead to stress disorders of which the sufferer, intent on the proper discharge of duties, is unaware. If the behavior of these people changes, junior personnel or strangers are unlikely to notice or report it unless it becomes excessively odd. These damaged individuals have to have their state recognized and then admit their situation to themselves. After this, there is reluctance to seek help through military channels, possibly because "mental instability" may affect

further promotion. To lessen the future suffering of individuals and their families, and to improve the effective use of human resources in the military, I am sure that I am not the only one who hopes that the SDF learns from the Iraq experience and employs trained consultants to both advise on avoiding unnecessary stress and to provide counseling that does not stigmatize those receiving it.

Tied to the JSDF, there are nationwide spouse clubs and provincial district unit spouse clubs. These clubs fit together like the pieces of a telescope slide into one another. They function as organizations in which wives can further the careers of their husbands. One major general's wife said, "In the JSDF we don't have training sessions for general officer's wives, but the U.S. Armed Forces do." It is not yet clear how the SDF evaluates the wives within the JSDF organization or, indeed, if it has an explicit, coherent policy.

Nevertheless, even beyond their valuable role in maintaining morale and providing personal support to military personnel, through relocation, dealing with overseas deployment, spouse clubs, and other activities, the spouses of JSDF officials are passively and actively involved in many aspects of JSDF operations. Harrell (2001) had pointed out that many more women were pursuing full-time careers, and that they were finding it difficult to fulfill the expectations. In Japan, it is clear that spousal support can be important to the careers of high-flying JSDF officers and officials. Papenek's idea of the "two-person career" is still a useful characterization.

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