

## Is Japan ready to face its harshest post-1945 security environment?

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Change was high on the agenda for Japan's late Prime Minister Abe Shinzo who strongly advocated transforming Japan's security and defence policies during his long tenure. As Abe's successors continue to grapple with rapid shifts in the geostrategic environment, Japan's 2025 Defence White Paper has warned that "International Society Faces Its Greatest Trial of the Postwar Era". While Abe's protégé Takaichi Sanae has been elected the first female leader of the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the relative domestic political stability of Abe's tenure has been replaced by tumult and flux. The fraying of the LDP-Komeito coalition that lasted 26 years is accompanied by the rise of right-wing parties. What changes will it take for Japan to attain proverbial "match-fitness" and fundamental reinforcement of its defence capabilities? How can new thinking, methods and practices of security help? This roundtable evaluates key dimensions of Japan's security and defence policies including deepening partnerships with like-minded states, increasing multilateral military exercises and unprecedented overseas deployments, the societal consensus underpinning policymaking, critical infrastructure protection such as undersea cables, and defence industrial and tech reforms.

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