



# US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Image Source: [Japan MOD](#)

## Headlines:

- Japan boosting cyber defense investment, amid report of vulnerabilities
- Former PM Aso visits Taiwan, calls for alliance to strengthen deterrence
- Notable US & Japan government personnel changes to report
- Japan manufacturer NIDEC acquires US auto parts firm in Ohio
- Allies deepen cooperation through joint training and interaction

## Details:

- Some retired Japanese government officials and Self-Defense Force (SDF) officers announced year-end [plans](#) for a **new liaison organization in Yokosuka** between the Defense Ministry and private sector to bolster the government's cybersecurity capacity. In addition to supporting the SDF with developing cybersecurity personnel, the organization will conduct research on global cyber-attacks and technologies. Early [reports](#) of Japan's FY24 defense budget describe **large increases planned for cybersecurity capabilities**. These developments coincide with a dramatic *Washington Post* [article](#) on August 7 describing the US National Security Agency's discovery in 2020 that Chinese military hackers had penetrated Japanese defense networks. Japanese officials [downplayed](#) the report, while US officials [promised](#) to continue sharing intelligence and collaborating on cyber defense capabilities, but it is a high priority alliance issue.
- In a meeting with Taiwan President Tsai in Taipei on August 8, former Japanese Prime Minister **Aso said Japan, the US, Taiwan and other like-minded countries must show their resolve to defend Taiwan** as regional tensions increase. Aso called the prospect of Chinese invasion of Taiwan a threat to Japan's survival and stressed the importance of maintaining the status quo through deterrence. In a [complaint](#) lodged with the Japanese government, Beijing called Aso's comments nonsense and said they interfere with China's internal affairs. Aso is the [first](#) sitting Liberal Democratic Party vice president to make an official visit to Taiwan since Tokyo severed diplomatic relations with Taipei in 1972.
- [Victoria Nuland](#) became **Acting Deputy Secretary of State** following Wendy Sherman's [retirement](#) July 28, while [Sasha Baker](#) is **acting Undersecretary of Defense for Policy**, replacing Kahl, awaiting confirmation of [Derek Chollet](#). In Japan, the Foreign Ministry [announced](#) August 8 that Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary Masataka Okano would become **Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs**. Other changes [include](#), Hiroyuki Namazu [became](#) Director General (DG) of Asian Affairs, Yutaka Arima as DG of North American Affairs, DG Yasuhiro Kobe succeeded Keiichi Ichikawa as head of the Foreign Policy Bureau, who in turn took Okano's NSS position. Takehiro Funakoshi is now Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, taking over from Shigeo Yamada, who is a candidate to be the next Ambassador to the United States.
- Japan motor parts manufacturer NIDEC [announced](#) the **acquisition of Ohio-based press machine equipment maker Automatic Feed** and two affiliates on August 2. The US firms have 80 employees and \$37 million in sales in 2022, making sheet metal cutting equipment for US auto makers. This is NIDEC's [7th](#) US acquisition in the past 10 years.
- The allies continued improving security operations coordination as JS Tokiwa conducted an **interchangeable logistics exercise** with USS Benfold on July 28. The allied vessels [operated](#) off the coast of Wakayama Prefecture to improve tactical capabilities, test interoperability, and conduct replenishment at sea. Separately, Fleet commanders Vice Admiral Thomas (7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Commander) and Vice Admiral Saito (MSDF Fleet Commander) [engaged](#) in a remote briefing (while Thomas was onboard the USS Blue Ridge) to discuss updates to bilateral defense cooperation on July 27.

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