

Trump meets Japan's new far-right prime minister

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US President Trump held a summit in Tokyo with new far-right Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Tuesday as part of his tour of Asia this week. Their meeting was aimed at strengthening the US-Japan alliance as the Trump administration prepares for war against China.

Like other leaders seeking to curry Trump's favor, Takaichi obsequiously praised the fascistic US president and would-be dictator as the two released a joint statement claiming the two countries were entering a "new golden age of the ever-growing US-Japan alliance."

Takaichi praised Trump's supposed "unwavering commitment to world peace and stability" and pledged to nominate Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize in the future, even as Trump carries out murderous military assaults on fishermen off the coast of Venezuela while threatening war with the country.

The Japanese prime minister also highlighted her alignment and close political relations with former right-wing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe was responsible for a significant acceleration of remilitarization during his 2012 to 2020 term in office. Trump has regularly praised his relationship with Abe, who was assassinated in July 2022.

While direct references to China were absent during Trump and Takaichi's meeting, at least publicly, the threats to China were clear. This was highlighted Tuesday afternoon after the summit when the pair appeared together aboard the USS George Washington aircraft carrier at the Yokosuka naval base, home to the US Seventh Fleet.

"Now we are facing an unprecedentedly severe security environment. Peace cannot be preserved by words alone. It can be protected only when there is unwavering determination and action," Takaichi stated.

Under the banner of "peace," she is pledging to further remilitarize. "Japan is ready to contribute even more proactively to the peace and stability of the region."

Trump in return has praised Takaichi, even though tensions have grown between Washington and Tokyo this year. He stated on Monday before the summit, "[Takaichi] was a great ally and friend of Shinzo Abe, who was my friend... He was one of my best... And I know they were very close, and I think philosophically they were close, which is good. It's going to be very good. That really helps Japan and the United States."

Takaichi took over as prime minister on October 21 with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) joining Nippon Ishin no Kai in a new far-right coalition. Takaichi's government is not proceeding from a position of strength, but of weakness. Despite the LDP's new coalition with Ishin, it presides over a minority government, two seats short of a majority in the lower house of parliament. The two parties have agreed to drastically ramp up Japan's remilitarization, including revising Article 9 of the constitution, which explicitly bars Japan from fielding a military or waging war.

Under her predecessor Ishiba, Washington and Tokyo orchestrated a trade deal to reduce tariffs on Japanese goods to 15 percent while Japan would invest \$550 billion into the US, with the latter taking 90 percent of the profits. The deal has angered layers of the Japanese ruling class. Takaichi has hinted at attempting to revise the deal, though she has avoided stating this directly.

In addition, Trump has demanded allies like Japan raise military spending to five percent of GDP. Ishiba's government balked at this, not because it was opposed to militarism, but instead calling the matter a "sovereign decision."

With these tensions, Takaichi's political resemblance

to Abe was no doubt a significant reason behind the support of the Japanese ruling class for her premiership. Under Abe, Tokyo carried out a constitutional “reinterpretation” and the imposition of military legislation allowing Japan to wage war overseas despite the post-war constitutional restrictions, running roughshod of working-class opposition. He also promoted historical revisionism to whitewash the crimes of Japanese imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s.

Takaichi shares a similar outlook on remilitarization. She served in different posts in Abe’s government while also making regular visits as a cabinet minister to the Yasukuni war shrine that also promotes the whitewashing of Japanese war crimes while enshrining 14 class-A war criminals.

With Trump on Tuesday, Takaichi pledged to increase war spending in line with Trump’s demands. Last week, Takaichi announced a plan to raise military spending to two percent of GDP by the end of the current fiscal year in March by pushing through a new supplementary budget.

Trump stated approvingly in return, “I know that you are increasing your military capacity very substantially and we’ve received your orders for a very large amount of military equipment.” He added, “We appreciate that order, and we very much appreciate the trade. We’re going to do tremendous trade together. I think more than ever before.”

Military spending will likely not stop there. Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi stated last week that “It’s not about the amount or the ratio to GDP. What matters is the substance of our defense capabilities.” In other words, Tokyo is dispensing with any restrictions on its military spending, which had long been in place not because the Japanese ruling class opposed war in the past, but because of the widespread opposition to militarism in the working class.

Further in line with these war plans, Trump and Takaichi agreed to a deal on rare earth minerals after Trump reached an agreement with Malaysia regarding such resources over the weekend. The deals come as China announced new export controls and other restrictions on rare earth and other critical materials earlier this month.

The deal, according to a separate statement, stated that the US and Japan plan to “accelerate development of diversified, liquid, and fair markets for critical

minerals and rare earths” and to “[achieve] resilience and security of critical minerals and rare earths supply chains, including mining, separation, and processing.”

Significant amounts of rare metals, including nickel and cobalt, lie under the waters in Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone to the southeast of Tokyo near the island of Minami-Torishima. Researchers estimate that the area around the island contains 16 million tons of rare earths, or the third-largest reserve in the world. Mining is set to begin this January.

These minerals are critical for semiconductors and other components used not only in smartphones and automobiles, but also fighter jets, missiles, and other weaponry. Washington considers access to these resources critical for its war planning against China. Trump’s trade war measures directed at allies and opponents alike were meant to force countries further into the US orbit and gain access to resources like those in Japan.

Enforcing these pro-war measures means further attacks on the working class, who will not only be expected to foot the bill, but will face increased attacks on democratic rights as well as they move openly to oppose Takaichi’s agenda.

While large protests against the government have not yet emerged, demonstrations have taken place. On Monday evening, several hundred protesters gathered in Tokyo to denounce Trump and Takaichi. Hundreds of Japanese and foreign residents in Tokyo also took part in the “No Kings” protests in June and on October 18. This is only the beginning of the mass opposition that is sure to emerge.



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