



By: TA | AP Brief

Japan will tell Trump it will build up its military



Japan's new foreign minister said Wednesday his country plans to show its determination to further build up its defense to rapidly adapt to changing warfare realities and growing tension in the region when U.S. President Donald Trump visits Tokyo next week.

Trump is expected to hold talks next Tuesday with Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who took office Tuesday after being elected as Japan's first female leader.

Takaichi, who had spent much of past few weeks embroiled in internal political wrangling, has to face major diplomatic tests within days of taking office — Trump and two regional summits.

"We are firmly preparing for President Trump's visit," Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said.

Motegi said he hoped Trump's first meeting with Takaichi during his Oct. 27-29 visit would serve as an opportunity for the two leaders to discuss further strengthening of the Japan-U.S. alliance while fostering their personal relationship of trust.

He said Japan also hopes to further cooperate with South Korea, along with other regional partners including Australia and the Philippines, while seeking stable and constructive relations with China.

Japan is currently undergoing a five-year military buildup through 2027 as part of its national security strategy, including doubling its annual defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product.

The strategy that promotes Japan's strike-back capability with long-range missiles marks a major break from Japan's defense-only principle under its postwar pacifist constitution.

Tough demands

The ruling party's alliance with the right-wing Japan Innovation Party that replaces the

dovish centrist Komeito party has raised concern that a revised strategy may involve further offensive roles for Japan under Takaichi, a security hawk.

Motegi said Japan's further strengthening of its military capability is essential in order to adapt to emerging new warfare such as drone swarms in the war against Ukraine, as well as responses to cyberattacks.

While firmly pursuing the ongoing five-year military buildup, the government will also review it, "and we hope to firmly convey our plans to the U.S. side," Motegi said.

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Japan is expected to face tough demands from Trump to further increase its defense spending to NATO levels of 5% of GDP, more purchases of costly American arsenals and additional spending for some 50,000 U.S. troops in Japan under the bilateral security pact.

"Our national defense should be based on our own independent decision," Motegi said. "What's important is not the amount or the GDP ratio but what's in it."

He also said he hopes to meet with his counterpart, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, at the earliest time possible to discuss further strengthening of the deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Motegi returns to the post for the second time after serving in 2019-2021, during Trump's first term, when he earned a reputation as a tough negotiator. He is also tasked with following up on the Japan-U.S. tariffs agreement.

He said he hoped to work toward "sincere and steady implementation of the agreement" to promote and ensure mutual benefits, economic security and growth.