The move comes amid heightened geopolitical tensions, with Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike asking the ruling parties to make final proposals for potential changes to the law. In March 2022, the government set the goal of strengthening the country's military, but will prefer to defend its own territory and will not be involved in actual combat operations far from Japan.

Deployments but also because the SDF is not set up to execute and maintain the “rules-based international order,” Japan is often seen as having to choose between defending itself and following international norms. Security relations may increase the chances of it being sucked into a major international conflict.

Christopher Hughes, a Japan expert and professor at Warwick University, said the security buildup is a reaction to the increasing threat of ballistic missiles. "Historical changes in power balances" noted in the NSS, said Robert Ward, the Japan chair at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The seriousness with which Tokyo views the deterioration of China's military, and Tokyo's perennial concerns about Russia, as well as the mounting tensions over Taiwan and territorial disputes in the East and South China seas, means that Japan is able to take the primary responsibility for dealing with the "asymmetric advantage" in the region.

"As a country without a natural shield, we have to find ways of building upon our allies," said Ryo Hinata, a professor at Meiji University. "This is the most important task of the SDF.

More rapid than anything in history, the SDF is adding new units, developing new weapons, and establishing new partnerships at a pace without recent parallel as it reacts to a changing geopolitical environment. Indeed, Tokyo is expected to continue expanding its bilateral security partnerships.

Indeed, Tokyo is expected to continue expanding its bilateral security relationships while looking for opportunities to exercise with military partners both in the Asia-Pacific region. Under the current regulations, Japan can only sell defense equipment in the first sale of Patriot air-and-missile shelters and develop a next-generation fighter aircraft by 2035.

But the rapid succession of security deals also points to a sense of hurry of activity across so many areas, with so many different minded partners both in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

Washington's reliability, particularly should Donald Trump be re-elected, is in question, while the threat of an increasingly challenging security environment is forcing Japan to reassess its relationship with the United States — strengthening and expanding its network of like-minded partners both in the Asia-Pacific region.

Another important pact was signed with Japan's "quasi-ally" Australia, giving Japan a powerful deterrent in the powder-keg region. March 2028, giving Japan a powerful deterrent in the powder-keg region.