

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

INTERNATIONAL
Newsweek



**Prime Minister
Fumio Kishida:
HOW
JAPAN WILL
CONTAIN THE
THREAT OF
CHINA
AND NORTH
KOREA**

**POWER
MOVE**

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As the 'peace-loving nation' doubles its defense spending, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida explains why it needs to take an assertive stance to counter China and North Korea.

by TOM O'CONNOR

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TRANSFORMING CARE Remote medical appointments are part of a burgeoning global digital health industry, which has a projected market volume of \$275 billion by 2028.

COVER Photograph by Haruo Motohashi for Newsweek



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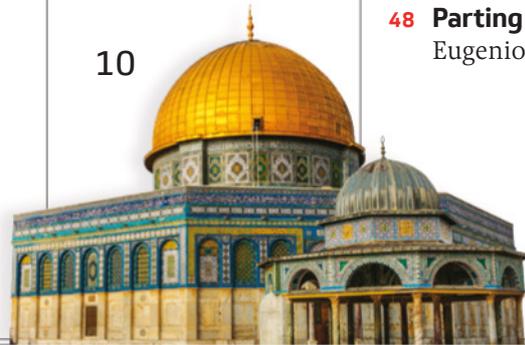
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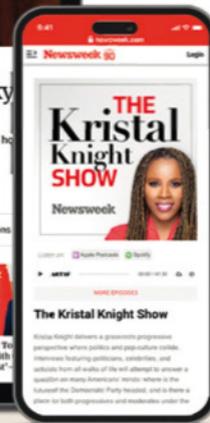
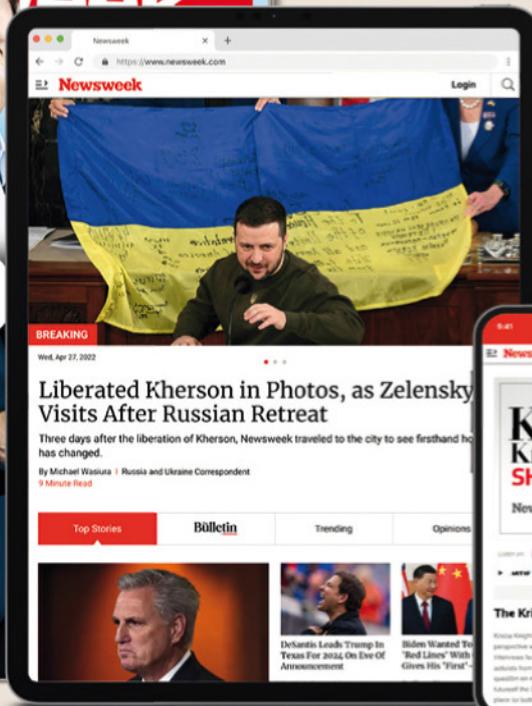
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The Archives

2008

“In April, a new poll revealed that 81 percent of the American people believe that the country is on the ‘wrong track.’ In the 25 years that pollsters have asked this question, last month’s response was by far the most negative,” *Newsweek* reported. Fifteen years later, an October 2023 poll found that 78 percent of respondents share the same sentiment. Over the past two decades, American presidential approval ratings have ranged between 41 and 55 percent, often leaving a majority of Americans displeased with the country’s leader. An April poll rated Biden’s approval at 43 percent.



1985

“At least 5 million Americans are caring for a parent on any given day,” *Newsweek* said. According to a 2023 study, nearly 53 million Americans care for a family member. The study also found that almost a quarter of Americans fulfill caregiving duties for family members while also working full time.



1990

“Anti-Semitism, the offspring of unbridled religion and nationalism, is working the fringes of the new politics of...Eastern Europe,” *Newsweek* wrote. According to the Anti-Defamation League, in the three months since Hamas’ October 7 attack on Israel, 3,291 antisemitic incidents occurred in the U.S., a 361-percent increase. 

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In Focus

THE NEWS IN PICTURES



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STANDS WITH PALESTINE

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STAND WITH STUDENTS
FOR
PALESTINE

LIBERATION
IS COMPATIBLE WITH
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NEW YORK CITY

Campus Uprising

Pro-Palestinian protesters occupy a lawn near Columbia University’s Butler Library on April 21, the fifth day of the “Gaza Solidarity Encampment.” Their demands included that the university divest support from Israel. Three days earlier, President Minouche Shafik called in the NYPD and 108 students were arrested for presenting a “clear and present danger,” violating university policies and trespassing. Classes were moved to a hybrid model for the rest of the semester, while similar encampments were erected at more than 40 other campuses across the country.

ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN





PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

Banding Together

Members of Haiti's National Palace band are escorted into the official residence by an armed guard on April 25 for the swearing-in of a nine-member transitional council. Prime Minister Ariel Henry had handed in his resignation amid spiraling violence earlier that day. As the council prepared to vote for the next president, notorious gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier warned the country to "brace itself."

📷 ▶ GUERINAULT LOUIS



CERVIA, ITALY

The High Life

A colorful kite flies over Pinarella Beach on the Adriatic Coast during the 44th Artevento Cervia International Kite Festival on April 25. Over 12 days, 250 wind artists and aerobatic flight champions from 50 countries came together to share their passion at the world's longest-running international kite festival. This year, Korea was chosen as the country of honor, celebrating 140 years of diplomatic relations with Italy.

📷 ▶ GIUSEPPE COTTINI



ATHENS, GREECE

Dawn to Dust

A couple look out over the Greek capital from Tourkovounia Hill as the city lies cloaked in Saharan dust on April 23. The National Observatory of Athens said winds blew "Minerva Red"—seen from a NASA satellite—over the Eastern Mediterranean region, bringing the highest concentration of desert dust to Greece in over a decade. The dense orange haze prompted air quality warnings.

📷 ▶ ANGELOS TZORTZINIS/AFP

DISPUTED TERRITORY

Muslims pray during Ramadan outside the Dome of the Rock—an ancient Islamic shrine built on Judaism's holiest site and Islam's third holiest, where two ancient Jewish temples are believed to have stood—in Jerusalem on March 29, 2024.





MIDDLE EAST

Red Cows, Gaza and the End of the World

As the Israel-Hamas war rages on, the Third Temple movement is ramping up its bid to reclaim a contested holy site in Jerusalem currently home to ancient Islamic shrines

IT IS SAID THAT THIS IS WHERE THE WORLD began—and perhaps where it will end.

The true epicenter of the war in the Holy Land is not the devastated Gaza Strip, under Israeli assault since Hamas' bloody raid last October sparked the region's deadliest conflict in decades. It is a few dozen miles away in Jerusalem, at the holiest and most fiercely contested hilltop on Earth.

The war has increased religious tensions and given new impetus to a group of Jews and their evangelical Christian allies who are set on rebuilding an ancient temple where millennium-old Islamic shrines now stand—a suggestion that arouses the horror not only of Palestinians and Muslims worldwide, but of many Jews in Israel and around the globe as well as that of would-be Middle East peacemakers.

Third Temple advocates have been preparing for the day when the temple can be rebuilt, complete with rabbinically-

certified red cows shipped from Texas for use in sacrificial purification rituals. The architectural designs are all ready, along the lines of the detailed Biblical descriptions. Robes have been woven and utensils assembled to Biblical specifications for ceremonies at the planned temple.

Messianic Jewish supporters believe the rebuilding of the temple, rather than being divisive, would fulfill Biblical prophecy to bring an era of peace with the temple as “a house of prayer for all nations.” Christian backers, meanwhile, believe it would be an important step toward the Second Coming of Jesus and an apocalyptic last battle with the Antichrist.

“Our holy warriors who are fighting in Gaza are actually fighting for the building of the Temple,” one Jewish prayer leader pronounced recently on a controversial visit to the believed site of two previous Jewish temples in Jerusalem.

by

**MATTHEW
TOSTEVIN**

Standing before the Dome of the Rock, the gleaming Islamic shrine that has sat for more than 1,300 years on the same contested spot, Marina Sokol, an Israeli mother whose son was killed fighting Hamas in Gaza, proclaimed: “The war we are waging is a war for the Temple Mount.”

In their war to destroy Israel and replace it with an Islamic state, Hamas leaders also readily draw on the symbolism of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary). It is the third holiest site in Islam with its Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as being the holiest site in Judaism. “This round of conflict is being waged by the resistance under the name ‘Al-Aqsa Flood.’ It is not for the sake of Gaza or the West Bank, but rather for the sake of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa,” Hamas spokesperson Bassem Naim told *Newsweek*.

Hamas killed about 1,200 Israelis and kidnapped more than 200 in its unprecedented October 7 attack, according to Israeli figures. Israel’s ensuing offensive against Hamas has so far killed over 32,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to Hamas authorities there. They do not say how many of those were combatants. Israel says at least 13,000 of them were.

Historical Significance

Hamas has long put the fight against “Judaization” of holy sites high on its list of reasons for seeking to destroy Israel.

During the holy month of Ramadan, Hamas leaders again urged Palestinians to rally to the 36-acre holy site,

scene of frequent confrontations in the past, and spark for wider violence. Israel has restricted the number of worshippers in the name of security concerns, drawing complaints from Palestinians of unfair treatment and of breaking longstanding agreements.

Israel’s government has set its three war aims in Gaza as destroying Hamas, bringing home the

hostages that remain and ensuring that the territory can no longer pose a threat—aims that have widespread support among Israeli Jews. But the hope that the conflict might be a step to the rebuilding of the temple also resonates for Third Temple advocates, who form part of a fringe that has gained strength under the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“The Holy Temple—Now, More than Ever!” said a social media post from the Temple Institute, one of the leading groups seeking to promote interest in rebuilding the temple.

“We’re all looking forward to the day after Israel’s defeat of all our enemies. Building the Holy Temple, ‘a house of prayer for all nations,’ (Isaiah 56:7) is the only peace plan that can & will succeed!” said the institute, which in the past was reported to have received some state funding,

“The Muslims correctly understand the historical and religious significance of the Temple Mount for the Jewish people.... In effect, the war in Gaza is very much a war over the Temple Mount.”



CLOSE PROXIMITY Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall on October 2, overlooked by the Dome of the Rock—built on the hill known as both the Temple Mount and Noble Sanctuary.

but says it no longer does. “The Muslims correctly understand the historical and religious significance of the Temple Mount for the Jewish people and therefore focus their incitement on the Temple Mount,” Yitzchak Reuven, director of the Temple Institute’s international department, told *Newsweek*. “In effect, the war in Gaza is very much a war over the Temple Mount.”

An Israeli government spokesperson acknowledged *Newsweek*’s questions but did not respond by time of publication.

For Palestinians, the growing Jewish religious activity at the site is already a step toward cataclysm.

“These are the seeds of conflict and the seeds of the type of fire that could burn the entire Middle East,” Palestinian academic Adnan Joulani told *Newsweek*. “This is the most dangerous plot of land to play with.”

The Palestinian Authority, which runs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and seeks a state alongside Israel, did not respond to a request for comment.

According to Jewish tradition, the place known as Mount Moriah is where the world was created. This was where Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice. For Jews and Christians that son was Isaac, whereas most Muslim sources say it was Ishmael. This was where King Solomon built the First Temple, destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. It’s thought the Second Temple was built 70 years later—the temple from which Christians believe Jesus drove out the moneychangers. That temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The well-known Western Wall is a portion of the retaining wall of that hill known to Jews as the Temple Mount, on which the two temples are thought to have stood, and which is now the site of the plaza on



TARGET Gilad Erdan, Israel’s ambassador to the U.N., shows footage of Hamas rockets over the Dome of the Rock while speaking at the U.N. Security Council last month in New York City.

which both the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock have been built.

For Muslims, the site is where Muhammad made a miraculous night journey from Mecca before ascending to heaven. Muhammad and his early followers turned here for prayer before they turned to Mecca. The Dome of the Rock was built little over 50 years after Muhammad’s death in 632 A.D. In the Middle Ages, some Muslims, Jews and Christians believed the gold-domed and elaborately tiled structure actually was Solomon’s Temple.

