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JAPAN

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Japan Annual Defence White Paper Released

Ministry of Defense's annual White Paper, called [2021 Defense of Japan](#) was released on July 13. In a noteworthy departure, Japan has categorically underscored for the [first time](#) the need to observe the developments surrounding Taiwan "with a sense of crisis more than ever before" as the military balance between Beijing and Taipei favours the former, and stability in the Taiwan Strait is vital for Japan's own security. Further analysing the threat perception, the White Paper outlines the inconsistencies in China's Coast Guard Law vis-a-vis the international law, and Beijing's unilateral attempts to alter the status quo in the East and South China Seas. Furthermore, the Paper tracks the ballistic missile development by Pyongyang which poses "grave and imminent threat" to Japan's security. Countering these security challenges, Japan will bolster its own defence capabilities on the one hand and closely coordinate and cooperate with like-minded powers in the Indo-Pacific under its Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision. In addition to its principle ally, the US, Tokyo will be working closely with Australia, India, European partners such as the UK, France, and Germany, and Canada and New Zealand.

China has sharply [reacted](#) to the White Paper as groundless and malicious, intentionally portraying a "China threat". Beijing has registered opposition saying that it "grossly interferes in China's internal affairs on the Taiwan question". China argues

that mentioning the Taiwan question in the White Paper is in violation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 and also the prevailing 'one-China principle' and as such dilutes the China-Japan political foundation.

US-Japan-Taiwan Virtual Strategic Dialogue

Japan-Republic of China Diet Member's Consultative Council hosted the maiden [Japan-US-Taiwan Strategic Dialogue](#). The dialogue was attended by former Japanese Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, Senator Bill Hagerty, Senator Edward Markey, and Taiwan's Legislative Yuan Speaker, You Si-kun amongst others. Abe has urged democratic powers to join forces in realising a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. He reportedly expressed concern that while Beijing presents economic opportunities but its power projection in the South and East China Seas is causing regional anxiety. Abe has also expressed support for Taipei's participation in regional free-trade agreements and international organisations. Meanwhile, American representatives called for deepening trilateral economic cooperation, further support democratic Taiwan's free economy, and ensure a greater role for Taipei in international affairs. Taiwan's Legislative Yuan Speaker, You Si-kun articulated his country's expectations vis-à-vis Washington and Tokyo in terms of maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait, and further floated the idea of negotiating possible bilateral trade agreements, and Taiwan joining the Quad.

US-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Meeting

Tokyo hosted a US-Japan-South Korea [trilateral meeting](#) where the focus of discussion was on the shared challenge of realising complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and the threats posed by Pyongyang's ballistic missile programme. Additionally, global challenges including economic recovery and Covid-19 response, as well as defending the rules-based order and supporting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific were on the table. The meeting was attended by Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo, and South Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong Kun. They opposed any actions that undermine the rules-based international order in addition to any unilateral efforts to alter the status quo in the South and East China Seas, and underlined the significance of stability in the Taiwan Strait.

India-Japan Cooperation in the Russian Far East and Pacific Islands

Indian Foreign Secretary, Shri Harsh Shringla has emphasised that the maturity of India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership has translated into successful cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners beyond India's immediate neighbourhood, such as in the [Russian Far East and the Pacific Island States](#). Japan is an important pillar in India's Act East policy and a natural partner in Delhi's Indo-Pacific strategy. Tokyo is not only an indispensable partner in India's development but also an invaluable player in Prime Minister Modi's Indo-

Pacific Oceans' Initiative's connectivity pillar.

Japan-UK Likely to Develop Aero-Engine Technology

Japan and the UK are reportedly considering working together on [developing aero-engine technologies](#) that will power Tokyo's F-X fighter aircraft. Defence Ministry has confirmed speeding up talks aimed at Japan's F-X fighter programme and UK's Future Combat Air System (FCAS) collaboration at sub-system level, with attention on power and propulsion systems. IHI Corporation and Rolls-Royce may be collaborating. Rolls-Royce has acknowledged that "working with Japan to develop the technologies and capabilities needed for a next-generation fighter to replace the F-2 offers an exciting opportunity to bring together some of the best combat air capabilities in the world."

Tokyo Olympics Begin

Emperor Naruhito has officially opened the Games on July 23. Around 11,000 athletes and several world leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron and Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene arrived in Tokyo for the Olympics. US First Lady Jill Biden and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus were also there. Meanwhile, Japan is struggling with rising number of Covid-19 cases and has [declared state of emergency](#) in several prefectures. A few athletes have also tested positive for the virus.