

Japanese panel eyes constitutional clause

by UPI

TOKYO -- An expert Japanese panel reportedly will begin looking into constitutional language interpreted as a ban on the exercise of collective self-defense.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Kyodo news service, quoting government sources, reported the experts are to begin work later this month. The panel may determine whether to revise the language, interpreted to mean that Japan had renounced its right to wage war or to maintain armed forces.

Kyodo said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki insisted no decision had been made on creating the panel, but also noted the need for such a study in view of Japan's security needs -- dictated by North Korea's missile launches and nuclear test last year.

Kyodo reported the government has been saying Japan inherently has the right to collective self-defense -- or the right to use its forces when an ally comes under attack -- under international law, but is prohibited from exercising it under its pacifist constitution.

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