Japan and the Emerging Security Architecture of the Middle East

Emmanuel Navon / 20 June 2026

Executive Summary

Japan's ongoing strategic transformation is reshaping not only the Indo-Pacific but also the broader international security environment. Since 2022, Tokyo has undertaken the most significant overhaul of its security doctrine since the end of the Second World War, strengthening its military capabilities, intelligence structures, and strategic decision-making institutions. These reforms reflect a gradual transition from Japan's postwar security model toward a more proactive strategy based on deterrence, resilience, and burden-sharing with democratic partners.

This evolution coincides with the emergence of an increasingly interconnected security environment. The growing alignment among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea is linking developments in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific, making traditional geographic distinctions less relevant. For Japan, whose prosperity depends on secure maritime trade routes and Gulf energy supplies, stability in the Middle East has become an increasingly important national-security interest.

This paper argues that Japan's strategic transformation creates a unique Skip to content**› deepen cooperation with Israel and the Abraham Accords countries. Israel's expertise in missile defense, counter-drone warfare, cyber security, intelligence integration, and national resilience complements**

Japan's evolving security requirements, while the Abraham Accords countries provide the geographic connectivity, infrastructure, and partnerships needed to link the Indo-Pacific, the Gulf, and the Mediterranean.

The paper recommends expanding strategic dialogue, intelligence sharing, maritime-security cooperation, cyber partnerships, and critical-infrastructure protection. It also advocates greater Japanese involvement in regional connectivity initiatives and the establishment of practical mechanisms linking Japan, Israel, and the Abraham Accords countries.

Rather than a formal alliance, such cooperation would constitute a flexible security architecture capable of strengthening stability across regions and contributing to a more resilient international order.

Introduction

For decades, policymakers treated Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific as separate strategic theaters. Today, that assumption is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

The growing alignment among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea is creating an interconnected security environment in which developments in one region increasingly affect stability in another. Russian-Iranian military cooperation, Chinese support for revisionist powers, and the expanding links between Iran and North Korea illustrate a broader trend: the emergence of a transregional challenge to the existing international order.

Japan’s strategic transformation should be understood within this context. Since 2022, Tokyo has undertaken the most significant overhaul of its security doctrine since the end of the Second World War, moving beyond the postwar model—often described as the Yoshida Doctrine—in which Japan Skip to content **nomic growth while relying heavily on the United States for its security. In its place, Japan is adopting a more proactive approach based on**

deterrence, resilience, and strategic burden-sharing. While driven primarily by developments in the Indo-Pacific, this transformation carries implications far beyond East Asia.

A more capable and strategically engaged Japan has become increasingly relevant to the security of the Middle East. Japan's dependence on Gulf energy supplies, the growing importance of maritime security, and the emergence of a more interconnected geopolitical environment are creating new areas of convergence with Israel and the Abraham Accords countries. At the same time, emerging connectivity initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) are creating new opportunities to link Japanese economic and strategic interests with those of Israel and the Abraham Accords countries.

This paper argues that Japan's strategic transformation creates a unique opportunity to develop a new framework for intelligence, cyber, maritime, and security cooperation linking the Indo-Pacific, the Gulf, and the Mediterranean. Such cooperation would strengthen regional stability while helping countries with shared interests respond more effectively to increasingly interconnected security challenges.

I. Japan's Strategic Transformation

Japan's strategic transformation represents the most significant shift in its security policy since the end of the Second World War. It reflects the gradual replacement of the Yoshida Doctrine, under which Japan prioritized economic growth while relying on the United States for its security, with a more proactive approach centered on deterrence, resilience, and burden-sharing among democratic partners.

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The Yoshida Doctrine proved remarkably successful. It enabled Japan to [illegible] of the world's leading economic and technological powers while avoiding the costs and risks associated with major military competition. Yet it

rested on assumptions that are increasingly difficult to sustain: that American security guarantees would remain sufficient, that major interstate conflict in Asia was unlikely, that economic interdependence would moderate geopolitical rivalry, and that Japan could preserve prosperity without becoming a more consequential strategic actor in its own right.

