

Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Onoda's Participation in the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus

On Wednesday, November 23rd, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Onoda visited the Kingdom of Cambodia (Siem Reap) to attend the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (hereinafter referred to as "ADMM-Plus"). A brief summary of the meeting is as below.

1. For the first time in three years, the 9th ADMM-Plus was held in person. A face-to-face meeting last occurred at the 6th ADMM-Plus in November 2019.
2. At the meeting, Minister-level participants exchanged views on the regional and international security environment. An outline of the statement by Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Onoda at the meeting is as follows.
 - (1) At the outset, Parliamentary Vice-Minister Onoda stated that almost nine months have elapsed since Russia's aggression against Ukraine began, and strongly condemned the series of outrageous acts perpetrated by Russia, which are severely shaking the international order and are blatant violations of international law. She emphasized that Japan is seriously concerned about Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons, stating that such threats are absolutely unacceptable, let alone any actual use, and that Japan is determined to lead international efforts toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. Additionally, she emphasized that any unilateral change of status quo by force is unacceptable in any region, and with a strong sense of urgency pointed out that "Ukraine today may be East Asia Tomorrow," and that Russia's actions are an issue for the Indo-Pacific region as well.
 - (2) Regarding North Korea, she stated that the spate of ballistic missile launches, including one which flew over Japanese territory and an ICBM-class ballistic missile that fell into the Japan's EEZ, are at unprecedented high frequency and in new forms. She strongly condemned the series of provocations as they violate relevant UN Security Council resolutions. She also stated that Japan will continue to work closely with the U.S., as well as with the U.S. and the Republic of Korea, toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with UNSC resolutions. Furthermore, she underlined that the abductions issue is a top priority for Japan and that Japan is resolved to making utmost efforts to realize the return of all abductees to Japan at the earliest possible date.
 - (3) She strongly pointed out that, in the East China Sea, China has been attempting to unilaterally change the status quo by force, such as by conducting continuous and intensified activities that

infringe upon Japan's sovereignty around the Senkaku Islands which are an inherent territory of Japan. She also strongly pointed out that the unilateral change of the status quo by force and moves to create a fait accompli continue in the South China Sea. In addition, she conveyed that Japan expects that issues surrounding Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue, as peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is an extremely important issue which directly impacts regional security. With respect to the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea, she appealed that it should be effective, substantive, and consistent with international law including the UNCLOS, and should not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders.

- (4) Regarding the situation in Myanmar, she stated that Japan remains deeply concerned about the current situation, and strongly urged the Myanmar military to faithfully work towards the peaceful resolution of the situation by swiftly implementing the "Five-Point Consensus."
 - (5) In addition, she expressed Japan's determination to formulate a new National Security Strategy and related documents, and fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, as well as continuing its efforts to uphold and reinforce a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). In particular, with regard to relations with ASEAN, she reiterated Japan's enduring commitment to play a constructive role through cooperation based on the "Vientiane Vision 2.0," as well as through the ADMM-Plus framework including engagements at the Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which Japan co-chairs with Vietnam. She also emphasized that Japan will further promote closer communications with ASEAN Member States by utilizing the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure, which Japan decided to join in December 2021.
 - (6) Lastly, she expressed Japan's determination to make utmost efforts to uphold a rules-based, free and open international order and to actively engage in regional cooperation centered on ASEAN.
3. After the exchange of views, the meeting adopted the "Joint Declaration on Defence Cooperation to Strengthen Solidarity for a Harmonised Security"
 4. On this occasion, Parliamentary Vice-Minister Onoda paid courtesy calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Tea Banh of Cambodia, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles of Australia respectively, and reaffirmed that they would further promote bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges.