

# Japan's National Strategy and Changes in the Situation in East Asia

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## **Abstract**

The international community is facing transformation, the foundations of the international order are being shaken, and the world is at a crossroads. Japan is in the most severe and complex security environment since World War II, and needs to develop and maintain a free and open international order based on the rule of law. The National Security Strategy of Japan emphasizes the importance of strengthening comprehensive defense capabilities to promote Japan's diplomacy. Therefore, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and defense cooperation with like-minded countries. It will also coordinate its relevant strategies to further promote the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" and strive to improve the security environment around Japan, and carry out substantive diplomatic cooperation with countries and regions bordering the Indo-Pacific. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the economic conflict caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and tensions across the Taiwan Strait are new factors in the National Security Strategy of Japan and its National Defense Strategy.

**Keywords:** National Security Strategy of Japan, National Defense Strategy, Defense Buildup Program, Taiwan Strait Situation, China is the Biggest Strategic Challenge

The much-anticipated Three Documents of Japan's National Security Strategy were officially released by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida after their adoption at a cabinet meeting on December 26, 2022. These three documents include the "National Security Strategy of Japan," the "National Defense Strategy," and the

“Defense Buildup Program.” The National Security Strategy of Japan was developed in 2013 and revised for the first time after 10 years. The “National Defense Strategy” was originally known as the “National Defense Program Guidelines.” “The Defense Buildup Program” covers Japan’s defense budget for the next five years and its specific weapons and equipment.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Japan Identifies China as the Region’s Biggest Strategic Challenge

Before the announcement of the new three security documents, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Komeito (公明黨) Party held several security discussion



Figure 1. China Is the Biggest Strategic Challenge

Source: 〈【解説】「反撃能力」保有 新たな「国家安全保障戦略」等が閣議決定 日本の防衛はどう変わる?〉, 《日テレ NEWS》, December 16, 2022, <<https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/680d2ad7044b3161582b9f87438d94262aca50d3>>.

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1. Cabinet Secretariat (Japan), 〈国家安全保障戦略について〉, December 16, 2022, *Cabinet Secretariat (Japan)*, <<https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/221216anzenhoshou.html>>.

meetings. At the meeting, the LDP wanted to define China's military activities around Japan as a "threat," but the Komeito worried that the word "threat" would anger China.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, the LDP reached an agreement with the Komeito to define China as a challenge. This move was also in line with the U.S. *National Security Strategy* released in October 2022, which defines "China as the greatest challenge."

After the release of the three security documents, Japan officially identified China as the region's "biggest strategic challenge." This is different from 10 years ago, when Japan saw China as an entity to watch and be wary of. Because Japan is aware that China may attempt to disrupt regional security and alter the international *status quo*, Japan must strengthen its defense and formulate relevant policies to respond.

The Chinese government reacted violently to Japan's definition of China as its "greatest strategic challenge" and "attention to the security and stability of the Taiwan Strait situation." On the day the report was released, the Chinese Embassy in Japan stated that Japan "wantonly incites China's threat and provokes regional tension and confrontation" and that "China's position on Diaoyutai [Senkaku] and Taiwan-related issues is clear and firm, and taking relevant measures is completely within China's sovereignty, and Japan is not allowed to dictate and take advantage of the opportunity." The Chinese Embassy spokesman formally protested to Tokyo. In addition, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin (汪文斌) stated that "Japan ignores the facts and reaffirms that the Taiwan issue is purely China's internal affair" and urged the Japanese side to abide by the cliché of the "four political documents of China and Japan."<sup>3</sup> However, it is worth noting that China did not immediately make a major political move against Japan, limiting itself to rhetorical protests by the Chinese Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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2. 田嶋慶彦、小野太郎、松山尚幹、〈中国は「最大の戦略的挑戦」 政府案に公明が「強すぎる」、調整難航〉、《朝日新聞》、December 8, 2022, <<https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASQD866RBQD8UTFK010.html>>.

3. Embassy of the PRC in Japan, 〈駐日本使館發言人就日本政府發布安保戰略三文件涉華消極內容發表談話〉、December 16, 2022, *Embassy of the PRC in Japan*, <[http://jp.china-embassy.gov.cn/sgkxnew/202212/t20221216\\_10991313.htm](http://jp.china-embassy.gov.cn/sgkxnew/202212/t20221216_10991313.htm)>.

