

Japan's promises to Transform Asian Geopolitics

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Context

Japan's Prime Minister (Fumio Kishida) addressed the US Congress and the developments from his summit meeting with President Joe Biden, announcing the arrival of a new, assertive Japan to the world.

Key Highlights

- After World War II, a defeated Japan followed a policy of pacifism.
- Today, Japan is about to come forward to be a main military power, transforming its civilian industrial functionality into a military organisation complex.
- From being a US protectorate, it will now become an American partner and a significant contributor to Asian and Indo-Pacific peace and security.

What is the Reason for this Radical Change?

- A mix of outer and inner factors has contributed to its reorientation in the 21st century.
- On the external front, the rise of China and North Korea; the deepening army bonds between Beijing and Moscow; and the fears that the USA may need to withdraw its safety protection to Japan.

- Internally, this example bolstered conservatives in Tokyo, who desired to see Japan turning into a 'global power'.

What Exactly is Japan Doing to Become a Geopolitical Power?

- First, Japan has performed away with the historical cap (~1% of its GDP) on defence expenditure.
- Second, Japan is in the system of similarly strengthening its counter-strike capability in the form of cruise missiles.
- Third, Japan has eased its self-imposed ban on exports of deadly guns to friendly nations. Fourth, Japan-US are inside the manner of revising the command-and-control framework governing their defence forces.

Changes in the Diplomatic Posture of Japan

- Japan has made efforts to end disputes with South Korea and Japan has been one among Ukraine's strongest supporters in the battle with Russia.

Implications of this 'New' Japan

- **For the region:** A politically active and militarily greater capable Japan will necessarily rearrange the local protection calculus.
- **For India:** A politically resolute and militarily robust Japan which can build a strong Asian equilibrium is a significant development.
 - It contributes to India's goal of building a multipolar Asia in a multipolar world.

Source: *The Indian Express*

UPSC mains Practice Question

Q.Discuss Japan's efforts in building a strong India-Japan relation that is important for peace in Asia-pacific. (250 words)