

Australia-Japan-United States Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting November 2024 Joint Statement

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles, Japanese Minister of Defense Nakatani Gen, and United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III convened the fourteenth Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting (TDMM) on 17 November 2024 in Darwin, Australia.

Through this fourteenth meeting, we affirm the longevity and enduring commitment of our partnership. Grounded in shared values, deep trust, and our unbreakable commitment to strengthening collective deterrence, our cooperation continues to evolve. We acknowledge significant progress made to implement activities and practical areas of cooperation set forth in our 2023 and May 2024 Joint Statements.

We are united in our steadfast commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, where the rule of law is upheld, sovereignty is respected, and nations can make decisions free from coercion or threats of force.

We reaffirm our consistent and unwavering support for ASEAN centrality and unity, ASEAN-led regional architecture, and look forward to a successful ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Lao PDR this week. We reinforce our commitment to work with partners, including Canada, France, Germany, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom to increase engagement with Southeast Asian partners and support the region's security priorities.

We recognise the criticality of backing Pacific-led responses to Pacific-security challenges, consistent with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent released by the Pacific Islands Forum. We commit to coordinate our defence engagement with Pacific counterparts, including capacity-building, Women, Peace and Security activities, and working through and with Pacific-led architecture such as the Joint Heads of Pacific Security and the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting, of which Australia is a member and Japan and the United States are observers.

We reiterate our serious concern about destabilising actions in the East and South China Seas, including dangerous conduct by the People's Republic of China (PRC) against Philippines and other coastal state vessels. We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. It is important that all states are free to exercise rights and freedoms consistent with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea. We reaffirm the need for all states to pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law and that the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award is final and legally binding upon the parties to those proceedings.

We emphasise the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

We strongly condemn North Korea's destabilising activities, including its series of reckless launches using ballistic missile technology, and its intercontinental ballistic missile test on 31 October 2024. These are serious violations of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and pose a grave

OFFICIAL

threat to international peace and stability. We reaffirm our continuing commitment to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, consistent with UNSC resolutions. We express serious concern for Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic security following reports of the transfer of ballistic missiles and other materiel to Russia to sustain its aggression against Ukraine, and the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia. We urge Russia to immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine. We concur in the importance of continuing to remind third countries, including the PRC, of their duty to uphold international law and in no way to validate, support, or condone Russia's attempts to acquire territory by force, in violation of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. These developments have destabilising consequences for the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions.

To support regional stability and collective deterrence, we commit to enhancing our defence cooperation under the following four pillars:

Expanding trilateral operational cooperation

- Recognising the critical role the trilateral partnership plays to uphold regional stability, we commit to trilateral policy coordination and to consult each other on regional security issues and contingencies. We announce the establishment of the “Trilateral Defence Consultations” to support alignment of policy and operational objectives of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and the United States forces from peacetime to contingency.
- We welcome Japan’s increased participation in Australia-United States force posture cooperation activities by increasing trilateral interoperability with the ADF and United States through:
 - Annual trilateral amphibious training among the ADF, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force’s Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, and United States Marine Rotational Force – Darwin in northern Australia and the Indo-Pacific region from 2025, beginning with TALISMAN SABRE 2025.
 - Increasing Japan’s contribution to Exercise SOUTHERN JACKAROO and Exercise TALISMAN SABRE in Australia, including more complex scenarios in order to increase trilateral interoperability from 2025.
- We reaffirm our commitment to trilateralise key Japan-United States exercises in Japan such as Australia’s inaugural participation in Exercise ORIENT SHIELD from 2025, and enhance the ADF’s participation in exercises such as Exercise YAMA SAKURA, KEEN EDGE, and KEEN SWORD.
- We continue to grow trilateral intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region as a priority, including Australian personnel’s participation in the Japan-United States Bilateral Information Analysis Cell (BIAC). We work towards further commitment of Australian intelligence and capabilities for the BIAC.
- We intend to enhance trilateral air interoperability enabled by the Australia-Japan-United States Memorandum of Intent signed at Exercise PITCH BLACK 2024. We continue to explore future opportunities to increase trilateral cooperative activities, including reciprocal deployments of air assets such as fighter and transport aircraft, to all three countries from 2025, through Exercise COPE NORTH, Exercise BUSHIDO GUARDIAN, and Exercise PITCH BLACK.

Building advanced capabilities together

OFFICIAL

- We acknowledge progress and expanded cooperation under the trilateral Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) Projects Arrangement, particularly collaboration on composite aerospace materials and autonomous systems.
- We commend steady progress of discussion in the area of collaborative combat aircraft and autonomy and commit to find cooperative opportunities in this area.
- Our countries intend to continue to work together to strengthen regional deterrence, including through cooperating on a networked air and missile defence architecture to counter the growing range of threats throughout the Indo-Pacific. We continue to make progress on our regional architecture through deepened information sharing to improve each country's ability to respond to threats. We continue to cooperate through various activities including trilateral training, exercises, and exchanges. The inaugural trilateral regional air and missile defence live-fire event at Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2027 will be a key milestone.
- We welcome progress on Japan's consultation with AUKUS partners under AUKUS Pillar II, with the initial focus to improve interoperability with Japan's maritime autonomous systems.
- AUKUS partners welcome Japan's October 2024 participation as an observer in Exercise AUTONOMOUS WARRIOR under the AUKUS Pillar II Maritime Big Play series, an important step in our practical collaboration. AUKUS partners look forward to continued consultations with Japan to determine projects for future cooperation under AUKUS Pillar II.
- In order to promote trilateral defence industrial cooperation, we concur in further collaboration, including within the Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience (PIPIR), a multilateral forum of allies and partners aimed at strengthening defence industrial resilience in the Indo-Pacific region, and welcome increased opportunities for interaction between Australian, Japanese, and United States defence industries such as holding the Australia-Japan-U.S. Unmanned Aerial Systems Defence Symposium in Tokyo this October.

Planning together

- We welcome bilateral initiatives that will improve trilateral operational coordination, planning and information sharing between respective command centres, such as
 - Commencement of the first Japanese Joint Staff Liaison Officer in Australia's Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) in November this year, while acknowledging the commitment to send an ADF liaison officer to JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC) once established in 2025.
 - The United States-Japan Security Consultative Committee ('2+2') announcement to reconstitute U.S. Forces Japan as a Joint Force Headquarters, which will serve as an important JJOC counterpart.

Demonstrating our presence in the region

- We welcome greater defence cooperation between Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States in the South China Sea, including through regular Maritime Cooperative Activities to support regional maritime security and uphold international law.
- We welcome the success of our maritime patrol aircraft collaboration activity with India on the sidelines of Exercise KAKADU in September 2024.
- We commit to enhancing Australia-Japan-India-United States maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific from 2025, acknowledging India's leadership role in conceptualising the idea of closer collaboration in maritime surveillance.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

- We intend to deepen cooperation with Pacific island countries, including through Australia, Japan, and United States contribution to Exercise PUK PUK in Papua New Guinea in 2025 and future iterations of Operation RENDER SAFE.

OFFICIAL