



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Image Source: [Kyodo News](#)

Headlines:

- Japanese government names new ambassador to United States
- US, Japan, South Korea set up trilateral hotline, conduct first air exercise
- US & Japan drug makers join forces to develop new cancer medicines
- US-Japan convene vice-ministerial meeting of Economic “2+2”
- 10th annual bilateral “Mt. Fuji Dialogue” convenes in Tokyo

Details:

- The Japanese government [announced](#) on Oct 24 that **Shigeo Yamada is now the new ambassador to the US**, replacing the well-respected Koji Tomita. Yamada served most recently as senior deputy foreign minister, following stints as director general of the Foreign Policy Bureau and political minister at Japan’s embassy in DC, among other assignments. Yamada has extensive personal experience coordinating policy with both Democratic and Republican US administrations. The government also [appointed](#) Kenji Kanasugi, former envoy to Indonesia, to be its new ambassador to China. Akira Muto was named envoy to Russia, while Kazuyuki Yamazaki was appointed as ambassador to the UN.
- The **US, Japan, and South Korea [established](#) a new three-way hotline** on Oct 17 to tighten communications between the countries in the event of a crisis. The need for the infrastructure comes as Kim Jong Un [develops](#) closer military technology ties with Russia’s Vladimir Putin. In addition, the three countries’ air forces [engaged](#) in a first ever joint air exercise on Oct 18. The drill incorporated fighter planes of the three nations in [escort](#) formation of a US B-52 strategic bomber over waters where the air identification zones of Japan and South Korea overlap. In a statement, the Republic of Korea Air Force press release [stated](#) “the exercise was planned to implement the defense sector agreements made at the ROK-US-Japan Camp David summit in August, and expand the three countries’ ability to respond to North Korea.” In a separate trilateral development, Japan and Australia defense ministers [announced](#) Oct 19 that **Australian troops will [participate](#) in Japan-US joint command post drills** (Yama Sakura in November and Keen Edge early next year).
- US drugmaker **Merck will pay Japan’s Daiichi Sankyo \$5.5 billion to jointly develop** three of its candidate cancer drugs. The drug candidates belong to the class known as antibody drug conjugates (ADC) and are in various stages of clinical development for treating multiple solid cancer tumors. Daiichi [will](#) be responsible for manufacturing and supply.
- Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Keiichi Ono, and Vice-Minister for International Affairs at METI [met](#) Jose Fernandez, Undersecretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment alongside Marisa Lago, Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade on Oct 19 for a **virtual US-Japan Economic Policy Consultative Committee (EPCC) vice ministerial**. The [discussion](#) covered strengthening the rules-based economic order, energy security, and critical mineral supply chains. They acknowledged the importance of economic security, each other’s strategic positions, and pledged to continue developing bilateral initiatives and cooperate on emerging technologies.
- About 260 US and Japanese foreign policy specialists, business executives, government officials and military officers from both countries, convened Oct 21 in Tokyo for the **10th annual Mount Fuji Dialogue**, a major US-Japan policy and intellectual exchange event. The dialogue included panel discussions with Diet Members, trade and technology specialists, China foreign policy experts, a [video](#) presentation by Prime Minister Kishida and an in-person presentation by Commerce Undersecretary for Industry and Security Estevez. Sasakawa USA’s Jim Schoff joined one of the panels.

“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