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The Evolving Role of the U.S.-Japan-Philippines Trilateral Cooperation in Asia-Pacific

Visit of the Japanese PM and the President of the Philippines to the U.S.

On the April 11, 2024, Washington DC welcomed the leaders of Japan and the Philippines for a trilateral summit with the United States, highlighting the enduring partnership among the Indo-Pacific nations.

Led by Prime Minister Kishida Fumio and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the summit underscored a shared commitment to economic prosperity and regional stability. With a focus on cooperation in economic security, clean energy, and democratic values, the leaders deliberated on strategies to address China’s provocative actions in the East and South China Seas.

The discussions aimed to strengthen maritime security and defence cooperation, reaffirming the trio’s dedication to a free and open Indo-Pacific. Notably, the summit also witnessed major U.S. investments announced in the Philippines, signalling a deeper integration of economies among the three nations.

This edition of CUTS Occasional News Wrap (ONW) encapsulates the key deliberations, insights, and outcomes that emerged during this historic trilateral summit, drawing from comprehensive print and electronic media coverage.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>Japan-U.S.-Philippines Summit</p> <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan</p> <p>April 11, 2024</p>	<p>President Biden welcomed the visit of Prime Minister Kishida and President Marcos to the U.S. and the first Japan-U.S.-Philippines Summit and stated that he would like to further advance Japan-U.S.-Philippines cooperation in various areas of security and economy based on this Summit.</p> <p>In response, Prime Minister Kishida welcomed the first trilateral Summit and stated that he attached importance to multilayered collaboration among allies and like-minded countries to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law, amidst the multiple crises the international community is facing.</p>
<p>U.S., Japan, Philippines Hold Summit Amid China Threat</p> <p>Deutsche Welle (DW)</p> <p>April 11, 2024</p>	<p>U.S. President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. met in Washington for their first-ever trilateral defence summit.</p> <p>The meeting came as Chinese and Philippines coast guard vessels in the disputed South China Sea regularly become involved in skirmishes, with China increasingly asserting its territorial claims in the region.</p> <p>Kishida, for his part, addressed Congress as part of a Washington visit, becoming the second Japanese premier to do so since Shinzo Abe in 2015.</p>
<p>Japan's Kishida Says U.S. Not Alone in Upholding World Order</p> <p><i>Ken Moriyasu</i></p> <p>Nikkei Asia</p> <p>April 11, 2024</p>	<p>Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told U.S. legislators that Washington does not have to single-handedly shoulder the responsibility of upholding the international order - and that Japan is ready to be a "shipmate" in that endeavour.</p> <p>"I detect an undercurrent of self-doubt among some Americans about what your role in the world should be," the 66-year-old leader said in a speech to a joint session of Congress, which he delivered in English.</p>
<p>The U.S. and Japan Announce Historic Upgrade in Security Ties to Counter China</p> <p><i>Jennifer Jett and Megan Lebowitz</i></p>	<p>The U.S. and Japan announced a historic upgrade to their security alliance, as President Joe Biden hosts Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for an official visit that highlights Japan's role in countering China in the Asia-Pacific.</p> <p>"Through our partnership, we have strengthened the alliance. We have expanded our work together. We've raised our shared ambitions," Biden said in his opening remarks at a joint news</p>

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<p>NBC News April 10, 2024</p>	<p>conference in the White House Rose Garden.</p>
<p>Japan's Kishida Bolsters U.S. Alliance with Washington Trip Nikkei Asia April 14, 2024</p>	<p>Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida travelled to Washington last week for a summit with U.S. President Joe Biden, the first state-level visit to America by a leader from the East Asian nation in nearly a decade.</p> <p>Kishida was especially keen to address Congress, aides say, trying to show both sides of the aisle that Japan is ready to step up as a global partner in upholding the international order. He also engaged in historic trilateral talks with the U.S. and the Philippines, as well as attending a state dinner featuring billionaires and pop stars.</p>
<p>Biden Lauds U.S.-Japan Alliance at State Dinner <i>Sam Fossum, Arlette Saenz, Kayla Tausche, Betsy Klein and Michael Williams</i> CNN April 10, 2024</p>	<p>President Joe Biden celebrated the relationship between the U.S. and Japan, calling the alliance “stronger than it’s ever been” as he hosted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for a state visit.</p> <p>Speaking at a swanky state dinner, Biden said the U.S. and Japan would continue to be partners amid a changing world, reinforcing his commitment to bolstering vital partnerships in the Indo-Pacific amid a militarily and economically resurgent China.</p>
<p>Philippines President Says Summit with U.S. Japan to Include South China Sea Cooperation Reuters April 10, 2024</p>	<p>The trilateral summit between the United States, Philippines and Japan will include an agreement to maintain security and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said.</p> <p>The Philippine leader told reporters that there will be an agreement on South China Sea issues, but emphasised that the summit is mainly aimed at boosting economic ties between the three allies.</p>
<p>Japan-U.S.-Philippines Summit Meeting: 3 Nations Should Deepen Security Cooperation to Deter China The Japan News April 15, 2024</p>	<p>China’s claim that almost all of the South China Sea is its own territory is contrary to fact and has no legal basis. Japan, the United States and the Philippines should promote security cooperation to deter China’s dangerous actions.</p> <p>Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, U.S. President Joe Biden and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. have met in Washington.</p>

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<p>Biden and Kishida Agree to Tighten Military and Economic Ties to Counter China</p> <p><i>Peter Baker and Michael D. Shear</i></p> <p>The New York Times</p> <p>April 10, 2024</p>	<p>President Biden and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan announced a range of moves to further enhance military, economic and other cooperation between the two longtime allies as part of the president’s efforts to counter China’s aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region.</p> <p>During a pomp-filled ceremony honouring the visiting Japanese prime minister, the president said the United States and Japan would create an expanded defence architecture with Australia, participate in three-way military exercises with Britain and explore ways for Japan to join a U.S.-led coalition with Australia and Britain.</p>
<p>U.S.-Japan-Philippines Hold First Trilateral, with 'Many More' to Come</p> <p><i>Ken Moriyasu</i></p> <p>Nikkei Asia</p> <p>April 11, 2024</p>	<p>The first-ever trilateral summit among the U.S., Japan and the Philippines was held at the White House, with all three leaders signalling that many more meetings would follow in the years to come.</p> <p>"We gather today in Washington as equal partners and trusted friends, united by the vision we share of a free and open Indo-Pacific and international order based on international law -- a vision we pledge to advance together for decades to come," a joint vision statement issued after the meeting said.</p>