



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Headlines:

- Japan joins US carrier strike group exercises in Philippine Sea
- US base relocation is key issue of Okinawa gubernatorial race
- Raimondo-Nishimura discuss semiconductors and IPEF in first meeting
- US regulatory moves spur more Japanese electric vehicle investment
- US-Japan student exchange program returns from pandemic hiatus

Details:

- The US Navy and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) [concluded](#) **joint training in the Philippine Sea** on August 18. MSDF destroyers Ohnami and Yamagiri joined the USS Ronald Reagan and other vessels of Carrier Strike Group 5 for several days of bilateral exercises. US Navy Captain Harts emphasized the importance of taking every opportunity to integrate with the MSDF in support of a "free, stable and secure Indo-Pacific region." The USS Ronald Reagan had been [ordered](#) to remain in the area near Taiwan during House Speaker Pelosi's early August [visit](#) to the island and to help monitor China's response. Subsequent visits to Taiwan by lawmakers from both [Japan](#) and the [United States](#) prompted China to [continue](#) military exercises in the region, followed by two US warships [navigating](#) the Taiwan Strait.
- The **gubernatorial race in Okinawa** is [underway](#) between incumbent Denny Tamaki and challengers Mikio Shimoji and LDP-backed Atsushi Sakima. Sakima [lost](#) to Tamaki in 2018 by a little more than 80,000 votes. The relocation of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma remains a key election issue, with Tamaki vowing not to allow relocation within Okinawa, while Sakima and Shimoji see benefit in completing the project to return land and support economic recovery. Campaigning [began](#) August 25 and voting is scheduled for September 11. Separately, the US Marine Corps [keeps](#) flying its MV-22 Osprey aircraft from Futenma despite the US Air Force's August 16 safety stand down [order](#) for its similar CV-22 tilt rotor transports, due to recent incidents. Tamaki has called on the Marines to suspend their flights.
- US Commerce Secretary **Raimondo** [met](#) **virtually with new METI Minister** Nishimura on August 25 to discuss the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) ahead of a [planned](#) IPEF Ministerial in Los Angeles on September 8-9. That meeting will welcome 14 Indo-Pacific partners to consider trade, supply chains, clean energy, decarbonization, infrastructure, and other issues. Raimondo and Nishimura also discussed bilateral economic security cooperation, as Raimondo pledged continued support for coordinating on export controls, promoting new technologies, and strengthening supply chains, especially for semiconductors. The same day President Biden [signed](#) an Executive Order to implement the 2022 CHIPS and Science [Act](#), and Commerce launched a new [website](#) to support that process.
- **California's Air Resources Board** [voted](#) on August 25 to approve Governor Newsom's plan to require all new vehicles sold in the state by 2035 to be either **electric or plug-in electric hybrids**, with important implications for Japanese automakers that sell [relatively](#) few zero-emission cars. Japanese firms are looking to expand all-electric offerings and produce more inventory in North America to qualify for new US [tax credits](#) in the Inflation Reduction Act [signed](#) August 16. A new \$4.4 billion electric vehicle US battery plant [investment](#) was announced by Honda and LG Energy August 29.
- The **Japan-America Student Conference (JASC)** concluded its first in person [exchange](#) since 2019 in New York. Established in 1934 as Japan's first international exchange program, JASC emphasizes personal connections between both cultures. Students lived together for three weeks and considered bilateral relations by discussing topics including education, technology, and global governance.

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