US-Japan Alliance Digest

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Headlines:

- US-Japan-Australia defense leaders agree to expand trilat exercises
- Large US tech firms expand in Japan via partnership and investment
- US, Japan govt agencies to cooperate on emerging technologies
- Toxins in firefighting foam removed from US military bases in Japan
- USS George Washington returns to Yokosuka with fifth gen fighters

Details:

- **The defense ministers of the US, Japan, and Australia met Nov 17 in Darwin for a dialogue on boosting defense cooperation**. In a joint statement, the allies announced that Japan's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade will join the annual bilateral exercise Talisman Sabre among Australian and American forces beginning in 2025. Secretary Lloyd Austin said, "Today, more than ever, we're taking concrete actions that will deepen our trilateral cooperation, and the three of us are here to see the results firsthand." The announcement marks a broadening of defense cooperation between the three nations as Japan increases its participation in exercises Southern Jackaroo, while Australia joins Exercise Orient Shield and enhances its role in Yama Sakura, Keen Edge, and Keen Sword. The gathering in Darwin, the 14th Trilateral Defense Ministers' Meeting (TDMM), comes as concerns about China's military intimidation continue.
- **US tech giant Nvidia announced a partnership with Softbank on Nov 13** to turn the Japanese firm's 200,000 telecom base stations into mini data centers. The venture would create a nationwide AI intel grid reducing lag times that hinder the rollout of AI applications like self-driving cars. Nvidia's CEO Jensen Huang also mentioned he would consider Japan's Rapidus to help diversify his semiconductor supply chain. Separately, American software provider ServiceNow will invest $2 bn to expand its data center operations in Japan to meet growing demand for its cloud-based services. The firm will continue its hiring blitz, strengthen local relationships, and enhance its enterprise management services.
- **US Dept. of Homeland Security's (DHS) S&T Directorate and Japan's MEXT signed a Joint Statement of Intent** on Nov 8 to further collaborative research, development and technical exchanges. Under the agreement, they will share information on mutual science and technology challenges and explore potential research, developing, testing or evaluation activities. DHS Undersecretary Kusnezov said it would, "leverage our collective expertise and capabilities."
- **US military installations in Japan followed through on a congressional order to destroy its stores of firefighting foam** that contain the toxic PFAS chemical, known to cause cancer. In a statement, US Forces Japan said, "The US Government (USG) has completed the disposal of all legacy AFFF at US installations in Japan. The USG replaced legacy AFFF with the new modern formulation AFFF, which does not contain PFOS and PFOA as a raw material." In recent years, Tokyo has protested to the US military regarding the use of the foam after it leaked from US bases.
- **The USS George Washington returned to Yokosuka Naval Base on Nov 22 after 9 years**. The aircraft carrier had been undergoing a nuclear refuel and overhaul that was drawn out by the COVID-19 pandemic. It replaced the USS Ronald Reagan and now hosts the USN Carrier Air Wing 5 (CVW-5) featuring the 5th gen fighter F-35C, which complement other US and Japanese units across the country already using variants of the most advanced fighter in the world. CVW-5 also includes updated E-2D Advanced Hawkeye reconnaissance aircraft and CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft. Before docking in its new home port, the carrier took part in the Freedom Edge exercise with Japan and South Korea.

"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