

June 1, 2024
Japan Ministry of Defense

Joint Press Statement by Minister of Defense of Japan and Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea

1. As concurred in Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting in June 2023, Minister of Defense of Japan Kihara Minoru and Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Shin Won-sik concurred that promoting Japan-ROK and Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation is becoming increasingly important, considering the necessity of responding to regional and global security challenges, as well as North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.
2. During Japan-ROK-U.S. Summit in August 2023, the leaders of the three countries concurred on bringing trilateral security cooperation to new heights, and confirmed the importance of trilateral collaboration in addressing regional security challenges, based on the belief that trilateral partnership among Japan, the ROK, and the U.S. advances the security and prosperity of all our people, the region, and the world.
3. The Ministers shared the recognition that a security cooperation relationship between Japan and the ROK is beneficial for both countries, which share fundamental values and strategic interests, also serves as a foundation for robust Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation, and is essential not only for deterring North Korean threats, but also for realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific.
4. The Ministers concurred on endeavoring to advance Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation and enhance mutual trust between the defense authorities of Japan and the ROK, while promoting cooperation and exchanges in various fields.
5. In order to activate the dialogue between the defense authorities of Japan and the ROK, the Defense Ministers of Japan and the ROK concurred on this occasion as follows; and concurred on utilizing these opportunities to discuss details of future Japan-ROK security cooperation.

(1) Regularize annual Japan-ROK Defense Vice-Ministerial Meeting

(2) Resume Japan-ROK Defense Bilateral Talks (Japan-ROK MM Dialogue)

(3) Resume High-level Exchange between Japan Self-Defense Forces and ROK Armed Forces

6. In addition, based on the outcomes of Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting in June 2023, the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Ministry of National Defense of the ROK alongside the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force(JMSDF) and the ROK Navy have held consultations at the working level; in order to establish measures to prevent a recurrence of an incident similar to the one that occurred between the JMSDF and the ROK Navy in December 2018, which could lead to stagnation of Japan-ROK and Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation.

7. As a result of the discussions necessary to ensure the safety of the JMSDF and the ROK Navy, both sides concurred on the importance of facilitating mutual understanding including ensuring smooth communication. Accordingly, the JMSDF Chief of Staff and the ROK Chief of Naval Operations formulated a document, which includes communication procedures between their ships and aircraft and ways of communication at the headquarters level; and concurred on proceeding with administrative procedures for the signing. Henceforth, the JMSDF and the ROK Navy will operate in accordance with this newly formulated document in the event of encounters between the JMSDF and the ROK Navy at sea in peacetime.

8. Acknowledging the above, the Ministers concurred on ensuring that items confirmed at the working level will be implemented, so that safety will be ensured in the event of encounters between the JMSDF and the ROK Navy at sea in peacetime. The implementation status of the confirmed items will be reviewed in the regular consultative bodies between defense authorities of Japan and the ROK as well as between the JMSDF and the ROK Navy.

9. Based on the outcomes of this meeting, the Ministers concurred on continuing to enhance Japan-ROK and Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation.