



US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Image Source: [Prime Minister's Office](#)

Headlines:

- New INDOPACOM chief Paparo meets w/ Kishida, others in Tokyo
- ATLA dispatches official to bring US railgun tech to Japan's SDF
- Japan & US firms to co-develop reusable rocket for commercial use
- US-Japan-South Korea vice foreign ministers meet for dialogue in US
- Trilat allies hold inaugural steering committee meeting in Manila

Details:

- PM Kishida promised to enhance alliance deterrence in his [meeting](#) with the new commander of INDOPACOM, Admiral Samuel Paparo, in Tokyo May 29. Speaking with Foreign Minister Kamikawa, Paparo underscored the severity of the regional security environment and [thanked](#) the minister for her leadership regarding [WPS](#). In an interview, Paparo stressed unity of effort with Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF), saying it would be **his job to upgrade the command and control [relationship](#) between the two countries**. Paparo also [met](#) Defense Minister Kihara and Chief of Joint Staff Yoshida. Separately, Kihara announced May 24 that Japan will [join](#) the large scale US field training exercise Valiant Shield (focused on integrating joint training among US and partner-nations forces) for the first time in June.
- Japan [announced](#) on May 21 that an official from the **Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) was sent to learn about the US Navy's** shelved rail gun project. The US [discontinued](#) the effort in 2021 after spending 15 years and \$500 million on its development. ATLA began its [project](#) in 2016 and conducted the first offshore firing of the weapon by the Maritime Self Defense Force in fiscal 2023. When China's PLA Navy test [fired](#) its railgun last year the smart projectile reached Mach 5 and 9 miles into the atmosphere but failed to meet the test's expected benchmarks.
- Japan's Innovative Space Carrier Inc. (ISC) is joining with US rocket maker Ursa Major Technologies Inc. **to [develop](#) a reusable launch vehicle for commercial use by 2030**. ASCA-1 is Japan's first attempt to develop a cost-cutting reusable rocket. In March, ISC [founded](#) a US subsidiary for the partnership to conduct test flights and because exporting rocket technology that can be used for military purposes is prohibited. In another example of space collaboration, a US private-sector space station developer (Sierra Space) will [use](#) a docking component made by Japan's IHI Aerospace.
- The US, Japanese, and South Korean vice foreign ministers [met](#) in "Little" Washington, Virginia for a trilateral dialogue on May 31. US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, Japan's Vice Foreign Minister for Foreign Affairs Masataka Okano and South Korea's First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Hong Kyun [reaffirmed](#) **their cooperation set by the 2023 Camp David Summit to meet challenges** from Russia's war on Ukraine, stability across the Taiwan Strait, Gaza support, and threats posed by North Korea. The North Korean threat is especially poignant as the country notified its neighbors of its [intention](#) to launch a satellite into orbit in violation of UN resolutions before June 4, drawing criticism.
- The US, Philippines, and Japan held the **inaugural Luzon Economic Corridor Steering Committee [meeting](#) on May 21 on the sidelines of the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Manila**. Senior officials from the three countries endeavored to implement [commitments](#) set by the Trilateral Leaders' summit in April under IPEFs Partnership for Global Infrastructure (PGI). At the April summit, President Marcos [said](#), "we meet today as friends and partners, bound by a shared vision and pursuit of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific." After China, the US and Japan are the Philippine's second and third largest trading partners, respectively, [totaling](#) nearly \$41 billion between them in 2023.

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