

Joint Communiqué

Sixth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations.

22 November 2015

1. Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Julie Bishop and the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator Marise Payne, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Fumio Kishida, the Minister of Defense of Japan, Mr Gen Nakatani, met in Sydney on 22 November for the Sixth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations.

2. Ministers welcomed the closer engagement between Australia and Japan since Prime Minister Abe's visit to Australia in July 2014, enabled through the special strategic partnership between Australia and Japan, a partnership based on common values and strategic interests including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, open markets and free trade.

3. Ministers unreservedly condemned the terrorist attacks in Paris and many other recent attacks which have killed and injured so many innocent people. Ministers recognized the importance of international counter-terrorism efforts such as the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Japan and Australia are providing significant humanitarian support in response to the crises in Iraq and Syria.

4. Australia welcomed Japan's recent passage of Legislation for Peace and Security which will enable Japan to contribute even more actively in securing peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the world from the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace". Australia also supported Japan's review of exercising its right of collective self-defence in a limited manner, participating more actively in United Nations peace-keeping missions, and introducing new principles for the transfer of defence equipment and technology.

5. Enhanced bilateral defence cooperation is a priority for both Australia and Japan. Ministers welcomed the progress made towards implementing the recommendations developed for and endorsed by Leaders in 2014 that would elevate the bilateral security and defence relationship to a new level, building on the 2007 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. These recommendations included options for enhancing training and exercises, increased personnel exchanges, deepening cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, peacekeeping, capacity building and enhanced trilateral defence cooperation with the United States. Based on progress already made, Ministers identified new initiatives to further enhance bilateral defence engagement and renewed their determination to strengthen cooperation in this area.

6. Ministers also welcomed substantial progress in negotiations towards making an agreement that would reciprocally improve administrative, policy and legal procedures to facilitate joint operations and exercises. They

encouraged continued progress, with a view to concluding negotiations at the earliest possible opportunity.

7. Japanese Ministers explained Japan's commitment to fulfilling all the requirements in the Competitive Evaluation Process underway to select an international partner to assist in the delivery of "Australia's Future Submarine." Australian Ministers welcomed Japan's participation in the Process and noted Japan's commitment to it.

8. Ministers underlined the two countries' deep engagement in the economically and strategically significant Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region. They recognised that building prosperity and maintaining stability in these regions was of vital importance to both countries.

9. Ministers expressed their determination to continue strengthening cooperation in the Pacific region to support economic prosperity and regional peace and stability, and will finalise a joint strategy for cooperation in the Pacific as soon as possible.

10. Ministers discussed the importance of working through regional fora to support security, stability, economic growth and regional integration. They welcomed efforts to strengthen the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the region's premier leaders-led forum for strategic dialogue.

11. Both countries welcomed the continued contributions of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) to fostering cooperation and dialogue on security issues. They expect to work closely to advance the agenda of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

12. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of promoting the rule of law at sea. They expressed their strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions that could alter the status quo in the East China Sea.

13. They expressed strong concern over the recent situation in the South China Sea and reiterated their strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions that could alter the status quo in the South China Sea. They called on all claimants to halt large scale land reclamation, construction, and use for military purposes. They urged claimants to exercise restraint, take steps to ease tensions and refrain from provocative actions that could escalate tensions. They called on claimants to clarify and pursue territorial claims and accompanying maritime rights in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In this regard, they supported the right of claimants to seek to resolve disputes peacefully, including through arbitration. They took note of the ongoing arbitration case under the UNCLOS brought by the Philippines, affirming that decisions of the arbitral tribunal are legally binding.

14. They also called for the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of commitments

under the Declaration on Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DoC), and to reach agreement on a substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (CoC) as soon as possible. They emphasised the importance of the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. Ministers recognised that all states have a right under international law to freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight, including in the South China Sea. Both Australia and Japan strongly supported those rights.

15. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of a constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with China through dialogue, cooperation, and engagement.

16. Ministers reiterated their concern that North Korea remained a serious destabilising factor for the entire East Asia region and discussed humanitarian concerns. They urged North Korea to comply fully with its international obligations and commitments and to take concrete steps towards denuclearisation, and called on North Korea to terminate its inhumane and arbitrary human rights policies and address the unresolved abductions issue.

17. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work together to achieve a world that respects the rights of women, including by continuing to condemn violence against women in all its forms. They also expressed their determination to cooperate to enable the United Nations and development organisations to contribute to increasing the participation of women in order to guarantee justice, security and prosperity for all women. They reaffirmed their commitment to cooperation in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which urges member states to ensure meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding and peace negotiations and to protect the rights and interests of women and girls during armed conflict.

18. In commemorating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a strong and effective United Nations in promoting peace and security, including by fostering human rights and sustainable development. In this context, Ministers reconfirmed willingness to enhance cooperation towards the early realisation of United Nations Security Council reform, including Japan's permanent membership. They welcomed the election of Japan to the UN Security Council for the term 2016-17, recognised the importance of Japan's constructive contribution to the Security Council's work in addressing the multiple and complex international threats confronting the world today, and committed to continuing the close liaison on issues before the Security Council, building on Australia's experience during its 2013-14 term.

19. Ministers exchanged views on the regional and international security situation and reaffirmed that their respective Alliances with the United States made a significant contribution to peace and security in the region. Ministers underscored the importance of strong U.S. engagement in the region and strong support for the U.S. rebalance.

20. Ministers discussed the strength of their respective bilateral security relationships with the United States, and commitment to further enhancing trilateral cooperation, including through the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD).