



THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF JAPAN'S REVISED DEFENSE STRATEGY:

Exploring Defense Modernization, Strategic Shifts, and Regional Dynamics

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Introduction

The world is on a politically dangerous course after the total Russian invasion of Ukrainian territories, even with the steadfastness of the Ukrainian armed forces and popular militias. *Zbroini syly Ukrainy* (Armed Forces of Ukraine) prevented the Russians from capturing vital facilities and strategic cities. Numerous military experts have been challenged by this sudden combat scenario. The global fear of Moscow's sweeping victory will inspire China, making it easier to regain control of Taiwan and occupy the islands disputed with Japan; or North Korea could attack its southern neighbor and bomb Japanese territory. The Russo-Ukrainian war casts a heavy shadow over the entire world, including the Far East, where the Chinese dragon is watching for the right moment to strike Taiwan, according to the "One China" policy¹. This includes the danger of regional as well as global expansion of confrontation, and the possibility of US-Western intervention with Japanese logistical support, which leaves the world's fate in the unknown.

1. K. Takenaka, "Japan offers Ukraine \$100 million in loans in show of support," Reuters, 15 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/japan-offers-ukraine-100-mln-loans-show-support-2022-02-15/>.

Tokyo has been on standby diplomatically, politically, and even logistically since the early days of the war in response to these dangerous factors and international concerns based on the Japanese Ministry of Defense Whitepaper 2022². With some military balance on the Ukrainian front and under the watchful eyes of the Chinese and South Korean leadership, Japan has moved peacefully and publicly to support Ukraine. The Japanese government has actively supported Ukraine in numerous ways, as evidenced by the following:

- Bilateral relationship: During Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Ukraine in March 2023, Japan and Ukraine upgraded their bilateral relationship to a "special global partnership."
- Diplomatic support: Japan has offered diplomatic support to Ukraine, including condemnation of Russia's incursion.
- Financial support: Japan has supplied significant financial help to Ukraine, including \$200 million in emergency humanitarian aid and \$600 million in direct financial aid.
- G7 presidency: As the G7 president this year, Japan has led efforts to restore international peace and security.
- Humanitarian support: Japan has also supplied humanitarian aid to Ukraine, including \$500 million worth of humanitarian, recovery, and reconstruction assistance for fiscal year 2022.
- Military support: While there are restrictions on the supply of equipment with the capacity to kill or wound as stipulated by its "Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology," bulletproof vests, helmets, drones, and other non-lethal equipment have been provided by Japan to Ukraine.

Eventually, Japan's support for Ukraine will be comprehensive and multi-faceted, demonstrating its commitment to international peace and order. Historically, Japan-Russia relations have been rigid for decades, especially after the Soviet Union occupied the northern islands during

2. Nikolaevna Ryumkina, "Agro-Industrial and Fishery Complex of the Russian Far East: Data on investment projects and transport connectivity.," Harvard Dataverse, 24 July 2022. Available on: [10.1016/j.dib.2022.108522](https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.1016/j.dib.2022.108522)

World War II³, declaring war on Japan a day after the Hiroshima crime against humanity⁴. The Russian Federation has not ceded its ownership of them until this moment.

The Kuril Islands (**Курильские**) or *Chishima rettō*, are a chain of islands located northeast of Japan's Hokkaido and are currently under Russian administration. The strategic significance of the Kuril Islands lies in their control over sea routes to warm waters and their potential impact on the movement of the Russian Pacific Fleet stationed at the Vladivostok base.

Japan has historically claimed sovereignty over the Southern Kuril Islands, which include Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan, and Habomai. The dispute over these islands has been a long-standing issue between Japan and Russia since the end of World War II. The disagreement over the sovereignty of these islands has hindered the signing of a formal peace treaty between the two countries.

In the economic arena, these occupied islands contain notable natural resources that provide significant economic returns. These islands are surrounded by rich fishing grounds that account for a third of the number of fish in the seas of the Far East. It is estimated that they consume 2448 thousand tons of fish per year⁵. Moreover, mineral resources are abundant such as titanium, magnesium, cobalt, copper, lead, zinc, platinum, gold, and sulfur. Furthermore, there is a field of rare rhodium along with gas and oil deposits on its shores. Most importantly, militarily, the islands provide a sea route for warm waters, so they control the movements of the Russian Pacific Fleet stationed at the Vladivostok base⁶.

3. K. Takahashi, "Japan begins refitting first of two Izumo-class carriers to support F-35B operations.," Janes, 2020. Available on: <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/japan-begins-refitting-first-of-two-izumo-class-carriers-to-support-f-35b-operations>

4. Y. T. Takenaka, "Japan ruling party manifesto calls for sharp rise in Defense spending," Reuters, 8 October 2021.

5. Kyodo, "Japan eyes upping Defense spending to 40 trillion yen over 5 years.," KYODO NEWS, 25 September 2022. Available on: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/09/a327fcc3eaf9-japan-eyes-upping-Defense-spending-to-40-trillion-yen-over-5-years.html>.

6. J. Johnson, "Japan is Seeking its Biggest Defense Budget Ever.," The Japan Times, 31 August 2022. Available on: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/31/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-Defense-ministry-budget-request/>



JS Izumo on Oct. 3, 2021. JMSDF Photo

1 - Redefining Japan's Defense Landscape

“The Evolving Landscape of Japan's Revised Defense Strategy 2020” offers a comprehensive perspective that extends beyond the confines of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). This study presents an in-depth analysis of the broader changes, advancements, and geopolitical implications shaping Japan's defense strategy. It delves into technological progress, shifts in alliances, and regional dynamics influencing Japan's defense landscape.

In contrast, the earlier research titled “The New Role of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) under the Proactive Contribution to Peace Strategy” focuses specifically on the evolving duties and contributions of the JSDF within Japan's “Proactive Contribution to Peace” strategy. This research emphasizes the developing functions, missions, and international roles of the JSDF, particularly within Japan's proactive approach to promoting global peace and security.

2 - International Tensions Indicate a Changing World Order

When Russia occupied Crimea in 2014, the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government acted with wisdom and prudence with the Kremlin leaders. Japan joined the sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union while keeping dialogue open with the Russian leadership, especially after the formal negotiations, in which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin participated in May 2016 during the bilateral meeting in Sochi⁷. In the meeting, Abe proposed an eight-point cooperation plan to enhance economic relations. In December of the same year, when Putin visited Japan, Japan-Russia relations took a more positive turn, motivated by the principle of close economic cooperation⁸.

The Japanese flexibility during the previous Russian-Ukrainian confrontation disappeared during this time under the government of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, especially after the mixing of military cards on the frontlines and the heroic constancy of Ukrainian forces. Ukraine's ambassador to Japan, Sergiy Korsunsky, appealed to both Tokyo and the international community, stating: "Ukraine needs more anti-aircraft munitions to defend against Russian missiles. Our forces are well equipped to defend against tank attacks but need Stinger missiles and other anti-aircraft supplies to defend against cruise missiles that are raining down on the country"⁹.

Prime Minister Kishida indicated, "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an attempt to change the status quo through force alone and shakes the foundations of the world order itself." For Japan, Reuters mentioned: "It is a clear violation of international law that cannot be tolerated, and we strongly condemn it... The international community confirms that, because of this Russian aggression, it is no longer possible to maintain the same level of relations with Russia"¹⁰. In his speech, Kishida assured that Japan would continue to work closely with the U.S., the European Union, and other nations committed to a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine crisis.

7. K. Takahashi, "ATLA receives two prototypes of upgraded variant of SH-60K naval helicopter," Janes, 28 September 2021.

8. Y. T. Saito, "Japan considering imposing sanctions against Belarus.," Reuters, 26 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/japan-considering-imposing-sanctions-against-belarus-2022-02-26/>.

9. JJI, "LDP To Propose Boost in Defense Spending to 2% of GDP within Five Years," Japan Times, 16 April 2022. Available on: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/04/27/national/japan-strike-capability-budget-proposal/>

10. DoD,T.U., "Boeing secures \$471m contract to upgrade Japan's F-15 fleet," Airforce Technology, 3 January 2022. Available on: <https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/boeing-secures-471m-contract/>.

On the same day, the Japanese government approved a raft of economic sanctions, such as freezing the assets of Russian government officials and stopping dealings with Russian factories. Japan and Russian state-owned energy giant “Gazprom” have been removed from the sanctions list. It shares with Japanese companies Mitsui and Mitsubishi Shell the exploration and utilization of oil and liquefied natural gas from gas fields in the north of Hokkaido, which provides Japan with about 60% of its needs¹¹. Also, Tokyo has joined the rest of the Group of Seven in preventing Russian banks from dealing with the global SWIFT payment system¹².

In support of Ukrainian resilience, Japan has announced a \$100 million loan to the government in Kyiv. In addition, another \$100 million in humanitarian aid was provided for the Ukrainian people¹³. U.S. Ambassador to Japan Ram Emmanuel immediately expressed Washington's satisfaction with the scale, speed, and effectiveness of Japan's deterrent measures. The U.S. Embassy issued a statement stressing that “the swift and decisive declaration in support of strong financial sanctions on Russia, such as the resolute steps taken by Prime Minister Kishida, has constituted an exemplary unified global response to the most serious conflict on European soil since World War II”¹⁴.

Japanese enthusiasm was heightened with Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi stating that Japan was “considering measures against individuals, including senior government officials in Belarus, which has strong connections with Russia and whose territory served as an entry point for Russian forces that invaded Ukraine,” referring to the decisions of the United States and Britain to punish Belarusian individuals and entities¹⁵.

