

Japan – United States – Republic of Korea Defense Ministers Meeting Joint Press Statement

Japan Defense Minister Tomomi Inada, U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and Republic of Korea Minister of National Defense Han Min-koo convened the 8th annual trilateral defense ministerial meeting in Singapore on June 3 on the margins of the 2017 Shangri-La Dialogue. During the meeting, they held substantive discussions on North Korea, the regional security situation, and advancing defense cooperation.

The three ministers strongly condemned North Korea's recent provocative actions and concurred that North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs represent an immediate threat to regional and global security. The three officials resolved to strengthen international coordination to implement and enforce relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The officials called on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, to cease additional provocative actions that only increase tensions in the region, and to abide by its international obligations and commitments.

The three ministers lauded the progress in trilateral defense cooperation and praised collective efforts to enhance interoperability and exercise a variety of communication channels to share information and coordinate responses to North Korea's provocative actions. The three officials applauded recent efforts to improve trilateral response capabilities, to include the execution of four missile warning exercises, an inaugural anti-submarine warfare exercise, a maritime interdiction operations exercise, and combined flight training events with U.S. bomber aircraft.

The three ministers also discussed other regional security issues, including the importance of maritime security. The three ministers reaffirmed that freedom of navigation and overflight must be ensured, and that disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner.

The three ministers recognized that Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea face common security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. They reaffirmed that the three nations are committed to sustaining defense cooperation and to maintaining a rules-based order. Accordingly, the three leaders pledged to take necessary steps to strengthen their ability to cooperate more closely in the face of North Korean threats, such as enhancing information sharing, executing a robust trilateral exercise program, developing interoperability, and enabling practical military-to-military coordination for effective response coordination.

The three ministers decided to continue holding consultations on trilateral security issues, and affirmed their continued strong commitment to promoting defense and security cooperation among Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea in order to contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world.