

Japan stepping up war planning following G7, NATO summits

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Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's attendance at the G7 and NATO summits last week provided Tokyo with the opportunity to intensify remilitarization and cooperation with allies in preparation for war with China. Kishida reiterated pledges to drastically increase military spending while denouncing China and North Korea in order to justify future Japanese aggression in the Asia-Pacific.

At both summits, Kishida referenced Ukraine then accused Beijing of attempting to unilaterally alter the status quo in Asia by force. He told the NATO meeting in Madrid on June 29, "Attempts to unilaterally change the status quo with force in the background are ongoing in the East China Sea and South China Sea. I feel a strong sense of crisis that Ukraine may be East Asia tomorrow. The international community must unite in demonstrating that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force will never succeed."

Washington and its allies have claimed that Beijing, without any evidence, is preparing to invade Taiwan within the next few years. Tokyo has taken a leading role in goading Beijing over the island, and thereby challenging the "One China" policy, which states that Taiwan is a part of China. Both Washington and Tokyo formally acknowledge this policy.

The Japanese prime minister stated last week that Tokyo would also develop a new National Security Strategy (NSS) by the end of 2022. Japan's first strategy document was developed in 2013 and served to ratchet up pressure on Beijing at a time when territorial conflicts in the East China Sea were rapidly developing. The new NSS will take this even further and make even more explicit Tokyo's militarist agenda. This includes doubling military spending, which would make Japan the third-largest spender on its armed forces in the world.

Kishida, who was the first Japanese leader to attend a NATO summit, stated that he would work in cooperation with the military alliance in "establishing the international order based on the rule of law and realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific." Washington and its allies regularly denounce China as a threat to the "rules-based order", that is, the post-World War II order in which Washington set the so-called "rules." In its Strategic Concept adopted at the summit, NATO labelled China a "challenge", making clear it intends to target both China and Russia.

More broadly, the territorial disputes that Washington claims are proof of Beijing's disregard for the "rules" are a direct result of US machinations. In a 2013 article for *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, Kimie Hara, currently a history professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada, wrote that the Treaty of San Francisco, which ended the war between the US and Japan, was written by the US at the expense of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea, amid the US war in Korea.

Hara wrote, "Accordingly, the peace treaty became 'generous' and its wording 'simple' [towards Japan]—but thereby ambiguous, leaving the potential for conflicts to erupt among East Asian states. The peace treaty was the result of careful deliberations and several revisions; issues were deliberately left unresolved."

A spokesperson for China's mission to the European Union responded to NATO's new Strategic Concept by saying, "We urge NATO to stop provoking confrontation by drawing ideological lines, abandon the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game approach, and stop spreading disinformation and provocative statements against China."

In addition, Kishida held a trilateral summit on the sidelines of the NATO meeting with US President Joe

Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol on June 29. The meeting, while brief, was used to facilitate further military cooperation. Yoon has pledged to normalize relations with Tokyo after years of tense relations under his predecessors Moon Jae-in and Park Geun-hye.

The drive to deepen military involvement overseas is supported by the entire political establishment in Japan. A July 2 editorial by the supposedly left-leaning *Asahi Shimbun*, for example, criticized Kishida for not doing more during the NATO summit to repair Tokyo's relationship with Seoul, claiming, "The security threat posed by North Korea is an urgent issue that the two countries should be working on together."

In reality, North Korea has long been the target of US imperialism, which has carried out numerous regime-change operations around the world. The editorial complained that Kishida was more concerned about the July 10 upper house election in the National Diet than in preparing for war.

In campaigning for the election, all the establishment parties have embraced some version of support for remilitarization. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the leading proponent of remilitarization, and its coalition partner Komeito are expected to win the election, in large part due to working class dissatisfaction with the opposition parties.

Among all candidates running in the election, 63 percent openly support increasing Japan's military capabilities while 55 percent support constitutional revision, according to recent surveys. Any changes to the constitution undoubtedly would include altering Article 9, known as the pacifist clause, to better allow Tokyo to take part in imperialist wars overseas. This is in addition to other anti-democratic changes that have been proposed in recent years.

In line with the LDP, the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP) has also pledged to boost military capabilities while backing the US/NATO-led war against Russia in Ukraine. However, the CDP is attempting to differentiate itself from the LDP by empty calls for international "dialogue".

The Stalinist Japanese Communist Party (JCP), and CDP ally, similarly calls for "dialogue." These calls however, are based on support for the positions of Japanese imperialism. The JCP's purpose in running in

elections is not to create any sort of anti-war or working-class movement, but to drive workers and youth back behind the capitalist CDP, keeping them within the framework of capitalist politics.

All of these parties deliberately obscure the fact that US and Japanese imperialism are turning to war in an attempt to offset growing economic and social crises at home. In a drive to eliminate economic competitors and seize resources, Washington is now waging war against Russia in the hopes of carving up the world's largest country into semi-colonies, with the intention of doing the same in China.



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