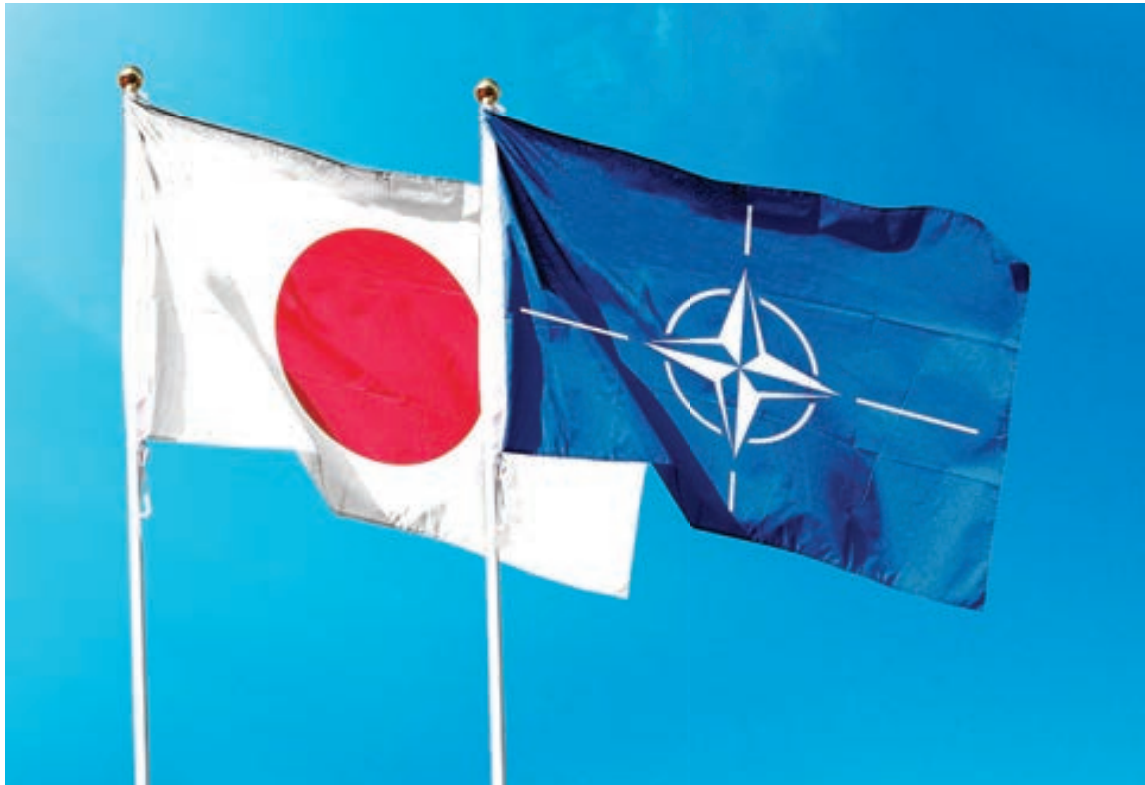
11. M. O. Defense, “Ground Defense Capability to realise Multi-domain Defense Force,” MOD, 2019. Available on: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/fan/pamphlet/pdf/2019_02.pdf.

12. A. Blinken, “Japan’s Financial Sanctions Against Russia,” in US Department of State, 2022.

13. Statista, “Military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in highest spending countries 2021,” 5 August 2022. Available on: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266892/military-expenditure-as-percentage-of-gdp-in-highest-spending-countries/>.

14. Y. Koshino, “Japan to accelerate its acquisition of stand-off Defense capabilities,” International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), September 2022. Available on: <https://www.iiss.org/en/online-analysis/online-analysis/2022/09/japan-to-accelerate-its-acquisition-of-stand-off-defence-capabilities/>

15. M. Yeo, “Japan confirms details of F-15J upgrade program worth \$5.6 billion,” Defense News, 17 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.Defensenews.com/smr/singapore-airshow/2022/02/17/japan-confirms-details-of-f-15j-upgrade-program-worth-56-billion/>.



At a session in Japan's parliament, Prime Minister Kishida criticized Russian President Putin personally for his decision to put Russian nuclear forces on high alert, saying "It is this risky behavior that further destabilizes the dangerous situation," adding that Japan will move quickly to freeze Putin's assets and consider its next step regarding sanctions "by looking at the course of developments"¹⁶.

Japan has entered the Ukrainian equation as a Group of Seven (G7) country ally. However, it is cautiously monitoring the behavior of its neighbors. One of its eyes is on its neighbor Taiwan, amid fears of any Chinese military adventure inspired by any provocative Russian victory. The other one is on North Korea's military moves, as Pyongyang has been firing missiles in an escalating manner for years. After the signs of sagging American unipolarity, the rise of China as a global economic power, and Russia's rejection of a threatening line of contact with NATO along its European border and expansion along its polar border, Japan seeks to secure its interests and security in the post-globalization era.

16. T. Fish, "Japan Countering China's Naval Build-up with Modern Fleet," USNI, 12 April 2022. Available on: <https://news.usni.org/2022/04/11/japan-countering-chinas-naval-build-up-with-modern-fleet>.

3 - Japan's Self-Defense Forces' Current Capabilities

Japan, relying on its mighty economic strength, considerable defense budget, and perfect military infrastructure, has been preparing for years to face various terrifying international scenarios, especially since the era of US President Donald Trump ignited the US-China trade war. It then turned into a new “cold war,” with fears of a limited but expanding military clash considering the firmness of Beijing's leadership and the arrogance of the White House administration at the time¹⁷. At the beginning of 2018, the Japanese government adopted the terms of a comprehensive plan to strengthen the preparedness of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces with a ten-year strategic budget costing approximately \$240 billion¹⁸. An ambitious plan that could be considered the starting point for the transformation of Japanese forces from a defensive pattern into a deeply integrated defensive and offensive structure¹⁹.