Outliers

A call to rebuild the temple is part of the daily prayers of religious Jews. But those actively seeking to make it happen are outliers within a religious nationalist movement that sees a God-given right over all the land from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea—a belief which has helped drive settlement of the occupied West Bank since the 1967 Middle East War. Still a tiny minority, Third Temple advocates gained momentum as Israeli politics swung toward the religious right under Netanyahu.

“The Third Temple movement have a lot of power. They are in the government, they are having a lot of support,

something they never had before,” said Yonatan Mizrahi of the Peace Now group, part of a once-influential left-wing peace movement that has itself been pushed to the margins, particularly since the Hamas attack. “Twenty years ago, even the settlers tried to avoid dealing with the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. There were only a few people, a few dozen, and today we’re talking about a movement,” he told *Newsweek*. “A very loud movement, but still a minority.”

Outside Israel, the movement has little traction.

“First of all, 90 percent of American Jews have no concept of a Third Temple in any traditional way,” said Rabbi Asher Lopatin, director of community relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Michigan. “The other 10 percent who are Orthodox or traditional are almost entirely of the opinion that the Third Temple will be rebuilt only after the Mashiach (Messiah) comes and there is world peace,” he told *Newsweek*. “Ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that only God will build the Third Temple.”

The Third Temple activists in Israel distance themselves from the most extreme radicals, such as the underground group whose members were arrested in 1984 with an alleged plan to blow up the Muslim sites. Many Third Temple activists assert that ultimately Muslims themselves will ask for the temple to be built in fulfillment of divine will.

“We definitely need to get rid of the Dome of the Rock,” said Melissa Jane Kronfeld, who came to Israel from New York and is a vocal supporter of the movement. “I actually think it should be moved and preserved into a beautiful museum somewhere,” she said. “It’s not part of the plan,” she told *Newsweek*. “God laid out exactly what the temple is supposed to be.”

She and others are not fazed by the challenges over removing one of the world's most iconic structures. In addition to being an architectural emblem of Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock is a symbol of the state long sought by Palestinians with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel also claims Jerusalem as its capital. The Dome of the Rock is part of the same compound as the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is not itself on the land where the temples are thought to have stood.

"We will defend the mosque to the very end," said Abu Ibrahim, a retired taxi driver, outside the mosque. He took a bullet through the leg during riots in 1990 when Palestinians feared a takeover by Third Temple activists. At least 17 Palestinians were killed at the time. "It is an Islamic place and not a Jewish one," he said. "They have no right to pray here."

Prayer Rights

The struggle over prayer rights is happening right now.

Every morning that visits by non-Muslims are allowed, groups of religious Jews gather at the one gate

through which they are permitted to visit. Every morning, an Israeli police officer tells them that they are not allowed to pray on the Temple Mount. Every morning, they go up under police escort and pray there, reciting from their mobile phones.

"Those who say prayers aren't happening here aren't the ones who are coming up with us," said Kronfeld, whose group, High On The Har, encourages visitors.

The legal situation for prayers is complicated. After Israel captured the site in the 1967 war, it ignored the suggestion of the army's then-chief rabbi to blow up the Dome of the Rock and clear the way for the Third Temple. Instead, the government chose to retain a "status quo" with administration under an Islamic Waqf that bans prayer by anyone except Muslims.

Although Israel's Supreme Court has ruled that Jews have the

LEGAL COMPLICATIONS Israeli forces, at Lions' Gate on February 23, have been limiting some Palestinians from entering the Dome of the Rock for Friday prayers.

right to pray there, it also said that the right can be limited in the public interest—as in, to avoid inflaming the situation. Visits by non-Muslims are not allowed on Fridays: the day of the main Muslim prayers, or on the Jewish Sabbath. They are also banned during Ramadan and other Muslim holidays.

The status quo has come under strain as Israeli politics has shifted. Hard-line Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir made the point of proclaiming Israeli ownership during controversial visits last year, drawing furious responses from Palestinian groups, including Hamas. The security ministry did not respond to a *Newsweek* request for comment.

Palestinians complain that their own prayer rights are being restricted by the Israelis, particularly since the war in Gaza.

"They are changing the status quo and creating a new agenda," Palestinian political scientist Mahdi Abdul Hadi, a member of the Waqf council, told *Newsweek*.

Trouble at the site quickly fires up the region. It helped to trigger the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 as the uprising derailed peace talks. In 2021, Israeli police stormed the compound after stone-throwing protests over Ramadan prayer restrictions. The result: 11 days of fighting between Hamas and Israel, and an inexorable step toward the latest conflict.

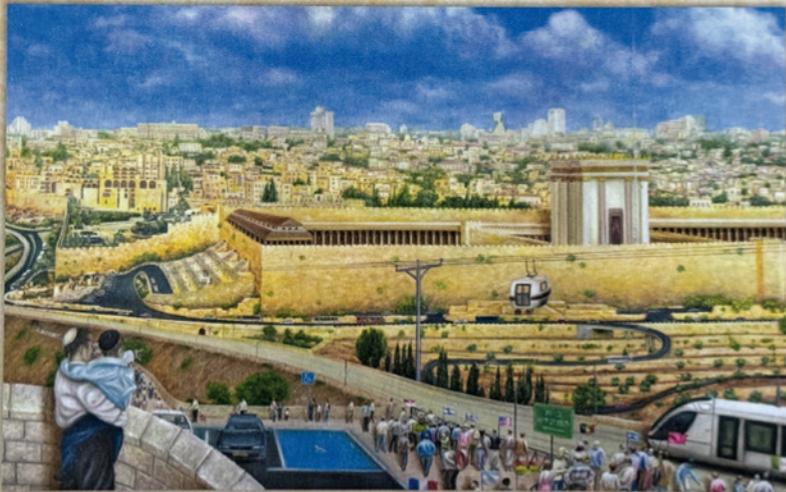
"This is a symbol for us. We have a holy duty to save it," said Palestinian shoe seller Sami Taim, who at 24 is too young to be allowed inside the compound most of the time by the Israeli border police who patrol the Old City. "We will never give up," he told *Newsweek*.

While Israeli Jews agree on the holiness of the site, there is no unified view of what should be done



Pilgrimage to the Third Temple

עולים לבית מקדש השלישי



The Temple Institute, Jerusalem

מכון המקדש, ירושלים

PREPARED The Temple Institute's gift shop sells postcards featuring an artist's impression of Jerusalem with the Third Temple in place of the Dome of the Rock.

site as a religious commandment: for the rest, it was to demonstrate sovereignty. Among secular Jews, 39 percent opposed allowing prayers because of the potential reaction from the Muslim world.

Strains are evident at the site itself. Impatient police guards hasten the Jewish worshippers along. One secular officer draws a severe rebuke from Kronfeld when he lights up a cigarette and flicks ash on the ancient stones.

The relationship between Israeli governments and the Third Temple movement has also been equivocal—at times dismissive, but with supporters also courted for political advantage. In 2013, Israel's Army Radio revealed that the Temple Institute had been getting state funding for its cultural and educational work, although it now says it gets no government help and relies on donations and sales from its museum and gift shop.

In the Old City's Jewish Quarter, the institute's displays feature robes made using Biblical-era dyes and yarn that have been prepared for the eventual ceremonies at the temple. There is an altar and a solid-gold menorah. The gift shop sells postcards with an artist's impression of the Jerusalem of the future, with pilgrims heading to a Third Temple that has replaced the Dome of the Rock.

"Most physical preparations have already been made," the institute's Reuven said. "The Temple vessels have been recreated. The Temple Institute has also recreated the garments of the high priest as well as the other priests. A modest scale-sized altar has

there in a society that has its own deep divisions among the religious; between the religious and secular; between left and right; and between Israelis whose ancestors immigrated from different parts of the world. "The fact that our enemies recognize the importance of this place and we don't is literally the tragedy of a generation," lamented one young prayer leader during a prayer at the site one Sunday for a dozen or so people, some of whom visit several times a day.

By contrast, Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef has said that any Jew who even visits the site is sinning—not to even mention seeking to build a Third Temple. He sent a stern letter to Ben-Gvir after his visit.

Even on the religious right, some are wary of the Third Temple movement in fear that it could undermine the immediate push for prayer rights at the holy site.

"I pray every single day for a Third Temple, but there's a difference in this time and in these generations from the practical step that we want," said Yishai Fleisher, international

spokesperson for the Jewish community of Hebron, scene of frequent confrontations between Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank. "Nobody is offering up a bill to build a Third Temple, but we do want it to be open on the Sabbath," he told *Newsweek*.

Israeli Divisions

A poll in 2022 found that 50 percent of Israeli Jews favored allowing Jewish prayers at the Temple Mount, with 40 percent against. But only 12 percent saw prayer at the

"The Third Temple movement have a lot of power. They are in the government, they are having a lot of support, something they never had before.... [They're] a very loud movement, but still a minority."

FROM LEFT: MUSTAFA ALKHAROUF/ANADOLU/GETTY; MATTHEW TOSTEVIN

also been made, which can easily be transported to its intended location on the Temple Mount.”

“While we make every effort in our limited ability to kindle interest in building the temple, the rebuilding of the temple is not a Temple Institute project. Such a monumental effort would need to be based on broad support from the people of Israel and members of the international community,” he added.

Evangelical Link

Non-Jews are among the most fervent supporters of the Third Temple: they are Christians who anticipate the Second Coming of Jesus before a Day of Judgment—a view of the End Times that is, in fact, broadly shared with Muslims.

One of those believers is Byron Stinson, a soft-spoken Texan and self-proclaimed Judeo-Christian who splits his time between the U.S. and Israel and is dedicated to helping “the fathers of the faith” build a new temple.

“This is God’s plan,” he told *Newsweek* by phone from his truck rolling across Texas. “It’s being lived out right now right in front of our eyes.”

Stinson helped secure five red heifers in Texas and ship them over in 2022. The cattle are needed for a purifying ceremony for the temple (sacrificial knives are on display at the Temple Institute). Not any red cows will do. They must be “without defect or blemish” (Numbers 19) and must never have worked. It was not cheap getting them to Israel: They had to be transported as pets aboard an American Airlines Boeing 777.

VOCAL SUPPORTER Third Temple activist Melissa Jane Kronfeld believes the Dome of the Rock should be moved to a museum.

Once the ceremony has been performed and the ashes of a red heifer are mixed with herbs and the waters of Jerusalem’s Gihon Spring, the purifying mix can last hundreds of years, Stinson said. But he reckoned 20 or 30 years would be enough for the temple.

“When we see the temple there, I’m expecting repentance, and then joy, and then celebration of the power of God, because he is showing the world that he is God,” Stinson said. “It’s not like it’ll happen in one day, in my opinion, but it will happen.”

Holy Cows

For now, home for the cows is a metal shed more than 7,000 miles from their Texas birthplace at the Israeli settlement of Shiloh in the West Bank.

“I’m always told the Third Temple is going to destabilize the Middle East and it’s going to start a war. Well, I’m pretty sure the war is already here.... What if the Third Temple is the answer?”



They look out from their straw-lined pen with gentle eyes, offering up muzzles in the hope of petting or treats. Rabbis inspect them occasionally to ensure they have no white hairs.

There is symbolism to having the red heifers in Shiloh. According to believers, this is where the tabernacle—a portable forerunner of the temple—stood for more than 300 years. In the Bible, Shiloh was Israel’s first capital. Now, it is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and violence in the West Bank has intensified along with the Israel-Hamas war.

Shiloh is one of the settlements that have long been seen by Palestinians and negotiators as among the biggest obstacles to a peace agreement and as illegal under international law—a view challenged by Israel.

Those settlements are now home to more than half a million people. Netanyahu, a longstanding opponent of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, planted an olive tree at Shiloh in 2019. A plaque says the tree he planted “symbolizes our hold on the ground of our homeland.” Olive trees can live for thousands of years.

Long Fight

Third Temple advocates point out to those who question their ambitions that the idea of Israel itself is not much more than a century old and few believed in it when Theodor Herzl founded his movement to promote Zionism in the 19th century.

