

**Joint Statement of the 15th Republic of Korea-United States-Japan
Defense Trilateral Talks**

September 10, 2024

Republic of Korea (ROK) Deputy Minister for National Defense Policy Cho Chang-rae, U.S. Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Cara Abercrombie, and Japan Director General for Defense Policy YAMATO Taro convened the 15th Defense Trilateral Talks in Seoul on September 10, 2024. They discussed shared regional security concerns and renewed their commitment to strengthening trilateral security cooperation following the Japan-ROK-U.S. Summits at Phnom Penh and Camp David and Trilateral Ministerial Meetings in Singapore and Tokyo this year.

The three defense officials acknowledged the progress made by the national defense authorities of the three countries over the past year since the historic Camp David Summit, and pledged to continue working closely together to strengthen trilateral security cooperation.

The three sides shared their views that the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework (TSCF), signed by the Ministers and the Secretary of the three countries in July, institutionalizes progress made in the relationship thus far and will serve as a foundation to pursue trilateral security cooperation in a systematic and stable manner.

The three defense officials highlighted the successful efforts of their three countries in systematically conducting trilateral exercises in accordance with the multi-year trilateral exercise plan approved last year. They pledged to continue seeking various opportunities for future trilateral exercises and committed to updating the multi-year trilateral exercise plan by the end of this year.

The officials acknowledged that the first execution of the multi-domain trilateral exercise FREEDOM EDGE in June contributed to enhancing interoperability among the three countries and safeguarding freedom, peace, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Korean Peninsula. They also concurred to conduct the second FREEDOM EDGE exercise in the near term.

The three sides reaffirmed their enduring commitment to strengthening trilateral cooperation to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in the Indo-Pacific region, and beyond, including by deterring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) advancing nuclear and missile threats.

They expressed grave concern over the increasing military cooperation commitment between the Russian Federation and the DPRK, as highlighted by the signing of the “Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership,” which is contrary to multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is a concerning development for many countries in the region. The three defense officials pledged to strengthen cooperation with the international community to fulfill the implementation of the related UN Security Council resolutions.

In addition, they condemned the DPRK’s recent diversification of nuclear delivery systems, tests and launches of multiple ballistic missiles, and other related activities, and urged the DPRK to immediately cease all actions that destabilize security of the Korean Peninsula and the region.

The United States reaffirmed its ironclad commitment to the defense of the ROK and Japan, emphasizing that this commitment is backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear capabilities.

All three sides reaffirmed strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the region.

The three defense officials shared assessments on recent maritime and air military activities in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea. They also recalled their respective positions regarding the dangerous and aggressive behavior by the People's Republic of China (PRC) supporting unlawful maritime claims in the area. Furthermore, they shared concerns about actions that are inconsistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and stressed the importance of fully respecting freedom of navigation and overflight.

The three sides recognized that there is no change in their basic positions on Taiwan and emphasized the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as an indispensable element of security and prosperity in the international community. They called for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

The three officials welcomed holding the 16th Defense Trilateral Talks in the first half of next year in Japan.