

The 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (“2+2”)

On September 5, commencing at 10:40 a.m. for approximately 3 hours, Mr. NAKATANI Gen, Minister of Defense of Japan, and IWAYA Takeshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, held the 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting with the Hon. Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of the Commonwealth of Australia and Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia in Tokyo. Following the consultations, a Joint Statement was issued. The overview of the meeting is as follows:

1. Overview

At the outset, Minister IWAYA stated that Japan and Australia have the will and capability to play a leading role in realizing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) and that the Japan-Australia security cooperation, as the central pillar of the coordination among like-minded countries, has become broader and more robust than ever before. He also expressed his desire to further strengthen Japan-Australia security cooperation to elevate the Special Strategic Partnership to a higher level, in light of the 50th anniversary in 2026 of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia. Minister NAKATANI stated that Japan and Australia being at the central pillar of the coordination among like-minded countries, Australia’s selection of the upgraded “Mogami”-class frigate as Australia’s future general-purpose frigates will elevate the bilateral defense cooperation to a higher level. He also shared his view that it was important to bring new values and benefits to the entire Indo-Pacific region by generating synergy through enhanced cooperation and collaboration among Japan and Australia’s respective initiatives.

2. Bilateral Security Cooperation

Japan and Australia shared a deep understanding of the increasingly severe strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region and concurred on further developing cooperation to strengthen collective deterrence in line with the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation of 2022. They also concurred on enhancing discussions between their foreign and defense authorities to share strategic assessments and to consider possible contingencies that may affect their sovereignty and regional security interests.

(1) Operational Cooperation, Defense Industry, Advanced Technology, etc.

Japan and Australia reaffirmed the importance of discussions on the scope, objectives, and forms (SOF) of cooperation, and they concurred on strategically and practically advancing this cooperation. They welcomed the progress in cooperation between their forces under the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) and concurred on promoting further operational cooperation and joint exercises.

Japan and Australia welcomed the establishment of reciprocal liaison officer exchanges of each operations command with the commencement of the dispatch of an Australian liaison officer to the Japan Joint Operations Command (JJOC), and they concurred on further enhancing operational cooperation through these liaison officers.

Japan and Australia welcomed the selection of the upgraded Japanese Mogami-class frigate as Australia's next general-purpose frigate, and they affirmed cooperation

towards the steady progress of this, including contract conclusion. They also welcomed progress in cooperation under AUKUS “Pillar 2” regarding advanced capability projects, including experimentation with maritime autonomous systems, and concurred on continuing collaboration.

Additionally, Japan and Australia welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation on Assisting Japanese and Australian Nationals Overseas, which was elaborated, taking into account the experience in cooperative evacuation of their nationals from New Caledonia in 2024.

(2) Economic Security

Recognizing that economic security is crucial for their safety, prosperity, and resilience, Japan and Australia concurred on further strengthening collaboration in economic security, including through the utilization of the Japan-Australia Economic Security Dialogue. They also affirmed their commitment to enhancing specific cooperation in areas such as supply chain resilience, critical minerals, energy, and undersea cables.

(3) Strategic Communication, Cybersecurity, Information Security

With the recognition that the information space is a new frontier of their cooperation, Japan and Australia welcomed the progress in bilateral cooperation on strategic communication and concurred on continuing to strengthen cooperation to counter foreign-manipulated information and narratives.

Japan and Australia concurred on deepening cooperation with the National Cybersecurity Office established in the Cabinet Secretariat of Japan and Australian authorities, and on further enhancing bilateral cyber cooperation by utilizing frameworks such as cyber policy consultations. They also concurred on promoting cooperation between diplomatic authorities for information security and to accelerate consultations regarding the update of the Japan-Australia Information Security Agreement.

3. Addressing and Cooperation on Regional and International Issues

Japan and Australia exchanged candid views on the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region and reaffirmed their continued contribution to regional and international peace and stability.

(1) Japan and Australia reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea and expressed serious concerns at the increase in scale and frequency of provocative activities by China in Japan’s maritime and air domains. They also concurred on the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

(2) Japan and Australia reaffirmed that they would work closely together on issues regarding North Korea, including the nuclear and missile activities, the advancement of Russia-North Korean military cooperation as well as the abductions issues.

(3) Japan and Australia strongly condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine, shared deep concerns over the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, and expressed concerns about the Middle East, including the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza.

(4) Japan and Australia reaffirmed unwavering support for ASEAN centrality and unity, as well as peace and prosperity in Southeast Asia, and concurred on further strengthening initiatives contributing to the resilience and stability of Pacific Island countries.

- (5) Furthermore, Japan and Australia concurred on further enhancing interoperability among Japan, the US, and Australia, and to strengthen networks among allies and like-minded countries, including Japan-Australia-India-U.S.(Quad), Japan-US-Australia-Philippines, the EU, NATO, and IP4.