Japan Minister says necessary to 'Wake Up' to protect Taiwan

WASHINGTON: Japan's deputy defense minister on Monday warned of the growing threat posed by Chinese and Russian collaboration and said it was necessary to "wake up" to Beijing's pressure on Taiwan and protect the island "as a democratic country."

Speaking to the Hudson Institute think tank, State Minister of Defence Yasuhide Nakayama questioned whether the decision of many countries, including Japan and United States, to follow a "one-China" policy that has recognized Beijing rather than Taipei since the 1970s would stand the test of time.

"Was it right?" he asked at the online event, referring to how future generations will judge policymakers on the issue. "I don't know."

Nakayama said democratic countries had to protect each other and noted that he had in the past referred to Taiwan as a "red line."

"So we have to protect Taiwan as a democratic country."

Nakayama noted that Japan and Taiwan were geographically close, and added that if something happened in Taiwan it would affect Japan's Okinawa prefecture, where U.S. forces and their families are based.

Nakayama highlighted growing threats posed by China in space, in missile technology, in the cyber domain and in nuclear and conventional forces, and said that under Xi Jinping's leadership it had "aggressive, aggressive ... thought and will."

"So wake up. We have to wake up, " he said.

Nakayama said it was necessary to show deterrence to China and also Russia, which had stepped up exercises in Japanese-claimed territory and near the U.S. territory of Hawaii.

"You can see China and Russia collaborating together, when they are doing some military exercise around our neighbors," Nakayama said, adding that he wanted to see the United States "stronger, stronger and stronger."

Nakayama referred to Tokyo's decision to scrap its one-percent-of-GDP cap on defense spending. He said Japan needed to spend more on weapons, including missiles, and cut costs, given that 50 percent of its budget went on personnel.

Washington and Tokyo should boost technological collaboration in the face of closer Chinese and Russian cooperation, he said.

South Korea's top airline to develop propellant tank for smallsat launcher

Korean Air, South Korea's biggest airline, says it will develop common bulkhead propellant tanks for small satellite launch vehicles as part of the Ministry of Science and ICT's "Space Pioneer" project.

The ministry plans to invest 211.5 billion won ($186.6 million) by 2030 in the "Space Pioneer" project, which aims to strengthen the global competitiveness of the domestic aerospace industry by reducing dependence on overseas products.

With a budget of 32 billion won, Korean Air has formed an industry and academic consortium with the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI), NDT Engineering and Aerospace, and Korea Aerospace University to develop common bulkhead propellant tanks for small satellite launch vehicles by 2026. Korean Air will manage the risk and quality assurance system as well as testing and evaluation for certification.

The common bulkhead propellant tank combines fuel and oxidizer tanks into a single tank using the latest metal welding and insulation technology. The common bulkhead propellant tank is expected to dramatically reduce the cost of sending 500-kg small- and medium-sized satellites or small satellite constellations into Earth's low orbit.

In 2012, Korean Air developed and assembled Korea's first space launch vehicle, KSLV-1, and the company has core technology capabilities such as aircraft system integration and aircraft structure development.

spacenews

Turkey welcomes back tourists, hopes to recoup losses

At the Ananas Hotel on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, the rooms were cleaned, the pool filled and the sun loungers dislanced, as staff prepared to welcome back Russian tourists after nearly 20 months of pandemic-induced closure.

Hotels in Turkey's popular Antalya region are ready to reopen after Moscow announced it was lifting flight restrictions to Turkey. Tourism representatives are hoping that their sector — a key component of the Turkish economy — can now recover some of its losses.

"We have been closed for about 20 months. We were quite pleased by the lifting of the flight restrictions by Russia," said Murat Ozbalat, general manager of the Ananas Hotel in the resort town of Alanya. Russians make up about 80% of his guests, he said. "The additional gradual lifting of restrictions from Europe gives us hope for the remainder of the 2021 season."

While many Turkish businesses suffered during the pandemic, tourism has been clobbered: In 2019, it brought in $34.5 billion and nearly 52 million visitors. In 2020, visitors dropped 69% and revenues fell to about $12 billion, according to the tourism ministry.

"We are talking about a ... sector that has been sitting idle for a year," said Hamit Koç of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies. "There is a loss of more than $20 billion."

Turkey relies on tourism revenues for its foreign currency needs, at a time when it's been hit by double-digit inflation and a sinking currency, exacerbated by the pandemic. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly said this year's season is crucial.

"We will ensure that tourism professionals can utilize at least the second half of the 2021 season," he said Saturday, inaugurating a hotel in Antalya. "We aim to get a much bigger share of the tourism cake" along with recouping losses.

German Renata Malzahn, vacationing in the Side resort, known for its ancient ruins overlooking the beach, said she was well aware Turkey needs visitors.

"I think the easing of travel restrictions to Turkey was well overdue," she said after getting a traditional scrub and bath at her hotel's Turkish hammam. "If you ease (travel) restrictions with regard to other countries ... you should not exclude Turkey, because the people here also urgently need visitors like us, otherwise the country collapses."

A spring COVID-19 spike in Turkey, when daily infections hit a record high of 63,000, drew travel warnings. The U.K. and France put Turkey on their red lists requiring returning tourists to quarantine, and Russia suspended flights in April. The fear of another missed season prompted the government to exclude tourists from what they called a "full lockdown" for Turks.

Tourism workers got priority in vaccinations and the tourism ministry shared a promotional video of mask-wearing staff that said "Enjoy, I'm vaccinated." The video was taken down after a public outcry on social media, with some people saying it presented Turks as subservient to foreign visitors.

With daily infections down to a 7-day average of 5,645, some countries reassessed their travel warnings this month. France and Germany have removed Turkey from the high-risk list and on Tuesday Russia resumed flights — with Turkish TV stations providing live coverage of the first Russians landing.

The industry is hoping that Britain, Turkey's third-largest tourism market, will also remove the country from its red list.

As China's Communist Party turns 100, economic challenges loom

Shenzhen, China – Private education companies that provide extracurricular lessons to legions of Chinese children are in the crosshairs of the government, as officials seek to ease pressure on students and the financial burden on families. Though aimed at private tutoring firms, the crackdown is symptomatic of wider systemic problems facing China as the ruling Communist Party celebrates its 100th anniversary this week. Falling birth rates and a rapidly ageing population spell trouble for China's future economic growth.

Income inequality, regional economic divides, and wide gaps in opportunity between rural and urban citizens were issues highlighted by China's President Xi Jinping in a late January speech as pressing matters the nation must tackle to reach what he called an era of "common prosperity" in the coming years.

China's leaders steer clear of the phrase "middle-income trap" – a condition where a country fails to reach a higher, more developed status – but that's where the country could end up if leaders fail to address those fissures.

Xi's remedies – better income distribution, education, social security, affordable medical care, housing, elderly care, child support, and quality employment; also mentioned in the same speech – are many of the same wants as most working families and youths.

Current structural and political barriers, however, may be too formidable to deliver those policies unless deeper reforms are implemented beyond piecemeal efforts such as lifting restrictions on the number of children families can have or trying to mandate less homework for school-age children.

They will be expensive and will likely need the country's most wealthy to pay heavier tax rates, either through property taxes or capital gains taxes. But implementing such policies is fraught with peril. Do it too fast and could lead to capital flight, problems in the white-hot property market and financial system disturbances that do more harm than good.

And there are other structural barriers. The country's hukou system ties social benefits to a family's rural or urban hometown, and the overemphasis on the gaokao – standardised exams – determine whether students can advance to university and achieve higher rates of economic success.

Growing pressures on parents and students over the past decade have increased the necessity to reform these systems as incomes have stagnated and social mobility has ossified.Alazeera

Afghanistan's art gift to UN on...

