

# Japan's PM Kishida and Trudeau to discuss threats from Russia and China

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FILE PHOTO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida speaks during a news conference at the prime minister's official residence in Tokyo, Japan October 14, 2021. Eugene Hoshiko/Pool via REUTERS/File Photo

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Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan says he will raise global security challenges, from the war in Ukraine to China's aggression in the Indo-Pacific,

while pushing to strengthen trade and energy ties in talks with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday.

The Japanese leader is on a whirlwind tour of most Group of Seven countries, visiting Italy, France, Britain and Ottawa, before heading to Washington, the final stop on Friday. Mr. Kishida will play host to the annual summit of the G7 industrial powers in May at home in Hiroshima.

He told The Globe and Mail that the summit would maintain the G7's commitment to helping Ukraine in its drive to repel Russian forces. It will also focus on security in the Indo-Pacific region under threat from China, which is using military and economic coercion to bully its neighbours and threaten maritime shipping lanes.

The Russian invasion has become a "turning point in history" and shaken the "international order to its core," the Prime Minister said in a statement provided exclusively to The Globe and Mail on Wednesday.

"My goal is to show the world the strong will of the G7 members in a long-lasting and powerful way. Together we will resolutely reject attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force and the threat, not to mention use, of nuclear weapons," Mr. Kishida said. He added: "I want to make it an opportunity to firmly confirm G7 co-ordination on a free and open Indo-Pacific since the G7 Hiroshima summit is being held in Asia."

In December, Japan unveiled the biggest military expansion since the Second World War, vowing to spend US\$350-billion, including on long-range missiles that could hit mainland China. Mr. Kishida has said Japan should respond to Beijing's growing threat in the Indo-Pacific with "comprehensive national power and in co-operation with like-minded countries and others."

Mr. Kishida is seeking to face the challenges posed by China by increasing security ties between the country's Self-Defense Forces and the G7 nations through military co-operation. A senior Canadian official said the two leaders will agree to joint military exercises.

The Globe is not identifying the government official, who was not authorized to discuss details of Thursday's meeting that will also include talks on Japanese investments in processing of critical minerals for electric vehicles, hydrogen development, and Canadian liquefied natural gas, or LNG, facilities on the West Coast. Both countries also want to co-operate on artificial intelligence.

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The official said Japan appreciates that Canada has sent frigates through the Taiwan Strait in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific and is helping to enforce sanctions against North Korea. Beijing has taken increasingly combative actions against Taipei, including flying fighter jets near Taiwan, and built military bases on three smaller islands in the South China Sea where much of the world's shipping passes through.

Mr. Kishida said Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had "a major negative impact on the international economy and the lives of people around the world in various aspects, especially with respect to energy and food.

"With the international geopolitical situation destabilized, the importance of Canada as a reliable supplier of energy and food is growing," he added.

The Ottawa official said Japan is keen to buy more grain and protein products from Canada as well as to take advantage of Canadian natural gas when an LNG facility in Kitimat, B.C., is completed in 2025. Japan's Mitsubishi is an investor in the Shell PLC-led LNG Canada export terminal on the B.C. coast.

Once the multibillion-dollar facility is up and running, Canadian natural gas will replace all its Russian supplies, the official said.

In Mexico City at the end of a North American Leaders' Summit, Mr. Trudeau said the world is looking to Canada as a reliable supplier of critical minerals and energy.

"Whether it be electric batteries, whether it be advanced technology, things that go into semi-conductors. These are the things of a reliable partnership that the

world is looking for,” Mr. Trudeau told reporters.

Mr. Kishida is the third world leader to come to Canada looking to buy natural gas and critical minerals in recent months. In September, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol came to Ottawa to make the case for buying natural gas and to secure supplies of critical minerals to bolster its semi-conductor industry and help its auto manufacturing sector transition to electric vehicles.

In August, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz led a trade delegation to find alternative sources of critical minerals for Germany’s auto sector as it transitions to battery-powered vehicles. Mr. Scholz also expressed interest in buying liquefied natural gas, provided that LNG facilities could be built on Canada’s East Coast.

China has become a world leader in controlling supplies of critical minerals. Fearing Beijing could cut supplies at some point – as Russia has done with energy to Europe – Japan, South Korea, the United States and Germany are looking to Canada as an alternative source of the materials, which are necessary for manufacturing a variety of high-tech devices.

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