But then the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted large-scale military exercises around Japan. On December 16, 2022, according to the Japanese Ministry of Defense, a carrier strike group led by the Liaoning entered the Pacific Ocean through the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island on the December 16, and it was confirmed that its course was 450 kilometers east-northeast. In the four days up to December 20, the Chinese aircraft carrier sailed in the Pacific Ocean southeast of Okinawa Prefecture, while fighters and other aircraft took off and landed on about 130 occasions; about 60 fighters and about 70 helicopters took off and landed, and carrier-based aircraft could reach the southwest islands of Japan in 5 to 10 minutes. The PLA expects to simulate training using strategic bombers to strike Taiwan from east and west.<sup>4</sup>

On December 26, 2022, according to the latest developments released by Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense, from 6 am on December 25 to 6 am on December 26, a total of 71 PLA military aircraft were detected, 47 of which crossed the middle line of the Taiwan Strait and entered the southwest air defense identification zone (ADIZ). The number of intrusions across the median line was second only to those on August 5, 2022,<sup>5</sup> when Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. On that occasion, the PLA held military exercises to encircle Taiwan, sending 68 military aircraft, 49 of which crossed the median line and entered the southwest ADIZ.

China will never allow for Japan's frequent comments on the Taiwan Strait issue. The PLA will step up its efforts to carry out gray zone operations around Taiwan and the Diaoyutai in the East China Sea. China could also join forces with Russia and use military aircraft and warships to continuously draw a large circle around the main islands of Japan, deliberately causing regional unrest and creating a "new normal."

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4. Joint Staff Office (Japan), 〈中国海軍艦艇の動向について〉, December 16, 2022, *Joint Staff Office (Japan)*, <[https://www.mod.go.jp/js/pdf/2022/p20221216\\_01.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/js/pdf/2022/p20221216_01.pdf)>.

5. Ministry of National Defense (R.O.C.), 〈中共解放軍臺海周邊海、空域動態(111年12月26日)〉, December 26, 2022, *Ministry of National Defense (R.O.C.)*, <<https://www.mnd.gov.tw/Publish.aspx?p=80843&title=%e5%9c%8b%e9%98%b2%e6%b6%88%e6%81%af&SelectStyle=%e5%8d%b3%e6%99%82%e8%bb%8d%e4%ba%8b%e5%8b%95%e6%85%8b>>.



**Figure 2. United States and Japan Held a 2 Plus 2 Meeting on January 11, 2023**

Source: Ministry of Defense (Japan), 〈日米安全保障協議委員会 (2+2)〉, January, 11, 2023, *Ministry of Defense (Japan)*, <[https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/minister/hamada/2023\\_1.html](https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/minister/hamada/2023_1.html)>.

The United States and Japan held a 2 +2 meeting on foreign affairs and defense in Washington on January 11, 2023, to determine the scope of defense cooperation. Given Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and China's increased military pressure on Taiwan, the United States and Japan discussed in depth how to respond to the current situation, and issued a joint statement after the meeting.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi reiterated after the meeting: "China presents the greatest strategic challenge ever, and China's foreign policy of rebuilding the international order for its interests has aroused serious concern for the Japan-U.S. alliance and the international community." Under this consensus, the United States and Japan will continue to cooperate to oppose China's attempts to change the *status quo* in the East China Sea, and firmly oppose China's illegal claims

and coercive provocations in the South China Sea.”<sup>6</sup>

At the same occasion, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also said: “Not just in recent months, but in recent years, China has continued to undermine decades of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The United States hopes to maintain the *status quo* and opposes unilateral changes by either side, and the United States and Japan will unite and continue to safeguard peace with a calm and decisive attitude.” U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin pointed out that the PLA’s continued provocative actions around Taiwan are an attempt to create a “new normal.” The United States and Japan agree that China is the biggest strategic challenge.<sup>7</sup>

However, the main point of the U.S.-Japan 2+2 talks in Washington was that the United States and Japan must confirm the specific content of security cooperation. While the United States agrees with and supports Japan’s ability to strike back against enemy missile bases, how the United States and Japan should cooperate, for example, in the deployment of troops and missiles, the purchase of equipment, etc., is something that requires very close exchanges between both sides. In particular, in the face of China’s comprehensive challenge threat, the U.S.-Japan strategic use will be different from its past iterations. For example, the United States and Japan will concentrate their defense capabilities to protect Japan’s southwestern islands, while the U.S. military establishes a small army landing ship force in Japan to adjust strategies such as island defense.