The religious dimension to the conflict and the vision of a multi-generational struggle—on top of nationalism, claims to land and the basic survival sought by all parties—further confound would-be peacemakers such as the successive U.S. administrations that have called for a two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians splitting the land.

FROM LEFT: MATTHEW TOSTEVIN; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JACK GUEZ/AFP/GETTY; MURTAJA LATEEF/AFP/GETTY; KEN CEDENO/CORBIS/GETTY; AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP/GETTY



SYMBOLIC Clockwise from top left: Red cows brought to Israel from the U.S. for ritual sacrifice; a Baghdad demonstrator with flags featuring an image of the Dome of the Rock; Ultra-Orthodox Jews protected by Israeli police on the Temple Mount; and the Islamic shrine on the site.

“Westerners have difficulties accepting this type of prism to conflict,” said Efraim Inbar, president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. “It’s a misconception to believe that the Americans will suggest some kind of wonderful agreement and pour money on us, on them. It’s nonsense.”

Prospects for such an agreement appear to have receded further during the Israel-Hamas war, with Netanyahu categorically rejecting U.S. President Joe Biden’s calls to back one. Support for a two-state solution had been flagging even before October 7, but a Gallup poll at the end of 2023 said it stood at 25 percent in Israel compared to 61 percent in 2012.

Support among the Palestinians

has also tumbled from a decade ago, although a survey in March showed that it had nearly doubled in Gaza to 62 percent since December, while still only 34 percent in the West Bank.

The absence of a deal for a Palestinian state suits Third Temple advocates. Some activists believe the trauma of the Hamas attack on October 7 and the war that followed will push Israelis further toward a stronger claim to the holy sites—if only from security concerns rather than from religious convictions.

Although the war has prompted accusations from left-wingers that Israel’s rightward tilt and neglect of peacemaking helped to bring the conflict about, it was far-right and

religious parties that made notable gains in recent municipal elections in Jerusalem, the first vote since the war.

Third Temple activists sense new momentum.

“I’m always told the Third Temple is going to destabilize the Middle East and it’s going to start a war. Well, I’m pretty sure the war is already here and the Middle East is pretty destabilized,” said Kronfeld.

“I like to think about it the other way. What if the Third Temple is the answer? What if it’s what brings the peace and stabilizes the region?” 

► **Matthew Tostevin** is NEWSWEEK’S standards editor. Follow him on X @TostevinM



J A P A N'S C A L L T O

As the
'peace-loving
nation' doubles
its defense
spending,
Prime Minister

FUMIO KISHIDA

explains why
it needs to take
an assertive stance
to counter
China and
North Korea





by
**TOM
O'CONNOR**

Portrait by
**HARUO
MOTOHASHI**

M

ORE THAN A DOZEN TIMES, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida uses the word “peace” as he discusses his country’s momentous decision to undertake its largest buildup of military capabilities since World War II.

“Since I became prime minister, we have substantially revised Japan’s National Security Strategy,” Kishida told *Newsweek* during an interview at his office in Tokyo on the heels of his first visit to Washington, D.C., as Japan’s leader for talks with President Joe Biden. “Now, in that strategy, of course, we will not change the steps we have been taking to date as a peace-loving nation.”



Japan faces a changing international order that is anything but peaceful, in either its own neighborhood or beyond. Under Kishida’s leadership since 2021, it has more assertively set out a policy of reinforcing its defense forces and of strengthening its alliances with the United States and other Western powers as it builds new partnerships with Asian countries that had sometimes been historically wary of its motives.

China is rapidly developing state-of-the-art military technology and seeking to assert its increasingly dominant regional position amid intensified global competition with the U.S. Its sporadic maritime confrontations with Japan over disputed East China Sea Islands are a sign of the bigger contest. North Korea, undeterred by international sanctions, seemingly achieves nuclear-capable missile milestones by the day while broadcasting fiery rhetoric toward its foes.

Meanwhile, Japan faces the repercussions of Russia’s war on Ukraine as it raises the prospect of a wider war with NATO in Europe and as Moscow also looks to the East, where it has a long-standing territorial dispute with Tokyo.

The sheer imbalance of military power surrounding Japan is displayed in one Japanese government document shared with *Newsweek*. Japan’s troops and aircraft are vastly outnumbered on all three fronts. Beijing and Moscow each command a naval fleet that outsizes that of Tokyo more than four times over.

“Military powers with high quality and quantity are concentrated in Japan’s surroundings, where clear trends such as further military buildup and an increase in military activities are observed,” the document states.

A Historic Turning Point

FOR KISHIDA, THE ANSWER IS A CALL TO ARMS, THE likes of which have not been seen in Japan since World War II ended nearly eight decades ago with the Japanese Empire’s defeat at the hands of the U.S. Kishida’s own family hails from Hiroshima, and he grew up hearing the horror stories of survivors of the world’s first atomic bombing, which helped end the war and established generations of U.S. preeminence.

Now, Kishida counts Washington as his most important ally amid what he calls “a historic turning point” for both Japan and the world at large. Japanese attitudes are unrecognizable from the expansionism that saw it conquer much of Asia and the Pacific and stun the U.S. with the Pearl Harbor



FROM LEFT: TOP, TOMOHIRO OHSUMI/GETTY; RICHARD A. BROOKS/AFP/GETTY; HARUO MOTOHASHI

attack in 1941, but the imperialist legacy remains a sensitive topic at home and abroad.

Kishida's offering at the controversial Yasukuni Shrine to Japan's 19th and 20th century war dead—among them World War II war criminals—on April 21 was protested not only by China, but also by fellow U.S. ally South Korea. For both countries it is a symbol of Japan's past and its record of occupation and atrocities. That legacy explained Japan's postwar aversion to rebuilding military strength. Kishida spoke frankly about why it is now engaged in a program that will mean a doubling of military spending over the next five years.

"I think we are facing the most challenging and complex security environment since the end of

World War II," said Kishida, whose conservative Liberal Democratic Party has dominated postwar politics. "In such a situation, we have to protect our people's lives and livelihoods."

Power, Hard and Soft

KISHIDA REPEATEDLY ASSERTS THAT JAPAN HAS demonstrated its aversion to aggression since the war but says it must continue to make efforts to explain its military resurgence. "We have to avoid any misunderstanding here," he said.

The region is distinctly wary of the trend, said Jingdong Yuan, senior researcher and director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's China and Asia Security Program.

"It is important for Japan to demonstrate its commitment to using force only for defensive purposes, place its growing military capabilities within the broader alliance and multilateral security arrangements rather than in unilateral ways," he told *Newsweek*.

While Japan's policy shift was not the cause of armament in the region, it could help to speed that up if not drive an arms race, Yuan said.

As Japan seeks to win friends and build influence, it is also putting weight on economic development. Plans include a new \$30 billion investment framework for Africa and some \$75 billion devoted to an array of projects across Southeast Asia, including rail infrastructure, clean energy development and joint maritime security mechanisms.

When hosting the largely Western G7 in Hiroshima last year, Kishida made the point of inviting two representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia and Vietnam.

While a recent survey by Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute shows China has eclipsed the U.S. in terms of which superpower the ASEAN nations would choose if forced to align with one or the other, Japan was chosen as the region's most trusted nation, ahead of both the U.S. and China.

In a sign of Japan's readiness to strengthen ties in the region, Kishida participated in the first-ever trilateral meeting of its kind with Biden and Philippines President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos. Earlier in the month, Kishida and Prabowo Subianto, president-elect of regional giant Indonesia, agreed to strengthen security and other cooperation.

China, North Korea and segments of South Korea's society remain suspicious of Japan—in the case of the



SHOW OF FORCE

Counterclockwise from top left: The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force; a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force soldier; and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

former two because of its friendship with the U.S. as well as its past, said Ja Ian Chong of the National University of Singapore. But attitudes are different elsewhere in Taiwan and Southeast Asia, he said.

“They may be more eager to encourage greater Japanese participation in regional affairs, given a high degree of trust in Japan from decades of cooperation and view that Tokyo has a major role in supplementing regional stability,” he told *Newsweek*. “Japan will have to be careful not to unnecessarily increase friction with some of its Northeast Asian neighbors while defending its own interests and working with its partners.”

Kishida has done much to renew relations with South Korea since taking office. He has also said he could consider unprecedented face-to-face talks with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un to ease rising tensions with the longtime foe, whose nuclear and missile development he calls a threat to Japan and the world. The possibility of such a meeting, Kishida said, was discussed in Washington and in ongoing consultations with Seoul.

“We will continue to make efforts to enable to hold a summit meeting towards resolving the outstanding issues of concern with North Korea,” Kishida said. Talks also continue on a trilateral meeting between Japan, South Korea and China in May.

At a time that Kishida has accused Beijing of intensifying a “unilateral attempt to change the status quo” in the East China Sea, the site of disputed islands known as Senkaku or Diaoyu claimed by both China and Japan, he emphasized that, “we will assert what needs to be asserted, but we will value dialogues as well.”

The Abe Doctrine

KISHIDA’S PARALLEL EFFORTS ON DIPLOMATIC AND military fronts follow in part from his previous experience. He served as foreign minister and, briefly, as acting defense minister under the late, influential Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe, an avowed nationalist who became Japan’s longest-serving premier before being forced to resign in 2019 amid corruption scandals and reports of ill-health, was the first to oversee the major changes in Japan’s military mindset and developed the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” concept which is now ubiquitous in U.S. strategy documents and a cornerstone of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, consisting of Australia, India, Japan and the U.S.



STRENGTHENING TIES
Top to bottom: Kishida with U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House in January 2023; the Nikkei 225 index hit a 35-year record this year; and Kishida delivering a speech at the National Defense Academy of Japan’s graduation in March.



Kishida took office in 2021 following the resignation of Abe’s immediate successor, Yoshihide Suga, and is widely seen as continuing the legacy of Abe, whose 2022 assassination by a gunman with a grudge against him shocked Japan. “Japan is now sustaining and leading the liberal international order in Asia. It is in Japan’s interest and the interests of the region,” Nobukatsu Kanehara, who served as Abe’s assistant chief cabinet secretary and deputy national security adviser, told *Newsweek*.

“People are all equal and free and they have rights to pursue their own happiness. This individual freedom fits very much with Samurai spirits of the Japanese.”

Like Abe, who, in 2015, was the last Japanese premier to visit Washington, D.C., Kishida took the opportunity during his trip to address a joint session of Congress, making the case for forging an even closer alliance with the U.S. “I was able to gain broad support, applause and the opinions from Congressional members,” Kishida said.

“It is **IMPORTANT** for Japan to demonstrate its commitment to using force only for defensive purposes.”





Threats From Within

THERE IS LESS APPLAUSE AT HOME, WHERE KISHIDA faces a potential fight over party leadership. The LDP's hold on power is not challenged by weak opposition parties and no parliamentary election is required before 2025, but Kishida's approval rating of just 20 percent means he could be ousted at internal party elections, said Daniel Russel, a veteran U.S. diplomat who now serves as vice president for international security and diplomacy at the Asia Society, told *Newsweek*. "His immediate challenge is remaining in office beyond September," Russel said.

On the economic front, Japan has dropped below Germany's output for the first time since the 1960s to become only the world's fourth biggest

economy. A declining, aging population is a weight on an economy that has pivoted toward inflation after 30 years of deflation, often referred to as "the lost decades." Kishida said he sought to ignite what he called a "virtuous cycle" by promoting investment through tax-exempt initiatives such as the Nippon Individual Savings Account, promoting both price and wage increases and devoting trillions of yen toward "green development," or "GX," and "digital development," or "DX."

He said that digitalization and increased support for child-rearing families could help offset the demographic crisis. These initiatives are all part of what Kishida refers to as a "new form of capitalism" for which he counts some early successes: including the Nikkei 225 hitting a 35-year record this year.

Yet there is an even more controversial measure that Kishida must consider when it comes to Japan's future: immigration.

In need of labor to fuel Japan's economic growth, Kishida says the Diet, Japan's national legislature, is debating a bill to "create a new system to have motivated people from overseas work in Japan."

The archipelago nation's reluctance to open its borders dates back millennia. Japan fended off Mongol invaders from China in the 13th century and is one of just a handful of nations to have avoided European colonization. Today, Japan eagerly welcomes millions of visitors from around the world, including a growing number of foreign workers, but it remains one of the world's most homogeneous countries, with an estimated 98.5 percent of its population being ethnically Japanese.

"There are still some in Japanese society who are resistant to the idea of continuous, indefinite immigration of labor from overseas," Kishida said, distinguishing the current plans to import more foreign labor from a "full-fledged immigration concept."

Kishida voices confidence in the path Japan is taking under his leadership, but also warns that there can be no underestimation of the daunting social, economic, diplomatic and military challenges it faces.

"In terms of diplomacy as well as security, we are in a very uncertain situation. Therefore, diplomacy, the leader-level diplomacy shall be strengthened," Kishida said. "We need to have defense capabilities as to back up this diplomacy. So even in uncertain times, Japan can fulfill our role to achieve stability." **N**



FROM LEFT: KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY; KIYOSHI OTA/GETTY; YUICHI YAMAZAKI/AFP/GETTY



**‘WE ARE FACING THE
MOST COMPLEX SECURITY
ENVIRONMENT SINCE
WORLD WAR II’**



Japan’s prime minister on security, diplomacy and protecting the rule of law at home, in Asia and around the world

by
**TOM
O’CONNOR**

Portrait by
**HARUO
MOTOHASHI**



SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING FROM HIS FIRST LEADERS-LEVEL visit to Washington, D.C., Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida sat down with *Newsweek* for an exclusive interview in his Tokyo office to discuss the main takeaways from his trip, as well as the historic changes he is overseeing in his nation’s military, economic and diplomatic strategies.

Kishida, who took office in October 2021, is looking to fortify his country’s long-standing alliance with the United States and expand regional ties. At the same time, Japan is undergoing its largest military buildup since World War II amid conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, and worsening tensions in the Asia-Pacific. Meanwhile, Kishida is also tasked with difficulties that beset Japan’s economy.

Throughout his 40-minute interview—lightly edited for space and clarity, below—with *Newsweek* President and CEO Dev Pragad, Global Editor in Chief Nancy Cooper and Deputy Foreign Policy Editor Tom O’Connor, Kishida spoke candidly about challenges his nation faces on multiple fronts, but he also expressed confidence that new initiatives being taken under his leadership would help Japan to navigate the deepening uncertainties that lie ahead.

NEWSWEEK: You’ve just recently returned from a trip to the United States, where you aimed to fortify the Japan-U.S. alliance in your meetings with President Joe Biden. What were your main takeaways from the visit and its achievements?

KISHIDA: Yes, this time around, as the Prime Minister of Japan, I went to the United States for the first state guest treatment in nine years. The international community is now at a historic turning point. Against this backdrop, once again, the U.S.-Japan relationship, the importance of that, is being pointed out and in such a situation I was able to visit the United States this time. Through this visit, we confirmed that in the uncertain international situation, Japan and the U.S. are very important global partners in upholding and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

I believe that we confirmed a solid bond between Japan and the U.S. in the areas of security, economy and advanced science and technology, including space. That was one takeaway from that visit.

In addition, I also made a speech to the joint session of the United States Congress. I was given that opportunity and, on that occasion, I expressed



well as a growing role for Japan on the world stage. Where would you say are your leadership priorities and what are some of the top challenges you are addressing?

When I took office two-and-a-half years ago, at that time, we were still fighting against COVID-19. This was a global phenomenon. So, overcoming COVID was one major challenge at that time. About last year, we have been able to normalize the situation regarding COVID-19.

At the same time, as you have rightly mentioned, the economic issues are what I tackled. Security and diplomatic issues have been an important focus for me as well. I have been also dealing with child and child-rearing policies to address Japan's declining birthrate and the demographic issues.

With Russia's aggression into Ukraine, the energy crisis globally was a challenge for Japan as well. I have presented a major policy of broadly advancing Japan's energy policy without excluding any options, including nuclear energy. These are major policies that I have been undertaking as the Prime Minister.

Now, you asked me what is the top challenge for me, and today, it is the economy as well as diplomatic and security issues.

Over the last three decades in Japan, we have been struggling from a deflation economy where wages have not risen, prices have not risen and investment has not progressed. However, since I became prime minister, over the past two-and-a-half years I have been promoting a new form of

my thoughts on what kind of world we, Japan and the United States, as global partners, would like to hand over to next generations, going forward for the future, and also for that purpose, what kind of efforts Japan and the United States must make together. As a result, the future-oriented message I conveyed was able to gain broad support, applause and the opinions from the Congressional members. Therefore, this was a very meaningful speech in my view.

Now, in addition to that, during this visit to the United States, I went to North Carolina. In terms of the relationship between Japan and the United States, it is not only at the leaders or the government level, but, when it comes to local economy, we do have a very broad-ranging support from various people. That means that the Japan-U.S. relationship is supported by a very broad base of people from a wide range of fields. That was actually what I felt in a tangible way. So, all in all, I think that was a very meaningful and fruitful visit.

Since being elected as prime minister in Japan in 2021, you've overseen a vast array of reforms, especially in the economic and defense spheres, as

HISTORIC CHANGES
Kishida with *Newsweek's* Tom O'Connor, Nancy Cooper and Dev Pragad; and below, Tokyo voting on Japan's new leader in October 2021.



capitalism, creating a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution that would be triggered by wage hikes, which would in turn increase consumption and motivate companies to make further investments and raise wages. And as a result, for the first time in 30 years, the Japanese economy is now showing positive signs. For example, we are seeing wage increases as well as significant increases in private investment. And the stock market has recorded record highs. These positive signs are emerging in the Japanese economy. I hope that we will be able to secure this trend, completely exit from deflation and bring Japan to a new stage of growth-oriented economy.

At the same time, in terms of diplomacy as well as security, we are in a very uncertain situation. Therefore, leader-level diplomacy shall be strengthened. We need to have defense capabilities to back up this diplomacy. So even in uncertain times, Japan can fulfill our role to achieve stability.

Speaking of those defensive capabilities, Japan has undergone extensive reforms in this sector. Why would you say these reforms are necessary for Japan at this stage and what are the leading threats that you believe these reforms seek to address?

Yes, first of all, with regard to the security environment of Japan, if we look around, there is a country which is developing nuclear and missiles capabilities and also a country which is expanding military capabilities in an untransparent manner. Also in the South China and East China Sea, we are seeing unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force. That is the situation.

So, in view of such a situation, I think we are facing the most challenging and complex security environment since the end of World War II. In such a situation, we have to protect our people's lives and livelihoods. Since I became prime minister, we have substantially revised Japan's National Security Strategy.

Now, in that strategy, of course, we will not change the steps we have been taking to date as a peace-loving nation.

However, in view of this challenging and dire security environment situation, first of all, for Japan, we have to create a favorable environment for that purpose. Diplomacy and summit-level diplomacy have to be steadfastly promoted. While clarifying our basic standpoint, we also made it clear that we,

in order to bolster the footing of diplomacy, must also strengthen the defense capability to protect our own nation. And for that purpose, Japan made clear its policy of achieving a defense budget of 2 percent of GDP, and its efforts to possess counterstrike capabilities and to improve our cybersecurity.

In addition, we strengthen the defense posture of the southwestern region of Japan. In this way, as clarified in the strategy that I mentioned earlier, toward strengthening defense capabilities, we are taking initiatives. So, step by step steadfastly, we would like to implement those measures.

The international situation is becoming more complex. Any one country cannot defend itself on its own. Therefore, in the case of Japan, in order to protect the lives and livelihoods of our nation and our people, I want to assume and fulfill our own responsibility. However, in addition to that, with the United States, our ally, and like-minded countries, and also the Global South, we would like to coordinate with all those countries through our foreign policy in order to improve the deterrence and response capabilities in this region. That is a very important initiative.



“Japan and the U.S. are very important global



FROM LEFT: RICHARD ATRERO/DE GUZMAN/NURPHOTO/GETTY; SOUTH KOREAN DEFENSE MINISTRY/GETTY IMAGES



partners in **UPHOLDING** and **STRENGTHENING** a free and open international order.”



SECURITY CHALLENGES

Kishida wants Japan's military, left, to remain defense-orientated, and to work with the likes of South Korea, above, to deal with North Korea.



Prior to becoming Prime Minister, you had served as foreign minister and briefly as acting defense minister as well. How do you balance the Japanese defensive and diplomatic needs, particularly in the face of some regional countries who may be hesitant to accept a larger role for Japan in security given the complex history behind it?

Now, as I mentioned earlier, the National Security Strategy has been revised and, up to now, as a peace-loving nation, our trajectory will remain unchanged. We are an exclusively defense-oriented policy-emphasizing country and the three non-nuclear principles will be maintained. There is no change in the fundamental policy. That has been clearly stated in our new strategy.

Following that strategy, the favorable international environment for Japan must be realized

through diplomacy. The most important fundamental principle in this endeavor is to realize a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

No attempt to change the status quo by force should be tolerated anywhere in the world. Furthermore, these rules and international laws are there, I believe, to protect vulnerable countries. So, we stress the importance of maintaining order following international rule to Southeast Asia and many countries, including those so-called the Global South.

We are receiving support from many nations regarding our stance. We should maintain the international order based on rule of law. We should bring neither conflict nor division, but cooperation in the international community. These are the messages I consider most important to work on, first and foremost.

And in order to endorse these initiatives, it is necessary to strengthen defense capabilities, which I mentioned before. Such basic thinking of Japan shall be thoroughly explained to the international community, especially to the East Asian countries. By providing such explanation, Southeast Asian countries and other countries, in turn, provided support for Japan's National Security Strategy. We will continue to seek such support to implement the diplomatic as well as security policies of Japan. That is the balance between diplomacy and security.

Now that Japan is ready to accept this larger role in security, do you believe the region is also ready to accept Japan's new role?

Yes, we do our best toward realizing the peace and stability of the region and also a free and open Indo-Pacific. Having said that, we have to avoid any misunderstanding here. Japan is not saying that we want to achieve this through military prowess. Rather, Japan, as a peace-loving nation, hopes to realize this by utilizing the economy and various other infrastructure support measures and also soft power such as culture and sports. I said that our trajectory as a peace-loving nation will remain unchanged. In addition to that, we have a peaceful constitution. So based on that constitution, and also based on international laws and domestic laws, we are going to carry our diplomacy and security efforts. It is also important to explain this basic stance to the region, and I think this stance is understood in the region.

And I think we are gaining understanding and support for this, particularly after World War II. In 1945, we were defeated in the war. Since that time, up until today, as a peace-loving nation, we have accumulated a track record, we have a good result and during this period, any country in the world thinks that Japan has been making tremendous efforts as a peace-loving country and they have been observing that and they appreciate our efforts in this way.

So, as a peace-loving nation, we have achieved results in this way. For many years, we have to maintain that, we have to build on that. That's important.

A security challenge often identified by Japanese officials is that of North Korea, which has continued to test sophisticated missile systems. Reports recently emerged that you would be willing to meet with Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. Is this a



possibility? And what do you believe is the best way to handle North Korea if sanctions do not appear to be working?

Regarding North Korea, its nuclear and missile development is a threat not only to Japan, but also to the peace and security of the international community. I believe that the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions stipulating the denuclearization of North Korea should be implemented completely.

In this regard, on the 28th of last month [March], it is with great regret that the U.N. Security Council Draft Resolution regarding the implementation regime of sanctions against North Korea was put forth but rejected by Russia's veto.

On the part of Japan, we will consider further measures for the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, working closely more than ever with the United States and South Korea and other like-minded countries.

At the last meeting with President Biden, we also discussed the situation in North Korea, including

DIPLOMATIC ROLE

Clockwise from below: Japan is holding consultations to meet with North Korea's Kim Jong Un; Biden (center) with Philippine President Marcos (left) and Kishida (second from right); and Taiwanese military drills.





supervision will be promoted with a view to holding a summit meeting going forward. I look forward to making progress on these consultations.

I'm sorry, to clarify, would you be willing to meet with Kim Jong Un?

