Center for Strategic and International Studies

Japan’s National Defense Strategy

Speaker:  
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Minister of Defense of Japan

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JOHN J. HAMRE: Welcome. We’re glad to have you all here. And I’m very pleased to welcome a very good friend, Takeshi Iwaya. I’ve known him for many years. He is a wonderful, serious, you know, member of the Diet, been in the Diet for many years. And I’ve had a chance to interact with him, and I know that he is a fine leader. This is the first time he’s been the defense minister, and so we’re very fortunate that someone with his dedication, his commitment is willing to be leading at this point in time.

I will just say in general I’m so grateful for the Abe administration that is willing to lead at a time when America is kind of in retreat in Asia. Prime Minister Abe and Japan have leaned forward to basically defend and support these Western liberal international values that they’ve embraced in their heart, so I’m very grateful for that. And Iwaya-san is on the front line every day. He’s on the front line every day for Japan, he’s on the front line every day for us, and it’s very important for that reason that he’s here. And we look forward to hearing his remarks.

What we’re going to do is, we’ll first turn to the defense minister. He’ll offer his speech. And then Mike Green is going to come up and conduct a little bit of an interview and lead question-and-answer from everyone here. And a special thanks to Rich Armitage for joining us today. I know he’s a trustee here at CSIS and a very dear friend.

So could I ask you, with your warm applause, please welcome the minister of defense from Japan, Takeshi Iwaya-san. (Applause.)

MINISTER TAKESHI IWAYA: Good morning, everybody. Thank you very much, Dr. Hamre, Dr. Green, Mr. Armitage, for your kind introduction. And thank you all for gathering here today.

It is indeed my pleasure to have this opportunity to speak at CSIS today. The entrance of CSIS reminded me of my last visit here in May 2015. I then took part in a panel discussion on the U.S.-Japan security cooperation here, which was held right after the revision of the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. This was also at the time during intensive discussions regarding the restoration for peace and security in Japan. And when Prime Minister Abe addressed a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, calling the Japan-U.S. alliance an alliance of hope, it has been three years and eight months since then. Our Japan-U.S. alliance has become stronger than ever. The new guidelines on the restoration for peace and security served to further deepen the defense cooperation between our two nations and to bolster the alliance’s ability to deter and counter threats.

For example, in November 2017, when we were experiencing rising regional tensions with North Korea, Japan’s helicopter destroyer Ise participated in a joint exercise in the Sea of Japan with three U.S. aircraft carriers, Ronald Reagan, Theodore Roosevelt, and Nimitz. We successfully demonstrated our strong will and capability through this activity, which was conducted for the first time in history.

But we must not forget that such events would not have been possible without the close cooperation between our Japan’s Self-Defense Force, JSDF, and the U.S. forces. I think you can see from this example how the Japan-U.S. alliance is playing a significant role for the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and the international community.
The basics for making a strong alliance are each country’s own efforts to build up national defense and aligned directions both countries aim for. The Trump administration swiftly formulated and announced the National Security Strategy, NSS, and the National Defense Strategy, NDS, after his inauguration. These documents stipulate to strengthen the capability of U.S. forces and to emphasize the importance of alliances. This reassured Japan as one of the U.S. allies.

Japan also formulated new policy documents on December 18th last year. They are the National Defense Program Guidelines, or NDPG, and the Mid-Term Defense Program, or MTDP, which sets our target level of the defense spending on procurement over the next five years. We’ll significantly upgrade our defense capability, and we’ll work to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance based on the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. The international security environment our alliance is currently facing is not easy, as you know. But I am confident that the direction of Japan and the United States are more aligned than ever.

Having this new NDPG and MTDP in mind today, I would like to talk about how Japan intends to improve our defense posture and how we are aiming to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance. In December 2013, the Japanese version of the NSC was established. As defense minister, I’m a member of the Council. When formulating the NDPG as the NSC, all relevant ministers including Prime Minister Abe had a series of intensive discussions. I can say that the new NDPG – the product of these discussions – is a strategy document involving Japan's political will and setting the direction of our national security.

