

Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting (Summary)

October 5, 2023

Ministry of Defense

On October 4, Defense Minister Kihara and Defense Secretary Austin held discussions from 13:10 (local time) for approximately 55 minutes at the U.S. Department of Defense. The summary is as follows.

1. Regional affairs

The Ministers confirmed that they would not accept any unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts in any parts of the world including the Indo-Pacific region and confirmed that they need to strengthen the Alliance capabilities to deter and respond to that end. In addition, the Ministers noted the importance of the U.S. stating its commitment that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands.

The Ministers confirmed that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrage that shakes the foundation of the international order including Asia and confirmed that Japan and the U.S. would work together to continue to provide support for Ukraine.

Given China's intensifying military activities including cooperation with Russia, the Ministers concurred that they would continue to cooperate more than ever before. Furthermore, the Ministers reiterated the importance of peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait.

Based on the belief that trilateral partnership among Japan, U.S. and ROK advances the security and prosperity of all our people, the region, and the world, as confirmed at the Trilateral Summit in August this year, the Ministers confirmed the importance of trilateral cooperation in addressing the regional security challenges. Regarding North Korea's nuclear and missile threat, the Ministers confirmed to advance trilateral defense cooperation among Japan, U.S. and ROK, including the efforts towards operationalizing the real-time sharing of missile warning data on North Korea by the end of this year.

The Ministers welcomed the expansion of training opportunities that applies Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement. In addition, they confirmed to further deepen defense cooperation among Japan, U.S. and Australia in various areas including bilateral training.

2. Bilateral Defense Cooperation

The Ministers confirmed to steadily progress efforts to strengthen Alliance capabilities to deter and respond under the new strategies. They confirmed to accelerated discussions on roles, missions and capabilities of the Alliance including effective operation of counterstrike capabilities under Japan-U.S. cooperation.

Secretary Austin welcomed the initiatives towards establishment of a Permanent Joint Headquarters in Japan. The Ministers confirmed to discuss coordination procedures between the two countries.

Secretary Austin reiterated that the U.S. commitment to providing extended deterrence including nuclear capabilities to Japan remains unwavering. The Ministers welcomed the deepening of substantial discussions between the two countries and concurred to continue to hold in-depth discussions on extended deterrence.

The Ministers concurred the importance of expanding bilateral presence of Japan and U.S. in Southwestern region.

The Ministers reaffirmed that the U.S. Air Force MQ-9s temporary deployed to MSDF Kanoya Air Base and the Bilateral Information Analysis Cell play a significant role in strengthening intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities of the Alliance.

The Ministers affirmed that they would expand UAVs-related cooperation and deepen cooperation towards the success of the joint development of GPI (Glide Phase Interceptor) from the perspective of ensuring technological superiority.

The Ministers shared the recognition that ensuring information security and cybersecurity serves as the foundation for the Alliance. Minister Kihara expressed his firm resolve to fundamentally reinforce information security and cybersecurity together with the U.S., and Secretary Austin welcomed such initiatives.

3. Realignment of U.S. Forces / U.S. Forces in Japan

The Ministers confirmed to steadily implement initiatives of the posture of the U.S. Forces as confirmed at the Japan-U.S. “2+2” meeting and continue to cooperate between Japan and the U.S. The Ministers welcomed the initiatives on U.S. Forces realignment so far and concurred to work closely together to steadily advance such efforts in the future.

The Ministers affirmed the importance of understanding and cooperation from the local communities for the stable stationing of the U.S. Forces in Japan and their daily activities and confirmed that they would continue to work together to mitigate impact on the local communities including Okinawa.