



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Headlines:

- US-Japan '2+2 Meeting' promotes integrated deterrence and cooperative research
- COVID outbreak at US military bases in Japan causing friction
- Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement signed
- Bilateral research on nuclear energy gets a boost
- Construction milestone for DPRI/ Guam Marine Corps base

Details:

- US-Japan defense and foreign policy leaders **convened their second '2+2 Meeting'** in the Biden era on January 6, finalizing a **new 5-year host-nation support deal** for US bases in Japan (including ~\$1.4bn in facility improvements) and noting progress on **new agreements for cooperative defense research**, development, production and sustainment. Joint analysis to counter hypersonic technology advances by China and North Korea was referenced, as well as other critical and emerging technology fields. They pledged "to constantly modernize the Alliance and strengthen joint capabilities...in an ever more integrated manner" to deter complex regional threats. Increasing joint/shared use of bases in Japan was also mentioned.
- Since mid-December, **several thousand US military personnel on eight bases in Japan tested positive for COVID-19**. The outbreak began at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, when the US military was **not testing** personnel prior to traveling to Japan. In a Jan 5 call with his US counterpart (Blinken), Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi **requested** US bases impose curfews and other measures to contain the outbreak. Okinawa governor Tamaki, **blamed** US soldiers for "the alarming rise" of infections in his prefecture, and Hayashi **acknowledged** this possibility on Jan 13, as cases rise nationally. Kanagawa governor Kuroiwa **highlighted** problems with the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in combating COVID. US Forces Japan **responded** with tighter protection measures including more testing, movement restrictions, and additional mask-wearing requirements.
- Prime Ministers Kishida of Japan and Morrison of Australia met virtually to sign a new **Reciprocal Access Agreement** that should expand opportunities for joint disaster relief, military exercises, and closer interoperability overall between the Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF) and the Australian Defense Forces (ADF). US officials **welcomed** this closer networking among allies, **seven** years after their negotiations started.
- Japan will bolster development of **next-generation nuclear power technology** in cooperation with the United States, industry minister Hagiuda **said** on Jan 6 during talks with US Energy Secretary Granholm. The Japan Atomic Energy Agency and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries will **sign** a memorandum of understanding with a US firm (TerraPower) to provide technical support for fast reactor development (supported by US government funding), while the Japanese government is **investing** nearly \$8m to upgrade a specialized research facility.
- The US Navy **awarded** on January 5 a \$39m contract for the construction of a Police Station at **Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz in Guam** (**commissioned** in 2020). The project is funded by the Japanese government (part of a **\$3bn program**) in support of the **Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI)** agreed to bilaterally in 2006-07.