The security environment confronting Japan has undermined these assumptions. China's military expansion, North Korea's advancing missile and nuclear programs, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and growing tensions around Taiwan have highlighted the return of great-power competition. At the same time, cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, space capabilities, missile technologies, and supply-chain vulnerabilities have blurred the distinction between economic and military security. For Tokyo, economic power alone can no longer guarantee national security.

The turning point came in December 2022, when Japan adopted a new National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program. Together, these documents constituted the most ambitious revision of Japanese security policy since the creation of the Self-Defense Forces. Most visibly, Japan committed itself to increasing defense spending to approximately 2 percent of GDP, bringing its defense effort closer to the level expected of other major democratic powers.

The more important shift, however, was conceptual. For the first time since 1945, Japan explicitly embraced the acquisition of "counterstrike capabilities," including long-range missiles capable of holding potential adversaries at risk before an attack reaches Japanese territory. This marked a historic departure from the strictly defensive interpretation of security that had dominated Japanese strategic thinking for decades. Japan was not abandoning self-defense, but it was redefining what effective self-defense requires in an age of missile proliferation, cyber disruption, and rapid escalation.

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...ilities alone, however, do not create strategic power. Effective deterrence also requires institutions capable of integrating intelligence,

diplomacy, military planning, economic policy, technological innovation, and crisis management into a coherent national strategy. For much of the postwar period, Japan's security decision-making remained relatively fragmented, with authority dispersed among ministries and agencies designed for a more cautious strategic era.

Recognizing this limitation, Japan has steadily strengthened its national-security architecture. The establishment of a National Security Council in 2013 laid the foundation for more effective interagency coordination. Since 2022, the pace of reform has accelerated, with increasing attention to the integration of military, intelligence, cyber, economic-security, and technological considerations into national planning. Semiconductor supply chains, satellite systems, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, and cyber networks are now treated not merely as economic assets, but as components of national power.

The creation of a Joint Operations Command for the Self-Defense Forces further modernized Japan’s command structure. By improving coordination among the ground, maritime, and air components of the Self-Defense Forces, the new structure brings Japan closer to the operational models used by other major military powers. It also facilitates deeper interoperability with American forces stationed in Japan, reinforcing the alliance while enabling Japan to assume greater responsibility for its own defense.

The latest stage of this transformation came with legislation adopted by the Diet on 27 May 2026. Although less visible internationally than defense spending increases or missile acquisitions, these reforms may prove equally important. By strengthening the ability of the National Security Council and the Prime Minister's Office to collect, integrate, assess, and disseminate strategic information, they aim to reduce bureaucratic fragmentation, improve situational awareness, and accelerate decision-making in an increasingly complex security environment.

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... practical terms, these reforms move Japan closer to the integrated national-security models employed by other major democratic powers.

Military intelligence, cyber threats, economic vulnerabilities, diplomatic developments, technological risks, and supply-chain disruptions can increasingly be assessed within a single strategic framework rather than through separate bureaucratic channels. This matters because contemporary competition rewards states that can transform information into policy quickly and coherently.

Taken together, these reforms suggest the emergence of a new strategic doctrine. The alliance with the United States remains the cornerstone of Japanese security, but Tokyo increasingly recognizes that it must play a more active role in safeguarding regional stability. This approach rests on three principles: deterrence through credible military capabilities, resilience through the protection of critical infrastructure and technological ecosystems, and burden-sharing with like-minded partners facing similar challenges.

Japan's transformation does not signify a return to militarism, nor does it reflect a desire for strategic autonomy from the United States. Rather, it reflects the recognition that Japan must become a more capable ally and a more consequential strategic actor. The implications extend beyond East Asia. A Japan with stronger defense capabilities, more integrated decision-making structures, and greater strategic confidence is increasingly positioned to contribute to challenges affecting the wider international system. This includes the Middle East, where maritime security, energy flows, cyber resilience, and the activities of Iran and its partners have become directly relevant to Japanese national interests.

