

Japan agrees to pay more for hosting U.S. troops

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U.S. Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, carry gear into an MV-22 while conducting on and off drills at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, on May 17, 2021 © US Marine Corps / Cpl. Karis Mattingly

Tokyo, December 21 (RHC)-- Tokyo will pay 211 billion yen (\$1.86 billion) per fiscal year to host more than 50,000 US troops in Japan starting next April, an increase of about 10 billion yen a year from the previously negotiated arrangement with Washington.

The deal would see Japan pay 1.05 trillion yen (around \$9.3 billion) to the U.S. over a five-year period, Japanese media reported on Tuesday. The agreement will be officially signed by the foreign and defense

ministers of both countries, scheduled for sometime in January in the United States.

Japanese news agency Kyodo said the agreement came in response to the Biden administration's request for an increase in "host nation support" payments, given the need for the U.S. forces to "deal with China."

While the agreement does increase the payments by roughly 5%, that's a far cry from the proposals floated in 2019 by the Trump administration, which reportedly went as high as 150%. The current fiscal year budget for troop support is 201.7 billion yen, under an interim agreement Japan and the US reached in February, after Joe Biden was sworn in as Trump's replacement.

Tokyo will also pay less for utility costs, and part of the increase will go towards maintenance of facilities jointly used by the US military and Japan's Self-Defense Forces, as well as joint exercises, Japanese government sources told the daily Mainichi Shimbun.

Japan and South Korea account for nearly half the U.S. troops deployed overseas, with an estimated 54,000 and 26,000 soldiers members, respectively.

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