



U.S. Arms Sales to Japan

Security Assistance Monitor, December 2020

What's At Issue

As Japan transitions its armed forces from a defensive posture into one with more forward leaning capabilities, it has looked to acquire newer and more advanced weaponry. With an eye towards a more assertive China, Japan has bought billions more worth of arms from the U.S. over the past 5 years, steadily expanding its U.S. arms imports, presenting risks to escalating regional tensions.

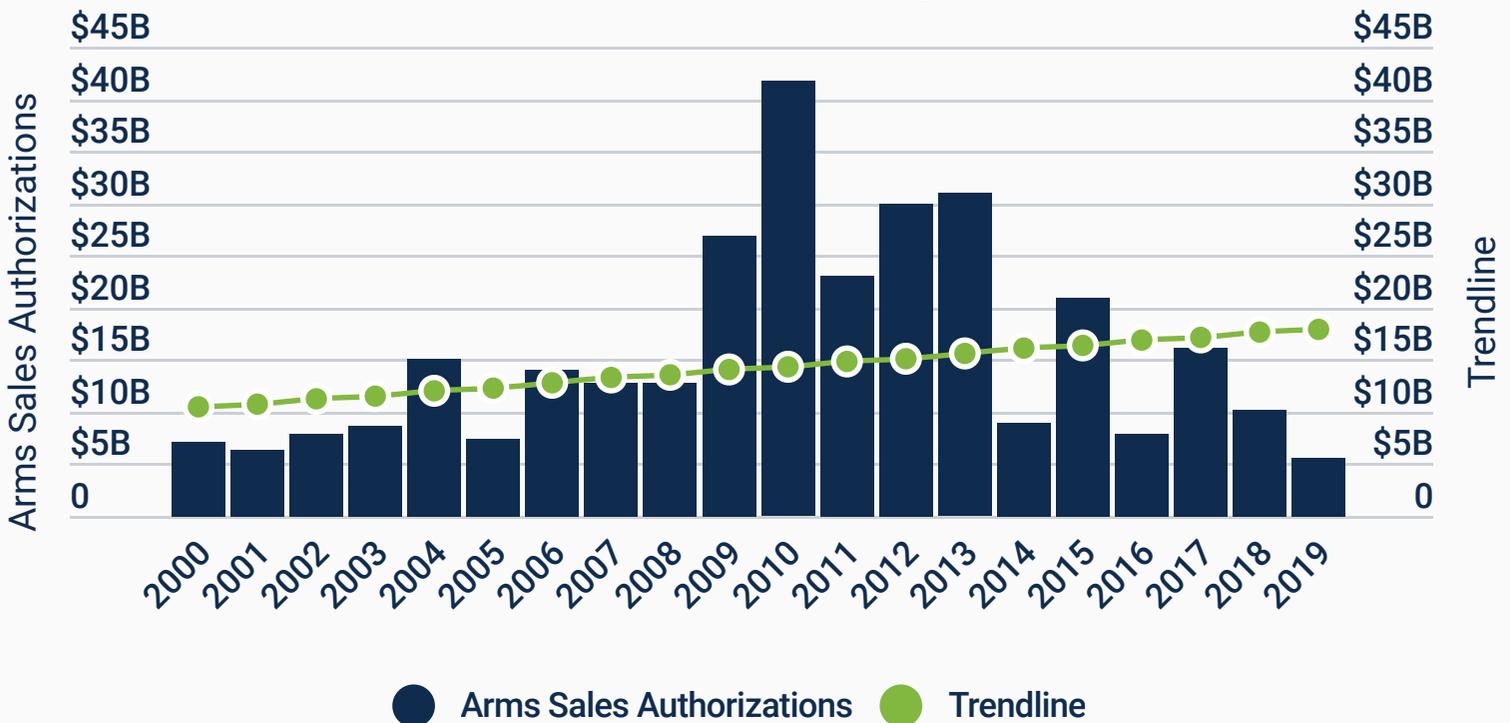
U.S. and Japan: A Changing Security Relationship

The end of World War II marked the beginning of a new security relationship between the U.S. and Japan. As Japan enshrined pacifism into its new constitution, the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty of 1951 gave the U.S. permission to open bases on Japanese territory, providing a permanent presence in East Asia in exchange for guaranteeing Japan's territorial defense. Following the pact's ratification, Japan carved out a purely defensive role for its Self Defense Force (SDF) with strict guidelines for its use.