II. The Emerging Security Nexus Between the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific

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he post-Cold War era, policymakers viewed Europe, the Middle Indo-Pacific as distinct strategic theaters. European security was shaped by NATO and Russia, Middle Eastern security by regional

rivalries and energy markets, and Asian security by the rise of China and tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

This framework is becoming increasingly inadequate. The principal challenges confronting democratic states are no longer confined to individual regions. They are increasingly interconnected through networks of military cooperation, technological exchange, economic support, and political coordination linking China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. While these countries do not constitute a formal alliance, they form an ecosystem whose members increasingly support one another in pursuit of shared revisionist objectives.

The strengthening partnership between China and Russia has become a central feature of contemporary geopolitics. Russia's invasion of Ukraine accelerated military cooperation with Iran, whose drones became an important component of Russian operations. North Korea emerged as a major supplier of ammunition and military equipment to Moscow, while China provided the economic and diplomatic support that helped Russia withstand Western pressure. At the same time, Iran deepened its ties with both China and Russia, while maintaining longstanding cooperation with North Korea in areas related to missile development, sanctions evasion, and military modernization.

The significance of this alignment lies not only in its scope but also in its transregional character. Developments in one theater increasingly affect security in another. Russian aggression in Europe, Iranian destabilization in the Middle East, Chinese pressure in the Indo-Pacific, and North Korean provocations on the Korean Peninsula collectively stretch the resources and attention of democratic states. Moreover, competition increasingly extends beyond conventional military power to include cyber operations, technological transfers, critical supply chains, disinformation campaigns, and economic coercion.

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Among the links connecting these revisionist powers, the relationship between Iran and North Korea is particularly significant. For decades, both countries have relied on ballistic missiles and asymmetric capabilities to compensate for conventional weaknesses. Both have developed sophisticated mechanisms to circumvent sanctions and acquire sensitive technologies. While many aspects of their cooperation remain opaque, missile technologies, drone capabilities, cyber tools, and sanctions-evasion techniques increasingly circulate through overlapping networks.

This reality creates an important convergence of interests between Japan and Israel. For Israel, Iran remains the principal source of regional instability and the leading sponsor of anti-Israeli militant organizations. For Japan, North Korea represents the most immediate military threat to national territory. Yet both countries increasingly confront security challenges that are linked through shared technologies, shared networks, and shared strategic partners.

China's growing role in the Middle East further reinforces these connections. Traditionally, Beijing sought to maximize economic engagement while minimizing political and military commitments. That approach is evolving. China has become a leading trading partner for many Middle Eastern countries, a major purchaser of Gulf energy exports, and an increasingly important actor in regional infrastructure, telecommunications, and technology sectors. At the same time, it has strengthened its partnership with Iran while seeking greater diplomatic influence across the region.

From Tokyo's perspective, these developments are not merely Middle Eastern issues. Chinese influence in the region affects maritime routes, energy security, supply chains, technological standards, and broader geopolitical competition. The Middle East is increasingly becoming another arena in which Chinese power intersects with Japanese interests.

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trates the growing interdependence between the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East more clearly than maritime security. Japan's prosperity depends on the uninterrupted flow of energy, goods, and data across

maritime routes stretching from the Persian Gulf to East Asia. The Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Strait of Malacca form parts of a single strategic system. Disruptions at any point affect the entire network.

The Houthi attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea demonstrated this reality with particular clarity. A conflict originating in the Middle East generated immediate consequences for global trade, energy markets, insurance costs, and supply chains. Likewise, threats to navigation in the Strait of Hormuz have direct implications for Japanese energy security.

As a result, developments in the Middle East can no longer be viewed separately from the wider balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. The future of Middle Eastern security will continue to be shaped primarily by regional actors, but it will also be influenced by extra-regional powers whose economic and strategic interests are increasingly tied to the region's stability. Japan is becoming one of the most important among them.

The growing convergence of interests between Japan, Israel, and the Abraham Accords countries should therefore be understood not as a temporary alignment of convenience, but as a response to a changing strategic environment in which regional security systems are becoming progressively interconnected.

