



Japan Bolstering Defenses Against North Korea Threat, PM Abe Says

Speaking to Japan's National Diet (parliament) on November 17, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (shown on left) said his government plans to strengthen Japan's defense mechanisms in the face of the growing threat from North Korea.

"We will strengthen Japanese defense power, including missile defense capabilities, in order to protect the people's lives and peace," Abe told the legislators.



"It's not an exaggeration to say our security environment is at its severest point ever since the end of the war," Abe told both chambers of the Diet. He cited North Korea's aggressive pursuit of a nuclear arsenal and the rapid pace with which it has test-fired ballistic missiles throughout this year, including two that flew over southern Hokkaido in August and September.

The *Japan Times* reported that the prime minister renewed his promise to stand firm against the communist Pyongyang regime. He also vowed to hold a trilateral summit with China and South Korea "swiftly" to strengthen a united front against Pyongyang and also promised to "take concrete actions" under the Japan-U.S. alliance to "strengthen our defense capabilities."

Britain's *Daily Express* reported that Abe is "confident" of amending Japan's pacifist constitution, which prevents the country from having a full-fledged military.

In a report about Abe's November 17 statements, ABC News noted that Japan's defense spending has increased slowly but steadily since Abe took office in 2012 and that the Japanese government has said it plans to buy more American missile defense systems.

ABC News also reported that during his visit last week in Tokyo, President Trump urged Abe to buy more American weapons that would allow Japan to shoot down North Korean missiles.

While some observers have charged that Trump was more interested in the business side of the weapons sales than on Japan's defense, U.S. Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty emphasized that the president's primary focus is on security, not trade. The ambassador said the United States is trying to make more advanced weapons technology available to Japan more efficiently and also make U.S. defense in the region more effective.

"Our overarching goal is to increase Japan's capability and interoperability. Our overarching goal is on security and defense," Hagerty said. "And [Japan's] goal is to make certain that more advanced technology is available to Japan."

In an [article last March](#), we cited a March 7 report from CNN stating that there are currently about 54,000 U.S. troops stationed in at least seven bases scattered across Japan, from Misawa Air Base in the far north to Okinawa in the far south, which cost the U.S. government about \$5.5 billion in 2016. We observed:



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The reason we have those troops stationed there is that following World War II, which was more than 70 years ago, the United States forced Japan to adopt a new constitution that keeps it permanently weak militarily. Article 9 of that constitution, particularly, prevents Japan from building a potent offensive military force.

As a result, the United States has maintained a large military force in Japan since the war, ostensibly to defend Japan against an invasion from Communist China.

During an interview on the *Special Report With Bret Baier* on the Fox News Channel earlier this month, Abe told Baier: “I very much hope that we will be able to further solidify the U.S.-Japan alliance. And I hope I will be able to take time to fully discuss with President Trump on various international challenges, including North Korea.”

“North Korea has used those talks just to gain time to further develop the nuclear program as well as missiles,” Abe continued. “So North Korean dialogue just for the purpose of dialogue is meaningless. That is our experience.”

As he continued with the interview, Abe made a statement that reaffirmed the way that the United States is entangled in an alliance with Japan that could draw America into a war to defend Japan: “Under this very strong U.S.-Japan alliance whenever an attack is made on Japan, Japan and the U.S. will firmly work closely together to respond to those threats and we have been confirming this.”

There is nothing wrong or unconstitutional about the United States selling weapons systems to friendly nations such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, or Israel, so these nations can better defend themselves. It is a mutually beneficial exchange in which these nations can assume responsibility for their own defense, instead of depending on the United States to do so. The revenue from these weapons sales also benefits the U.S. economy.

However, there is nothing in the Constitution that authorizes our military to defend any nation other than our own.

As we have written before, today’s crises in Asia are the result of our State Department’s betrayal of the nationalist government in China, which allowed the communists to take control of that country. (U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall boasted that he disarmed 39 anti-communist divisions “with a stroke of the pen.” Read: “[China Betrayed Into Communism](#).”) This doomed Chinese freedom. That betrayal led to communist Chinese troops supporting the communists in North Korea and led to the Korean War. Though we never should have entered that war, once we did, we should have sought victory. Our government’s decision to ignore the advice of General Douglas MacArthur — thereby abandoning victory and leaving the communists in power in North Korea — set up the ongoing crisis in Asia today.

If the United States had maintained a noninterventionist foreign policy since World War II, while selling weapons to pro-Western noncommunist governments, there would be no reason to maintain any U.S. troops overseas. Instead, we still have almost 80,000 troops in harm’s way in Japan and South Korea, and the expense of maintaining those troops is several billion dollars a year. That money could be better spent on repairing America’s decaying infrastructure.

While Trump’s move to sell more weapons to Japan is praiseworthy, he should also let the Japanese know we are bringing our troops home from there, and that Japan will be responsible for its own defense from now on.



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