Japan's military equipment is diversified. Japan currently has 1,480 warplanes, including 256 multi-role fighters; 17 attack aircraft; 162 special mission aircraft; 552 helicopters; 119 attack helicopters; and other military training and transport aircraft, all deployed at 175 air bases. Japan's ground forces consist of about 1,000 tanks, 5,500 armored vehicles, 214 self-propelled guns, 480 field guns, and 99 rocket launchers²⁰. Additionally, The Japanese Navy consists of a war fleet of 155 battleships, including 4 helicopter carriers, 37 destroyers, 6 corvettes, and 20 submarines as well as other minesweeping ships and patrol ships. Japan also has a formidable maritime logistical support force, comprising a merchant fleet of more than 5,170 warships and 44 ports.

Since the geography of Japan is a sprawling maritime archipelago, the capabilities of the Japanese fleet had to be strengthened, considering the dangers coming from the Asian mainland. Hence, according to Aegis

17. R. Emanuel, “U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel's Remarks at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. (F. C. Japan, Interviewer),” in U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Japan, 2022.

18. I. Reynolds, “Japan Seeks Record \$50 Billion Defense Budget with Eye on China,” Bloomberg, 31 August 2021. Available on: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-31/japan-eyes-china-with-fastest-defense-spending-hike-since-2014>

19. Y. Koshino, “Japan to accelerate its acquisition of stand-off Defense capabilities,” International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 27 September 2022. Available on: <https://www.iiss.org/en/online-analysis/online-analysis/2022/09/japan-to-accelerate-its-acquisition-of-stand-off-defence-capabilities/>

20. L. Njoroge, “The Japan-Soviet Union Territorial Dispute: An Appraisal,” *Far Eastern Survey*, pp. 499-511, 1956.

Combat System, the Japanese vision included the acquisition of modern, advanced naval warships, including a heavy aircraft carrier and two destroyers, as well as EGS missile Defense systems, and fifth-generation F-35 fighters²¹, of which 20 of the 147 fighters contracted by Tokyo with Washington have so far entered into service in the Japanese Air Force²². On another operational front, an amphibious commando force has been formed within the Marines' Rapid Deployment Brigade. This force can launch naval commando operations that include immediate landings on remote Japanese islands like contact with China and North Korea. These operations do not exclude South Korea.

Presently, the Maritime Self-Defense Forces have limited capabilities compared to the Chinese dragon and the two Korean rivals, with four helicopter carriers, two amphibious landing ships, and nine landing craft. Therefore, the effort of the Japanese Ministry of Defense to strengthen the submarine corps was a strategic deterrent force for any adventure from Beijing or Pyongyang. In October 2020, the Japanese Navy inaugurated the first heavy electric-powered submarine of the Taigei class, followed by another submarine of the same class in 2021. Moreover, a new submarine will enter service in March 2023, with two additional submarines inaugurated in the coming years²³.

It should be mentioned that the cost of one submarine is approximately \$750 million since it is in the category of hybrid attack submarines powered by diesel and lithium batteries. It weighs about 3,000 tons. The twelfth SRY-class submarine entered service in 2020; they were inaugurated in March 2022. This is a class that is as heavy as the Taiji-class submarines, armed with Harpoon-type anti-ship missiles along with attack torpedoes. Japan's arsenal of submarines now consists of 21 submarines: two of the Taiji class, twelve Sorio class submarines, and nine of the older Oyashio class²⁴.

21. V. Insinna, "US gives the green light to Japan's \$23B F-35 buy," Defense News, 10 July 2020. Available on: <https://www.Defensenews.com/smr/2020/07/09/us-gives-the-green-light-to-japans-massive-23b-f-35-buy/>.

22. E. Jozuka, "Japan's Prime Minister: It would be "unacceptable" to seek NATO-like nuclear sharing with the US," CNN, 28 February 2022. Available on: https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-news-02-28-22/h_7fe210d3ce2cd44e2c8710ea6891e41c

23. R. P. Rajagopalan, "S-400s, CAATSA Complicate India-US Ties," ORF, 25 November 2021. Available on: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/s-400s-caatsa-complicate-india-us-ties/>.

24. V. Soldatkin, "Russia's Gazprom Neft, Japan's Mitsui sign deal on decarbonisation," Reuters, 15 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/russias-gazprom-neft-japans-mitsui-sign-deal-decarbonisation-2022-02-15/>.

Japan's military also recognizes the danger of modern cyber warfare. Thus, part of its Defense budget includes an allocation of \$50 billion for developing Japanese electronic warfare capability²⁵. This includes the acquisition of ground jamming systems, the development of an anti-aircraft electronic warfare system, and the improvement of the electronic warfare capabilities of the Japanese Air Force, particularly the F-15 fighters which are the country's main fighters at present²⁶.

On the air Defense front, Tokyo is developing hypersonic cruise missiles and plans to deploy a network of seven satellites that will be responsible for guiding these missiles²⁷. The Ministry of Defense expects tests of prototypes of these missiles to start in 2024 and enter service by 2030.

4 - Rebuilding the Japanese Defense Forces

Taking into consideration the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war, including Moscow's threat to use nuclear weapons, the joint Russian Chinese military exercises with the participation of many repressive countries, and North Korea's provocations by penetrating its ballistic missiles into Japan's airspace as they cross Japanese territory before they fall into the Pacific Ocean. It has become imperative for Japan to develop its armed forces and increase its modest budget to achieve the requirements of strengthening Japan's land, sea, and air arsenals in the face of current regional and global threats. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP), amid its bitter struggle with the opposition in Japan's parliament, has submitted for the eleventh time in a row a request for a 1.1% increase in military spending in the next government budget while Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio vowed to "radically strengthen Japan's Defense capabilities over the next five years"²⁸.

