

A new direction for the U.S.-Japan relationship? | Aggies GO

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U.S. and Japanese soldiers prepare for a joint exercise in Japan, March 2022.

Jonah Carlson - President Biden's recent meeting with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan is another sign of the ongoing shift in the military balance of Northeast Asia. [A recent article by Edward Wong](#) reviews the discussion between the two leaders and examines what it indicates for the region's growing security tensions.

To better understand Wong's report, one should have a grasp on [relational power](#). Relational power describes the ability of a state to utilize its material capabilities given its diplomatic, economic, and other types of relationships. China's expanding military capability continues to put pressure on Taiwan. Wong notes nervousness among Japanese officials after Chinese missiles landed nearby Japanese waters. Japanese officials are worried that the balance of power in East Asia is rapidly shifting against their interests. By reemphasizing their military relationship with the United States, their strongest material ally, Kishida's administration aims to demonstrate its relational edge over China. Wong's article covers a variety of cooperative measures the U.S. and Japan are taking to strengthen their relationship. While he focuses on increased military spending in terms of Japanese GDP and the restructuring of U.S. military capabilities in Okinawa, non-military measures are covered as well, including economic promotion and space exploration. By cooperating and developing stronger relations, both Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden aim to bolster Japan's position as a regional superpower to balance

Western coalitions against China's emerging hyperpower status.

For further understanding of Japan's growing security concerns, one should understand [geopolitical codes](#). Japan's geopolitical code regarding its military structure and constitutional pacificism is quickly shifting in an environment with growing perceived threats from both China and North Korea. Increasingly instability in the region also encourages the United States to reevaluate its geopolitical code as well, which includes pushing the limits of the Japanese constitution its own officials helped pen in the aftermath of World War Two.

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