On January 13, 2023, the United States and Japan held bilateral summit talks. The Indo-Pacific region will continue to strengthen capabilities in the face of China’s violations of the international order, North Korea’s provocations, and Russia’s continued brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, and their strong opposition to unilateral changes to the *status quo* by force or coercion anywhere in the world. The

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6. 〈日米2プラス2、日本の反撃能力運用で「協力を深化させる」〉,《毎日新聞》, January 12, 2023, <<https://mainichi.jp/articles/20230112/k00/00m/030/043000c>>.

7. 〈中国抑止へ日米の能力を統合、2プラス2で方針打ち出す…役割分担巡る議論を加速化〉,《読売新聞》, January 12, 2023, <<https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/politics/20230112-OYT1T50109/>>.



**Figure 3. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Delivers a Speech at Johns Hopkins University**

Source: Prime Minister's Office (Japan), 〈米国訪問—1 日目〉, January 13, 2023, *Prime Minister's Office (Japan)*, <[https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/101\\_kishida/actions/202301/13usa.html](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/101_kishida/actions/202301/13usa.html)>.

United States and Japan once again reaffirmed that their position on Taiwan remains unchanged and that the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is an indispensable element for the security and prosperity of the international community, and encouraged the peaceful settlement of cross-Strait issues. The Taiwan Strait issue has become one of the important topics of concern to the United States and Japan.

Prior to meeting U.S. President Biden during his visit to the U.S. in January 2013, Prime Minister Kishida gave a talk at Johns Hopkins University. In his speech, Kishida singled out China as the core challenge and expressed his fears that East Asia would become the next Ukraine. Kishida also said that due to changes in the balance of power between regions and increasingly fierce competition between countries, the world has entered a more complex and divided era. Especially near

Japan, it is becoming increasingly evident that nuclear weapons are a growing threat, militarization is rapidly increasing, and unilateral attempts to change the *status quo* by force are becoming likelier. In the face of the current crisis, Japan must make major changes in its security policy.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Japan has to carry out the largest military expansion plan since World War II, double its defense budget, introduce U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles, and adopt counterstrike capabilities to maintain regional peace. Kishida's visit to the United States not only received strong support from President Biden, but Biden expressed his willingness to use various means to help defend Japan.

For Beijing, Japan's new security documents are aimed at China as a regional peace and stability saboteur. To respond to regional threats, Japan will work with the United States and other liberal and democratic allies to confront and curb China's hegemonic behavior in the region. In the face of the issue of "different" interests and security between Japan and China, we can expect that Japan and China will enter a period of "competition and confrontation," during which bilateral relations will be tenuous.

## **II. The United States and Japan Will Break Away from the Traditional Security Cooperation Model and Expand Exchanges in Various Fields**

More than 70 years have passed since World War II. Japan, especially in defense, has maintained a policy of exclusive defense (exercising defensive power only when attacked). However, Japan's defense policy is now experiencing a dramatic change, allowing it to acquire counterattack capabilities with strong support from the United States. This is Japan's direct response to China's attempt to change the international *status quo* and regional order. Under the traditional U.S.-Japan alliance, the role of the United States and Japan was divided; today, Japan advocates for the ability to attack

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8. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 〈岸田総理大臣のジョンズ・ホプキンス大学高等国際関係大学院 (SAIS) における講演〉, January 13, 2023, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)*, <[https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/na/na1/us/page1\\_001476.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/na/na1/us/page1_001476.html)>.



enemy bases under certain conditions. The way the United States and Japan fight has therefore completely changed.