25. I. Reynolds, "Japan Set to Become One of World's Biggest Defense Spenders," Bloomberg, 18 July 2022. Available on: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-25/japan-set-to-become-one-of-world-s-biggest-defense-spenders>

26. M. O. Pan, "Japan-Russia Summit Meeting," 外務, 2016.

27. J. Johnson, "Ukraine War — and Impact on Asia — Take Top Billing in Japan Defense White Paper.," Japan Times, 22 July 2022. Available on: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/07/22/national/japan-defense-white-paper-2022/>.

28. A. Shimbu, "EDITORIAL: Process to revise national security documents must be open to public", 8 September 2022. Available on: <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14713743>



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On 31 August 2022, the Japanese Ministry of Defense requested monitoring of 5.59 trillion yen, equivalent to \$40.4 billion. This was part of the governmental budget for the fiscal year, 2023, to meet the critical security challenges Japan faces. The leadership of the Self-Defense Forces announced an extensive list of necessary military needs without revealing their specific costs. Under its demands, the total budget could reach approximately 6.5 trillion yen after completing the transaction for the equipment of ambiguous costs²⁹.

Since the geography of Japan is a maritime archipelago in which the islands are longitudinally deployed, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) have pushed for modernization. The allocation of 3.6 billion yen has been requested to continue the modification of the Izumo-JS and JS Kaga helicopter carriers to convert them into jet aircraft carriers capable of enabling F-35B fighter jets to take off³⁰. After being denied the acquisition of aircraft carriers since its defeat in World War II, this is considered the first in modern Japanese history. This type of strategic weapon has offensive advantages that worry Washington and the Far East.

The Japanese Navy has also requested additional funding for purchasing six SH-60 L anti-submarine patrol helicopters, an upgraded version of its SH-60K multirole marine helicopter produced by the Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries³¹. Six next-generation 1,920-ton offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) are also needed in 2023³². Thus, part of the funds will be used to equip the JS Kaga with an F-35B landing navigation system³³, Raytheon's Joint Precision Approach and Landing System (JPALS)³⁴.

29. T. SURUGA, "Japan to fundamentally strengthen Defense in 5 years," Nikkei, 10 June 2022. Available on: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Kishida-Japan-to-fundamentally-strengthen-Defense-in-5-years>.

30. DEFENSE, A. S., "Japanese Defense White Paper -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM," ISA, Tokyo, 1976.

31. Y. Shimbun, "Japan's Defense white paper includes hypothetical invasion of Taiwan by China," Asia News Network, 25 July 2022. Available on: <https://asianews.network/japans-Defense-white-paper-includes-hypothetical-invasion-of-taiwan-by-china/>.

32. T. Kosuke, "Japan Awards Contract to Shipbuilder JMU for 12 New Offshore Patrol Vessels," The Diplomat, 2 July 2022. Available on: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/japan-awards-contract-to-shipbuilder-jmu-for-12-new-offshore-patrol-vessels/>

33. G. Reim, "Raytheon plans expeditionary JPALS and F-35A signal test," Flight Global, 2 September 2022. Available on: <https://www.flightglobal.com/Defense/raytheon-plans-expeditionary-jpals-and-f-35a-signal-test/139974.article>.

34. P. Sandle, "Britain to work with Japan on new fighter jet programme," Reuters, 18 July 2022.

These patrol ships will specialize in warning and surveillance. They can be operated by as few naval crews as possible, as they will need a crew of only about 30 personnel. About a third of the 90 crews of Mogami-class frigates³⁵. Furthermore, the Japanese Navy has also requested additional funding to begin intensive production of a long-range version of a domestically developed Type 12 surface-to-sea missile for shore Defense. The proposed budget request, as part of the Navy's cooperation with the Japanese Air Force, includes funding for more than 100 joint military sectors, such as the development of domestically manufactured missiles that can be launched from Defense Force vehicles, ships, and aircraft, as well as the anticipated development of a next-generation fighter that can be launched from ground bases or aircraft carriers³⁶.

The Japan Air Self-Defense Forces, in their independent capacity, through the Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency of the Ministry of Defense, have requested a budget of 143.2 billion yen, or about 10.3 billion dollars to move forward with the next-generation air sovereignty fighter program in partnership with the British Air Force³⁷. As part of the collaboration, JI is developing the basic design for the future fighter aircraft fuselage. The jet engine developed through their partnership will be inspected by the end of this year.

Also, as part of military cooperation with EU countries, the Japanese Air Force has proposed the purchase of the Joint Strike Missile, a precision-guided air missile developed by the Norwegian company Kongsberg, which is scheduled to be equipped on board the F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter³⁸. The Japan Air Self-Defense Force has also requested funding for the purchase of six U.S. F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters and six other F-35B Lightning multirole fighter jets, to be equipped with AGM-158B Joint

35. Y. TAJIMA, "US and Japan plan fleet of low-orbit satellites to track missiles," *Nikkei*, 19 August 2020. Available on: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/US-and-Japan-plan-fleet-of-low-orbit-satellites-to-track-missiles>

36. V. Soldatkin, "Russia's Gazprom Neft, Japan's Mitsui sign deal on decarbonisation," *Reuters*, 15 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/russias-gazprom-neft-japans-mitsui-sign-deal-decarbonisation-2022-02-15/>.