The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe and uncertain at a remarkably fast speed. In particular, we have seen changes in the balance of power among countries. Also, rapid expansion in the use of new domains, which are space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum, is poised to fundamentally change the existing paradigm of national security. This is what drove Japan's recent formulation of the new NDPG.

Under this NDPG, Japan aims to drastically improve our defense posture, expand our roles we can perform, and strengthen our defense capabilities at a speed radically different from the past. In the new NDPG, we crystallized the three basic principles for Japan's national defense.

First, Japan will improve its own posture for national defense. As a sovereign nation, we will continue to make efforts to proactively ensure our security on our own accord. In doing so, we will directly contribute to a stronger Japan-U.S. alliance.

Second, Japan will further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance. We will accelerate our effort in accordance with the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation to boost the ability of the alliance to deter and counter threats.

Third, under the vision of free and open Indo-Pacific, we will strategically enhance cooperation with countries sharing universal values and security interest. The Japan-U.S. alliance will be positioned as a cornerstone in promoting such cooperation. In order to improve Japan's defense posture, we have introduced a multi-domain defense force as a concept to further realize our effective defense capability. The key to integrating this multi-domain defense force lies in the development of our cross-domain operations.

This is critical to the deterrence and response to quantitatively superior threats. We believe that this concept will enable us to overcome any deficiency in individual domains. To this end, Japan will
emphasize efforts to acquire and strengthen our capabilities in the new domains of space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum. Also, as for capabilities in the traditional domains, we will strive to establish a maritime and air superiority as well as strengthen our capabilities of withstand of firepower and comprehensive air and missile defense. Ultimately, our aim is to organically integrate capabilities in all domains, both in new domains and traditional domains, to generate synergy and amplify the overall strengths.

Another important aspect of the NDPG is to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance. By further strengthening the stronger-than-ever alliance and combining the power of both countries, we will be able to deter any threat and counter any situation. Later I will specifically explain direction of cooperation for this purpose.

We will drastically improve our defense posture at a speed fundamentally different from the past and expand the roles we can perform. This is not a rhetorical statement. In order to be consistent with the strong determination expressed in the NDPG, we will promote concrete actions necessary for strengthening our defense capabilities. This enables us to respond to the current security environment surrounding our country. We will carry out these actions in accordance with the budget described in the new MTDP, which is a target lever of our defense capability over the next five years.

In the new MTDP, you can find the numbers related to the amount of money. What I would like to – what I would like you to pay attention the most is the target lever of defense buildup over the next five years. That is $245.3 billion U.S. This is a large 11 percent increase, or a $25 billion U.S. increase, compared to the previous MTDP. This is a record high amount. According to this, we believe that we will be able to take necessary measures to realize the capability enhancement expressed in the NDPG. This shows our strong determination towards our national defense.

Now, I would like to explain our concrete initiatives to develop our multi-domain defense force. First and foremost, we must gain and improve our capabilities in new domains. For space, we will monitor situations over space all the time and develop capabilities to disrupt opponents' command and control of information communications. By Japanese fiscal year 2022, we will establish a space domain mission unit in order to ensure superiority in the use of space at all stages, from peacetime to contingencies.

Regarding cyberspace, by fiscal year 2023 we will establish a cyber defense unit under the direct command of the defense minister. This will domestically enhance cyber defense capabilities including those to disrupt opponents’ use of cyberspace in its armed attack against Japan. Also, our plan includes a major increase personnel engaging in cyberspace. Furthermore, in regards to the strengthening of our capabilities in the traditional domains, we will prioritize its implementation to effectively deal with armed attacks from aircraft, ships and missiles against Japan.

