

East Asia: Japan Restores Cold War Military Alliance With U.S.

By [Stop NATO](#)

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Japan's Prime Minister Noda has restored the Japan-US security alliance – a legacy of the Cold War – as the “foundation” of Japan's foreign policy, a stark shift from three years ago, when then-Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama sought a harmonious “East Asian community” that included China.

Japan's chest beating is no doubt because it has been emboldened by the US' strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific. However, it should realize it is in danger of losing whatever goodwill it had in the region.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda talked about “wisdom” and “the future” at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday.

But his Cabinet's “nationalization” of China's Diaoyu Islands has been anything but wise and only served to remind the world of Japan's imperialist past.

Noda's speech reinforced why it is impossible for the two countries to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations on Thursday. This year is the first time the two countries have been unable to officially observe this occasion.

With its antics over the Diaoyu Islands, the Noda administration has brought the development of bilateral ties to a standstill.

In 1972 – 27 years after Japan's surrender to the allied countries – China buried the hatchet and restored diplomatic relations with its one-time enemy. Leaders of the two countries at that time were well aware of their strategic interdependence.

Unfortunately, such wisdom and far-sightedness have not been the hallmark of the Noda administration.

The Japanese government's sweeping denial of the existence of the dispute over the islands and of the consensus the two countries once reached on shelving this dispute has shown Japan is shifting to the right.

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And elected as the new president of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party on Wednesday, former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe couldn't wait to show how tough he would be if he regained his old job, playing up his determination to revise Japan's Constitution and vowing to protect Japanese territorial claims.

More disturbingly, such views are increasingly finding favor with the Japanese public. Surveys in Japan earlier this year found that 25 percent of Japanese people think their country should increase its military strength, compared with 14 percent three years ago and 8 percent in 1991.

Japan's chest beating is no doubt because it has been emboldened by the US' strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific. However, it should realize it is in danger of losing whatever goodwill it had in the region.

If Japan is trying to act tough on the Diaoyu Islands to recover the clout it has lost after two decades of economic stagnation, it has chosen the wrong place.

Its leaders should show wisdom and stop trying to deny the past.

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