37. G. Dominguez, "Japan awards Kongsberg another follow-on contract for Joint Strike Missiles," *Janes*, 1 December 2022. Available on: <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/japan-awards-kongsberg-another-follow-on-contract-for-joint-strike-missiles>

38. S. Hyodo, "Putin's Visit to Japan and the Russia-Japan Summit," *The Diplomat*, 31 December 2016. Available on: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/putins-visit-to-japan-and-the-russia-japan-summit>



Air-Surface Standoff Missiles with Extended Range to be integrated with the required upgraded F-15Js³⁹.

Japan's Ground Self-Defense Forces, for their part, are striving to improve the range of homemade guided missiles. The Ministry of Defense asked



for funding to continue research on the hyper-velocity gliding projectile to defend remote islands and to enhance these hypersonic missiles⁴⁰. The Land Forces Command also plans to introduce unmanned vehicles that can be used directly in combat rather than just for surveillance and intelligence gathering⁴¹.

By adopting all viable options to strengthen Defense, the Japanese government has pledged to increase Defense spending significantly over the next five years. This includes acquiring offensive capabilities and attaining a

39. M. Q. & L. L. Pollard, "China Criticises Japan's Defense White Paper for Making "accusations"," Reuters, 22 July 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-criticises-japans-defence-white-paper-2022-07-22/>

40. V. Raghuvanshi, "India approves S-400 buy from Russia, Amid Expectations for More Bilateral Deals," Defense News, 28 September 2018. Available on: <https://www.Defensenews.com/land/2018/09/28/india-approves-s-400-buy-from-russia-amid-expectations-for-more-bilateral-deals/>

41. A. Muraviev, "RUSSIAN PACIFIC FLEET," Australia: Royal Australian Navy, 2007.

first strike to destroy the enemy initiative⁴². These demands to increase military spending put the Japanese government in the dilemma of determining the size of the Japanese Defense budget, so the Japanese leadership is based on three parallel plans to achieve national security and develop the country's three main security policies by the end of 2022, which are:

- a. National Security Strategy.
- b. National Defense Program Guidelines.
- c. Medium-term Defense program⁴³.

The demand for increased military spending is based on ten main axes of “the efforts necessary to effectively enhance Japan's Defense capabilities within five years.” These efforts are:

- a. Create airborne forces for rapid intervention to defend the remote Japanese islands.
- b. Enhancing Japanese cyber security.
- c. Increase air Defense capabilities to protect Japanese airspace from hostile planes and ballistic missiles.
- d. Increase the efficiency of “Japanese soft power” abroad to clarify the national view of confronting Russian, Chinese, and North Korean propaganda.
- e. Promote the domestic Defense industry.
- f. Strengthen Japan's intelligence service internally and externally.
- g. Strengthen the police and internal security forces to protect the country in case of external aggression.
- h. Support for the coastal Defense of the sprawling Japanese islands.
- i. Take advantage of the current global conflicts and the evolution of drone technology to produce them locally or import them from abroad.
- j. The development of Japanese media is oriented towards the rest of the world.

42. Y. Huang, “The U.S.-China Trade War Has Become a Cold War,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2016.

43. R. S. Takenaka, “Ukraine needs more missile Defense munitions - envoy to Japan,” Reuters, 25 February 2022. Available on: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-japan-envoy-idUSL1N2V0065>.

“In October 2020, the Japanese Navy inaugurated the first heavy electric-powered submarine of the Taigei class, followed by another submarine of the same class in 2021.”





5 - The Japanese Ministry of Defense White Book 2022

The White Paper issued by the Japanese Ministry of Defense on July 22 is of paramount importance considering the international and regional contexts coinciding with its release⁴⁴. Recently, there has been increasing debate about Japan's attempts to strengthen its defense capabilities, taking into consideration both the international concerns created by the Ukrainian war and Japan's geographical presence as an influential country in the Indo-Pacific region amidst the rising competition between the United States and China.

The updated White Paper on Japan asserts the notion that Japan's political objectivity has become part of the past. Additionally, it fortifies global fears that another war could erupt in Asia, contributing to political and economic instability. The White Paper is an annual document published by the Japanese Defense Ministry that gives a clear and specific vision of the status of the Japanese Defense Establishment and how Tokyo interprets security and military developments regionally and internationally.

The first edition of the report was published in 1970, and then the size of the record quickly doubled over the years due to the expansion of the concept of conventional and non-conventional security, including the fields of space and cyber security, not to mention China's military buildup and North Korea's development of its nuclear and missile Defenses⁴⁵. Accordingly, the revised White Paper, issued on July 22, 2022, incorporated several key items:

- a. Building a Multidimensional Defense Force: The document affirms Japan's strategy to build a multi-domain defense force as an effective defense capability. According to the White Paper, this strategy will ensure the defense of Japanese security through coinciding procedures that naturally assimilate capabilities in all fields. This process includes outer space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum, amplifying Japan's overall military capabilities and responding quickly to complex security environment modifications.