III. Why the Middle East Matters to Japan

Japan's strategic transformation is often explained through the rise of China, North Korea's missile and nuclear programs, and growing uncertainty surrounding Taiwan. While these factors remain the primary drivers of Tokyo's security reforms, they do not fully explain Japan's growing interest in [illegible] beyond East Asia.

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The answer lies in a fundamental reality of Japanese geopolitics: Japan remains one of the world's most energy-dependent major economies. As an island nation with limited natural resources, it relies heavily on maritime imports, particularly from the Gulf. This dependence makes the security of key maritime chokepoints—notably the Strait of Hormuz—a matter of national security.

For decades, this vulnerability was manageable. Although the Gulf periodically experienced crises, the uninterrupted flow of energy to global markets was rarely placed in serious jeopardy. Japan therefore approached the Middle East primarily through the lens of energy security, seeking stable relations with all major regional actors while avoiding involvement in local rivalries. As a major energy importer with limited military capabilities and constitutional constraints on the use of force, Tokyo had little incentive to align itself too closely with any particular regional camp.

Recent developments have begun to alter this strategic calculus. Iran and its regional proxies have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to threaten maritime commerce through missile attacks, drone operations, mining activities, and the harassment of commercial vessels. The Houthi attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea highlighted how relatively inexpensive weapons can disrupt global trade routes and generate consequences far beyond the region itself. For Japan, such developments underscore the vulnerability of the maritime networks upon which its prosperity depends.

At the same time, Iran can no longer be viewed solely through the lens of energy security and bilateral diplomacy. Traditionally, Tokyo viewed Iran primarily as an important regional actor and a potential energy partner. Japan has historically maintained cordial relations with Tehran and, unlike many Western powers, carries neither a colonial legacy nor a history of military intervention in the region. Successive Japanese governments therefore

Skip to content **serve constructive relations with Iran while maintaining strong ties with other Middle Eastern states.**

This balancing strategy is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Iran is no longer merely a regional actor. Its growing alignment with China, Russia, and North Korea places it within a broader strategic ecosystem whose activities directly affect Japanese security interests. Russia's military cooperation with Iran, China's strategic partnership with Tehran, and Iran's longstanding links to North Korea connect Middle Eastern developments to the wider geopolitical challenges confronting Japan in the Indo-Pacific.

This does not mean that Japan will adopt a policy of confrontation toward Iran. Nor does it imply that Tokyo must abandon its traditional preference for balanced diplomacy. It does mean, however, that Japan's assessment of regional partners is increasingly influenced by broader strategic considerations. States committed to freedom of navigation, the protection of critical infrastructure, technological innovation, and regional stability naturally become more important to Japanese interests.

In this context, the Abraham Accords have fundamentally altered the strategic landscape. For decades, Japan's Middle East diplomacy was constrained by the need to navigate tensions between Israel and many Arab states. Closer relations with one side often risked complicating relations with the other. The Abraham Accords have begun to change that equation by creating a framework for cooperation among countries that are increasingly aligned on issues of security, technology, investment, and connectivity. They have also facilitated new connectivity initiatives, most notably IMEC, which seeks to link India, the Gulf, Israel, and Europe through transportation, energy, and digital networks.

For Japan, this development is particularly significant. The countries participating in the Abraham Accords include some of Japan's most important economic partners, energy suppliers, and investment destinations. They are also investing heavily in advanced technologies, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, infrastructure development, and defense

The emergence of this network creates opportunities that did not exist a decade ago. Rather than treating relations with Israel and the Gulf states as separate diplomatic tracks, Japan can increasingly engage a group of partners whose interests converge around maritime security, economic resilience, technological innovation, and regional stability. Security cooperation with Israel no longer needs to be viewed separately from relations with the Gulf, while initiatives involving Gulf states can complement broader partnerships in technology, infrastructure, and connectivity.

The Middle East therefore matters to Japan for reasons that extend well beyond energy security. As regional stability becomes increasingly linked to the security of global trade routes, technological ecosystems, and the broader balance of power, developments in the Middle East have become more directly relevant to Japanese national interests. The Abraham Accords, meanwhile, provide a framework through which Japan can engage these challenges in partnership with countries whose strategic priorities increasingly overlap with its own.

