

Japan-UK Defense Ministers Meeting

On November 7, 2023, commencing at 14:00 for approximately 50 minutes, Minister KIHARA held a Defense Ministerial Meeting with Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Grant Shapps.

- 1 At the beginning of the meeting, Secretary Shapps extended his congratulation to Minister Kihara on his appointment to the Minister of Defence. Minister Kihara also congratulated Secretary Shapps' appointment to the Secretary of State for Defense, and expressed his commitment to work with Secretary Shapps to further deepen Japan-UK cooperation, as each other's closest security partner in Asia and in Europe.
- 2 The Ministers affirmed that Japan-UK security relationship has been closer than ever, based on the "Hiroshima Accord" announced this May between the Prime Ministers of Japan and the UK, and welcomed that mutual visits and interactions are accumulating in every service between Japan Self-Defence Forces and the UK Armed Forces. Minister Kihara also expressed his welcome for UK's plan to deploy carrier strike group to the Indo-Pacific, as a testament of UK's will and capability to further reinforce UK's engagement to this region. The Ministers also welcomed that Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) would be first applied to the bilateral field training exercise "Vigilant Isles 23" between Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the British Army planned to take place in Japan from November 15, and concurred to further advance cooperation and interoperability between Japan Self-Defense Forces and the UK Armed Forces by utilizing Japan-UK RAA. Additionally, the Ministers welcomed that the discussion concerning the application of Asset Protection Measures by the JSDF has been progressing.
- 3 The meeting also included a discussion on defense equipment and technology cooperation, and with regards to cooperation for Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), the Ministers once again affirmed to work in unison to develop by 2035 the next-generation fighter aircraft with superior capability.
- 4 The Ministers concurred to continue to work closely together towards further deepening Japan-UK defense cooperation and exchanges.