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# JAPAN

## *Digest*

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- PM Kishida visits Southeast Asia, US
- MOFA Kamikawa visits Israel, US, ROK
- MOD Kihara attends US-Japan-ROK trilateral



## PM Kishida visits Southeast Asia, US

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida marked the beginning of a hectic month of diplomacy on 3 November 2023 when he [departed](#) on a three-day tour of the Philippines and Malaysia to boost ties with the two South-East Asian countries. Arriving in Manila on 3 November, Kishida [met](#) his counterpart, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, and agreed to bolster their defence cooperation in the region amid Chinese aggression in the South China Sea region. The two sides also agreed to negotiate a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), and discussed the details of Japan's provision of material and technical assistance in the form of coastal radars under its new Official Security Assistance (OSA) program. Kishida addressed the Philippine Houses of Parliament on 4 November, becoming the first Japanese leader to do so. He used the platform to call for "heart-to-heart ties for a new generation".

On 5 November, Kishida [arrived](#) in Kuala Lumpur for the second leg of his journey. In a meeting with his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim, the two sides agreed to promote bilateral defence and maritime security cooperation. The two sides also discussed the implementation of the OSA program (of which Malaysia is also a recipient), and agreed on promoting joint training and capability-building between the Japanese Self-Defence Forces and the Malaysian armed forces in order to better secure the critical sea lanes passing through Malaysia's territorial waters. The Japanese leader also stressed on the need to ensure a stable supply of energy sources such as liquefied natural gas, which his Malaysian counterpart assured would be provided in a stable and predictable manner.

Kishida carried on his diplomatic engagement on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Summit in San Francisco between 16 and 19 November. Aside from his multilateral engagements, Kishida also [met](#) his South Korean counterpart President Yoon Suk-yeol for a 35-minute meeting on 16 November (local time), where the two sides [discussed](#) the continued improvement of their relationship, and the continuation of their cooperation on the floor of the United Nations Security Council, where both Japan and the Republic of Korea will serve as non-permanent members from 2024.

However, the highlight of the event was Kishida's hour-long [interaction](#) with Chinese President Xi Jinping, where both sides reaffirmed their desire for a mutually beneficial relationship that benefits all parties, and agreed to hold a High-Level Business Dialogue in association with the newly-launched High-Level Export Control Dialogue between the countries. The prime minister also conveyed his concerns regarding China's maritime aggression in the East China Sea as well as its detention of 17 Japanese nationals on dubious charges of espionage to his counterpart, though the latter's responses were not revealed. However, the two sides [remained](#) far apart on the issue of the discharge of wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant, with Xi referring to Japan's actions as "a threat to all mankind".

## MOFA Kamikawa visits Israel, US, ROK

Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa too completed a busy schedule of diplomatic engagements in November. From 3-5 November, she [visited](#) Israel,

Jordan and the Palestinian Territories, where she [interacted](#) with her counterparts. Kamikawa also visited the Amman headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). In Tel Aviv, she interacted with her Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen, where she called on all parties to respect international law and for Hamas to release Israeli hostages immediately. At Amman, Kamikawa urged Israel to announce a humanitarian ceasefire in its war on Hamas so that aid may be delivered to the Gazan population. She also promised a total of 75 million US dollars in aid to Gaza through the UNRWA.

During the APEC Summit in San Francisco, Kamikawa [attended](#) the Japan-US Economic 2+2 round with her METI counterpart Yasutoshi Nishimura on 14 November in addition to their American counterparts. The two sides [assessed](#) the contribution of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework positively, and highlighted the importance of working together on critical technology development and supply chain resilience. Later on the same day, Kamikawa, along with her American and South Korean counterparts, [held](#) a Foreign Ministers' Meeting where the three sides [agreed](#) to work together more closely on deterring North Korea's missile testing. They also agreed to take a closer look at the North Koreans' supply of lethal ammunition and supplies to Russia for use in Ukraine, and Kamikawa issued a call for "strategic trilateral cooperation" to be strengthened. The three sides also discussed cooperation on improving supply chains for semiconductors and other critical technologies.

On 26 November, Kamikawa [attended](#) the tenth edition of the trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting between Japan, China and South Korea in Busan. The three sides [discussed](#) the state of trilateral relations, and agreed to advance efforts in people-to-people exchange, science and technology, the environment, public health, economic cooperation and peace and security. The three powers remained far apart on geopolitical issues, however, with Japan's views on Gaza, Ukraine and North Korea being shared by Kamikawa's South Korean but not her Chinese counterpart. The meeting ended on a promising note, with the foreign policy chiefs agreeing to expedite a trilateral Leaders' Summit as early as possible.

### **MOD Kihara attends US-Japan-ROK trilateral**

Minister of Defence Minoru Kihara [attended](#) via teleconference a trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting on 12 November, during which they [discussed](#) the regional state of affairs. The three sides placed importance on properly implementing the breakthroughs made at the Camp David Leaders' Summit held in August. The three sides also affirmed that the common missile early-warning system proposed during the Camp David Summit was close to completion, with its launch being confirmed to occur as early as the end of 2023. They pledged to continue the "smooth progress" of their arrangements, and agreed on joint drills to enhance readiness capabilities.