To maintain the deterrent power of the Japan-U.S. alliance, Japan has constantly emphasized and called for deeper cooperation between Japan and the United States, especially in its national defense strategy. Japan and the United States must constantly review the “roles,” “missions,” and “capabilities” of both sides to jointly strengthen Japan's and U.S. deterrence and counterstrike capabilities, and further develop the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM). The key aim is to maintain stability and peace in the region.

The new security document shows that Japan will make substantial investments to enhance its counterstrike capabilities, especially through missile deployment. Japan is expected to begin purchasing more than 1,000 long-range missiles with a range of more than 1,000 kilometers. First, Japan will buy 500 of the latest Tomahawk cruise missiles with a range of more than 1,600 kilometers from the United States; second, it will increase the range of the Self-Defense Force's original Type 12 surface-to-ship missile from 200 kilometers to more than 1,000 kilometers; third, it intends to deploy extremely supersonic missiles with speeds up to Mach 5.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force has decided to develop a Vertical Launching System (VLS) capable of conducting long-range missiles. The equipment will be placed on submarines as part of measures to significantly strengthen defense capabilities. VLS is a system for launching missiles placed in a cylindrical storage container with multiple launch ports in the upper part of the hull. At present, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force has about 100 warships equipped with VLS. Japanese submarines have horizontally launched torpedo tubes in the bow, and if VLS is introduced,<sup>10</sup> it will be possible to launch several missiles at once, thus enhancing attack capabilities.

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9. Cabinet Secretariat (Japan), 〈防衛力整備計画について〉, December 16, 2022, *Cabinet Secretariat (Japan)*, <<https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/221216anzenhoshou/boueiryokuseibi.pdf>>.

10. 谷田邦一, 〈令和の潜水艦: 海中からの反撃能力保有へ—難敵は「人」〉, *nippon.com*, January 16, 2023, <<https://www.nippon.com/ja/in-depth/d00878/>>.



**Figure 4. U.S.-Japan Military Exercises**

Source: 〈提言：国家安全保障戦略の改定で非核三原則の見直しを中国・北朝鮮の脅威が現実化するなかでNSS改訂は最重要〉, *JBpress*, February 12, 2022, <<https://jbpress.ismedia.jp/articles/-/68848>>.

On the South China Sea issue, the United States has asked Japan for more assistance. Although the U.S. military has installed countless fixed Sound Surveillance Systems (SOSUS) in the waters around the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan, and even in the western Pacific and the South China Sea, it has always monitored China and Russia, North Korean submarines, so that they have nowhere to hide. However, the function of submarines is no longer simply to track the movements of submarines of other countries, and there are special tasks that only submarines can perform. For example, during the Cold War, Japanese capabilities monitored exercises by the former Soviet Navy in Vladivostok and intercepted communication between Soviet aircraft and ships over a long period of time. Missile-induced radio waves, radar waves used by anti-submarine helicopters for search at sea, and coastal military installations were also photographed. Since the end of the Cold War, Japan was also working around the clock collecting data on North Korean missile launches off its coast.

On September 2018, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine USS Kuroshio (SS-596) entered Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. Initially, the Ministry of Defense announced that only three Japanese Self-Defense Force frigates were on a goodwill visit, but just before entering port, it revealed that a submarine was accompanying the trio and was training in the South China Sea. The sudden announcement was understood to be part of an effort to contain China and tell China that Japan could also operate in the South China Sea and conduct Freedom of Navigation operations. At that time, the United States asked the Japanese government to cooperate in a military response to China's attempt to change the *status quo* in the South China Sea. In other words, the appearance of Japanese submarines in Cam Ranh Bay sent a clear message from Japan.

In the joint statement issued by the United States and Japan in 2023, the United States and Japan said they will respond with the concept of “integration and deterrence” in response to China's hegemonic behavior in the region. For example, the United States and Japan will expand the joint use of facilities such as bases, airports, and harbors. To improve the deterrence and response capability of the United States, the 12<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment of the U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa will be reorganized into the “Marine Littoral Regiment” (MLR), which can quickly respond to incidents on outlying islands by fiscal 2025.<sup>11</sup> This is a force of about 1,800 to 2,000 people, consisting of missile units with long-range attack ships and air defense groups with anti-aircraft missiles, which can be dispersed on a small scale and deployed to outlying islands to prevent enemy ships and military aircraft from entering and leaving, and play a role in ensuring sea supremacy. If the islands are invaded, the U.S. military will remain on the islands on the front line to carry out anti-ship missiles and other operations. The Marine Corps Coastal Operations Regiment may plan three units: the first, which will be established in Hawaii, in March 2021; the second is the unit planned to be established in Okinawa; the third could be deployed in Guam. Since China is strengthening its missile capabilities, making it difficult for U.S. ships