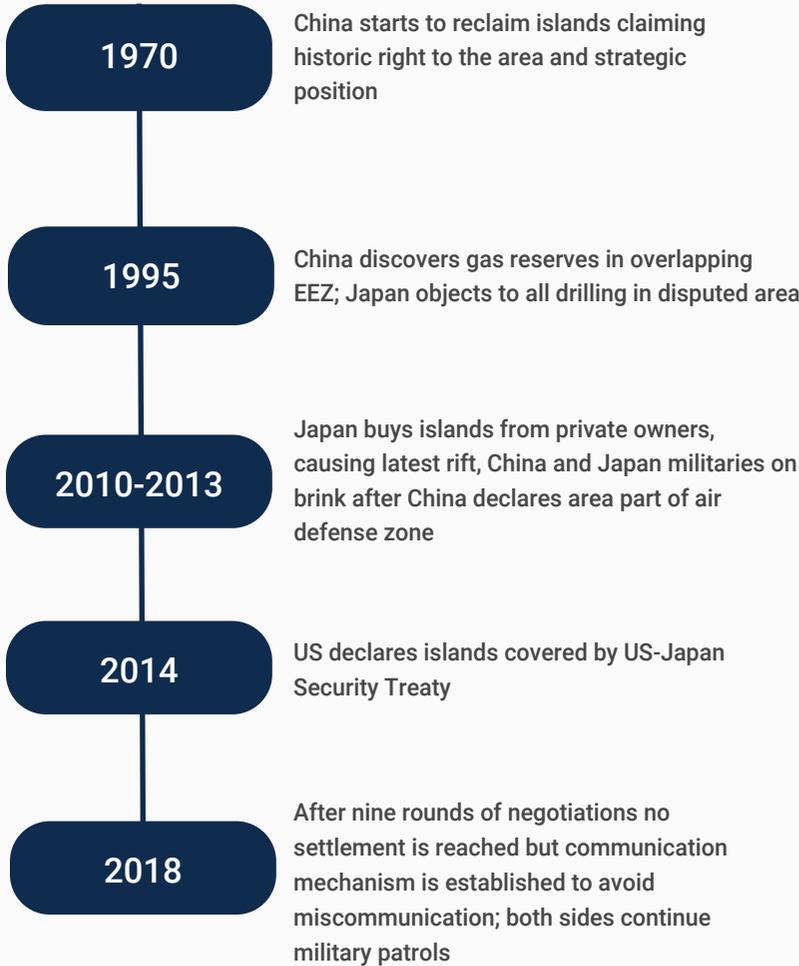
But in the following decades, perceived threats, particularly from North Korea's nuclear program and an increasingly assertive China, saw successive Japanese leaders cautiously re-orient the country's SDF towards a more forward-leaning presence. In 2014, then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reinterpreted the country's constitution to allow the SDF to come to the aid of allies under attack, a controversial decision that represented a watershed moment for Tokyo's armed forces. The Obama administration and the current Trump administration have welcomed the move, offering advanced weapon systems in return and substantially increasing the scale of arms sales to the country.

Japan has been a strong presence on Capitol Hill, lobbying members of congress from both parties on Indo-Pacific security. In a new report by CIP's Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative, Japan reported 39 meetings with House, Senate, and think tank leaders at the same time funding for the Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative was being debated in congress.

US Arms Sales Authorizations to Japan 2000-2019



Key Events in U.S.-Japan Defense Ties



What's Being Sold

With an eye towards increased regional competition in the Pacific region, Japan has turned to the U.S. to acquire advanced coastal defense systems. Most of the arms sales include missile systems and aircraft used in coordination to bolster maritime defense.

E-2D Advanced Hawkeye Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft: Over \$3 billion in sales; designed to be used as a patrol aircraft and issue incursion warnings



73 Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA: Over \$3 billion in sales; short and medium range ballistic missile interceptor, can also intercept other kinetic warheads

F-35 aircraft Final Assembly and Checkout (FACO) Facility: Over \$4.5 billion in sale; facility completes final assembly of F-35 Lightning II, aircraft can be directly given to SDF



The Japan Lobby

Japan has accelerated its bipartisan lobbying efforts to members of Congress and the Trump administration. A report by the Center for International Policy's Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative found that in 2019 alone, Japan's lobbyists contacted the House and Senate 745 and 315 times respectively in an effort to influence U.S. policy, including on issues of defense and security. This table illustrates the frequency Japan's lobbyists have contacted certain Congressional offices regarding defense issues in 2019.

Congressional Office/Committee	Times Contacted Regarding Defense
House Committee on Armed Services	20
Madeleine Bordallo	19
Dutch Ruppersberger	13
Austin Scott	13
Ed Case	9
Brian Schatz	9
Stephanie Murphy	8
Sanford Bishop	8
James Inhofe	8
Rob Bishop	7