

### Japan-Australia Defence Ministerial Meeting (Summary)

On October 19, Defense Minister KIHARA Minoru and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP held the meeting in Tokyo. The summary is as follows;

- 1 At the beginning, DPM Marles congratulated Minister Kihara for his appointment as the Defense Minister and Minister Kihara expressed his appreciation. Minister Kihara noted that defence cooperation has expanded to all the possible areas between Japan and Australia, which fully share the value and strategic objectives, and expressed his intension to increase effectiveness of bilateral defence cooperation so that Japan and Australia will be able to cooperate firmly in contingencies that may affect our sovereignty and regional security interests.
- 2 Minister Kihara explained about Japan's ongoing efforts to fundamentally reinforce defence capabilities including counterstrike capabilities and DPM Marles expressed his strong support. Ministers confirmed that it is important to steadily implement the items laid out in the new "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation" in October 2022 and to take forward trilateral defence cooperation with the U.S., which is the common ally to Japan and Australia, in all the possible areas.
- 3 Ministers shared their understanding that deepening operational cooperation and joint exercise and enhancing interoperability is important in increasing effectiveness of our bilateral defense cooperation. With that, Ministers confirmed the progress made in operational cooperation and joint exercises in various areas such as the first application of the Reciprocal Access Agreement to mutual deployment exercises of F-35As to Japan and Australia, following its entry into force in August. Ministers also welcomed the first full participation of the Australian Defence Forces in the Japan-U.S. Bilateral Command Post Exercise "Yamasakura" from the end of November 2023 and the Japan-U.S. Bilateral Command Post Exercise "Keen Edge" in February 2024. Ministers also welcomed the progress made in discussions on scope, objectives and forms of enhanced operational cooperation building upon the "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation".
- 4 Ministers confirmed the importance of defence equipment and technology cooperation and welcomed the announcement on the conclusion of a contract for joint development project utilizing laser technology released by Australia Department of Defence with Mitsubishi Electric Corporation Australia.
- 5 Ministers concurred to further enhance cooperation to uphold and reinforce "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".