In detail, in order to establish and maintain maritime and air superiority in the surrounding area of Japan, including the airspace and waters of the Pacific, we will enhance the capabilities of our ships and aircraft. For example, we will acquire an additional 105 F-35s in addition to 42 that we have already plans to acquire. This will make a total of 147. Once we complete the integration of all of them, Japan will possess the largest number of F-35s among all U.S. allies. Included in the procurement of the 105 additional aircraft, 42 may be capable of STOVL. We will also refurbish the Izumo-class destroyers for possible operations of these STOVL aircraft.
Once we become able to operate the STOVLs onboard Izumo-class destroyers, Japan will have more airbases available for temporary takeoff and landing, further enhancing our operational flexibility. This will significantly improve our air defense posture in the Pacific where we currently only maintain a single airbase available for jet fighters on Iwo To, or the island of Iwo Jima.

Moreover, in order to be able to counter from all the range of threats, we will enhance standoff defense capabilities against the ships or landing forces trying to invade Japan. For this purpose, we will steadily proceed with the procurement of standoff missiles, such as JASSM and LRASM. Otherwise, the research and the development of other equipment, such as hypervelocity grinding projectiles for the defense of remote islands.

Further, in order to deal with increasingly diverse and complex air and missile threats posed not only by ballistic missiles, but also cruise missiles, aircraft and others, we will enhance our comprehensive air and missile defense capability. As part of this effort, Japan will continue working on swift introduction and deployment of the Aegis Ashore, the E-2D, and the latest Aegis-equipped destroyer.

Through these developments, we aim to construct a defense posture sufficient to counter any types of threat in order to defend Japanese territory at all times. We will try to do this under unified command and control, combining all forces of the – of the JSDF for air and missile defense.

Let me now touch upon Japan’s future fighter. Our F-2 fighters are expected to retire from the range in 2030s. Therefore, Japan decided to promote necessary resurgent launch at an early timing. Japan led the development project with a possibility of international collaboration inside.

As for its development, Japan has five priorities: One, capability for future air superiority. Two, potential to expand capability by incorporating next-generation technology. Three, freedom of modification and upgrading. Four, participation of domestic industry. And five, affordable cost, needless to say. We will proceed with this program with these priorities in mind. Interoperability with the United States will also be a point of interest in moving forward with this project.

Now, I would like to speak about the other key of the NDPG, the future of Japan-U.S. cooperation for further strengthening the alliance. First of all, I am certain that cooperation in new domains is essential for improving the overall Japan-U.S. joint response capabilities, including cross-domain operations. Among these new domains, Japan has already started to deepen cooperation with the United States in the space domain. Japan’s first participation in the Schriever wargame last October was a milestone that showed our unity of effort with the U.S. Air Force Space Command.

I am also aware that last December, President Trump ordered the creation of the U.S. Space Command as the 11th unified combatant command. Space is critical to our improved capabilities for the operations and which are hoped to secure a close relationship between the U.S. Space Command and other prospective space domain mission units.

In regards to the cyberspace domain, we would – we would also like to enhance our capabilities by receiving continuous support from the United States and further deepen cooperation with the U.S. Cyber Command. Strengthen Japan-U.S. bilateral operational cooperation could be another topic. Japan and the United States have already made close cooperation in BMD by information sharing and the deployment of U.S. assets, such as Aegis – such as Aegis destroyers and the TPY-2 radars to Japan.
Meanwhile, Japan plans to introduce U.S.-made Aegis Ashore, expecting a tremendous increase in our BMD capability.

We cannot overlook the fact that North Korea’s nuclear missile capability continues to be a serious and imminent threat to our security. This fact makes it even more important for Japan-U.S. cooperation to be rock solid.

Also, the JSDF has started to conduct new activities enabled by the implementation of the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation and the reason for peace and security. For example, the U.S. forces asset protection mission by the JSDF enables both countries to help each other out. This has made our bond stronger. We are also providing logistics support, such as refueling activities to the U.S. Navy, engaging in ISR and other operations. These support functions of the JSDF serve to enhance the efficacy and flexibility of U.S. forces operations. And we will continue to proactively deepen such cooperation between our two countries in the operational field.

The shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific is also pivotal to our alliance. The new NDPG highlights the importance of creating a desirable security environment. With the Japan-U.S. alliance as a cornerstone, Japan will strategically promote international security cooperation in close coordination with countries sharing universal values and security interests, such as Australia, India, and Southeast Asian countries. As an example of such cooperation, Japan has conducted trilateral exercise Malabar with the United States and India for two consecutive years since 2017. We also started to dispatch our Izumo-class destroyer on long-term deployment the same year.

In October 2018, our destroyer Kaga completed a two-month deployment to the South China Sea and Indian Ocean. During this deployment, Kaga conducted Japan-U.S. joint exercise. It also conducted capacity-building assistance activities in Sri Lanka. Besides, Japan-United States confirmed and announced examples of U.S.-Japan cooperation to maintain and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific during the Summit Meeting last September. It includes potential areas of cooperation for our two nations, such as providing capacity-building assistance in the field of maritime security to the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. In a mutually complementary manner, in order to establish the desired security environment for the U.S.-Japan alliance, it is essential to strengthen the presence of Japan and the United States in the Indo-Pacific Region, and we will continue our efforts to that end.

Moreover, I would like to talk about cooperation in defense equipment and technologies. Regarding the Japan-U.S. joint research and development, we are seeking for new project after SM-3 Block IIA. We will try to improve our technologies in new domains and incorporate cutting-edge, potentially game-changing technologies such as artificial intelligence through exchanges with U.S. institutions. We will proactively utilize civilian technology as well.

It is also crucial to promote the efficient acquisition of U.S. defense equipment. Accordingly, streamlining of the foreign military sales, or FMS process, is becoming more and more important. Since reducing the cost and ensuring the timely delivery of equipment, major challenges for us, high performance U.S. equipment such as AEGIS system and F-35 are procured through FMS and the expense is growing substantially over recent years. In the draft budget for the next fiscal year, FMS-related expenses reached approximately 6.4 billion U.S. dollars, which is the largest amount ever, and about 70 percent increase compared to the previous year. Included in this amount is a budget for bulk procurement of nine E-2Ds, with a huge cost reduction compared to single-year procurement. This is our first attempt at the bulk FMS procurement over the course of five years. We are expecting a large
reduction in cost and would like to work closely with the United States to complete this successful procurement.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize measures taken to ensure the smooth and effective stationing of U.S. forces in Japan, USFJ. USFJ is playing an essential role in maintaining the U.S.-Japan alliance. To this end, we will steadily proceed with project for the realignment of USFJ, and we’ll mitigate the impact on local residents, local communities, while sustaining the returns offered by the U.S. forces. Notably, on the construction of Futenma replacement facility, we started the landfill work in Henoko on December 14th last year. Motivated by the strong will to resolve this issue that has spanned for 22 years, we will steadily proceed with the construction to enable the early return of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

In closing, I’d like to tell you a phrase I like. It goes: “Sincerity is a way to heaven.” This is one of the tenet of the Chinese philosopher Mencius, and I keep this as my motto. This phrase teaches us that if you act with sincerity, heaven will know in time. Or anyone will be moved by means of sincere devotion.

Today this teaching has attracted many Japanese people, including the leading spirits of the Meiji Restoration, and encouraged them to take action. The words “sincerity is a way to heaven” embodies the samurai spirit. With the revision of NDPG and formulation of new MTDP, Japan has clarified its way ahead. The current direction of both Japan and the United States to further strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance is aligned, so now is a golden opportunity for both of us. I will lead the Ministry of Defense, MOD and JSDF working together, and making every possible effort following the spirit of “sincerity is a way to heaven” so as to strengthen our own defense capabilities and make our alliance even stronger.

I truly believe our efforts will contribute to supporting the peace and stability not only in Japan but also in the United States, our ally and most important friend, and ultimately in the Pacific and across the entire world. Again, I appreciate support and cooperation from CSIS, Dr. Hamre and Dr. Green. Thank you very much for your attention. Thank you. (Applause.)

