

Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting 2023 – Joint Statement

7 November 2023

1. H.E. Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, H.E. Mr. KIHARA Minoru, Minister of Defense of Japan, the Rt Hon James Cleverly, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as the “UK”) and the Rt Hon Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Defence of the UK held the fifth Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting on 7 November 2023 in Tokyo.
2. The four Ministers reaffirmed that the “Global Strategic Partnership” between Japan and the UK, which is united by our shared values and principles such as freedom, democracy, rule of law, fundamental human rights and open and fair trade as well as our commitment to the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and our determination to support Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, only grows stronger.
3. Amid the increasingly severe international security environment, and sharing the recognition that the security and prosperity of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are indivisible, the four Ministers emphasised the deep strategic alignment of the two countries as demonstrated by Japan’s National Security Strategy formulated in December 2022 and the UK’s Integrated Review Refresh of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy announced in March 2023.
4. The four Ministers noted substantive progress in each of the core areas as set out in the “Hiroshima Accord: An Enhanced Japan-UK Global Strategic Partnership”, and reaffirmed their commitment to deliver all aspects of the Hiroshima Accord.
5. Reaffirming the vision set out in the Hiroshima Accord the four Ministers focused on expansion and deepening of efforts towards interoperable, resilient and cross-domain defence and security cooperation. This will be realised through more frequent and complex joint exercises and operational cooperation, driving cutting-edge defence equipment and technology cooperation, enhancing strategic mutual visits, promoting cross-domain cooperation including in cyber and space domains and redoubling our efforts on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, amongst others.
6. The four Ministers affirmed that as each other’s closest security partners in Europe and Asia, Japan and the UK would continue to take leadership roles in the international community’s efforts to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law and to uphold the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the prohibition on the threat or use of force, and stressed their strong opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion anywhere in the world. Furthermore, the four Ministers expressed strong opposition to economic coercion and affirmed their intention to continue working together.
7. Based on the above, in order to ensure that the Japan-UK partnership delivers for both countries and contributes to global security, prosperity, inclusivity and resilience, the four Ministers welcomed the following efforts in defence and security cooperation and committed to further enhancing such cooperation, stressing the alignment of both countries’ assessment of the strategic environment.

8. The four Ministers welcomed that the defence exchanges between Japan and the UK have increased in recent years, as exemplified by intensifying high-level visits between defence authorities as well as the deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth and her Carrier Strike Group to the Indo-Pacific in 2021; port calls by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Training Squadron and the UK Royal Navy's offshore patrol vessels; Japan Air Self-Defense Force cargo aircraft visit to the UK and unit-to-unit level exchanges which followed. They committed to work together to maximise the opportunities provided by the deployment of the UK's Carrier Strike Group to the Indo-Pacific planned for 2025, which will be a visible demonstration of the strength of the Japan-UK partnership and consolidate the UK's engagement to the Indo-Pacific on a long-term, strategic, and sustainable footing.

9. The four Ministers acknowledged the increasing importance of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and committed to increase collaboration. The four Ministers recognised the importance of the existing activities of the UK's two offshore patrol vessels being deployed to the Indo-Pacific on a permanent basis, noting their important contribution to rules-based maritime order and ongoing engagement with international partners. This included monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels prohibited by UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2375 (2017).

10. The four Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) and that its benefits will be seen in the expanded bilateral ground exercise VIGILANT ISLES 23 this month. The four Ministers reached consensus on ensuring the application of the RAA to increase interoperability and realise an even more ambitious programme of more frequent and complex exercises. Furthermore, the four Ministers welcomed positive progress in discussions between defence authorities on the application of the Japan Self-Defense Forces' asset protection measure.

11. The four Ministers welcomed the expanding breadth of bilateral defence cooperation, such as that between high readiness forces including airborne brigades and amphibious units, and strategic-level linkage between Japan Joint Staff and UK Strategic Command, as part of bilateral efforts to enhance our respective defence capabilities and strengths. They recognised the importance of enhancing measures that serve to strengthen defence cooperation, such as providing additional staffing to their respective embassies, and reinforcing the defence dialogue to be held regularly at Vice-Ministerial level of the Ministry of Defense of Japan and Permanent Under-Secretary level of the Ministry of Defence of the UK.

