



US-Japan Alliance Digest

Vol: 2.18

September 29, 2023

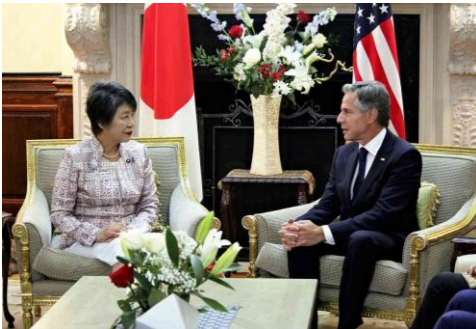


Image Source: [The Yomiuri Shimbun](#)

Headlines:

- Officials discuss alliance initiatives on sidelines of UN Gen Assembly
- INDOPACOM Commander in Japan as allies test logistics integration
- US works to aid Japan's scallop industry hit by China ban
- US unmanned surface ships arrive at 7th Fleet for first exercises
- US Space Force expands initiatives with Japan SDF and private sector

Details:

- **Secretary of State Blinken and Foreign Minister Kamikawa met** on Sept 18 in New York to [discuss](#) Indo-Pacific security threats, the Taiwan Strait, and upholding the rules-based international order. Separately, the pair [met](#) with South Korea's FM Park to discuss countering North Korean aggression and maintaining momentum of the Camp David summit. They also joined a [G7](#) Foreign Ministers meeting that discussed Russia, China, the Indo-Pacific and beyond. At the UN, Prime Minister Kishida [urged](#) the global community to work together to avoid confrontation, highlighting Russian aggression and calling for [action](#) on climate and public health crises. President Biden also [addressed](#) the General Assembly, urging a collective effort for "a more secure, more prosperous, more equitable world for all people."
- **US INDOPACOM Commander Adm Aquilino met PM Kishida, Defense Minister Kihara**, and other officials during a Japan visit on September 27. This came just a few days after the conclusion of the largest annual field training exercise between the US Army and Ground Self-Defense Forces, named [Orient Shield 23](#). One objective is to [increase](#) logistical interoperability, bilaterally and with other regional partners, as it followed US-Japan participation in [Talisman Sabre](#) in Australia this summer and [Super Garuda Shield](#) with partner nations in Indonesia in mid-September. The effort is part of a strategy to scatter logistical channels and deter nations from attempting to change the status quo by force. Nikkei [reported](#) that the Japanese government is beginning discussions with prefectures and cities to upgrade civilian infrastructure (33 airports, 10 ports) for possible defense use during emergencies including regional contingencies.
- **US Embassy Tokyo is working with Japan to help its scallop industry** hit by China's seafood import [ban](#), prompted by a dispute over the release of treated water around Fukushima. China's ban was [called](#) a form of "economic coercion" by US Ambassador Emanuel, and it runs counter to safety assurances by Japan, international bodies, and many seafood importing neighbors. Last year China processed \$100 million of Japanese scallops for the US market, so now US officials are [facilitating](#) connections with US-registered processing plants in Vietnam, Taiwan, and Thailand to fill the void.
- The **US Navy's 7th Fleet welcomed four Unmanned Surface Vessels (USV)** in late September. The vessels are the first such craft operating from Japan and took part in the [Integrated Battle Problem 23.2](#) exercise that placed them into the Yokosuka-based fleet. USV Division 1 commander CMDR Jeremiah Daley [described](#) how the USVs augment the Navy's battle space awareness, shorten the kill chain, and increase the range and accuracy of offensive weapons.
- **Defense Minister Kihara and US Space Force Chief of Operations Gen. Saltzman met** in Tokyo September 25 to discuss boosting space cooperation via a new USSF base in Japan. The move would bolster Indo-Pacific security, deepen information [sharing](#) with Japan's Self Defense Forces, and promote trilateral cooperation with South Korea. Separately, Japanese space services firm Astroscale signed a \$37 million [agreement](#) (under Other Transaction Authority) with US Space Force in September to co-fund and co-develop a refueling vehicle for satellites in orbit, to be delivered by 2026.

"US-Japan Alliance Digest" is a bi-weekly summary of bilateral and related developments compiled by [Sasakawa USA's](#) "US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative." To receive "Alliance Digest" via email, contact egulum@spfusa.org