MICHAEL GREEN: Minister Iwaya, thank you very much for that strategic and precise and, most importantly – would you mind grabbing his – yeah.

MR. IWAYA: Please allow me to speak in Japanese from now because I have to understand the questions correctly and I have to answer correctly. (Laughter.)

MR. GREEN: So, Minister, thank you for a strategic and very precise and very sincere presentation on the Mid-Term Defense Plan, the National Defense Program Guidelines. The new NDPG and the MDTP, Mid-Term Defense Plan, represent some important firsts for Japan. It’s the first – channel 10 is Bulgarian, I think.

MR. IWAYA: OK. OK. Sorry. Sorry.

MR. GREEN: So it’s the first defense plan in Japan to follow a national security strategy that the Abe government issued early on and so it flows from national strategy. Usually, these defense plans initiate the defense and strategy debate, but this one follows from national strategy. That’s very
important. It’s the first defense plan since the Japanese government recognized its right to exercise collective self-defense, which is important. It’s the first defense plan to incorporate multidomain capabilities. It’s the first defense plan with multiyear procurement. It’s also the first defense plan, at least in some time, to have such a clear provision for standoff strike capability, LRASM, JASSM, F-35B. And I thought I would ask you about that first

In general, the plan has been very well received in the United States and much of Asia, but it does raise some questions. You know, when Rich Armitage was at the Pentagon, the U.S. and Japan agreed we would have a division of roles and missions. The U.S. would be the spear, Japan would be the shield. But LRASMs, JASSMs, you know, F-35B, these look like some more offensive strike capabilities. So can you explain to our audience whether this is a profound change in the division of roles and missions, profound in direction? Or is this basically a capability to maintain the current and previous concept of (in Japanese), exclusively defensive defense? How should we think about the standoff strike politically, legally and strategically?

(Note: Mr. Iwaya’s remarks are made through an interpreter.)

MR. IWAYA: Right. So when it comes to the roles that the U.S. and Japan divide up, we are not looking at changing these fundamentally. But if you do look at the JASSM or the LRASM that have relatively long ranges as missiles, by introducing those in terms of actually capability, we could – we will gain the capability of striking enemies that are further away.

But basically, they are for the defense of our remote islands. And also, when there are threats that come from without – from outside of our range, we have to protect the lives of the self-defense forces and to be able to respond to attacks that come from without – from outside the zone as well. But the roles that are divided between the United States and Japan are not – we do not see as being fundamentally changed. But as Dr. Green just said, we have a policy of being exclusively defensive, but we believe that the new equipment all is in line with this policy.

MR. GREEN: You gave us the thinking about the F-2 and procurement and you mentioned that FMS is expensive, takes a lot of time and it is an increasing part of Japan’s procurement budget, FMS. Are you worried that Japan is losing its defense industrial base, that too much FMS from the U.S. is weakening Japan’s own defense and aerospace industry base? Or are we in a new era where Japan can’t think about its own autonomous defense industrial base, it has to think about a broader sharing of technology exports, development with other likeminded countries? How do you think about the defense industrial base with the new Mid-Term Defense Plan?

MR. IWAYA: As to the successor of the F-2, from five perspectives we’ll be studying this. When we do that, a very important element will be domestic industry participation. But in this day and age for one country just to make a fighter jet by itself, it’s just really not the way things are going. Even the F-35 was a multinational effort. So we would like to have our industry lead, but joint development and research with other countries will be considered. And when I say other countries, I mean considering cooperation with the United States, but it would have to be led by – we would like to do development that’s led by the Japanese industry.

MR. GREEN: Exports, defense articles from Japan and Japanese industry participation in international projects, there was a big change in the three arms export principles. One of the first big projects for Japan was the Australian submarine program. It was too big. It was like, some told me, going to Tsukiji for the first time to try sashimi. (Laughter.) But instead of a finely stacked sashimi,
they hand you the whole tuna fish. So it was a bit big to try. But what do you think going forward, do you think there’s a growth potential for Japan’s – for Japan’s defense exports and collaboration? Or is there some limit that the Japanese industry and government is hinting to the export markets?