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11. 〈『海兵沿岸連隊』創設へ 沖縄への影響は？自衛隊との連携の強化など米軍の狙いは〉, *TBS NEWS DIG*, January 12, 2023, <<https://newsdig.tbs.co.jp/articles/-/272572?display=1>>.



**Figure 5. U.S. and Japan Air Force Joint Training**

Source: Air Staff Office (Japan), 〈米軍との共同訓練の実施について〉, December 20, 2023, *Japan Air Self-Defense Force*, <<https://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/news/houdou/R4/20221222.pdf>>.

to approach, the deployment of the Marine Corps in Okinawa would effectively deter China.

The joint statement pointed out that for security in the space field, given that attacks in space are a clear challenge to the security of the alliance, the United States and Japan will apply Article 5 of the *Japan-U.S. Security Treaty* on certain occasions. If Japan's artificial satellites are attacked, the United States and Japan will use force in response.

In addition, joint training exercises between the United States and Japan will become more frequent. According to Japanese media reports, on December 20, 2022, the air forces of the United States and Japan conducted a joint military exercise over

the Sea of Japan. Japan was represented by four F-15 fighters from Komatsu base in Ishikawa Prefecture of the Air Self-Defense Force and four F-2 fighters from Tsukijo base in Fukuoka Prefecture. The U.S. military sent two B-52 strategic bombers and one C-17 transport aircraft.<sup>12</sup> In response to the long-distance joint exercise by Russian bombers and Chinese bombers in the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean on November 1, the United States and Japan have tightened their vigilance against such actions.

In addition, in response to the incident in the Taiwan Strait, on January 8, 2023, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Australia conducted a “recapture of the island” exercise in Chiba, Japan. In this exercise, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force used about 1,000 soldiers, including the elite “The 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Brigade,” 70 soldiers from U.S. “Green Flat Hat” special forces, and 30 soldiers from the British and Australian side. In addition, 20 military vehicles and 20 fighters were involved to highlight the close cooperation between the United States, Japan, the UK, and Australia to jointly confront China.<sup>13</sup> The four-nation exercise, together with the U.S. Navy Aegis destroyer USS Chung-Hoon (DDG-93), transited the Taiwan Strait. In response, the PLA announced a new round of naval and air exercises around Taiwan, showing that the competition was heating up.

### **III. To Maintain Peace and Stability in the Taiwan Strait, U.S.-Taiwan-Japan Cooperation Will Deepen**

On April 16, 2021, then-Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and U.S. President Joe Biden held a summit meeting, and the two sides issued a joint statement. Key to this statement was the fact that the United States and Japan mentioned the Taiwan issue after a 52-year hiatus. While stressing the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, the two sides urged the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. For both the United States and Japan, the word “Taiwan” has always

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12. Air Staff Office (Japan), 〈米軍との共同訓練の実施について〉.

13. 〈陸自・米・英・豪軍が集結、第1空挺団降下始め約1万人が来場〉, *Fly team*, January 9, 2023, <<https://flyteam.jp/news/article/138256>>.

