



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Headlines:

- Biden-Kishida summit launches “Economic 2+2” process
- First US-Japan joint statement on nuclear non-proliferation treaty issued in nearly 7 years
- Ruling party-backed candidate wins Nago mayoral election
- New US ambassador Emanuel finally arrives in Tokyo
- First-ever deployment of US drones to a Japanese base planned

Details:

- **President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida** [met](#) virtually for 90 minutes on January 21 to discuss [strategy](#) for various regional and global [issues](#), vowing to strengthen defense cooperation and economic policy coordination. Their **first in-depth meeting** since Kishida became Prime Minister in October, the two leaders [announced](#) plans for an in-person summit in Tokyo in the first half of 2022 alongside other Quad leaders. They also unveiled a new ministerial Japan-US Economic Policy Consultative Committee (an economic “2+2” involving State/Commerce and MOFA/METI) to drive and track economic security cooperation related to their Competitiveness and Resilience ([CoRe](#)) Partnership which was first outlined in 2021. The leaders’ critique of China’s human rights practices and aggressiveness in the East and South China seas drew [complaints](#) from Beijing.
- The US and Japanese governments issued a **joint statement on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** on January 20, in anticipation of convening the [long-delayed](#) 10th NPT Review [Conference](#) in New York in 2022. The statement [reiterated](#) traditional alliance support for the NPT regime and related initiatives including the test-ban and fissile material cutoff treaties, and it requested China to contribute more to advance nuclear disarmament and reduce nuclear risks (the first time China has appeared by name in such a joint statement).
- A **mayoral election in the Okinawan city of Nago** on January 23 resulted in a [win](#) by incumbent and LDP-backed Toguchi with 57% of 34,134 votes cast. Toguchi’s victory over opposition-backed Kishimoto assuaged some fears of renewed obstruction to the relocation of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Nago’s Henoko district. While this issue was previously a top concern of area voters, it polled lower among voters’ priorities. A recent [Asahi survey](#) showed only 30% of respondents thought that base relocation was the most important issue, while 50% cited local economic promotion policies. Voter turnout was relatively [low](#) at 68%.
- New **US ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel** [arrived](#) in Tokyo on January 23, ending a 2½ year vacancy of the post. Emanuel [described](#) the US-Japan alliance as “a beacon of endless possibility and promise” in the region, and he [pledged](#) to deepen bilateral ties and confront common challenges together, highlighting the China challenge. Amb. Emanuel officially begins his duties on February 3, following 10 days of quarantine.
- Japan and the United States **plan to deploy around seven MQ-9 (Reaper)** unmanned military reconnaissance aircraft to a Japanese SDF base in Kanoya, Kagoshima, according to Japanese news [reports](#). This would be the [first](#) such deployment of these long-range (up to 2,500km) UAVs, likely meant to increase surveillance of Chinese maritime activities in the East China Sea. Supported by about 100 US personnel, the deployment will take advantage of increasing “[joint-shared use](#)” of each other’s facilities in Japan, as mentioned at the [2+2 meeting](#) earlier this month. Defense Minister Kishi [confirmed](#) the possibility of this temporary deployment on January 28.

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