
Japan's Diplomatic Push Raises Concerns Over Military Expansion



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TOKYO: Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi's visits to Australia and India this week highlighted Tokyo's efforts to expand arms exports and strengthen military cooperation, analysts said.

During the visits, Koizumi promoted Japan's "counterstrike capabilities" and discussed defense

equipment cooperation with both countries.

Analysts said Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's government is pursuing what they described as a "diplomacy of military expansion," seeking to broaden Japan's defense activities and overseas military presence.

Japan has recently eased restrictions on defense equipment exports and is promoting weapons transfers, including possible sales of upgraded Mogami-class frigates to Australia and equipment to India.

Koizumi also reached a 10-year agreement allowing Japan's Self-Defense Forces to use Australian test sites for long-range missile launches. Japan and India agreed to expand joint exercises, including Japanese fighter aircraft participation in an Indian air force exercise.

Analysts said these developments could institutionalize Japan's military activities abroad and strengthen defense ties with partner countries.

They warned that expanded arms exports, overseas exercises and deeper military cooperation could challenge Japan's postwar defense-oriented policy and raise concerns over regional stability.

Japanese and international experts have also expressed concern over efforts to revise the country's pacifist Constitution and strengthen military capabilities.