Well, we are now conducting various consultations behind the scenes, but unfortunately I cannot give details on the progress here so far at this point in time. But we will continue to make efforts to enable to hold a summit meeting toward resolving the outstanding issues of concern with North Korea. In this regard, I exchanged views with President Biden, based on the common understanding between Japan and the U.S. that the path to dialogue with North Korea is open. We would like to continue to explore paths for dialogue with North Korea as I just mentioned, while communicating with the countries concerned, including South Korea.

China has long been identified as a leading national security concern for Japan in part due to the existing territorial disputes and the rapid military rise of the People's Republic. Has this concern associ-

“The path to **DIALOGUE** with North Korea is open.

We would like to continue to **EXPLORE** paths for dialogue with North Korea.”



its nuclear and missile development. At that time, we agreed to work together more closely under the current situation of grave concern, and we also had frank exchange of views, based on our common understanding that the path to dialogue with North Korea is open. We also agreed to continue to work more closely between Japan and the U.S., and Japan, the U.S. and South Korea to address the situation in close cooperation. We have agreed to this direction.

The establishment of productive relations between Japan and North Korea is in the interest of both Japan and North Korea and will greatly contribute to regional peace and stability. Therefore, under my direction, in order to resolve the outstanding issues of concern with North Korea, high-level consultations under my direct

ated with China grown, you'd say, since you've taken office and in what areas do you believe that Japan has to be particularly vigilant?

First of all, in the East China Sea, unilateral attempts to change the status quo are being intensified. And this is something of a grave concern for us. Japan will assert to China what needs to be asserted, and respond calmly and resolutely to the situation with the determination to resolutely defend Japan's territory as well as territorial waters and airspace.

Now, while Japan and China share diverse possibilities, we also have many challenges and concerns. China is our neighboring country. So, this is the situation we face with this neighboring country. We will assert what needs to be asserted, but we will value dialogues as well. And wherever we can

cooperate for common challenges, we will cooperate. So, in this way, a constructive and stable relationship should be realized through mutual effort.

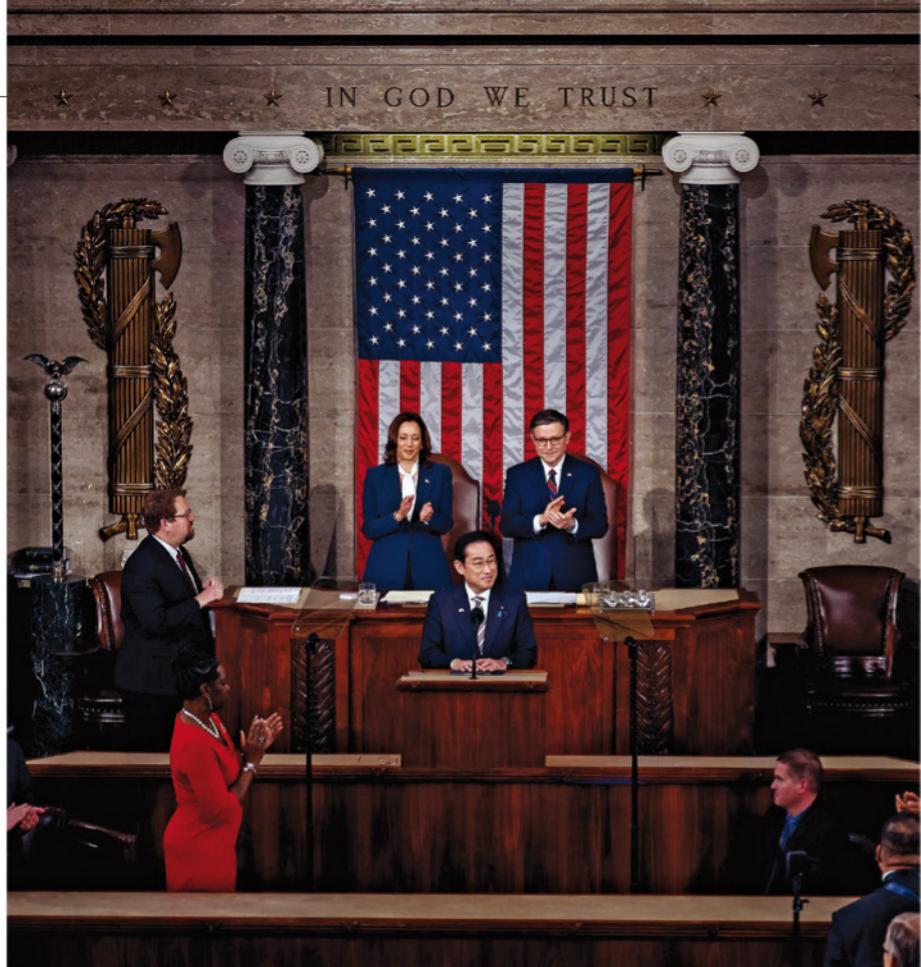
I believe that both Japan and China are countries that have great responsibility for the peace and prosperity of the region and the international community. It is my consistent policy to make our bilateral relationship constructive and sustainable. We will continue to pursue comprehensively a “mutually beneficial relationship,” and I believe that we must engage in a significant amount of communication with China to realize the kind of relationship I have just described.

We’ve seen some tense moments in U.S.-China relations since you’ve taken office, particularly as they relate to the question of Taiwan. Japanese officials have been speaking more about Japan’s potential role in the event of a Taiwan contingency. Have you made a decision as to what Japan’s role may be in the event of an actual conflict over Taiwan in the region?

Regarding Taiwan, now, I refrain from answering the hypothetical question of a Taiwan contingency. But I will say that the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are important not only for Japan’s security, but also for the stability of the international community.

It has been and continues to be Japan’s consistent position that we hope the issues surrounding Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue. During my recent visit to the United States, I stressed with President Biden the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and we confirmed that we would encourage a peaceful resolution of the cross-strait issues.

In this regard, it is important to convey this point directly to China. We just had a summit meeting among the U.S., Philippines and Japan for the first time. It is important to clearly convey the position



I have just mentioned, in cooperation with the Philippines and other like-minded countries.

On the part of Japan, we will continue to closely monitor the developments of the cross-strait relations and make diplomatic efforts. This is the basic stance of Japan.

The Japanese economy’s recent recession pulled Japan below Germany and out of the top three for the first time since the 1960s. Is this a short-term problem? And how do you address demographic trends that are dragging down the economy?

Yes, as you pointed out, in terms of dollars, in 2023, Germany’s nominal GDP exceeded that of Japan. Whether that is short term or long term, that is the question. The exchange rates fluctuation and also

FORGING ALLIANCES
Kishida is applauded while addressing a joint meeting of Congress in the House of Representatives on April 11 in Washington, D.C.



“Both **JAPAN** and **CHINA** are countries that have great responsibility for the peace and **PROSPERITY** of the region and the international community”

prices increasing faster in Germany than Japan, I think these recent trends are the major reasons for the situation you have described.

However, in the long run, as I said earlier, Japan has been in the “cost-cutting type of economy” that has cut investment and the wages for the past 30 years. It has been in a “shrink-oriented” economy, so stagnation has lingered in this way.

However, finally, we are seeing some bright signs, and as such bright spots in the Japanese economy are witnessed and if such a virtuous cycle of economy is sustained, then toward the next year, the Japanese economy once again will regain power, vitality. I think that is possible.

Having said that, on the other hand, in Japan, the declining birthrate and aging population is progressing. The population decline is something we have to address and that is an important matter when you consider long-term impact on the economy. It is also important to create an environment that enables the younger generations who want to have children to have and raise children by continuing to implement child and child-rearing policies.

At the same time, it will be a major point to see if we can create a country that can adapt to a declining population by promoting digitalization and other efficiency measures that will enable it to cope with a declining population and streamline Japanese society, especially its administrative and financial organizations.

So, if the Japanese economy revives, and it can respond to population decrease, then for the future, the Japanese economy will be able to move forward in a robust way. So that is what I want to achieve, and that is the kind of policy I have been implementing.

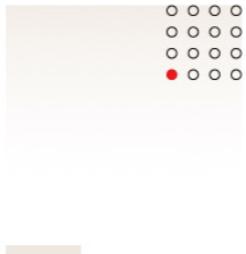
Would you be interested in encouraging immigration in order to reverse the population decline?

First of all, Japan is responding to its declining population through the child and child-rearing policies I mentioned earlier, as well as through digitalization and other measures. And at the same time, it is very important to create a system in which motivated and energetic elderly people and, above all, women can play an active role in Japan’s society and economy through reforms of work styles and other measures.

But having done that, there is still a labor shortage and shortage of workers, and we must consider inviting highly capable workers from outside of Japan to

be active in the Japanese society and economy. In the current Diet (national legislature) session, we are discussing the amendment of the law in order to create a new system to have motivated people from overseas work in Japan. For highly capable and motivated workers to be invited into Japan to provide support to Japanese society is what we would like to enable.

But there are different, diverse views in terms of immigration in Japanese society. There are still some in Japanese society who are resistant to the idea of continuous, indefinite immigration of labor from overseas. So, we are considering a way of inviting foreign nationals to come to Japan in the form I have just described by establishing a set of rules, though not a full-fledged immigration concept.



TERRITORIAL BATTLE
Japan’s Yonaguni Island, below, is close to the Senkaku Islands, disputed with China, posing a test to Japan’s military, bottom.



FROM LEFT: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY; CARL COURT/GETTY; YUICHI YAMAZAKI/AFP/GETTY

How do you help Japanese manufacturers keep their edge against global competition, especially from Korean and Chinese brands? Is automation being adopted quickly enough in Japan and have Japanese automakers been too slow to invest in electric vehicles?

Our country is competing not only with China and South Korea, but also with companies from all over the world, including developed countries. Now, my economic policy is to use social challenges including climate change and population decrease as an engine for economic growth in the long run. That is to say, public sector, private sector working together in solving these social challenges and turning them into a growth engine. From that



GREEN DRIVE

Top to bottom: CEO Makoto Uchida's Nissan Motor Co. is among Japanese car firms responding to the rapid shift to EVs; and Kishida and wife Yuko arrive in North Carolina, where a factory is being built to produce batteries for Toyota's EVs.



perspective, we are investing in what we call GX (green transformation) and DX (digital transformation), with particular emphasis on these areas.

Regarding GX, we will provide bold, upfront investment support on the scale of 20 trillion yen [\$129 billion] and hope to realize GX investment of more than 150 trillion yen [\$964 billion] over the next 10 years through private-public initiatives.

In the area of DX, for example, in the area of semi-conductors, we set aside about 2 trillion yen [\$13 billion] of support. At the recent Japan-U.S. summit meeting the other day, we agreed to strengthen cooperation in the area of increasing resilience of supply chains and work together from the economic security perspective.

Now, when the population is declining, it is very important to increase productivity. In Japan, we put together a domestic investment promotion package in order to provide intensive support for large-scale investments in strategic areas and support SMEs (small and medium enterprises) in labor-saving investment.

As you pointed out, with regard to EVs, we are seeing a rapid shift to EVs, and Japanese manufacturers are responding to the situation with a sense of urgency. Earlier, I mentioned that I visited North Carolina during my visit to the United States. In North Carolina, a huge factory is now being built to produce batteries for Toyota's EVs. So, in this way, Japanese manufacturers are making strategic investments in the electric vehicles area as well.

Going forward toward the realization of carbon neutrality in 2050, while maintaining "a variety of options" as our basic strategy, we would like to continue to maintain and strengthen the competitiveness of Japanese companies by providing comprehensive support for EV purchase subsidies, recharging infrastructure development, strengthening the domestic manufacturing base for storage batteries and securing upstream resources, in order to "win also in EVs."

Prices are rising again. The Bank of Japan is raising borrowing costs for the first time in 17 years and the Nikkei 225 has finally topped its 1989 peak. You say Japan has a historic opportunity to exit deflation. What needs to happen for your country to seize this opportunity? And what are the risks that your administration worries about if it does not succeed?



