US Strategic Command chief reassures allies on nuclear umbrella
Raimondo-Nishimura discuss chips as new industry ties emerge
US Midwestern governors meet officials, industry leaders in Tokyo
Japan’s top court orders Okinawa to allow Henoko base construction
Kishida’s cabinet reshuffle brings new Defense and Foreign ministers

Details:

- **US STRATCOM Commander General Cotton** made his first visit to Japan and met with top defense officials in Tokyo and Foreign Minister Hayashi from Sept 1-4, following a similar visit in Seoul. In a meeting with Self Defense Force Chief of Joint Staff Gen. Yoshida, Cotton discussed regional security and deterrence, having noted earlier to Congress that China’s land-based missile launchers now exceed the US in number. He said in Tokyo, “I want to be able to display the extended deterrence that we offer to allies, in particular Korea and Japan.” Separately, the incoming US Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Smith also visited Tokyo telling counterparts that the Corps considers deterring China its key focus and said that the planned reconfigured Marine Littoral Regiment in Okinawa reflects this change. He added that, “the missile threat from the PRC is significant and growing” and that “everyone should take [it] seriously.”

- Commerce Secretary Raimondo spoke with METI Minister Nishimura on September 11 to discuss the agenda for the next Economic “2+2” meeting and Indo-Pacific Economic Framework negotiations. During the call, the two pledged to deepen collaboration on semiconductors, strengthen supply chain resilience, and begin new trilateral dialogues on industry and commerce with South Korea, following the Camp David summit in August. Separately, Arm Holdings, the UK chip design company controlled by Japan’s SoftBank Group, raised nearly $5 billion through a Wall Street IPO Sept 14 that saw US semiconductor customers (including Nvidia, Intel, AMD, etc.) become its biggest new shareholders.

- Foreign Minister Hayashi along with other public and private sector leaders met with six US Midwestern governors and Lt. governors in Tokyo as the Midwest US-Japan Association (MWJA) convened for the first time in four years Sept 10-13. They discussed green energy initiatives, digital transformation, and further developing US-Japan economic and grassroots partnerships. The MWJA was founded in 1967 to promote trade and mutual exchanges across sectors.

- Japan’s Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling on September 4, dismissing Okinawa Prefecture’s lawsuit that sought to halt further landfill work at Henoko, which will support the relocation of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The ruling confirms that the land minister ordering Okinawa to approve design changes in the construction plan for the relocation was legal. Okinawa Governor Tamaki expressed disappointment and said he would continue objections, but his legal options to halt work seem exhausted. Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno welcomed the ruling and pledged to complete the Futenma relocation, but is seeking to limit confrontation with the Okinawa government.

- Prime Minister Kishida reshuffled his cabinet September 13, saying he is determined to adapt to recent rapid economic, security, and technological changes and turn those into national strengths. Among the new members are Defense Minister Minoru Kihara and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa. Kihara was a special national security adviser to former PM Abe and Suga and is likely to deepen ties with Taiwan. Kamikawa is the first female foreign minister in 20 years, and in a call with Sec. Blinken, pledged closer collaboration in addressing global and regional challenges.

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