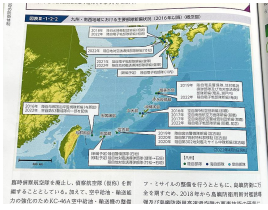


Japan defense paper highlights Taiwan

Written by Taipei Times

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A page from a Japanese government defense white paper released yesterday explains enhanced defense deployment near Taiwan.

Photo: CNA

Japan's latest defense white paper highlights Taiwan's defense measures, as well as Tokyo's and the international community's concerns over stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Cabinet yesterday approved the 500-page report — the second published under Japanese Minister of Defense Nobuo Kishi that gives substantial attention to the Taiwan issue.

Last year's edition for the first time separated Taiwan from a chapter devoted to China and placed it in a section on China-US relations.

This year's edition includes 10 pages on Taiwan, double the length of last year's paper.

The paper introduces Taiwan's defense situation and its approach to national defense, as well as the international situation Taipei is operating under, with a focus on Taiwan's guidelines of "solid defense, layered deterrence" and asymmetric warfare.

The paper also mentions Taiwanese measures to mitigate the effects of Chinese cognitive warfare, including using a combined form of electronic and cyberwarfare capabilities to create "beachheads."

The military balance continues to be tipped in China's favor, but against a backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, Taiwan's efforts to strengthen its defensive capabilities should be noted, it says.

The US, without deviating from its “one China” policy, has since the administration of former US president Donald Trump stepped up efforts to deepen US-Taiwan relations, a trend that has continued under US President Joe Biden. His administration defines Taiwan as a principal democratic, economic and security partner, and sends US ships through the Taiwan Strait while continuing sales of arms packages to Taiwan, the paper says.

In addition to the US, the international community — led by Europe — has also voiced concern over stability in the Taiwan Strait and has been reinforcing EU-Taiwan relations, it says.

“Taiwan is an extremely important partner for Japan,” it says. “The stability of the situation surrounding Taiwan is also critical for Japan’s security and must be closely monitored with a sense of urgency ... based on the recognition that changes to the status quo by coercion are globally shared challenges.”

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐江子) said that Taiwan welcomes the international community’s concerns and measures, which contribute positively toward maintaining regional peace and stability.

The ministry anticipates the possibility of working with like-minded countries, including Japan, to jointly defend democracy and uphold stability in the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific region, Ou said.

In a new chapter devoted to Russia’s war in Ukraine, the report said that Russia’s international isolation and fatigue from the war might increase the importance of Moscow’s political and military cooperation with China.

Military cooperation between the two countries should be closely watched, because it could have a “direct impact” on Japan’s security, the paper says.

The report comes as Kishida’s government pledges to bolster Japan’s military capability and

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budget under a revised national security strategy and basic defense guidelines that are planned for release later this year.

China yesterday said it firmly opposed the white paper and had sent stern representations to Tokyo.

“Japan’s new defense white paper makes accusations and smears China’s defense policy, market economic development and legitimate maritime activities,” Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Wang Wenbin (王文斌) told a daily news briefing.

The report “exaggerates the so-called China threat” and interferes in China’s internal affairs on Taiwan, Wang said.

Additional reporting by AP and Reuters

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