FROM LEFT: TOP, TOMOHIRO OHSUMI/GETTY; THE ASAHI SHIMBUN/GETTY; JAMES MATSUMOTO/SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTSTOCK/GETTY



“High prices are a **MAJOR** issue today, and there are uncertainties. However, I believe it is **IMPORTANT** to implement policies to firmly raise disposable income.”



Price hikes are now a very big issue in our country. We feel strongly that it is important to raise wages more than price hikes. That is why the government is now mobilizing all possible policies to raise wages, reduce income and inhabitant taxes this June and launch a new tax-exemption system for individual investments called NISA (Nippon Individual Savings Account) in January this year. The NISA system has been launched to redirect the financial assets of households, which are said to amount to 2,200 trillion yen [\$14 trillion], to corporate investments.

By having the value increase for companies, then the benefits can be returned to households, which will help create a virtuous cycle that will lead to consumption and investment again. I believe that it is first important to achieve disposable income that exceeds prices by mobilizing all of these policies.



ECONOMIC BOOST
Shinsaibashi shopping district in Osaka. Kishida hopes his policies will increase disposable income, consumption and investment.

Although monetary policy itself is obviously decided by the BOJ [Bank of Japan], we hope that the BOJ will pursue monetary policy while keeping in mind the various policies of the government, through good communication between the government and the BOJ. It is important that a virtuous cycle in the Japanese economy can be established in Japan toward next year, by so doing.

High prices are a major issue today, and there are uncertainties such as the weak yen or the situation in the Middle East. So, it is difficult to be optimistic. However, I believe that it is important to implement policies to firmly raise disposable income, including the wage increases I just mentioned, while minimizing the impact of price increase[s] as much as possible, in order to protect the lives of the people and the future of the Japanese economy. **■**



WORLD'S BEST

DIGITAL HEALTH

COMPANIES

2024

D

DIGITAL HEALTH IS A BURGEONING GLOBAL INDUSTRY. If you have a remote appointment with a doctor or other health care provider, wear a medical device or download electronic medical records, you've employed a digital health product.

Data intelligence platform Statista predicts the global digital health market will exhibit a compound annual growth rate of more than 9 percent through 2028, when it will arrive at a projected market volume of \$275 billion. Such tremendous growth can create confusion. How can would-be patients or medical providers assess which products, services or data-suppliers are most reliable and best able to meet their needs?

To help identify the new services and technologies that are transforming health care, *Newsweek* is partnering with Statista for the inaugural ranking of the World's Best Digital Health Companies. The list includes 400 companies based in 35 countries; they represent seven industry segments including diagnostics, health records, medical management and telehealth.

Each firm's score was based on an analysis of several areas, including its financial performance and traffic data for its websites and apps. In addition, market intelligence company Holon IQ provided data on the impact of each business's product or service and the expertise of its leadership. We hope this ranking helps all health care industry stakeholders and patients identify the digital health companies that make the most sense for them. ▶ **Nancy Cooper**, *Global Editor in Chief*



METHODOLOGY

For the first time, *Newsweek* and Statista are awarding the World's Best Digital Health Companies. With the digital health industry globally on the rise, this top list aims to highlight the leading innovative companies worldwide. Digital Health companies are defined as companies who primarily offer digital products or services within the health care sector.

In total, 400 companies from over 35 different countries and across seven market segments are included in the list: Data Analytics, Diagnostics, Health Records, Medical Management, Prevention, Telehealth and Treatment.

Statista conducted comprehensive research on over 3,000 companies, utilizing desk research, an online application form and a partnership with the data and market intelligence company HolonIQ. From the results of the research and analysis, three evaluation pillars were defined, with a score calculated for each of them:

1 – Financial performance score: This score is based on the analysis of financial data including metrics like revenue per employee or funding information. The financial performance score constitutes 55 percent of the total score.

2 – Impact score: This score is based on impact data such as the quality of their product or service, relevance in their market category, recent company development and expertise of the leadership team provided by HolonIQ. The impact score constitutes 25 percent of the total score.

3 – Online engagement score: This score is calculated based on traffic data for company websites and apps such as monthly active users and number of downloads. The impact score constitutes 20 percent of the total score.

Companies with the highest total score within their market segment were awarded as the World's Best Digital Health Companies.

The list is composed of companies from seven different market segments:

1 – Data analytics: This segment comprises companies that leverage digital tools and algorithms to analyze health-related data, enabling insights regarding metrics such as population health trends as well as predictive analytics.

2 – Diagnostics: Within these segments are companies that create digital solutions for assessing and diagnosing medical conditions, including medical imaging analysis, or monitoring parameters for early disease detection.

3 – Health records: In this segment, there are companies that develop digital platforms for storing, managing and sharing electronic health records and patient information securely.

4 – Medical management: Included in this segment are companies that create digital technologies designed to optimize health care deliv-

ery including management of physician practices.

5 – Prevention: This segment encompasses companies that focus on digital tools aimed at promoting health and wellness, including behavior-change apps, preventive programs and digital coaching.

6 – Telehealth: Companies in this area include digital platforms and technologies enabling remote health-care delivery, including virtual consultations.

7 – Treatment: This segment consists of companies that involve digital solutions for delivering and managing medical treatments, including digital therapeutics.

The selection of the companies and the definition of the evaluation criteria were based on independent journalistic criteria of *Newsweek* and Statista. The evaluation was carried out by the statistics and market research company Statista. *Newsweek* and Statista make no claim to the completeness of the companies examined.

To be included in the top list is a positive recognition based on research of publicly available data sources at the time and information received via an application process.

In addition, events after March 1, 2024, were not considered in the analysis. As such, the results of this list should not be used as the sole source of information for future deliberations. The information provided through this top list should rather be considered in conjunction with other available information about a company.

The quality of companies not included in the top list is not disputed, and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of every data point.

DATA ANALYTICS

Action
NEW YORK CITY

AiCure
NEW YORK CITY

Aidoc
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

AIRS Medical
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

BGO Software
LONDON

Biofourmis
BOSTON

BlueDot
TORONTO

Bluesight
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, U.S.

BrightInsight
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

CancerIQ
CHICAGO

Cardiologs
PARIS

Caresyntax
LARKSPUR, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Centaur Labs
BOSTON

Clarify Health Solutions
SAN FRANCISCO

Cleerly
NEW YORK CITY

CLEW Medical
NETANYA, ISRAEL

ClosedLoop
AUSTIN, TEXAS, U.S.

Commure
SAN FRANCISCO

Datavant
SAN FRANCISCO

Dawn Health
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Eden
MEXICO CITY

Egnite Health
ALISO VIEJO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Element5
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.



PatientPop

Syapse
SAN FRANCISCO

Temedica
MUNICH

Tempus
CHICAGO

Verato
MCLEAN, VIRGINIA, U.S.

Vibrent Health
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA, U.S.

Welldoc
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND, U.S.

DIAGNOSTICS

Ada Health
BERLIN

ADHD Online
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, U.S.

Aignostics
BERLIN

Altoida
WASHINGTON, D.C.,

Aural Analytics
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, U.S.

Biodesix
BROOMFIELD, COLORADO, U.S.

Caristo Diagnostics
OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM

Cerebriu
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

contextflow
VIENNA

Corti
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Cue
SAN DIEGO

Everly Health
AUSTIN, TEXAS, U.S.

Freenome
SAN FRANCISCO

Getlabs
MIAMI

Harrison.ai
SYDNEY

Healthmap Solutions
TAMPA, FLORIDA, U.S.

Hexarad
LONDON

Embold Health
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, U.S.

Enlitic
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO, U.S.

Evidation Health
SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Gray Matter Analytics
CHICAGO

H1
NEW YORK CITY

Health Catalyst
SALT LAKE CITY

Health Data Analytics Institute
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

HealthVerity
PHILADELPHIA

Huma
LONDON

Innovaccer
SAN FRANCISCO

IQVIA
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA, U.S.

Iterative Health
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

Komodo Health
SAN FRANCISCO

LeanTaaS
SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Lenus Health
EDINBURGH, UNITED KINGDOM

Lifebit
LONDON

Lightbeam Health Solutions
DALLAS

MDClone
BE'ER SHEVA, ISRAEL

MedeAnalytics
RICHARDSON, TEXAS, U.S.

Medical Informatics
HOUSTON

Medicus AI
VIENNA

Mendel.ai
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

mPulse Mobile
ENCINO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Navina
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

nference
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

Octagos Health
HOUSTON

ONVY HealthTech
GRÜN WALD, GERMANY

Orbita
BOSTON

Pieces
IRVING, TEXAS, U.S.

Real Time Medical Systems
LINTHICUM HEIGHTS, MARYLAND, U.S.

Redesign Health, Inc.
NEW YORK CITY

Regard
LOS ANGELES

Reveleer
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Ribbon Health
NEW YORK CITY

SOPHiA GENETICS
BOSTON

Sorcero
WASHINGTON, D.C.

WORLD'S BEST
DIGITAL
HEALTH
COMPANIES
2024

Newsweek

statista

iCAD

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, U.S.

Imagen Technologies

NEW YORK CITY

Infermedica

WROCLAW, POLAND

Kheiron

LONDON

Koios Medical

CHICAGO

Linus Health

WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

Medial EarlySign

HOD HASHARON, ISRAEL

Medipixel

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Mednition

BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Mesh Bio

SINGAPORE

NeuraLight

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

NOCD

CHICAGO

OncoHealth

ATLANTA

Rad AI

SAN FRANCISCO

Skin Analytics

LONDON

TestCard

SCARBOROUGH, UNITED KINGDOM

Ubie

TOKYO

VoxNeuro

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

XUND

VIENNA

ZEPHYRx

TROY, NEW YORK, U.S.

HEALTH RECORDS

Abridge

PITTSBURGH

Abtrace

LONDON

Afyra Rekod

NAIROBI, KENYA



Push Doctor

Arcadia io

BURLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

Benchmark Systems

FOREST, VIRGINIA, U.S.

Bizmatic

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

CareCloud

SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY, U.S.

Castor

AMSTERDAM

CloudMedx

LOS ANGELES

Geneyx

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, U.S.

Health Gorilla

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Health Note

SAN FRANCISCO

HealthPlix

BENGALURU, INDIA

HealthViewX

PLANO, TEXAS, U.S.

Kaiku Health

HELSINKI

Kno2

BOISE, IDAHO, U.S.

lifen

PARIS

Lynx.MD

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

LynxCare

LEUVEN, BELGIUM

Medaxion

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, U.S.

Meditech

CANTON, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

MeetingDoctors

BARCELONA, SPAIN

Nabla

PARIS

nexuzhealth

HASSETT, BELGIUM

Nourish Care

BOURNEMOUTH, UNITED KINGDOM

Particle Health

NEW YORK CITY

Phoenix Ortho

OVILLA, TEXAS, U.S.

PicnicHealth

SAN FRANCISCO

PointClickCare

MISSISSAUGA, CANADA

RevolutionEHR

SAN DIEGO

Rhapsody

BOSTON

ROOK

MIAMI

Savana

MADRID

Semble

LONDON

Smart Reporting

MUNICH

Synapse Medicine

BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Triyam

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, U.S.

Truveta

SEATTLE

UMed

LONDON

Valant

SEATTLE

Waiting Room Solutions

GOSHEN, NEW YORK, U.S.

Well Health Technologies

VANCOUVER, CANADA

Xealth

SEATTLE

Zus Health

BOSTON

MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

Acclivity Health Solutions

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, U.S.

AdvancedCare

VANCOUVER, CANADA

AdvancedMD

SOUTH JORDAN, UTAH, U.S.

Akido Labs

LOS ANGELES

Aledade

BETHESDA, MARYLAND, U.S.

Alleva

LAGUNA NIGUEL, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Annexus Health

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.

AristaMD

SAN DIEGO

Artera

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

AssureCare

CINCINNATI

Augmedix

SAN FRANCISCO

Avegen

LONDON

Ayogo Health

VANCOUVER, CANADA

b.well Connected Health

BALTIMORE

Belong.Life

NEW YORK CITY

Blueprint

CHICAGO

Carbon Health

SAN FRANCISCO

care.coach

MILLBRAE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

CareBridge

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, U.S.

CareStack

KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA, U.S.

