

Friends,

In advance of the U.S.-Japan 2+2 meeting this evening and tomorrow's summit, the Stimson Center (major Washington, D.C. think tank) held an in person & online session with Itsunori Onodera, the LDP politician and former Defense Minister. Predictably, the interviewer did not ask my questions about the new doctrines' violation of the constitution and if the Japanese people should be voting on this, or about the SDF's interpretation of the constitution re: an SDF right to possess nuclear weapons.

Onodera began by reiterating that the doctrinal changes are due to the "new crises in the international order": Taiwan, China-Russia cooperation, DPRK missile tests, and the East China Sea. Japan will play a bigger role for defense of itself and of the region.

Much was said about the commitment to increase Japan's military equipment technological base. In this regard, while it will be developing its own strike weapons over a period of years, it plans to purchase U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles and to make the operational almost immediately

Cyber defenses will be built up for space, cyber and other functions. With the difficulty of recruiting forces, A.I. will increasingly be used for intelligence and targeting. To get the personal capital needed for this, there will be a supplemental budget. Given some obstacles in getting access to university based AI technologies, this will need to be a "whole government" effort, to ensure access to corporate and university based technologies.

There was discussion about how to pay for the massive military expansion. Getting Japanese citizens support is important. Polls say that 70% of the population support the build up, but the question is who will pay for it. There should have been a broader public debate on this, and this has caused some pushback. However, the government has until November 2023 to debate the budget. They will need to find an approach that the public will support.

Given a lesson from the extended Ukraine War, Japan will need to build up its military stockpiles, including the buildup of its manufacturing based. This will also include construction of more ships to help ensure Japan's maritime security, as Japan is an island state.

Japan will transfer military supplies to other countries. To which countries will depend on the ruling parties' coalition discussion. There will be a new fund for this. [Note that Kimetto may have some reservations about this and other aspects of the new doctrines, so we are seeing reports of the LDP in discussions with the DPP about the possibility of the latter joining the coalition.]

About growing ties with NATO: UK, France and Italy are increasing military ties with Japan. France has Oceania territories. UK has its Commonwealth ties. NATO will be especially important in terms of information technologies.

ROK-Japan-US ties: The new Yoon government in the ROK has opened the way for better talks among allies. The ROK is important. In case of a conflict, with both economies based on maritime trade, we need to cooperate to prevent war

**On Japan and nuclear weapons.** [Euphemisms were used!] The Japanese people have missed feeling about nuclear weapons, given that it is the only country to have been attacked by nuclear weapons. Faced with nuclear threats, Japan has the U.S. nuclear umbrella. This is complicated. It is important that we can trust that the nuclear umbrella doesn't have holes in it or will open when needed. Japan's

preferred nuclear deterrence is U.S. extended deterrence. Kishida will have good discussions about this with the U.S. government.

How to reinforce extended deterrence? If the U.S. were to use nuclear weapons, it would first need to consult with allies about which weapons would be employed and how they would be used. We need to develop plans for numerous contingencies, and related exercises will need to be held.

Southwest Japan (the small islands) has become more important. The new SDF encampment there is important, due to China. If there were a war with China over Taiwan, Iwaguni (sp?), which is only 110 miles from Taiwan would become vulnerable to invasion. //We need to be there to prevent an invasion of Japan.

What will be discussed 2+2 meeting today? The goal is to increase our deterrence and maintain a balance of forces. U.S. support is essential for this, as is the “big change” in Japan’s strategy. We also need to get the word out in the U.S., and it is important for there to be broad understanding in the U.S. of the changes in Japan’s strategies, hence meetings with think tanks, the government elite, etc.