

Japan-United States-Republic of Korea Trilateral Ministerial Joint Press Statement

July 28, 2024 – Tokyo, Japan

Japan Minister of Defense Kihara Minoru, United States (U.S.) Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, and Republic of Korea (ROK) Minister of National Defense Shin Won-sik convened a Trilateral Ministerial Meeting on July 28, 2024, in Japan for the first time in history. The three defense leaders recalled their commitment to strengthening trilateral security cooperation following the U.S.-Japan-ROK Summits at Phnom Penh and Camp David. The Secretary and two Ministers discussed shared regional security concerns, and renewed their commitment to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in the Indo-Pacific region, and beyond.

The three defense leaders recalled their enduring commitment to strengthen trilateral security cooperation to deter nuclear and missile threats posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as shared recognition and concerns about the security environment, as reiterated in the Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan-ROK Ministerial Meeting on June 2, 2024 in Singapore. They expressed grave concern over the increasing military and economic cooperation commitment between the Russian Federation and the DPRK, as highlighted by the signing of the "Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", which is contrary to multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is a concerning development for many countries in the region. They also condemned the DPRK's recent diversification of nuclear delivery systems, tests and launches of multiple ballistic missiles, and other relevant activities. The Secretary and the Ministers expressed concern about other provocative actions by the DPRK that could escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula, and urged the DPRK to immediately cease such actions. In addition, they shared assessments of recent maritime and air military activities in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea.

As emphasized at the Camp David Summit, the Secretary and the Ministers reaffirmed that they strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the waters of the Indo-Pacific, and they shared concerns about actions that are inconsistent with international law as reflected in the United

Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They stressed the importance of fully respecting international law including the freedom of navigation and overflight.

The three defense leaders commended the successful execution of the multi-domain trilateral exercise “FREEDOM EDGE,” through which Japan, the United States, and the ROK expressed their shared resolve to promote trilateral interoperability to safeguard freedom and ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, including the Korean Peninsula.

Today, the three defense leaders signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework among the Department of Defense of the United States of America, the Ministry of Defense of Japan, and the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea (TSCF) and announced that it has come into effect. The TSCF institutionalizes trilateral security cooperation among defense authorities, including senior-level policy consultations, information sharing, trilateral exercises, and defense exchange cooperation, to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in the Indo-Pacific region, and beyond. Accordingly, the Secretary and two Ministers reaffirmed the unwavering nature of the new era of trilateral cooperation.

The two Ministers and the Secretary concurred to convene the TMM in person in the ROK next year, in accordance with their expressed intent to host the meeting on a rotational basis.

The three defense leaders will further develop trilateral cooperation to effectively address regional challenges, provocations, and threats.