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He said: "This painting, of course, is very important for the UN. It represents a partnership of 75 years, a very solid partnership that Ambassador Raz has been boosting in an extraordinary way."

On the role of the UN, he said: "I want to reassure you of our strong commitment to support Afghanistan, our strong commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

"And to make sure that these trying times will lead to a new era — peace, prosperity and human rights for the people of Afghanistan that are so dear to my heart."

One of the founders of Art-Lords, Omaid Sharifi, discussed how the painting was made and explained its symbolism.

"To make the painting, our team travelled all over Afghanistan to draw inspiration from across our diverse regions and to collect soil from all 34 provinces. That soil from all over the country makes up the background of this canvas." Reflecting on the imagery of the artwork, he told the story of a child who lost one of his legs but learned to run and of the Buddha's of Bamyan, which today represent our rich history and our losses."

The painting — two by four metres has in the foreground calligraphy of a poem by the famous Afghan poet Rumi. The poem reads: "Let's not sew anything, but love and friendship in this pure land."

The Kabul Times

Afghan Advertisement

AA 890

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BIDDING

Procurement Entities	NPA on behalf of Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Funded By	World Bank
Item Description / Ref No.	**Procurement of Kabul North Zone, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Balkh Provincial Deeds Automation System offices - ICT Equipment, RFB No:** NPA/MUDL/1400/G-3170/ICB (ALASP/G21-25).
Deadline for submission Bids	**11August,2021 at 10:00 Hours** (Local Time). The public opening of Bids received will be held immediately after the deadline.
Address for submission Bids	**Attention:** Bidding Facilitation Secretariat **Address:** National Procurement Authority (NPA) Administrative Office of the President (AOP), Pashtunestan Wat, Kabul, Afghanistan | Kabul Afghanistan. **Telephone:** (+93) 202926290 **Email:** bfs-npa@npa.gov.af
Website	Interested bidders may download the complete Bidding Documents from our website. www.npa.gov.af/ www.agcops.net In case of any problem in downloading, may obtain the same by sending e-mail at the address mohsin.nisar@npa.gov.af. Copy to hikmatullah.asadi@npa.gov.af, aziz.obaidi@npa.gov.af, pfd_d_08@npa.gov.af, naseeb.arman@mudl.gov.af
Bid Security:	5,700 USD

Taliban does not represent ...

From P1

We believe that the genuine intra-Afghan dialogue is the only solution for Afghanistan. We have always said that we are ready to facilitate talks," Khatibzadeh told reporters in a press conference in Tehran. "The Taliban are not all Afghanistan. They are part of Afghanistan and part of the government and the future solution of Afghanistan," he added.

"This is an issue that has been said many times, and what is important is an inclusive government that includes all the genuine Afghan groups and achieves a peaceful and lasting solution in Afghanistan," "The security of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan is very closely linked," Khatibzadeh noted, stressing, "What is important to us is security, unity, an inclusive and authentic government in Afghanistan."

"Violence in Afghanistan has escalated to alarming levels and some minorities are under pressure. We want everyone to respect their rights. Only a political solution can guarantee Afghanistan's future," he said. Afghanistan's foreign ministry declared in a statement earlier this year that it is informed of a delegation of Taliban group to Tehran to negotiate with Iranian officials on the Afghan peace process. "The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has informed the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan about the visit of the Taliban delegation to Iran and has already requested and received the views of the Government of Afghanistan in this regard," the statement said in January. Elaborating on the purpose of the Taliban delegation's visit to Iran, it said in addition to a declaration of its views, Tehran informs the Taliban on the existence of a regional consensus on immediate ceasefire and a comprehensive peace agreement within the framework of the Republic system and preservation of Afghanistan's constitutional values.

"Iran wants to ensure that the post-conflict Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for the terrorist groups and remains a center of regional and international cooperation," the statement added. It expressed the hope that the Taliban would comply with the legitimate demands of the Afghan people to stop the bloodshed and ensure lasting peace.

The Kabul Times