

January 15, 2026
Ministry of Defense

Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting (Summary)

On January 15, Defense Minister Koizumi and Secretary of War Hegseth held discussions from 14:00 (local time) for approximately 50 minutes at the U.S. Department of War. The summary is as follows.

1 Overview

The Ministers confirmed that Japan and the United States have been working closely together under the unwavering Alliance, as demonstrated in four Defense Ministerial engagements over the past three months. In light of the increasingly severe security situation in the Indo-Pacific region, the Ministers also exchanged candid views on concrete measures to further enhance Japan-U.S. defense cooperation.

The Ministers joined each other to exercise together in physical training, highlighting that the United States and Japan stand shoulder to shoulder and make the utmost effort to fulfil their respective responsibilities, which further deepens the bilateral tie and strengthens the Alliance.

2 Initiatives to Reinforce Respective Defense Capabilities

Minister Koizumi explained the progress Japan has made so far towards the further reinforcement of Japan's own defense capabilities, including Government of Japan's draft budget request for the next fiscal year, highlighting that

- Japan does not rule out any option particularly in consideration of the revision of the three strategic documents
- Japan would like to reference U.S. military pay system for improving the Self-Defense Force (SDF) personnel treatment.

Secretary Hegseth welcomed Japan's efforts to reinforce its defense capabilities across all domains and capabilities, and reinforced U.S. support for such efforts.

Following the discussions in the meeting, Minister Koizumi received a briefing on

U.S. Forces' AI utilization at the Department of War.

3 Further Strengthening the Alliance Capabilities to Deter and Respond

The Ministers concurred to promote various initiatives to further strengthen the Alliance capabilities to deter and respond, with a sense of urgency and speed, in order to respond to challenges posed by the changing security environment. The key points of the discussion are as follows:

- (1) With regard to expansion of bilateral joint presence in the southwestern region of Japan, based on the progress in measures to reinforce defense capabilities of the SDF, the Ministers confirmed to make further efforts including enhancement of more advanced and realistic bilateral training across Japan, and in the southwestern region in particular, as one of the highest priorities of the Alliance.
- (2) With regard to defense equipment and technology cooperation, the Ministers concurred to work more closely together. In particular, Minister Koizumi emphasized the importance of moving forward with holding the next iteration of Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition and Sustainment (DICAS) Plenary as early as possible. Ministers agreed to
 - a. accelerate mutually beneficial efforts to enhance the defense industrial base of Japan and the U.S. under the DICAS framework, which are:
 - progress in co-production of air-to-air missiles (AMRAAM) and surface-to-air interceptor missiles (PAC-3MSE)
 - co-sustainment of vessels and aircrafts of the U.S. Forces
 - initiatives on supply chain resiliency initiatives, including cooperation related to but not limited to critical minerals
 - b. advance discussion to substantially increase the production of interceptor missile for Ballistic Missile Defense (SM-3 Block IIA).
- (3) The Ministers discussed the necessity of enhancing cooperation in Integrated Air Missile Defense capabilities and space domain.

4 Realignment of U.S. Forces etc.

In order to maintain deterrence and mitigate the impact on local communities,

Ministers reiterated the vital importance of the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan and other existing bilateral arrangements, such as the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko as the only solution that avoids the continued use of MCAS Futenma. The Ministers also concurred to advance cooperation to prevent recurrence of incidents and accidents involving U.S. forces in Japan.