

US, Japan, France Hold First Joint Drills in Japanese Territory with Eye on China

Japan is looking to boost military cooperation with 'like-minded' countries

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The US, France, and Japan on Tuesday [began joint ground and naval military exercises](#), marking the first time the three countries are holding drills together in Japanese territory.

The week-long exercises come as the US is looking to boost military cooperation between its allies in the region to counter China. Tensions between Japan and China have been high due to a dispute over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

The exercises started in the Nagasaki Prefecture at Camp Ainoura, [where Japan's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade is headquartered](#). The Japanese amphibious unit was established in 2018 and was created to focus on outlying islands that Japan claims, like the Senkakus, or Diayous as they are known in China.

Speaking to reporters, Japanese **Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi** said Tokyo was looking to expand its military ties with “like-minded” countries beyond the US. He described France as “a like-minded country that shares with Japan the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Australia will also join a part of the exercises that will be held in the East China Sea. The US, Japan, Australia, and India form the informal grouping known as the Quad, which is seen as a possible foundation for a NATO-style military alliance in Asia. France joined the Quad for military exercises when it [led naval drills in the Bay of Bengal](#).

Strengthening military ties in Asia is a crucial part of the Biden administration's China policy. In his first address to Congress, [President Biden said he told Chinese President Xi Jinping](#) that the US “will maintain a strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific just as we do with NATO in Europe.”

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