Carium

PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Centauri Health Solutions

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, U.S.

Coreplus

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Dedalus Group

FLORENCE, ITALY

Dental Monitoring

PARIS

Doctolib

LEVALLOIS-PERRET, FRANCE

doctorly

BERLIN

Doctrin

STOCKHOLM

DoseSpot

DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.

eHealth Technologies

WEST HENRIETTA, NEW YORK, U.S.

Force Therapeutics

NEW YORK CITY

Glooko

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Health Wealth Safe

ATHENS, GEORGIA, U.S.

Healthengine

PERTH, AUSTRALIA

Healthie

NEW YORK CITY

HealthNow

MAKATI, PHILIPPINES

Hint Health

SAN FRANCISCO

Infinity Health

LONDON

InSync Healthcare Solutions

TAMPA, FLORIDA, U.S.

League

TORONTO

Lifelink Systems

SAN FRANCISCO

LOGEX

AMSTERDAM

Luma Health

SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

MacroHealthPlus

DHAKA, BANGLADESH

Medefer

LONDON

Mindoula Health

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, U.S.

Modern Health

SAN FRANCISCO

ModRN Health

OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS, U.S.

ModuleMD

GRAND BLANC, MICHIGAN, U.S.

NexHealth

SAN FRANCISCO

Notable

SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

OhMD

BURLINGTON, VERMONT, U.S.

Open Medical

LONDON

OpenDoctor

NEW YORK CITY

Orb Health

RICHARDSON, TEXAS, U.S.

OSP

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, U.S.

Ospitek Inc.

SAN DIEGO

PatientPop

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Phreesia

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, U.S.

Privia Health

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA, U.S.

Rip Road

NEW YORK CITY

RXNT

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, U.S.

Sensely

SAN FRANCISCO

Sentry Health

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, U.S.

Seqster

SAN DIEGO

Spirit Health

LEICESTER, UNITED KINGDOM

Stellar Health

NEW YORK CITY

Storii

SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Suki

REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Swift Medical

TORONTO

TeleClinic

MUNICH

TigerConnect

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Unobravo

NAPLES, ITALY

Visiba

LONDON

VitalHub UK

LONDON

Viz

SAN FRANCISCO

Vytalize Health

HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY, U.S.

PREVENTION**2Morrow**

KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON, U.S.

AbleTo

NEW YORK CITY

Aktiia

NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND

Aktivolabs

SINGAPORE

Alma

NEW YORK CITY

Aptihealth

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK, U.S.

Axena

SAO PAULO

Bamboo Health

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, U.S.

Big Health

SAN FRANCISCO

Binah.ai

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL



LEFT: COURTESY OF PUSH DOCTOR; RIGHT: COURTESY OF CUE

Bloomlife

SAN FRANCISCO

Breathe Well-being

NEW DELHI

Calm

SAN FRANCISCO

Carebook

MONTREAL

Clue

BERLIN

Diagnostikare

MEXICO CITY

Doccla

LONDON

Ellipsis Health

SAN FRANCISCO

Equip Health

CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

FiNC

TOKYO

Fitelo

MOHALI, INDIA

Fitterfly

MUMBAI, INDIA

HealthifyMe

BENGALURU, INDIA

Healthily

LONDON

Hello Heart

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Humanoo

BERLIN

Inflow

LONDON

Koa Health

BARCELONA, SPAIN

Lifesum

STOCKHOLM

Little Otter

SAN FRANCISCO

Manage My Health

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Mindset Health

CREMORNE, AUSTRALIA

Myia Health

SAN FRANCISCO

NeuroFlow

PHILADELPHIA

New Ocean Health Solutions

CONSHOHOCKEN, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.

Nivati

SOUTH JORDAN, UTAH, U.S.

Nymbi Science

DENVER

Oliva Health

LONDON

OneStep

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Palta

LONDON

Peppy

LONDON

Perx Health

SYDNEY

Prescribe Fit

COLUMBUS, OHIO, U.S.

Sharecare

ATLANTA

Soda Health

CENTERTON, ARIZONA, U.S.

Solera Health

PHOENIX

Spring Health

NEW YORK CITY

ThoughtFull

SINGAPORE

Thymia

LONDON

Unmind

LONDON

Vinehealth

STAFFORDSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

VirtualHealth

NEW YORK CITY

Welltory

REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Woebot Health

SAN FRANCISCO

YAS.life

BERLIN

TELEHEALTH

Allm

TOKYO

Alodokter

JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Alpha Medical

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

Altibbi

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Assure Health

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GETTY: TOP RIGHT: TOMMASO BODDI/VARIETY/GETTY



MUSIC

An Ecstatic Anniversary

Sarah McLachlan is touring this summer, 30 years after the release of 'Fumbling Towards Ecstasy,' the album that made her a star

“PEOPLE KEPT SAYING, ‘DO YOU KNOW IT’S GOING to be 30 years? You need to do a tour.’ I [said], ‘No, it’s not been 30 years.’ I did the math, and I was like, ‘Oh my gosh.’ Then I talked to my management. They’re like, ‘Yeah, you should do a tour. Let’s do it.’”

In recalling the making of her third album, 1993’s *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy*, Sarah McLachlan had no initial thoughts that it would be her breakthrough. Rather, she remembers the period of writing and recording as a time of a new personal outlook. “I was unencumbered,” she tells *Newsweek*. “I was single for the first time in my adult life for a good chunk of time. I just felt very free. It felt like a joyful light process.”

McLachlan had established herself in her native Canada with her sophomore album, 1991’s *Solace*, but *Fumbling* was the work that really introduced her to a wider audience, especially in the U.S. where the record has since sold 3 million copies. Followed by diligent touring, *Fumbling* was the prelude for McLachlan’s mainstream success a few years later

with her next record *Surfacing* and the launch of the Lilith Fair festival that she co-founded.

by

DAVID
CHIU

The idea of celebrating *Fumbling* via this new tour came from people McLachlan knew

who reminded her about its approaching milestone. To mark the record’s anniversary, McLachlan is embarking on a North American tour that will see her perform the album from start to finish, beginning May 23 in Vancouver. A dollar per ticket will go to the nonprofit Sarah McLachlan School of Music that provides free music education for kids.

Opening for her tour will be two fellow Canadian musicians, Feist and Allison Russell. “I’ve tried to have other women open up for me or play with other women,” McLachlan says. “And this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know them better, to hear their music. I’m a huge fan of both of their music.”

The ‘Easiest’ Work

The tour is also an opportunity to revisit an album that McLachlan describes as the easiest work she wrote. She felt she could take more artistic chances in making *Fumbling* without any previous burdens: “My first record [1988’s *Touch*] was critically acclaimed,

and it didn't sell that well, but I had some success," she says. "With the second record [*Solace*], you're like, 'OK, now you have to step it up.' With the third, there was just kind of a feeling of like, 'You know what? Just do what you're going to do. Make the record you want to make,' which is a huge luxury. I was given tons of creative freedom. I think that was part of the success of it, and certainly part of the joy of making it—that I didn't feel as much pressure and could just be free to try and discover who I was."

For the album, McLachlan worked with Pierre Marchand, who previously produced *Solace* and would go on to helm several of her subsequent releases. "Pierre gave me a real foundation of allowing me to figure out who I was," she says. "One of the most important things he said to me was, 'I know you can sing high in all these different ways, but I wanna hear what you really sound like.' So he pushed me into my lower register, and I think that I really found my voice at that point."

Accompanied by lush instrumentation and atmospherics, the lyrics on *Fumbling* run the gamut of emotions: from isolation, angst and melancholy to yearning and hope sung in McLachlan's gorgeous, lustrous voice. "For me, every song is about walking down a new path that I haven't walked down before," she says. "Early on, too, I was trying to figure out who I was and tell stories about that...breakups, relationships, how I was in the world."

Sharing Her Experiences

One example of McLachlan drawing from her real-life experiences was the

EVER-HOPEFUL With her tour beginning in May, McLachlan emphasizes how it's always important for her "to instill some hope in my lyrics."

haunting "Possession," the album's opening track. It was the singer's response to an obsessive fan who was stalking her. "It was terrifying for me," she says "I didn't understand it."

Another single from *Fumbling*, the soulful ballad "Good Enough," was, according to McLachlan, about a woman's abusive relationship. "This is my dear friend. I love her, and she's in a really sh**** relationship. And I'm like, 'You deserve so much better than this.' So it's about friendships for me, but also about trying to show someone that they are worth more than what they can see themselves."

The gut-wrenching and moving "Hold On" came about after McLachlan saw a documentary about a young woman who lost her husband to AIDS. "The love story in it was really inspiring to me," she recalls, "her dedication to him and her love for him."

"I still get to make music and people still want to come hear me sing. It's just fantastic."



It was beautiful and tragic. I was sort of overcome by it, and the song came from that experience."

In contrast, the somewhat whimsical "Ice Cream," which has since been a staple of McLachlan's live shows, provides a respite from the emotional tumult of *Fumbling's* preceding songs. The singer said that the track barely made it on the record. "I was still very young at the time, and I wanted to be taken seriously," she explains. "I felt it was kind of too glib and light. But Pierre, once again, in his wisdom, was like, 'You know, you need some lightness [*laughs*]. This is part of who you are.' He encouraged me to not be afraid to show that side of myself."

Fumbling's final two tracks, the aching "Fear" and the anthemic title song, not only juxtapose feelings of helplessness and bravery respectively, but they perfectly sum up the themes of the record. "I think that I'm very drawn to the darker side of life," says McLachlan. "I've always found it incredibly cathartic to write about my challenges. But I'm a very hopeful person. So, for me, it's always been important to, for the most part, instill some hope in my lyrics because that is a big part of who I am. Even though I'm drawn to darker themes, it's like I need to explore those so that I can get back to my happy place, basically [*laughs*]."

McLachlan remembers the period following the release of *Fumbling* as one of heavy touring for two years, which heightened her profile with American audiences. "My manager [Terry McBride] in his wisdom was like, 'Just keep touring. Your approach to success is playing live.' And I don't think he was wrong there. I'd go and play to a couple hundred people, and to 1,000 people and then to 2,000 people. Every time I'd come back to a market, I'd play to more people and really build up a solid fan base that way."

LEFT: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY/THE WAYUU TAYA FOUNDATION

Supporting Women

The critical and commercial reception surrounding *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy* set the stage for the massive success of the singer's next album, *Surfacing*, in 1997. Coinciding its release was the memorable female-centered Lilith Fair touring festival, which McLachlan co-founded and headlined.

"I'm thrilled," she says of Lilith's legacy. "I was so happy and honored to be a part of that—to have so many other women believe in it and want to get on board. We all elevated each other. That's how we survive, endure and thrive in society. All the systems in this world have been built by men for men. And this was a way of disrupting that. I'm so, so proud of it."

As McLachlan is revisiting the past for her upcoming retrospective tour, she is also looking ahead with new music—her last album of all-original material, *Shine On*, was released in 2014. "I am seriously working away at a new record," she says. "We're sort of having to do it piecemeal because my producers [have] got a bunch of other projects going at the same time, as do I. So we're just trying to pencil each other in every chance we get."

Even though it's now been 35 years since the release of her debut record *Touch*, McLachlan says she still feels like a 12-year-old in the context of her long music career. "I still pinch myself every day for this incredible life that my music has given me," she says. "I never thought that far ahead. I never really thought about what success might look like. And this has been just an incredible ride. I am so grateful for all of it. And that after 35 years, I still get to make music and people still want to come hear me sing. It's just fantastic." **N**

► **David Chiu** is a freelance music reporter. Follow him on X @newbeats

FURTHER LISTENING

Touch NETTWERK, 1988

After her time with the Halifax, Nova Scotia, band the October Game, McLachlan released her debut album when she was about 20. Her mix of alternative pop and folk offered glimpses of a star in the making with her expressive and delicate voice and poetic lyrics that hearkened Joni Mitchell and Kate Bush; highlights include "Out of the Shadows," "Steaming" and the exuberant "Vox."



