

Pacifist Japan unveils biggest military build-up since World War Two

TOKYO, Dec 16 (Reuters) - Japan on Friday unveiled its biggest military build-up since World War Two with a \$320 billion plan that will buy missiles capable of striking China and ready it for sustained conflict, as regional tensions and Russia's Ukraine invasion stoke war fears.

The sweeping, five-year plan, once unthinkable in pacifist Japan, will make the country the world's third-biggest military spender after the United States and China, based on current budgets.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who described Japan and its people as being at a "turning point in history", said the ramp-up was "my answer to the various security challenges that we face".

His government worries that Russia has set a precedent that will encourage China to attack Taiwan, threatening nearby Japanese islands, disrupting supplies of advanced semiconductors and putting a potential stranglehold on sea lanes that supply Middle East oil.

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