

Kyotango Demands Clarity on Unannounced U.S.-Japan Military Drill

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KYOTANGO, JAPAN, City officials in Kyotango, located in Kyoto Prefecture, are calling for a full explanation after a joint U.S.-Japan military exercise was conducted earlier this month without any prior notice to local authorities or defense officials.

The training event took place on July 10 at the Kyogamisaki Communications Site, a U.S. military installation known for housing X-band radar used in ballistic missile detection.

According to a local eyewitness, the exercise included U.S. military personnel and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's 7th Infantry Regiment from nearby Fukuchiyama. The event was only revealed publicly on July 16, when photos and a description were posted on the base's official Facebook page.

Historically, drills at Kyogamisaki have been communicated in advance to both local and regional stakeholders. This time, however, the Kinki-Chubu Defense Bureau, part of Japan's Ministry of Defense, was also kept in the dark.

At a July 31 liaison meeting hosted by the Ministry, Kyotango Deputy Mayor Kazuyoshi Nakanishi expressed concern over the lack of transparency, saying, "The city and its residents must be properly informed about all training exercises. This oversight is unacceptable."

The Defense Bureau issued an apology, stating, "We deeply regret the inconvenience caused. We will work to ensure better communication with local authorities moving forward." Still, officials admitted they had no additional details to provide regarding the nature or purpose of the drill.

The drill was described online as part of a Field Training Exercise (FTX), a standard military term for ground-based joint operations. One concerned resident told reporters, "The fact that even Japan's defense ministry wasn't informed raises serious questions. Civilian control should never be sidelined."

Military cooperation between Japan and the United States remains a key part of regional security in the Indo-Pacific, but this incident has reignited concerns about local oversight and the transparency of allied operations conducted on Japanese soil.

As of August 3, Japan's Ministry of Defense has not announced when its investigation into the matter will conclude.