

Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Telephone Conference (Summary)

March 13, 2024

Ministry of Defense

On March 13, Defense Minister Kihara and Secretary of Defense Austin held a telephone conference. The summary is as follows.

At the outset, Minister Kihara expressed his appreciation for the sympathy and support offered by the United States as well as the cooperation extended by U.S. Forces Japan for disaster relief operation in the wake of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake that occurred on January 1.

Following the U.S. Air Force CV-22 Osprey incident last November, Minister Kihara once again offered his condolences for the eight service members who lost their lives in the incident, as well as their family members. In response Secretary Austin thanked Minister Kihara for Japan's support in the search and recovery mission by Self Defense Forces, Japan Coast Guard, and local communities.

The Ministers confirmed the outcome of efforts to verify safety measures, etc., which had been conducted in close cooperation between both countries following the U.S. Air Force CV-22 Osprey incident off the shore of Yakushima Island. Minister Kihara expressed his gratitude for sharing technical information at an unprecedented level, and requested the U.S. side's cooperation in MOD's efforts to better inform the Japanese public of the content of U.S. accident investigation report upon its release. The Ministers confirmed that they will further cooperate on this issue.

The Ministers confirmed that they will carefully proceed with the resumption of flight operations of V-22 Osprey aircraft in Japan in a phased manner in close cooperation between both countries after implementing safety measures that the U.S. side presented this time, while ensuring that flight safety remains a top priority.

The Ministers concurred that they will continue to work on further strengthening the Alliance capabilities to deter and respond as well as realizing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.