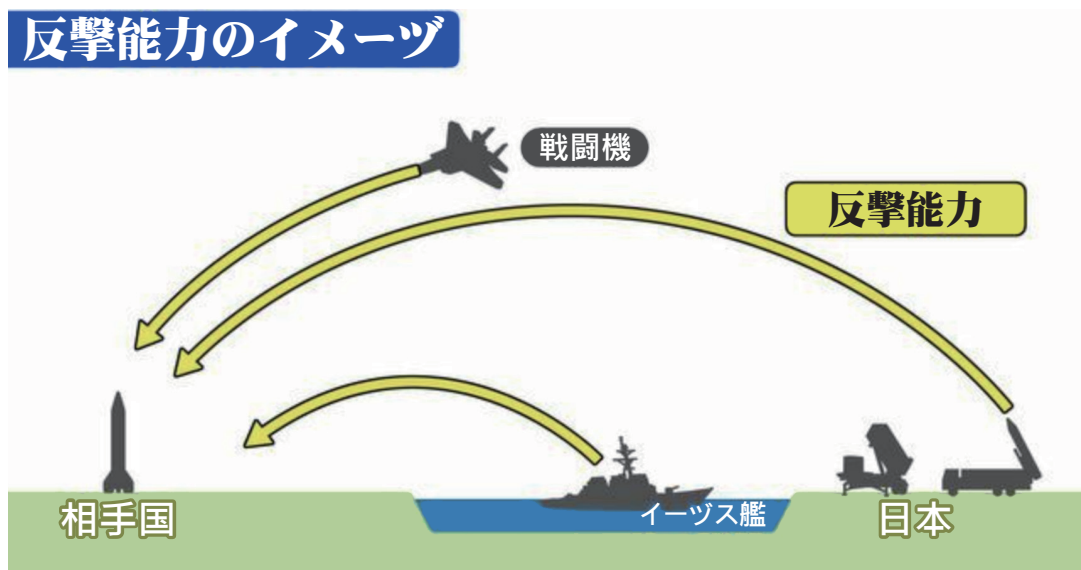


Figure 6. Japan's Counterstrike Capability

Source: 〈【解説】「反撃能力」保有 新たな「国家安保戦略」等が閣議決定 日本の防衛はどう変わる?〉, 《日テレ NEWS》, December 16, 2022, <<https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/680d2ad7044b3161582b9f87438d94262aca50d3>>.

been taboo and was not to be discussed publicly.<sup>14</sup> But as the confrontation with China became more serious, Japan no longer fears a Chinese backlash, and this time the new security document highlights the importance of “peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.” In other words, Taiwan has become an important issue of concern between the United States and Japan, and it is also a priority consideration in the defense strategy of the United States and Japan.

Taiwan is key to the first island chain, an essential strategic line in the Indo-Pacific. Controlling Taiwan can effectively contain the strategic passage in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. It also forms a favorable shipping channel within the second island chain and is a convenient way to enter the Pacific Ocean. If

14. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 〈日米首脳共同声明「新たな時代における日米グローバル・パートナーシップ」2021年4月16日〉, April 16, 2021, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)*, <<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100202832.pdf>>.

Taiwan is occupied by China, the United States will be at a complete disadvantage in the Western Pacific, Japan and Guam will also be directly threatened, while Japan's maritime lifeline could be cut off. Japan is alarmed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shaken the international order and that something similar could happen in East Asia. Therefore, Japan will significantly increase its defense capabilities in response to the current security environment.

Regarding security cooperation between Japan and Taiwan, although Taiwan still maintains practical relations with Japan at the non-governmental level, the Japanese government's basic position on Taiwan has not changed. For Japan, Taiwan is an important partner and friend, and Japan shares the basic values of democracy and maintains close economic and people-to-people exchanges with Taiwan. Taiwan and Japan are both island countries, and the new *National Security Strategy* mentions that maritime security cooperation will be enhanced with allies and partners to build an international community based on universal values, including freedom of navigation and overflight, ensuring safety and the rule of law, and promoting the maintenance and development of maritime order. Specifically, Japan will strengthen multilateral maritime security cooperation by enhancing maritime monitoring to counter threats to maritime shipping lanes, actively conducting joint training and exercises with other countries, and visiting overseas ports. Taiwan and Japan will therefore have the opportunity to carry out close cooperation in safeguarding maritime security. Maritime law enforcement agencies in Taiwan and Japan can conduct joint exercises on humanitarian rescue and disaster relief at sea. On March 26, 2021, Taiwan and the United States signed the AIT-TECRO Memorandum of Understanding on a Coast Guard Cooperation. The two sides will continue to strengthen regional stability and peace through maritime law enforcement exchanges, marine conservation, fishing rights protection, and maritime search and rescue, and deepen the Taiwan-U.S. Indo-Pacific partnership through coastal patrol exchanges. Japan can follow this cooperation model between Taiwan and the United States,<sup>15</sup> or when Taiwan and the

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15. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (R.O.C.), 〈台美「設立海巡工作小組瞭解備忘錄」完成簽署，為台美海巡合作奠定里程碑〉, March 26, 2021, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (R.O.C.)*, <[https://www.mofa.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=95&sms=73&s=95574](https://www.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=95&sms=73&s=95574)>.

