

Right-wing Japanese government supports criminal US-Israeli war against Iran

Ben McGrath
2 March 2026

Following the start of the US-led war against Iran on Saturday, the Japanese government of far-right Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi expressed its support for this imperialist endeavor that threatens to ignite a broader war across the globe.

While Takaichi has largely limited herself to boilerplate comments about ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals in the Middle East, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Sunday backing Washington's phony justification for starting this war.

The statement in part read, "Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed for the sake of maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime... Talks between the United States and Iran are extremely important for resolving this issue, and Japan has strongly supported them. Iran must stop its development of nuclear weapons and actions that destabilize the region."

However, Iran was not developing nuclear weapons, a fact confirmed by Washington's own intelligence agencies as well as by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency. By parroting Washington's lies about a non-existent nuclear weapon program, Tokyo justifies this illegal attack, insinuating that it was forced upon Washington despite "negotiations."

The claims that Iran has been destabilizing the region also stand reality on its head. It is the US that has set the Middle East aflame, through its invasion of Iraq based on the lie of "weapons of mass destruction," the stoking of the civil war in Syria to install a pro-US government, and the full support for Israel's genocide in Gaza, to name just a few examples—all of which Tokyo backed.

The rationale for launching a supposed pre-emptive war is similar to the logic employed by Nazi Germany

and the Japanese militarists in World War II, and which was rejected during the Nuremberg Trials. Furthermore, the recent talks between Washington and Tehran—conducted as the US amassed an armada on Iran's doorstep—were never aimed at reaching an agreement, but were a cover for Washington's war preparations carried out alongside Israel.

During a press conference on Sunday, Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi was asked for the government's position on the US attacks. He referenced the Foreign Ministry's statement as well as similar remarks by the chief cabinet secretary about not allowing Iran to develop nuclear weapons. The reporter then asked directly, "Does that mean you are expressing support for the US attack?"

Koizumi responded: "I believe the chief cabinet secretary and the Foreign Minister have already spoken on this matter, so that is the position of the government as a whole." In other words, the Foreign Ministry and chief cabinet secretary have expressed support for the war, and that is the government's position.

If the Foreign and Defense Ministries speak on their support for US aggression in carefully crafted and indirect political language, it is not because they are adhering to Japan's so-called "pacifist ideals" contained in Article 9 of the constitution, which formally bans Japan from going to war or maintaining a military. The Article itself has long since become a dead letter, routinely ignored as Tokyo rapidly pursues a program of remilitarization.

Rather, the ruling class in Japan is conscious of the widespread anti-war sentiment in the working class and among youth. Full-throated support for US and Israeli aggression against Iran would quickly be met with anger and the potential for significant anti-war protests like those that erupted in 2015 to military legislation

allowing Japan to go to war overseas alongside an ally.

This would expose Tokyo's own lies about defending the "international rules-based order" in the Indo-Pacific against supposed Chinese "aggression" meant to justify its remilitarization. This agenda includes more than doubling military spending beyond 2 percent of GDP, acquiring offensive military hardware, and building up Japan's military industrial base through the lifting of export restrictions on weaponry.

Japan is already currently supplying the US with Patriot missiles following the easing of export restrictions in 2023. These missiles are now being used either directly by the US and Israel to intercept Iranian counter attacks, or replenishing US military stockpiles.

In addition, part of the remilitarization agenda is also aimed at reducing its reliance on the US and asserting Japan's own imperialist interests throughout the world. This includes in the Middle East, where it already has a military presence as well as significant economic interests. Nearly 95 percent of Japan's oil comes from this region. Securing its access to oil is a major factor in Tokyo's calculations.

In fact, Japan's only overseas military base is located in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa, supposedly to combat piracy. The Maritime Self-Defense Force, the formal name of Japan's navy, conducts operations in the Gulf of Aden, the northern Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Oman, which borders Iran.

Since late 2019, Japan has engaged in an intelligence-gathering mission in the region. This was an expansion of the Japanese military's role that corresponded with the first Trump administration's escalation of tensions that year with Tehran, including in the assassination of top Iranian intelligence official Qasem Soleimani in January 2020.

Japan's intelligence is shared with the US, raising the possibility that not only was Tokyo aware of US plans to attack Iran, but may be taking an active role in the war. At the very least, Washington would have warned its military allies operating in the region ahead of Saturday's attack.

During his press conference on Sunday, Koizumi was asked if US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had alerted Japan ahead of time about the assault. He responded, "At this time, I cannot comment on the details of our interactions with the countries involved." Once again, the refusal to answer in reality amounts to a 'yes'.

The war against Iran is ultimately aimed at China, just as the attack on Venezuela earlier this year was. Washington is attempting to surround, isolate, and cut off China from energy resources in preparation for an even larger conflict. Beijing is being goaded into taking some action that Washington can seize upon as a pretext for launching war against the world's second largest economy.

This is one reason why the Takaichi government is backing the criminal activities of Washington around the world. Just like the US ruling class, the Japanese ruling class views economic competition from China as an impediment to their own interests, access to resources and cheap labour.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact