# Japan Conducts UAV Trials to Boost Surveillance Capabilities Amid Naval Threats



The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is testing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to enhance surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities amid rising naval activities by China and Russia. An MQ-9B SeaGuardian UAV recently landed at Kanoya Air Base in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, marking a significant step in ongoing trials. This UAV, developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI), traveled from Hachinohe Air Base, covering approximately 2,000 kilometers.

Japan's defense minister, Minoru Kinara, has announced that UAV trials will continue over the East China Sea from July to September 2024. The SeaGuardian UAV is part of Japan's strategy to explore the use of remotely piloted systems for tasks traditionally performed by manned patrol aircraft. The UAV is equipped for long-duration maritime surveillance, with capabilities that include anti-submarine and electronic warfare.

Meanwhile, at Japan’s Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, another UAV, the MQ-4C Triton, arrived on June 9, 2024. This arrival follows a previous deployment at the same base in May 2024, part of ongoing efforts to bolster intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations throughout the region.

In a related development, Ukraine has been using drones to target Russian airbases, successfully damaging advanced aircraft, including Su-57 stealth fighters, deep within Russian territory. Ukrainian strikes aim to disrupt Russian air capabilities and force a reallocation of air defense systems. These actions underscore the expanding role of drones in modern military strategy.