IV. Why Japan Matters to the Middle East

Discussions of Japan's role in the Middle East have traditionally focused on what Japan needs from the region: energy, maritime stability, and access to global trade routes. Increasingly, however, the opposite question deserves attention: what can Japan contribute to Middle East security?

The answer is not primarily military power. Japan is unlikely to become a major military actor in the region, nor does it seek influence through military deployments or alliance networks. Its value lies elsewhere: in its technological sophistication, intelligence capabilities, economic resources, institutional reliability, and growing expertise in economic and national

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assets are becoming more consequential than traditional military power alone.

Japan's most significant contribution may be in the field of intelligence and strategic analysis. The nature of intelligence has evolved dramatically over the past two decades. Military capabilities remain important, but strategic advantage increasingly depends on the ability to integrate information across multiple domains, including cyber activity, maritime traffic, supply chains, financial flows, satellite imagery, technological developments, and critical infrastructure.

Japan is particularly well positioned in this environment. Few countries have invested more heavily in advanced sensing technologies, satellite systems, telecommunications, data analytics, and information processing. Equally important, the reforms undertaken since 2022—and especially the strengthening of the National Security Council and the Prime Minister's Office—are improving Tokyo's ability to integrate these capabilities into a coherent national-security framework.

This evolution has direct relevance for the Middle East. Many of the region's most pressing security challenges depend less on military force than on information. Monitoring maritime traffic, detecting sanctions evasion, tracking missile and drone proliferation networks, identifying cyber threats, and protecting critical infrastructure all require sophisticated intelligence capabilities. Japan is becoming increasingly capable of contributing to these missions.

Maritime security provides another area in which Japanese capabilities align closely with regional needs. The maritime routes linking the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and East Asia form a single strategic system upon which both Japan and the Middle East depend. Protecting that system requires extensive situational awareness across vast distances.

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ses some of the world's most advanced maritime surveillance capabilities. Its coast guard, maritime agencies, satellite infrastructure,

commercial shipping sector, and naval forces have developed considerable expertise in monitoring complex maritime environments. These capabilities are particularly relevant at a time when commercial shipping faces growing threats from piracy, smuggling networks, sanctions evasion, sabotage, and attacks by state and non-state actors.

For Middle Eastern partners, cooperation with Japan offers opportunities to strengthen maritime domain awareness, improve the monitoring of commercial traffic, and enhance the protection of critical shipping routes. In an era of increasingly sophisticated threats, information sharing may prove as important as naval deployments.

Japan's growing focus on economic security is equally relevant. One of the most important lessons of recent years is that economic resilience has become an essential component of national security. Supply chains, advanced technologies, critical minerals, semiconductors, telecommunications networks, and infrastructure are no longer merely economic assets; they are strategic assets. Japan has emerged as a global leader in addressing these challenges. Faced with growing geopolitical competition and technological rivalry, Tokyo has invested heavily in supply-chain resilience, technological sovereignty, and the protection of critical industries. These efforts have generated expertise that is increasingly valuable to Middle Eastern states pursuing ambitious economic diversification programs.

The Abraham Accords countries are investing heavily in advanced manufacturing, logistics, artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, and high technology. Their efforts to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons and build knowledge-based economies create natural opportunities for cooperation with Japan. Beyond trade and investment, such cooperation can contribute directly to national resilience by strengthening critical infrastructure and reducing strategic vulnerabilities.

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Cybersecurity represents another area of growing convergence. Japan, Israel, and the Abraham Accords countries are all becoming increasingly

digitalized societies whose prosperity depends on secure technological ecosystems. At the same time, they face cyber threats from many of the same actors, including China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

The significance of this challenge extends beyond the protection of computer networks. Cybersecurity today encompasses the resilience of entire societies, including energy systems, transportation networks, financial institutions, communications infrastructure, and industrial facilities. Protecting these systems requires close cooperation between governments, private companies, and technological innovators.