MR. IWAYA: So as Dr. Green just pointed out, our three principles on the export of arms, we did revise, and we created them into the three principles for the transfer of defense equipment. And so international joint development has now become possible. And if it contributes to Japan’s national security, then transfer of such equipment overseas has become possible. But will this mean doing transfers of fighter jets overseas right off the bat? I’m not sure.

But as you said, that submarine, we really would have liked for Australia to choose Japan, but it looks like France beat us out. But a submarine is – submarines are an important topic, but once a Japan-led fighter is created, I think that there will be difficult hurdles. But based on the principles that we have created, if it does contribute to Japan’s national security, then transfers of such equipment to other countries are possible.

MR. GREEN: -- audience, but if I could ask one more question. You gave a very thorough explanation of how Japan is increasing cooperation with Australia and India and others to protect a free and open Indo-Pacific. With respect to the North Korean threat, though, other than the U.S., by far the most important defense partner for Japan will be the Republic of Korea. Political relations between Seoul and Tokyo now are pretty bad. But the defense ministry in Korea and I think the defense minister in Japan recognize how important cooperation will be trilaterally among U.S., Japan, and Korea to deal with the North Korean threat.

So I want to ask your views of cooperation with the Republic of Korea, but also could you tell us your views about the importance of U.S. Forces Korea – of U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula? Because President Trump in June last year said he’d like U.S. forces someday to leave the Korean Peninsula, and I imagine that would have some significance for Japan’s security strategy and assumptions. So what is your thinking about defense cooperation with the Republic of Korea and what is the role of U.S. Forces Korea for Japan’s own security strategy?

MIN. IWAYA: As Dr. Green just said, for Japan’s national security, for Northeast Asia, for the security of the Asia Pacific as a whole, Japan-ROK. relations are very important. At the time Secretary Mattis was in office, there was a U.S.-ROK.-Japan defense ministerial meeting and the North Korean issue was on the agenda, and that meeting confirmed the importance of close trilateral cooperation.

But on the other hand, as Dr. Green also pointed out, between Japan and the ROK. there are many difficult issues. We can’t deny this. It was very unfortunate, but even between defense authorities recently a P-1 patrol craft was – it was captured by a radar. An ROK. radar targeted it, which is very unfortunate. But especially relations between defense authorities with U.S. mediation or, rather, with the U.S. participation we have to continue our defense ties, including trilaterally.

As for U.S. Forces Korea, their presence there is extremely important also for the national security of Japan. The deterrence that the U.S. Forces Korea have and the deterrence of the U.S., Japan, and the ROK. together we would not like to see them go down at all.

So there was a U.S.-North Korea summit and we understand there may be another. But we would – in order to see that diplomatic effort bear fruit, military pressure is also necessary, we believe. And so this – exercises in the ROK. we understand have been scaled down and we do understand that
that’s to try to support the diplomatic effort. But the presence and the deterrence of U.S. Forces Korea we would like to see solidly maintained.

MR. GREEN: Very important point. I have a feeling your government is going to have to keep making that point, going forward.

Let me open it up for questions. Quickly introduce yourself. Short question. Ben Self. Wait for the mic, Ben, if you could. Thanks.

Q: Thank you. Ben Self from the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation.

As Ambassador Mansfield always said, the U.S.-Japan relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none. We continue to believe that, and we continue to support the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance. So thank you for your hard work and for the government of Japan’s hard work.

I’m sorry to have to ask a difficult question, but the cyber defense unit is a single squadron in your next plan. The scale of that is dwarfed by the PLA – the Chinese PLA cyber operations units. So I’m worried that even, as you say, a radical improvement in Japan’s capacity – and it is a good step forward – is far insufficient to the growing cyberthreat in that domain and the linkage of cross-domain operations actually increases the vulnerability of Japan to China’s larger-scale cyber capability – cyberwarfare capability.