12. The four Ministers endorsed the progress made related to the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) and emphasised the importance of meeting the timeline to develop a next-generation fighter aircraft by 2035. The four Ministers reached consensus on identifying further potential items of joint development and cooperation, including through the discussion such as the Japan-UK High Level Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation Steering Panel on defence equipment and technology cooperation including industrial collaboration.

13. The four Ministers stressed the importance of the recent progress in cooperation in new domains, which adds further depth to the bilateral defence and security partnership. They appreciated the establishment of the Japan-UK Cyber Partnership and the discussions through the Japan-UK Bilateral Consultations on Cyber Issues. They welcomed the steady progress of public-private partnerships such as the upcoming Keidanren mission to the UK. They further highlighted cyber defence cooperation, which has led to bilateral and multilateral exercises including a joint team in Exercise LOCKED SHIELDS, to enable the sharing of best operational practices between Japan Self-Defense Forces and UK Armed Forces. They also recognised the importance of collaborating on outer space and concurred to work together in activities such as exercises and training, personnel exchanges, exchange of information on space situational awareness and space domain awareness, building support for norms, rules and principles of responsible space behaviour, and deepening dialogue on any additional activities of mutual interest. Recognising the increasing threats to the information environment, the four Ministers concurred to reinforce exchange of information to strengthen cooperation in strategic communication, and response to integrated information warfare, including addressing foreign information manipulation and interference as well as dissemination of disinformation.

14. The four Ministers welcomed the cooperation to date between Japan and the UK concerning the evacuation of their respective nationals from third countries during crises, and concurred to coordinate closely in contingency planning for potential evacuations.

15. The four Ministers affirmed the commitment to consult each other on important regional and global security issues as referred to in the Hiroshima Accord and welcomed the opportunity this meeting presented. The four Ministers recognised the necessity to continue working on strengthening cooperation that facilitates secure and timely exchange of information and analysis, which supports security cooperation between the two countries.

16. The four Ministers concurred on the importance of reinforcing coordination with their common ally, the U.S., and partners in further reinforcing their ability to address security challenges. The four Ministers welcomed the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) between Japan and NATO, and reaffirmed their commitment to deepen Japan-NATO cooperation.

17. The four Ministers confirmed their continued close collaboration on issues concerning economic security, including through the Economic Security Dialogue. This includes partnering on enhancing supply chain resilience, international standards, all forms of forced or coerced technology transfers and intellectual property theft, and export controls. They also affirmed to work together to continue to address economic coercion as well as non-market policies and practices, and to further promote cooperation among the G7 and with non-G7 partners.

18. Highlighting the leading role of women in the prevention of violent conflicts, delivering relief and recovery efforts and forging lasting peace, the four Ministers welcomed the advancement of the WPS, including efforts in the field of prevention of sexual violence and support for survivors such as contributing to the Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (GSF). The four Ministers also stressed the importance of applying the WPS to disaster risk reduction and post-disaster recovery efforts, coordination at the UN Security Council and enhanced dialogue between the defence authorities for further promotion of the WPS.

19. The four Ministers discussed Japan and the UK's alignment in response to China. The four Ministers call on China to act as a responsible member of the international community, and stand prepared to work together to build constructive and stable relations with China through dialogue. They further called on China not to assist Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine, to press Russia to stop its military aggression, and to support a just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the principles of the UN Charter. The four Ministers reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, and expressed serious concern over the situation in the East and South China Seas. They reemphasised the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and reaffirmed UNCLOS's important role in setting out the legal framework that governs all activities in the oceans and the seas and reiterate that all maritime claims must be based on the relevant provisions of the UNCLOS. Furthermore, the four Ministers reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan strait as indispensable to security and prosperity in the international community. The four Ministers emphasized that their basic positions on Taiwan remain unchanged, and they called for a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. They reiterated their call for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations as a member where statehood is not a prerequisite and as an observer or guest where it is. The four Ministers voiced their concerns on reported human rights violations in China, including in Tibet and Xinjiang. They further called on China to honour its commitment under the "Sino-British Joint Declaration" and "Basic Laws", which enshrine rights, freedom and a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong.

