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## **DOES THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR HERALD A NEW ERA FOR JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY?**

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Russias invasion of Ukraine has swiftly changed the security landscape of Europe. NATO has stepped up troop deployments to member states in Eastern Europe. Sweden and Finland are poised to apply for NATO membership, a step previously opposed and now embraced by their publics. And in the most dramatic transformation, Germanys new chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced once-unthinkable investments in German military capabilities and shipments of arms to Ukraine. He had good reason to call Russias invasion of Ukraine a *Zeitenwende* – a watershed moment, and the end of an era.

However, where the war in Ukraine has led European publics to dramatically revise not just their perceptions but their policies, its not clear than the Japanese public is as ready to undertake such wholesale revisions.

To be clear, the war in Ukraine has prompted a much different reaction from Japan than past international crises. In the past, perhaps most famously the 1991 Gulf War, Japan has held back, unsure of its role and hesitant to commit to action even in concert with close allies. This time is different. Since February, Japan has imposed a broad and escalating set of economic sanctions on Russia in coordination with G-7 allies, including freezes of Russian assets and expulsions of Russian diplomats.

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