Solace NETTWERK, 1991

McLachlan's sophomore effort *Solace* is notable for two things: it contained the standout tracks in the dramatic-sounding "Into the Fire" and the soulful and gentle "Path of Thorns (Terms)." It also marked the first time she worked with producer Pierre Marchand, kicking off a longtime musical collaboration that has lasted through several subsequent albums.



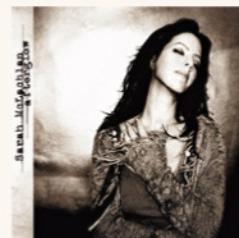
Surfacing ARISTA, 1997

Along with spearheading the launch of the Lilith Fair festival, McLachlan further solidified her popularity with her fourth and most accessible album yet. *Surfacing* was a U.S. smash success, reaching No. 2 on *Billboard* and eventually selling 8 million copies. Its singles were also inescapable on radio and MTV—among them "Building a Mystery," "Sweet Surrender," "Adia" and the ballad "Angel," which has arguably become the singer's signature song and covered by such artists as Brandi Carlile, Emmylou Harris and Allison Russell.



Afterglow ARISTA, 2003

Afterglow came six years after *Surfacing*, during which time McLachlan married and became a mother. Like its predecessor, the record also peaked at No. 2 on *Billboard* augmented by the singles "Fallen," "World on Fire" and "Stupid." In a 2003 *New York Times* interview, she recalled the panic of making it "in this fog of being a new mother and thinking, 'Oh, God, I've got to get this record out.'"



Shine On VERVE, 2014

Not counting the 2016 holiday album *Wonderland*, *Shine On* is McLachlan's most recent studio album of all original material. Released in the wake of her father's death and the dissolution of her marriage, McLachlan characterized the record (with its singles "Monsters" and "In Your Shoes") as hopeful. "Going through all this stuff and finding a way to feel at peace with all of it, that's the place I'm in," the singer told CBC Radio at the time.



Hannah Einbinder

▶ AFTER A NEARLY TWO-YEAR HIATUS, THE Max-original Emmy Award-winning series *Hacks* is back. And Hannah Einbinder, who plays Ava, the comedy writer to legendary—and difficult—stand-up comic Deborah Vance (Jean Smart), used the time off to figure out how to be a person again. “I went on the road, I did stand-up, but I kind of had to fill in the rest of my time with various hobbies and things. It made me go like, ‘OK, I gotta like be a person. Do sh** that isn’t just work.’” Now that the dark comedy series is in its third season, Einbinder is no longer intimidated by Smart. “At this point in our relationship it’s familial close.” And now Einbinder has more than just *Hacks* in the works, she will also debut her first stand-up comedy special this June on Max. But she gives the credit to *Hacks*: “It is single handedly because of this acting gig. That boosted the visibility for me to be able to tour and develop. To run an hour, to sharpen it, it’s hard to get that opportunity. I am so grateful to do that and to work it out in a way that is not common. I hope people like it.” —*H. Alan Scott*



HANNAH SPEAKS ABOUT ...

“I always marvel at Jean [Smart], but it is to her credit that she goes so out of her way to make me feel comfortable.”

WHAT AVA IS DOING NOW ▶

“It’s been about a year since the two characters parted ways. Ava has kind of figured it out in L.A., she’s hitting her stride. She’s got this new job where she’s on a cool show, working her way up. She’s living with her girlfriend, and she’s got more of a full life. She’s doing pretty well. Of course, that doesn’t last. I’m proud of where we find her.”

DEBORAH & AVA’S RELATABILITY ▶

“They don’t bother blurring the edges on Deborah. Deborah will say f***** up sh** and Ava will do f***** up sh**. And they’re not going to misrepresent the character of Deborah Vance to make her look better. I think she’s real in a way that connects to people of her generation, and I think the same of Ava. This is an honest portrayal.”

HER FIRST STAND-UP SPECIAL ▶

“I’ve been working at it relentlessly. I don’t know that I’m nervous. I’m excited. Just going on tour and testing it all around and going all over the country and Canada and London. Just making it what it needs to be. Much to my team’s chagrin, I am Mrs. No. 1 go, ‘Not until it’s right. Not until it’s perfect. Not until it’s ready.’ And I think that time is now.”



Bell Wine Cellars

Hillary Cole ~ Director of Sales

Bell Wine Cellars has been a family-owned winery in Napa for over 30 years and has significantly shaped the region's viticulture. Our research into seven Cabernet Sauvignon clones has uncovered their application in modern winemaking to influence a wine's structure, optimal food pairings, and aging potential.



Fior di Sole

Stefano Migotto ~ Owner

Born from Italian roots, Fior di Sole has successfully blended extensive winemaking expertise with advanced production facilities to deliver the highest quality private and retailer-exclusive brands, along with custom wine co-packing services.



Williams Selyem

Jeff Mangahas ~ VP, Director of Winemaking

From our mature vineyards to our commitment to traditional winemaking techniques, Williams Selyem is capturing a purity of character and essence in its wines that sets it apart from a quality perspective.



South West Wine Center

Michael Pierce ~ Director of Viticulture and Enology

At Yavapai College, wine students can embark on a practical-minded journey into viticulture. With South-west Wine Center's "grape camps" helping budding young—and not so young—winemakers understand the craft inside out, we're redefining Arizona's wine industry.



VineOS

Jules Robbins ~ CEO

Delivering customer-centric excellence, VinesOS is redefining how wineries manage direct sales. As an all-in-one winery software platform, our primary objective is to help wineries increase profitability with a highly personalized platform for point of sale, clubs, ecommerce, and reservations.



Foxx Equipment

Rob Beckley ~ Sales Manager

At Foxx Equipment, we like to think we're more than just a beverage dispensing supplier—we're a partner. And a great one. With unrivaled customer satisfaction and a scientific approach to system optimization, we're making the beverage industry an easier place for businesses to succeed in.



Heaven's Door

Marc Bushala ~ CEO

Collaborating with legendary songwriter Bob Dylan, we created Heaven's Door—a brand that blends artistry with craftsmanship to offer a curated selection of exceptional whiskeys that capture unique characteristics and inspire exploration.

Terlato Wine Group

Bill Terlato ~ President & CEO



Sustaining Excellence Across the Decades with the Terlato Wine Group

With an 85-year history spanning four generations, the Terlato Wine Group stands as a testament to longevity in an often challenging industry. As a family-owned business that has remained an enduring feature of the wine and beverage landscape for so long, what's been the secret to its lasting success?

"We only partner with other family-owned businesses," explains Bill Terlato, President and CEO of the Group. "Family businesses make decisions measured in decades, not in financial quarters... which is how public companies think. When you focus on the long-term, you make far better decisions."

Better decisions indeed. From humble beginnings with a single wine shop in Chicago, the Terlato family gradually transitioned into distribution, importing Italian wines in the sixties, and later expanding their portfolio to include wines from around the globe. Recognizing the importance of proximity to the source, the company strategically sold its retail and distribution businesses to focus on owning brands and developing vineyards.

A key aspect of their enduring success is the meticulous attention given to their vineyards, boasting over a thousand acres worldwide. Owning the majority of their vineyards ensures optimal grape quality, allowing the wines to almost make themselves with minimal intervention for brands such as Chimney Rock, Rutherford Hill, and Sanford. This dedication to quality extends beyond wines, as evidenced by their entrance into spirits and non-alcoholic beverages, offering a curated portfolio to cater to diverse preferences.

Sustainability is a core value for Terlato. "Our vineyards are the most valuable assets we have," says Bill Terlato. "So you want to care for them the best you possibly can, to keep them healthy and sustainable for the future." With the family using sheep as natural lawnmowers in their vineyards, it's clear the family are looking for environmentally conscious solutions wherever they can.

In an industry often swayed by trends, Terlato remains focused on timeless quality. As they continue to expand, the Terlato Wine Group is standing strong thanks to its enduring partnerships, commitment to sustainability, and an evolving portfolio catering to an ever broader range of customers.

Heaven's Door

Marc Bushala ~ CEO



The Spirits Beyond Heaven's Door. A glimpse into the craftsmanship behind Heaven's Door's premium whiskeys.

When you think of Bob Dylan, you probably think of legendary songwriting. You may even think of painting and sculpture, both of which Dylan has proven himself remarkably gifted at. Many of you may not be aware, however, that he's also the talent behind a portfolio of American whiskeys that have won numerous awards, from "Whiskey of the Year" to "Best American Blended Limited Release."

"He's a perfectionist," says Marc Bushala, CEO of Heaven's Door. "What does he do when he creates a masterpiece? He creates another. He constantly pushes us to make everything better, different, and more interesting than it was before."

With Bushala having earned his wings with Angel's Envy, a unique bourbon that truly set the standard for secondary finishing, he collaborated with Dylan, sharing a mutual passion for crafting exceptional whiskeys. Merging Bushala's expertise with craft whiskeys with Dylan's artistic flair—showcased through metalwork sculptures on the bottle labels—the pair have created a selection of exceptional whiskeys that each have their distinct character and story.

The purchase of a Kentucky distillery signifies a monumental milestone for the brand's evolution. Now home to The Heaven's Door Distillery at Six Mile Creek, led by Master Distiller Ken Pierce, this venture is set to expand the Heaven's Door portfolio into new realms. Inspired by the restless spirit of Bob Dylan, the Heaven's Door lineup of core whiskeys and limited releases is propelling category growth and primed for expansion, offering enthusiasts globally a more intricate tapestry of whiskey experiences.

With the success of Heaven's Door, Bushala's vision now extends beyond whiskey to tequila and hard seltzers. Partnering again with unexpected names, like Playboy, Bushala has created the Play Hard Seltzer, using famous art from the 1960s and '70s to help capture the spirit of the drink. "We use Andy Warhol's bunny head for our first releases, which are the vodka seltzers," says Bushala.

One thing is for sure. As Heaven's Door continues to flourish and new brands emerge, one thing remains comfortingly certain: in a world driven by trends, authentic craftsmanship and artistic spirit are alive and well, courtesy of Dylan, Bushala, and co.



PARTING SHOT

Eugenio Derbez

FOR EUGENIO DERBEZ, MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM BEING ONE OF Mexico's most recognizable faces in comedy to the American market was not easy. "We don't laugh at the same things. Humor in Mexico and in the U.S. is completely different. I had to reinvent myself." He's done a good job of it because his Apple TV+ series *Acapulco* (May 1) is now in its third season. "I'm so glad that the series is bilingual and it's getting its third season." The success of the show is directly tied to Derbez's success stateside. Loosely based on his character Maximo from the 2017 film *How to Be a Latin Lover*, *Acapulco* shifts between telling the backstory of young Maximo in the 1980s at a popular resort and the character in modern day. Part of why he wanted to do *Acapulco* was because "there's still a big opportunity to tell beautiful things about Mexico. I was always concerned that Mexico equals violence." With his success in the U.S., Derbez is looking to adapt his popular Mexican sitcom *La Familia P. Luche* into English. "It's so different from anything that you've watched before in the U.S."

What was it about *How to Be a Latin Lover* that made you want to tell the backstory of Maximo in *Acapulco*?

Well, when we were doing the film, *How to Be a Latin Lover*—by the way, it's a very funny film—I remember that we would be talking about, "What about a prequel?" How does Maximo get from here to here? It's not exactly a prequel. It's slightly based on the film. Every time you turn on the news and you hear anything about Mexico, it's violence, crime and drugs. I wanted to change that by portraying a different Mexico—and *Acapulco* is that.

What about Maximo do you relate with?

I feel that Maximo and I are similar. The only thing that I like more about Maximo is that he's always questioning himself, [whether] he should or not cross certain lines in order to get what he wants. And I feel that all of us at a certain point, we're always questioning ourselves. And this is what I love about the series.

How difficult was it for you to make the transition from your work in Mexico to the American market?

It took me a while to understand how comedy works in the U.S. Everything in the Latin world is broad, over the top. In the U.S., everything is contained, small. I used to write my own scripts in Spanish; in English I'm completely lost. So, it's been a very complicated path, but I think I'm almost there. Still needs some work, but I'm almost there. — *H. Alan Scott*

"Humor in Mexico and in the U.S. is completely different. I had to reinvent myself."



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