



# US-Japan Alliance Digest

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## Headlines:

- APEC in San Francisco creates diplomatic opportunities
- US missiles to Japan get green light as North Korea launches satellite
- Japanese & US firms team up to offer first foreign stablecoin in Japan
- Economic “2+2” ministerial convenes, focused on supply chains/tech
- US Marine Corps stands up reconfigured littoral regiment in Okinawa

## Details:

- **President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida** [met](#) briefly on the sidelines of the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** Leaders’ Week, hosted by the US in San Francisco until November 17. They [discussed](#) current events and coordinated policy approaches regarding Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas conflict, and China, following Biden’s [meeting](#) the day before with Chinese president Xi. Kishida also [met](#) with Xi during that week, and Biden, Kishida, and South Korean president Yoon also [convened](#) a brief trilateral meeting. Under the umbrella theme of “Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All,” APEC 2023 produced a variety of both practical and aspirational [agreements](#) on climate change mitigation and resilience, energy transitions, disaster risk reduction, and other initiatives.
- The State Department on November 17 [approved](#) a possible **Foreign Military Sale to Japan of up to 400 Tomahawk missiles** (Blocks 4 and 5) and related equipment worth an estimated \$2.35 billion. Congress was notified of the possible sale, and bilateral negotiations will continue with the aim of completing a contract soon to [enable](#) the first shipments to take place in Japan’s 2025 fiscal year. The [Tomahawk](#) cruise missile launches from ships and submarines and can strike targets precisely from 1,000 miles away. The move comes as **North Korea placed its first spy satellite** into orbit on November 21 and [claimed](#) the ability to view “major target areas” such as US military bases and the White House. Outside confirmation of the satellite actually functioning is pending. An emergency UN Security Council meeting November 27 on the prohibited launch [failed](#) to produce any new sanction due to opposition by China and Russia.
- Japanese financial group SBI Holdings has [partnered](#) with US-based Circle Internet Financial to make the company’s cryptocurrency US dollar coin (USDC) the **first foreign stablecoin to circulate in Japan** as early as 2024. SBI Holdings, a venture capital group and financial services provider, will also [work](#) with Circle on establishing a banking relationship and promoting the use of Circle’s Web3 services in Japan. Recent legislation in Japan [allows](#) banks and trust companies to issue stablecoins from June this year.
- The US and Japan [agreed](#) to bolster supply chains for semiconductors and critical minerals on the sidelines of the APEC gathering at a second meeting of their **Economic Policy Consultative Committee (EPCC or Econ 2+2)**. In a 6-page joint [statement](#), the foreign and commercial ministers outlined policy coordination measures to enhance the rules-based international economic order and make their economies more competitive and resilient. They also [emphasized](#) promoting and protecting technology in areas such as semiconductors, AI, quantum, clean energy, and 5G.
- The US set up its [first Marine Littoral Regiment \(MLR\)](#) in Japan on November 15. The 2,000 strong Okinawa-based 12<sup>th</sup> MLR specializing in rapid response was activated to bolster regional security. It represents a reconfiguration (capabilities enhancement) of the existing 12th Marine Regiment based in Okinawa, agreed to by the allies at their “2+2” ministers [meeting](#) in January. This is the Marines’ second MLR, with the first [set up](#) in Hawaii in March 2022.

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“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](mailto:egulum@spfusa.org)