



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Image Source: [Yonhap News](#)

Headlines:

- Dep. Sec. Sherman hosts trilateral meeting with Japan & South Korea
- US & Japan conduct first Strategic Dialogue on Democratic Resilience
- Allies engage in logistics training to boost interoperability
- IPEF delegates meet in New Delhi for new round of negotiations
- Japan's Cabinet approves bill to support domestic defense industry

Details:

- Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman hosted Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori and South Korean First Vice Minister Cho in Washington on February 13. The **trilateral meeting** focused on enhancing security cooperation, joint assistance to Ukraine, and ways to continue strengthening a free and open Indo-Pacific including food and energy security. After arriving in Washington, Cho [said](#) "strengthening US extended deterrence against North Korea's evolving threat is a joint objective of South Korea and the US." Separately, Ministers Mori and Cho met bilaterally to continue discussions on Japan's wartime forced labor practices that constitutes an ongoing rift between the two countries.
- US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya traveled to Tokyo on February 8-9 to lead a US delegation in the **inaugural US-Japan Strategic Dialogue on Democratic Resilience** along with Deputy Minister for Foreign Policy Ichikawa. The two sides [exchanged](#) views on how democratic resilience can be enhanced in the international community and within each country, and they committed to deepening cooperation in multilateral venues. In addition, US Special Envoy for the Advancement of the Human Rights of LGBTQ+ Persons, Jessica Stern, [met](#) with the head of Japan's Komeito party, Yamaguchi, to share views on related topics ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima in May.
- The JS Oumi conducted replenishment at sea [exercises](#) with USS Antietam January 26 off Okinawa. The **Interchangeable Logistics Exercise 23-1 (ILEX 23-1)** mimics logistical operations in support of front-line units and improves interoperability between the naval forces. Continuing the logistics theme, Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) members [toured](#) a US Army Landing Craft Utility Vessel in Yokohama on January 25 to better understand its capabilities for joint logistics support. The January US-Japan 2+2 [meeting](#) agreed to expand defense logistics cooperation with those vessels. JGSDF Col. Matsuda [said](#) that she and her staff "became so interested in the unit" as it can carry the payload of a C-17 aircraft, which can be up to 400 combat armed troops or four main battle tanks.
- A **special negotiating round of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** [met](#) in New Delhi from February 8-11. The US and Japan are spearheading this multilateral effort to facilitate regional trade and strengthen US economic [connections](#) to the Indo-Pacific. Around 300 officials from more than a dozen countries attended the negotiations hosted by [India's](#) Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Commerce Department Chief IPEF Negotiator Sharon Yuan led the US side, while Japan was led by METI's Takanari Yamashita. Discussions focused on the initiative's key pillars of supply chain, clean economy, and fair economy. Japan [encouraged](#) India to join the Trade Pillar that includes digital.
- Japan's Cabinet [approved](#) draft legislation on February 10 designed to **support Japan's defense industry and facilitate collaboration with foreign partners** by shoring up information security practices and stiffening penalties. The bill would also [create](#) a new framework for the government to shoulder defense companies' costs for building stronger supply chains, improving production efficiency, bolstering cybersecurity and ensuring business continuity.

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