These complementary capabilities create a strong foundation for cooperation. Japan contributes technological sophistication, industrial capacity, and institutional reliability. Israel offers world-leading cyber expertise and operational experience. The Gulf states are investing heavily in digital transformation and smart infrastructure. Together, they can develop partnerships that extend far beyond traditional security frameworks.

Ultimately, Japan's value to the Middle East lies in its ability to strengthen resilience. Unlike traditional external powers whose influence is measured primarily through military presence, Japan contributes capabilities that help societies anticipate, absorb, and recover from strategic shocks. Its expertise in intelligence, maritime awareness, economic security, technological innovation, supply-chain resilience, and critical infrastructure protection addresses many of the challenges that are likely to define security in the twenty-first century.

Japan also enjoys a unique position in the region. It maintains positive relations with a wide range of Middle Eastern actors and is generally viewed as a pragmatic and constructive partner. Unlike many external powers, its engagement is not burdened by colonial legacies, military interventions, or hegemonic ambitions. This reputation provides Tokyo with a degree of

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xibility that few other major powers possess.

For Israel and the Abraham Accords countries, a more strategically engaged Japan therefore represents something unusual: a major power whose capabilities increasingly align with their own priorities and whose involvement can strengthen regional resilience without introducing new geopolitical rivalries. The challenge is no longer identifying areas of cooperation but creating the mechanisms necessary to transform converging interests into durable partnerships.

V. Israel as Japan's Strategic Security Partner

For much of the postwar period, relations between Japan and Israel were shaped primarily by economics, technology, and diplomacy. Security cooperation remained limited. Japan's dependence on Middle Eastern energy imports encouraged diplomatic caution, while Israel focused its strategic partnerships on the United States, Europe, and its immediate regional environment. The geographic distance separating the two countries reinforced the perception that their security interests were largely distinct.

That perception is increasingly outdated. As Japan's strategic transformation accelerates and the distinction between regional security theaters becomes less meaningful, Israel is emerging as a particularly relevant security partner. This is not because Israel is a major military power in the traditional sense. Rather, it is because Israel has accumulated decades of operational experience in confronting many of the challenges that are becoming increasingly relevant to Japan's security environment.

The character of warfare is changing. Conventional military capabilities remain important, as demonstrated by the war in Ukraine. Yet contemporary conflicts increasingly combine missile attacks, drone warfare, cyber operations, economic coercion, disinformation campaigns, and proxy

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tary and civilian domains are becoming progressively hile technological innovation is accelerating the pace of strategic competition.

Few countries have confronted these challenges as consistently as Israel. For more than two decades, Israeli defense and intelligence institutions have operated under conditions of persistent security pressure. Missile threats, cyber attacks, terrorism, proxy warfare, and regional instability have required continuous adaptation. The attacks of October 2023 and the conflicts that followed further expanded the range of threats confronting Israel, involving Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, Iranian-backed militias, and eventually direct military confrontation with Iran itself.

As a result, Israel's security environment has become one of the world's most important laboratories for understanding the evolving character of conflict. For Japan, many of these experiences offer relevant lessons for addressing emerging security challenges in East Asia.

One area of particular importance is intelligence integration. Modern security threats develop rapidly and often blur the boundaries between military, technological, economic, and civilian domains. Effective responses require the ability to collect, analyze, and integrate information from multiple sources before transforming it into operational and political decisions.

Israel has spent decades developing mechanisms for integrating intelligence, military planning, cyber capabilities, and political decision-making under conditions of constant pressure. These experiences are particularly relevant as Japan strengthens the role of its National Security Council, modernizes its strategic planning structures, and seeks to improve coordination across government institutions.

Missile defense represents a second area of convergence. Japan faces growing challenges from North Korea's missile arsenal and China's expanding military capabilities. At the same time, advances in precision-guided weapons and autonomous systems are increasing the complexity of modern air and missile defense. Threats increasingly combine ballistic [illegible]se missiles, drones, and other autonomous systems designed [illegible] traditional defenses.

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Israel's security environment has compelled it to develop one of the world's most sophisticated multi-layered defensive architectures. Equally important, Israeli experience demonstrates that effective missile defense depends not only on interceptors, but also on the integration of intelligence, sensors, command systems, and civilian preparedness. The lessons derived from operational experience under combat conditions may prove as valuable as the technologies themselves.