44. M. Yeo, "Japan launches second Taigei-class submarine, 'Hakugei'," *Defense News*, 14 October 2021. Available on: <https://www.Defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2021/10/14/japan-launches-second-taigei-class-submarine-hakugei/>

45. L. Morton, "Soviet Intervention in the War with Japan," *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 653-662.

- b. Expecting the Tripartite Alliance (China, Russia, and North Korea) to fight a war in Asia: Japan is preparing for joint Russian Chinese operations near its territorial waters. Specialists suggest that North Korea may also start simultaneous military operations against U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific region if China invades Taiwan, in which case Japan may have to retaliate on the North Korean, Chinese, and Russian fronts. In an explanation of this point, Katsutoshi Kawano, the former chairperson of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: "Japan should strive to strengthen its Defense capabilities by assuming that the three countries, Russia, China, and North Korea, which all share the same values would cooperate in taking military action⁴⁶."
- c. Endorsing the prominence of technological advancement in the Defense field: The White Paper mentions the influence and prominence of scientific and technical growths and the fields of space and electromagnetism on security. Japan's technological superiority requires "increased investment in potentially game-changing technologies and boosting research and development expenditures to a record level." The book stressed the need to fortify the scientific base through strategic proposals, promote R&D, and effectively practice innovative equipment. Preserving Japan's technological superiority needs an increase in the tractability of the industrial base to guarantee the production of high-performance operational equipment. Also, Japan should be encouraged to enter partnerships for Defense technology cooperation.
- d. Stressing the necessity to increase military spending: the document compared the national Defense expenditures of the Group of Seven major economies, including neighbors South Korea and Australia. The draft noted that Defense expenditures in the USA embody about 3.5% of the country's GDP while South Korea's Defense expenditures are 2.8% of its GDP. Other Western allies, such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, each spend about 1.5%⁴⁷. However, Japan's Defense expenditures stand at less than 1.1%. According to this data,

46. M. Yeo, "Japan unveils its hypersonic weapons plans," Defense News, 13 March 2020. Available on: <https://www.Defensenews.com/industry/techwatch/2020/03/13/japan-unveils-its-hypersonic-weapons-plans/>.

47. H. A. James L. Schoff, "Tracking Japan's Military Strike Debate," Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace., 2022.

accompanied by the unprecedented threats to Japan's security environment, Tokyo is urged to enhance its Defense spending. This trend is also linked to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party calling on the government to increase the Defense budget to more than 2% of GDP⁴⁸. However, the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may have had an impact on the debate over Defense expenditures.

- e. Fear of the Ramifications of Russo-Chinese Collaboration: Warnings of escalating threats to Japanese national security because of increased cooperation and coordination between China and Russia were highlighted. Following Moscow's war against Kyiv, China is escalating its threat to Taiwan. It may be possible to annex it to Beijing by force through military invasions. Furthermore, Chinese, and Russian ships and planes have conducted joint military exercises in the vicinity of Japan. The paper describes such ex-communist allies as a looming threat that intimidates the current international order, threatens the safety of the Trans-Indo-Pacific region, and poses a risk to Europe in particular.
- f. Advice concerning Chinese-Taiwan tensions: Japan and Taiwan have long established strong ties in many areas, although there are no diplomatic relations between the two parties. Taiwan was considered "a strategic partner and an invaluable friend of Japan, with whom we share many core values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law." Moreover, the escalation of tensions between the United States and China over Taiwan was discussed in the report. The Japanese state has a viewpoint quite like the U.S. which rejects China's direct invasion of Taiwan and defends its current political status⁴⁹.



48. Defense, M. o, "Introduction to the Equipment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces," Ministry of Defense, Tokyo, 2018.

49. M. Green, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy, and Why Does it Matter?" The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 13 January 2017. Available on: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-us-one-china-policy-and-why-does-it-matter>.



JS Kumano (FFM-2) launch on Nov. 19, 2018. JMSDF Photo

6 - Future Implications Facing Japan's Security

Japan's reformed foreign policy was outlined, and it reflected Japan's evolving geostrategic outlook toward its position in the international order and its existing alliances. In this sense, the book may have some potential implications for Japan's regional and international foreign policy, as follows:

- a. Challenging Russia and China's rise through multifaceted coalitions: Japan's Ministry of Defense devoted an entire chapter in this year's White Paper to the Russo-Ukrainian war and its potential long-term effects on

the Trans-Indo-Pacific region. “If Russia’s aggression is tolerated, it may give the wrong impression that unilateral changes to the status quo are allowed in other regions, including Asia,” the white paper noted. “The international community, including Japan, must not tolerate such aggression.” The paper also warned that China may launch a comparable military action against Taiwan. In this spirit, the report stressed the need not to endure such aggression by the global community by highlighting the importance of adopting a coordinated international position through alliances and partnerships. Among the pacts that the White Paper expresses Japan’s explicit support for, is the tripartite grouping that brings together Japan with the United States of America and Australia. Also, the collaboration that currently exists between Japan and EU nations on several foreign policy issues is mentioned.

- b. **Emphasis on India’s Importance:** The Indian leadership has departed from the Western consensus in its position on the Ukraine-Russian war, and Washington has shown tolerance for New Delhi in this file, to the extent that the repeal of the application of the “Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act” to India has been discussed in the US House of Representatives⁵⁰. This allows India to continue to build military, strategic, and security relations and partnerships with Russia without being subjected to the consequences of US sanctions, as Türkiye previously was.

