
JAPAN'S NEW DEFENCE MINISTER MAKES HIS EARLY MARK WITH CANBERRA

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Little more than a month after his appointment to Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's new cabinet, Nobuo Kishi took one of his first important steps as Japan's defence minister. He and Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds agreed to initiate discussion and coordination to enable Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to provide asset protection for the Australian military – in short, to deploy weapons to protect Australian military assets including ships and aircraft.

It is envisaged that such action will involve the SDF providing protection for Australia's military assets during joint training exercises and peacetime surveillance activities in waters near Japan, which would logically include the East China Sea. It will be up to the Japanese defence minister to accede to a request from the Australian military for such protection.

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