The proliferation of unmanned systems presents a related challenge. Drones have transformed warfare by enabling relatively inexpensive platforms to conduct surveillance, deliver precision strikes, disrupt infrastructure, and challenge traditional military advantages. Their growing role in conflicts from Ukraine to the Middle East highlights the extent to which autonomous systems are reshaping the battlefield.

For Japan, the implications are significant. Chinese military modernization increasingly incorporates autonomous platforms, while North Korea continues to expand its drone capabilities. The defense of remote islands, critical infrastructure, and maritime approaches will require increasingly sophisticated counter-drone capabilities.

Israel has developed extensive expertise in this domain through years of operational experience against drone-equipped adversaries. Beyond technological solutions, it has also developed operational concepts for detecting, tracking, disrupting, and neutralizing unmanned systems in complex environments. These experiences create natural opportunities for cooperation in research, training, doctrine, and technology development.

Yet Israel's most distinctive contribution may lie in an area often overlooked in discussions of security policy: national resilience. Modern conflicts increasingly target societies as much as armed forces. Cyber attacks can disrupt civilian infrastructure. Missile strikes can target population centers.

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n campaigns can undermine public confidence. Economic coercion can generate political pressure. The ability of societies to absorb

shocks, maintain continuity, and recover rapidly has therefore become a critical component of national security.

Israel has accumulated extensive experience in this domain. Civil-defense systems, emergency-management structures, continuity-of-government planning, public-warning mechanisms, and infrastructure redundancy have evolved through repeated crises. These institutions have been tested not only during military confrontations but also through prolonged periods of uncertainty and disruption.

Although the threats confronting Japan differ in important respects, the broader challenge is similar. Both countries must prepare for an era in which resilience is becoming as important as deterrence. The ability to sustain economic activity, protect critical infrastructure, maintain public confidence, and ensure governmental continuity during crises is increasingly central to national security.

Israel's value to Japan therefore extends beyond any single technology or defense system. What Israel offers is practical experience in managing many of the challenges that are likely to characterize future conflict. Japan, in turn, brings technological sophistication, industrial capacity, economic resources, and a growing capacity to contribute to regional security. The strengths of the two countries are highly complementary.

As Japan assumes a more active security role and Israel seeks to expand its strategic partnerships beyond its immediate region, the foundations exist for a relationship that extends well beyond traditional diplomacy. Such cooperation would not only strengthen bilateral ties. It could also serve as a cornerstone of a broader framework linking Japan, Israel, and the Abraham Accords countries in support of regional stability, resilience, and security.

The Abraham Accords have created the foundations of a new regional framework based not on ideology but on shared interests. Economic modernization, technological innovation, maritime security, and resistance to destabilizing actors are increasingly driving cooperation among participating states. Japan's strategic transformation creates an opportunity to connect this emerging framework to a broader network of partners committed to regional stability, secure trade, and technological resilience.

Such cooperation should not take the form of a military alliance. Political realities in both Japan and the Middle East make such an outcome neither realistic nor necessary. Instead, the objective should be the gradual development of a flexible framework centered on intelligence cooperation, maritime security, economic resilience, cyber security, and strategic dialogue.

The most promising starting point is intelligence cooperation. Missile proliferation, cyber threats, sanctions-evasion networks, drone technologies, illicit financial flows, and supply-chain vulnerabilities increasingly transcend regional boundaries. Particular attention should be devoted to monitoring the growing connections among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The goal is not a formal intelligence alliance, but regular mechanisms through which information can be exchanged, analyzed, and incorporated into strategic planning. The strengthening of Japan's National Security Council creates new opportunities for such cooperation with the countries participating in the Abraham Accords.

Maritime security represents a second pillar. The sea lanes connecting the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and East Asia form a single strategic system upon which global trade and energy flows depend. Japan and the Abraham Accords countries occupy critical nodes within this system and share a strong interest in preserving freedom of navigation and protecting maritime infrastructure. Cooperation should focus on maritime

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and undersea communications infrastructure, and exchanges among maritime-security agencies.