United States conduct exercises or search and rescue at sea, Japan can also seek the consent of Taiwan and the United States in advance and join as an observer.

Signed by U.S. President Biden on December 23, 2022, *The National Defense Authorization Act* for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23 NDAA) calls for closer military exchanges between Taiwan and the United States. Since one of the bill's key aims is to support military aid budgets to countries such as Taiwan, the U.S. government is authorized to provide Taiwan with up to US\$2 billion a year over a period of five years, totaling US\$10 billion, to enhance Taiwan's ability to defend itself against China.<sup>16</sup> Another key point of the bill is its call on the U.S. government to invite Taiwan to participate in the 2024 Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises. If this occurs, this will mark the first joint military exercise between the United States, Japan and Taiwan and other countries, which is of great significance. Of course, this would in turn compel China to respond, and East Asia is likely to become increasingly volatile as tensions continue to rise.

#### IV. Conclusion

The new security documents released by the Japanese government are important strategic guidelines for Japan in the field of diplomacy and defense for the next five years. Due to the current grim international situation, China's frequent military activities in the sea and around Taiwan, improvements in North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, regional security has become quite unstable. It is necessary to maintain "peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" and stop China from using any means other than peaceful means, including military threats, boycotts, embargoes, and attempts to change the *status quo* in the Taiwan Strait. There is a need for concerted efforts and cooperation among countries within the region. Japan cannot compete with China, Russia, and North Korea alone. Therefore, in the new security document, Japan significantly increases its

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16. 〈拜登簽署法案 授權 5 年提供台灣 100 億美元軍援〉,《中央社》, December 24, 2022 , <<https://www.cna.com.tw/news/aip/202212240002.aspx>>.





**Figure 7. The NATO Secretary General Visits Japan on January 31, 2023**

Source: NATO, “NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg meets the Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida,” January 31, 2023, *Flickr*, <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nato/52661941137/in/album-72177720305682307/>>.

defense budget, strengthens cooperative relations with allies and partners, aims for a counterstrike capability, and allows for effective counterattacks on enemy territory.

After the promulgation of the new security documents, Prime Minister Kishida expressed his hope that Japan's military modernization plan will be endorsed by Western allies and form a collective defense force. So far this year, Kishida has visited France, Italy, the UK, Canada, and the U.S.<sup>17</sup> Amid a comprehensive threat in East Asia, and to complement the U.S.-Japan alliance, Japan hopes to strengthen its cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) under the guidance of the United States Military cooperation with the European allies. On January

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17. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 〈岸田内閣総理大臣のフランス、イタリア、英国、カナダ及び米国訪問〉, January 4, 2023, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)*, <[https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/erp/we/page4\\_005739.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/erp/we/page4_005739.html)>.

31, 2023, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg visited Japan for talks with Kishida.<sup>18</sup> Stoltenberg publicly criticized China, saying it had greatly increased its military forces, including nuclear weapons, and threatened Taiwan. NATO and Japan, he said, therefore needed to jointly respond, adding that the new security documents released by Japan at the end of last year were a necessary development. Stoltenberg said that what happens in Europe will also have an impact on Asia's security, and the two sides have an inseparable understanding of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security guarantees. The joint statement issued after the meeting stressed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, clearly stating that "no place is allowed to change the *status quo* by force," and expressed serious concerns about military cooperation between China and Russia.

Amid a changing international situation, the Japanese government has had to revise its national defense strategy, assume greater responsibility for regional peace and stability, and communicate more with Western countries. Therefore, the China-skeptic atmosphere led by the United States and supplemented by Japan and Western countries is gradually consolidating.

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18. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 〈イェンス・ストルテンベルグ NATO 事務総長の訪日〉, January 23, 2023, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)*, <[https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/erp/ep/page4\\_005755.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/erp/ep/page4_005755.html)>.