So what can Japan do, aside from asking the U.S. Cyber Command for more help, to strengthen its cyberspace operations? Thank you.

MIN. IWAYA: Cyber capability is – must be reinforced quickly, we believe. It will end up having about 2,000 members. That’s our goal. But as you point out, and it’s not just China but starting with China, the cyber capabilities of various countries are increasing every year. So we must strengthen our cyber forces with considerable speed for that purpose.

We look forward to cooperation and support from the United States. Certainly, it’s important to be able to get personnel and to train them, and that effort will certainly be done within the self-defense forces. But we also want to consider making use of civilian talent.

Q: Thank you. Trina Ching (ph) with United Day News Taiwan.

First question – will you talk about your work with other likeminded countries to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific? Does it include Taiwan? And second question is if China invaded Taiwan, would Japan help to defend Taiwan? Thank you.

MR. GREEN: (Inaudible.) Just kidding. (Laughter.)

MIN. IWAYA: That’s a very tough question, even as the questioner said. But in the Indo-Pacific, certainly Taiwan exists and so freedom of navigation in this area, and not just on the seas but also in the air, securing that freedom really is something that will help all of the countries and all of the peoples of the Indo-Pacific region, we believe. So soon two-thirds of the global population will be concentrated in the Asia Pacific. Even the wealth of the world will be concentrating with considerable
speed in this area. So there are – it’s important to assure the security of these important sea lanes, not just for Taiwan but we believe it will be helpful for all of them – all the countries of that area.

As for cross-strait relations, we would like to see peaceful resolution in the future – peaceful discussions, peaceful actions. Certainly, with the United States, Japan would support any such peaceful actions.


Q: Nothing’s changed since. Jake Schlesinger with the Wall Street Journal.

Thank you for the interesting presentation. I think you made very clear in your presentation that a core part of Japan’s strategy, going forward, is deepening its ties and cooperation with the United States. But as both Dr. Hamre and Dr. Green alluded to, it’s not clear that that is necessarily the scenario going forward. We may have a situation where the U.S. pulls back considerably from its presence in the Asia-Pacific region. So I’m just curious if you could talk a little bit about Japan’s ability and willingness to expand its own role to fill what could be a growing void from the U.S. pulling back, and to what extent when you plan for contingencies is one of them a significantly reduced U.S. role in the region?

MIN. IWAYA: So you’re pointing out that the strategy is not terribly clear. But the national defense guidelines, we believe, are a paper that is quite solidly strategic. So you said there were three pillars. One is the defense of our own country. And we want to do this even more strongly than before. And we want to move steadily forward doing this. And the second pillar, of course, the alliance with the United States is very important for our security. And we want to strengthen it too. As I mentioned, there are the new guidelines. There’s our peace and security legislation based on those, that make the exercise of collective self-defense possible.

We think that we are already engaging in bilateral operations that are quite different than what we’ve had before, and that this will continue the development. So we want to see an even stronger alliance. I also mentioned that reorganization of U.S. Forces Japan is taking quite a long time. But we want this to move along as quickly as it can as well. So we’re making various efforts to maintain and enhance the deterrence of our bilateral alliance. And we believe that that is possible.

MR. GREEN: So the – our president has introduced, as Jake suggested, some real questions about alliances. But I think in almost every other metric, support for the U.S.-Japan alliance in the U.S. has strengthened – whether it’s public opinion polls, which show the highest levels of support for the alliance in America in decades, congressional legislation like the Asia Reassurance and Investment Act that passed last week, think tanks and public intellectuals. And for one very simple reason, really. The challenges are growing. We don’t have any better option than to strengthen our alliance with Japan. Japan doesn’t really have a better option.

And we’re very grateful, Minister Iwaya, that you’ve become defense minister and that you’ve spoken to us today. And you can count on support from a lot of people in this room – from think tanks, from government, from embassies. And you’ll need it, because this is hard work. (Laughter.)

Please join me in thanking Minister Iwaya for sharing his time with us today. (Applause.)