Economic security constitutes a third area of convergence. Competition over semiconductors, artificial intelligence, telecommunications networks, critical minerals, and advanced manufacturing has demonstrated that national security increasingly depends on technological and industrial resilience. In this context, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) should be understood not merely as an infrastructure project but as a strategic connectivity framework linking India, the Gulf, Israel, and Europe through transportation, energy, digital, and technological networks.

Japan is a natural participant in this effort. Its expertise in infrastructure development, logistics, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, and strategic investment aligns closely with IMEC's objectives. Japanese participation would strengthen the corridor's economic viability while reinforcing supply-chain resilience and economic integration among like-minded partners.

A fourth pillar should focus on cyber resilience and critical infrastructure protection. Japan and the Abraham Accords countries are increasingly dependent on digital networks and interconnected economic systems while facing cyber threats from many of the same actors. Cooperation should therefore extend beyond traditional cybersecurity to include the protection of energy systems, transportation networks, financial infrastructure, telecommunications, and critical supply chains. Joint exercises, information sharing, common standards, and technological cooperation would strengthen resilience across all participating states.

The success of this framework will depend on sustained political commitment. Japan should expand its existing dialogue with Israel into a broader strategic-security partnership while establishing regular

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with the Abraham Accords countries on intelligence, cyber security, economic security, and critical infrastructure protection. The Abraham Accords countries should likewise create institutional mechanisms

for cooperation with Japan in maritime security, digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and economic resilience. The United States should encourage and support these efforts as part of a broader strategy linking its partnerships across the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East.

The purpose of such cooperation is not to create a new alliance structure. It is to build a network of capable partners able to address shared challenges across an increasingly interconnected security environment. Japan's strategic transformation and the emergence of the Abraham Accords have created a unique opportunity to begin building such a framework.

Conclusion

Japan's strategic transformation is one of the most consequential geopolitical developments of the twenty-first century. For nearly eight decades, Tokyo pursued a security model that prioritized economic development while relying heavily on the United States for protection. Today, a changing strategic environment is driving Japan toward a more proactive role in regional and international security.

At the same time, the Middle East is undergoing a transformation of its own. The Abraham Accords have begun to reshape regional dynamics, creating new opportunities for cooperation in technology, connectivity, maritime security, and economic resilience. These developments are unfolding against the backdrop of growing cooperation among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, whose activities increasingly connect security challenges across the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe.

The result is a strategic environment in which traditional geographic distinctions are becoming less relevant. Energy security, supply chains, maritime stability, and technological competition now link

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ere once treated as separate theaters. Developments in the

Strait of Hormuz can affect economic security in East Asia just as tensions in the Indo-Pacific can influence strategic calculations in the Middle East.

In this context, Japan's relationship with the Middle East can no longer be viewed solely through the prism of energy imports. The region has become increasingly relevant to broader Japanese security interests, while Japan's growing capabilities in intelligence, technology, economic security, and resilience have become increasingly relevant to the region.

The Abraham Accords provide a framework through which these converging interests can be translated into practical cooperation. Rather than requiring Japan to choose among regional actors, they create opportunities to engage a network of partners committed to economic modernization, secure trade routes, technological innovation, and regional stability. Intelligence cooperation, maritime security, cyber resilience, critical infrastructure protection, and strategic connectivity initiatives such as IMEC offer practical avenues for advancing these shared interests.

The objective is not to create a new alliance structure. It is to build a flexible framework of cooperation among states confronting many of the same challenges in an increasingly interconnected world.

As Japan assumes a more active strategic role and the Abraham Accords continue to reshape the Middle East, a new opportunity is emerging to connect the Indo-Pacific, the Gulf, and the Mediterranean through shared interests rather than formal alignments. What began as separate developments in East Asia and the Middle East may ultimately contribute to a broader framework of cooperation among states committed to stability, connectivity, and resilience. In an era of increasingly interconnected security challenges, such frameworks are likely to become as important as traditional alliances.

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