20. Regarding the discharge of Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) treated water into the sea, noting the Comprehensive Report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which concludes that the discharge of ALPS-treated water into the sea is consistent with relevant international safety standards, the four Ministers underscored the importance of the IAEA's monitoring and assessment. Acknowledging that Japan has been providing explanations to the international community based on scientific evidence in a highly transparent manner, the UK Ministers expressed the UK's full support for Japan's efforts and welcomed the continued cooperation between Japan and the IAEA.

21. The four Ministers strongly condemned the unprecedented series of unlawful ballistic missile launches by North Korea and reaffirmed the commitment towards the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all North Korean weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes. The four Ministers emphasised the importance of complete implementation of the UNSCRs and shared the recognition to continue to cooperate closely on North Korean human rights issues and towards the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

22. The four Ministers once again condemned in the strongest possible terms the war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, which constitutes a serious violation of the international law, including the United Nations Charter, and reaffirmed their support for Ukraine for as long as it takes. Based on the "G7 Leaders' Statement on Ukraine" and the "Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine", the four Ministers affirmed to intensify diplomatic, financial, humanitarian and military support for Ukraine to bring a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Japan and the UK will each advance work with Ukraine on specific, bilateral, long-term security commitments and arrangements. The four Ministers expressed support for Ukraine's efforts concerning the Peace Formula and emphasised the importance of coordinating their efforts to gain the engagement of as many countries as possible. The four Ministers also concurred to increase efforts to cooperate with global partners to act against the circumvention of their restrictive economic measures imposed on Russia. They would maintain, fully

implement and expand the economic measures they have already imposed, to further counter Russia's capacity to wage its illegal aggression. The four Ministers emphasised that Russia's ongoing irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, undermining of arms control regimes, and stated intent to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus are dangerous and unacceptable. They recalled the G7 Statement that any use of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons by Russia would be met with severe consequences.

23. The four Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The four Ministers acknowledged the importance of further promoting cooperation with partners in Southeast Asia and Pacific Island countries to secure a free and open Indo-Pacific. The four Ministers welcomed further cooperation including under the Partners in the Blue Pacific Initiative, which will support the Pacific Islands Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

24. The four Ministers expressed their unequivocal condemnation of the appalling terror attacks committed by Hamas. The four Ministers reiterated the paramount importance of the immediate release of hostages and ensuring safety of civilians, respect for international law by all parties concerned, and redoubling of diplomatic efforts to prevent escalation and further instability in the wider region. The four Ministers emphasised Israel's right to defend itself and its people in accordance with international law. The four Ministers stressed humanitarian access and called for a humanitarian pause, and committed to collaborate in the delivery of necessary food, medicine, water, electricity, and fuel to the people of Gaza as early as possible, and regarding the evacuation of foreign nationals. The four Ministers reiterated that a "two-state solution" remains the only viable path to just, lasting and comprehensive peace and stability in the region.

25. The four Ministers expressed their determination that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon, noting that Iran's nuclear programme has no credible civilian justification and that its unabated escalation must cease. The four Ministers call on Iran to immediately fulfil its legal obligations and political commitments regarding nuclear non-proliferation, including full and unconditional cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), without further delay. The four Ministers also expressed their opposition to Iran's continued destabilizing activities, including the transfer of missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and related technologies to state and non-state actors, as well as other military, financial and political support to non-state actors. The four Ministers called on Iran to refrain from taking actions that destabilize the Middle East and to play a constructive role towards the de-escalation of regional tensions. The four Ministers stressed that Iran must stop supporting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The four Ministers reiterated their opposition to Iran's human rights record, and called on Iran to cease its unacceptable threats to individuals outside of Iran, including in the UK.

26. The four Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continue working bilaterally as well as through the G7, G20, and wider forums to tackle the issues that the international community is facing, including addressing the concerns of developing countries, and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The four Ministers reaffirmed their determination to promote transparent and fair development finance practice and strengthen collaboration in providing a positive investment offer to developing countries.

27. The four Ministers recognised the threats of climate change and the impacts of climate and energy security on national security. In line with the Hiroshima Accord, the four Ministers vowed to continue collaboration to achieve net zero by 2050. They also confirmed, in line with the G7, to ensure energy supply is not weaponised and to reduce dependency on energy from hostile actors.

28. Based on the success of today's meeting, the four Ministers decided to continue exchange of views and instructed their respective officials to closely follow up on the results of today's meeting.