While ignoring the “Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act”⁵¹, India signed a \$5.43 billion deal with Russia to acquire four S-400 TRIUMF surface-to-air missile Defense systems in October 2018. A significantly stringent law, in the context of the Ukraine war, allows the US to authorize the imposition of strict sanctions on countries that buy Defense hardware from Russia. According to statements made by US officials, the Biden administration has yet to decide whether to apply sanctions to India. In the threat of these sanctions, India has canceled orders for MiG-29s, helicopters, and anti-tank weapons. Japanese gestures are being made to persuade India, either directly or indirectly, to stop departing from the Western consensus⁵².

50. J. M. Defense, “Defense of Japan Report,” Japanese Ministry, Tokyo, 2022.

51. CAATSA, “Definition, implications for India and criticism,” BYJUS, 24 December 2022. Available on: <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/countering-americas-adversaries-through-sanctions-act-caatsa/>.

52. CAATSA, “Definition, implications for India and criticism,” BYJUS, 24 December 2022. Available on: <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/countering-americas-adversaries-through-sanctions-act-caatsa/>.

7 - International Responds to Japan's White Paper 2022

China strongly rejected the Japanese White Papers where the Chinese ambassador in Tokyo handed over to the Japanese government a formal protest of this strategic assessment of the situation in the region. Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, told the Chinese and foreign press that the recent White Paper of the Japanese Ministry of Defense forms unrealistic allegations and distorts China's Defense policy and its legitimate efforts in the fields of market economy development and maritime activities. Wang added that the report exaggerates the so-called Chinese threat and interferes with China's internal affairs concerning Taiwan⁵³.

There is a clear dedication to competition among allies and enemies in the Indo-Pacific region. It cannot be overlooked that the document issued by the Japanese Ministry of Defense reaffirms and consecrates the rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region and the polarization between China against the United States and its allies. South Korea also rejected the document due to Japan's continuous claim of sovereignty over the Dokdo Islands, which are called the Takeshima Islands in Japanese. South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Choi Yong said in a statement to South Korea's Yonhap News Agency that the South Korean government protests Japan's repeated claims of sovereignty over the Dokdo Islands, which are an integral part of South Korea's territory following history, geography, and international law, and urges it to immediately retract these claims⁵⁴. The White Paper's assertion of the need to increase Japanese military spending may demonstrate Tokyo's awareness of the escalating threats posed by competition in the region, especially with the ongoing tensions over Taiwan and the fear that Beijing will perform military action to forcibly annex the island.

53. R. Rahmar, "Japan Outlines Funding Proposal for New OPVs, Anti-Submarine Helicopters in 2023," Janes, 8 September 2022. Available on: <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/sea/japan-outlines-funding-proposal-for-new-opvs-anti-submarine-helicopters-in-2023>

54. Y. S, "Korea protests against Japan's claims to Dokdo in Defense white paper," Yonhap News Agency , 22 July 2022. Available on: <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220722002152325>.

Conclusion

The Russia-Ukraine war and the open possibility of that daring clash is not just affecting European politics. This is part of a global escalation trend, especially with the establishment of a military alliance that flexes its muscles with large military exercises. Therefore, sovereign countries face the challenge of maintaining their people's security, preserving their independence, and protecting their national rights.

For that, Japan must move towards strengthening its Defense capabilities. Tokyo needs to double its Defense spending in its annual budget. The recent White Paper demonstrates Tokyo's awareness of the rapid regional and geopolitical changes that pose many security challenges. On the one hand, the Ukrainian war has led to major shifts on the international scene. It has also rearranged some international alliances, not to mention the concerns it has raised about stability in different regions of the world. However, the state of security liquidity in the Indo-Pacific region has increased amid intense competition between China and the United States for influence in the region and around the globe. In addition to this, countries must also face the threat of non-traditional intimidations, which necessitates investment in Defense development and modern technology.

The Russia-Ukraine war has created a complex security situation for all countries, but especially for Japan. Japan must recognize the need to be an active and responsible player in the international community and its region and move towards enhancing its Defense capabilities. This includes increasing Defense spending in the annual budget, strengthening its relationship with other countries in the region and the United States, and investing in specific aircraft machines, as well as expanding its cyber-defense capabilities. Japan's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine must be to fortify its Defense capabilities and build a strong international coalition to deter further aggression.

To respond to these security challenges, Japan must also increase its diplomatic efforts and toughen its Defense capabilities. This will set the foundation for cooperation and maintain a balance of power. Tokyo must also prioritize Defense equipment. For example, Japan should invest in long-



range missiles, air defense systems, and maritime patrol aircraft, as well as strengthen its cyber-defense capabilities.

Ultimately, Japan must recognize the need to be an active and responsible player in the international community, as well as in its region. This means that it must work together with other countries to promote peace and stability, while also being ready to protect itself and its interests. Japan's response to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict must be to strengthen its Defense capabilities and build a strong international coalition to deter further aggression.

Finally, this paper provides a comprehensive overview of Japan's Defense development, encompassing its current state, future enhancement plans, political stance, and revised foreign policy as outlined in the Defense white paper. While the paper successfully synthesizes these crucial aspects, it is acknowledged that further in-depth academic studies are needed to align the study's objectives with the analysis presented.

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