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# JAPAN

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July 2024

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## PM Kishida attends NATO summit

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan [attended](#) the annual summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Washington between 10 and 12 July, following which he visited Germany till 14 July. Prior to the commencement of the summit proceedings, he [met](#) with President Yoon Suk-Yeol of the Republic of Korea for a bilateral summit to discuss issues of common concern. At the meeting, Kishida and Yoon agreed to consider the Asian security situation as 'indivisible' from Europe and vice versa. They confirmed their broader and deeper collaboration with the United States of America, NATO and other like-minded allies across the world to preserve the rules-based international order. The two leaders also laid emphasis on the importance of mutual trust as a foundation for bettering Japan-ROK relations. On the signing of a mutual defence treaty between Russia and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK), Yoon said that the move is the source of 'serious concerns for global security', a formulation Kishida seemingly agreed with. Finally, the two sides discussed the upcoming 60th anniversary of the normalisation of their diplomatic ties, agreeing to work together to ensure its success.

On 12 July, Kishida [followed](#) up his bilateral with a minilateral meeting on the sidelines of the primary NATO summit of the so-called 'Indo-Pacific 4' (IP4). He was joined by President Yoon, President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon

of New Zealand and Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles (standing in for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese). The primary item on the agenda continued to be the military cooperation between the DPRK and Russia, which the parties condemned roundly. They also agreed that they would cooperate to make the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept a reality. The IP4 were also joined by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for a summit, where the four parties announced their continued support for Ukraine. During his sojourn, Kishida also met with the leaders of the United Kingdom, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

## The 10th Pacific Islands Leaders' Summit (PALM10)

Japan [hosted](#) the tenth edition of the Pacific Islands Leaders' Summit (PALM10) between 16 and 18 July 2024 in Tokyo. The Summit saw participation from all 18 members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) along with Japan.

The event [commenced](#) with official banquets organised by the Emperor and Empress of Japan, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi. In his address at the banquet, Kishida lauded the PALM process and its efforts across 27 years in ensuring closer ties between the PIC and Japan. He also expressed 'determination to elevate the relationship between Japan and the region to even greater heights and work together for the future' in light of geopolitical

headwinds. Prime Minister Mark Brown of the Cook Islands, who as chair of the PIF co-hosted the summit, welcomed Japan's approach of seeking equal participation from the PICs in achieving the latter's 2050 Strategy. Kishida also held bilateral meetings with the leaders of several key PICs earlier on 17 July.

On 18 July, the Summit was inaugurated by speeches delivered by Prime Ministers Kishida and Brown where both sides [spoke](#) of the key issues facing the region. During his speech, Kishida announced that Japan would provide a wide range of assistance to the PICs. He declared that climate change is 'the single greatest existential threat' facing the PICs and announced a Pacific Climate Resilience Initiative to help PICs overcome its worst effects. Japan would collaborate with the PICs on curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. On human resource development, he promised to ramp up people-to-people exchanges further. He also touted the benefits of transparent and fair development finance, committed to helping PICs develop high-quality connectivity infrastructure, and repeated the traditional Japanese commitment to work closely with like-minded countries throughout the region to thwart challenges to the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), while agreeing to work with PICs on nuclear disarmament. The summit also served as a vehicle to assure the PICs regarding Japan's concern for safety in the discharging of treated wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

### Japan's MoD releases 1st AI policy

Japan's defence ministry [unveiled](#) its first policy on the use of artificial intelligence in battlefield tactical as well as strategic situations on 2 July. The new basic policy on AI usage is divided into seven domains where the Ministry of Defence (MoD) envisages a role for AI. The seven fields are: detection and identification of military targets, command and control, logistical support, information gathering and analysis, unmanned defence platforms, cybersecurity and improving work efficiency. The *raison d'etre* of the new policy was defined in the document in terms of competing with other nations, both friendly and hostile, in developing an AI element as a force multiplier. Other benefits, such as enhancing the speed of combat operations, reduction of human error and labour-saving, were also cited.

At the same time, the policy remained cautious on the potential of AI, as it stated the limitations of AI clearly. It mentioned the possibility of *sui generis* events hampering the utility of AI models which learn from past data. Also mentioned as limitations were the potential for lack of credibility and the potential for misuse. Defence Minister Minoru Kihara noted at the time of unveiling the new policy that Japan faced a 'big challenge' in terms of whether it could adapt to 'the new forms of battle' represented by AI and stressed the need to understand the downsides of AI accurately in order to be able to address its shortcomings.