

Topic I: The Current Police System: Looking Back on 60 years and Toward the Future

The climate of public security in Japan is changing with the times. Today, there are issues such as a heightened threat to cyberspace, international terrorism, and international crimes that easily cross national borders. The police force is reassessing its organizational state so that it can adequately deal with these changes in the climate of public security.

The present police system was created in July 1954 and has been in place for 60 years as of 2014. The police have been dealing with changes in the public security landscape and social structures to continuously reevaluate the ideal state of its force.

(1) Development of the Police System

I. The Pre-war Police System and the Former Police Law

Prior to the war, the police system was fundamentally one of national police. As the head minister, the Home Minister controlled and supervised prefectural governors and the chiefs of police serving as regional directors. After the war, the Police Law (No. 196, 1947; hereafter, Former Police Law) was enacted under the policies of the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces. While the Former Police Law was significant for its democratization of police, because municipal police systems were adopted and police operations departmentalized, there were problems that included inefficient police operations, a heavy fiscal burden on small local governments, and ambiguity about the government's responsibility for public security. Revisions were made to the law on several occasions to improve these adverse effects, but the fundamental problems remained unresolved.



**Former National Police Agency Building
(National Personnel Authority Bldg.)**

II. Enactment of the Current Police Law and the Trajectory of the Current Police System

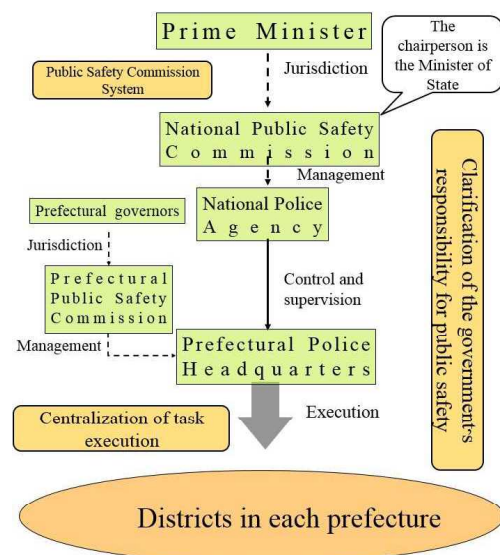
Therefore, sweeping revisions to the police system were debated, and the Police

Law (No. 162, 1954; hereafter, Current Police Law) took effect in July 1954. The Current Police Law maintains the superlative aspects of the Former Police Law that was founded on democratic principles, and aims for an efficient and logical police system.

It is characterized by its clarification of the government's responsibility toward public security through actions such as appointing the Chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission from among the Ministers of State, while maintaining a public safety commission system to secure democratic police operations and political neutrality. It also tasks prefectures with police administration, centralizes the execution of tasks with prefectural police, and recognizes specific government participation.

Since its enactment, the Current Police Law has been subject to various revisions in response to changes in the climate of public security.

An outline of the police system according to the Current Police Law



Major changes in the Current Police Law

Development of new measures & reorganization of the National Police Agency

- 1962 The Traffic Bureau is established
- 1994 The Community Safety Bureau/Info-Communications Bureau, etc. are established
- 2000 The Police Station Council/provisions for filing complaints are developed
- 2004 The Organized Crime Department/Foreign Affairs and Intelligence Department are established

Reassessment of national and regional division of roles for maintaining national public safety

- 1980 Provisions are developed for mutual legal assistance
- 1996 Provisions are developed for coping with broad-based organized crime
- 2004 Provisions for national authority involving serious terrorism, etc.
Clarification of liaisons with foreign law enforcement agencies

Strengthening measures against broad-based crimes & coordination among prefectural police

- 1964 Exercise authority between neighboring police in boundary vicinities
- 1996 Exercise authority outside of jurisdictions in regard to broad-based organized crime

(2) Future Developments

In regard to the climate of public security in Japan, the number of confirmed criminal offenses hovered around 1.4 million from the mid 1950s to mid 1960s, but continued to trend up from 1974. In 2002, there were approximately 2.85 million confirmed criminal offenses, the largest number since the war. To break away from this critical state, the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime was held among all cabinet members, and the number of confirmed criminal offenses decreased from 2003 when initiatives were launched based on the Action Plan of the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime. In 2012, the number had dropped to less than half that of 2002. However, in addition to the growing threat to public security because of the hazards of cyberspace and other menaces, the assurance of good public safety has become an important issue as Japan prepares to host the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo.

Given this state of affairs and with an eye

toward the coming seven years until 2020 when the country hosts the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, in December 2013 the 21st Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime drew up the Strategy to Make “Japan the Safest Country in the World,” which hinges on major initiatives such as building the world’s safest cyberspace.



21st Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime
(Source: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Founded on this strategy, the police will promote efforts for adequately dealing with changes in the public security climate.



The design for the New National Stadium

Column: Improvements and Enhancements to Equipment that Supports Police Activities

Amid changes to public safety and the growing and diversified expectations of the police, improvements and enhancements have been made to police equipment such as uniforms, vehicles, and aircraft.

Changes in police equipment

	Former police uniform (male/female)	Current police uniform (male/female)
Former/current uniforms		
Changes in patrol cars		
Utilization of aircraft		<p>Utilization of helicopter video transmission system</p>