

Joint Statement
Seventh Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations
20 April 2017

Overview

1. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Defense of Japan, Ms. Tomomi Inada, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Julie Bishop and the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator Marise Payne, met in Tokyo on 20 April for the Seventh Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations.

2. The Ministers welcomed the closer engagement between Japan and Australia since the sixth 2+2 meeting, including Prime Minister Abe's visit to Australia in January 2017. They reaffirmed their determination to further enhance the Special Strategic Partnership between the two countries, founded on common values and strategic interests including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, open markets and free trade.

3. The Ministers underlined the importance of ensuring a stable, free and open rules-based order across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. They recognised the importance of ensuring free and open sea-lanes as well as enhancing regional connectivity, including through infrastructure. They reaffirmed that Japan and Australia will continue to work proactively in this regard, together with our common ally, the United States, and other like-minded partners. With this in mind, the Australian side welcomed Japan's greater engagement in the region under its "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy".

Bilateral and Trilateral Security and Defence Cooperation

4. Marking the tenth anniversary of the 2007 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, the Ministers renewed their determination to strengthen security cooperation. They welcomed increased cooperation in the areas of training and exercises, personnel exchanges, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, peacekeeping, capacity building, and defence equipment and technology. The Ministers identified a suite of new initiatives to further enhance bilateral defence engagement, including looking to establish a joint activity in 2018 in Japan involving fighter jets of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

5. The Ministers welcomed the progress in their respective internal procedures necessary for the entry into force of the new Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-

Servicing Agreement, signed on 14 January 2017, which will facilitate greater mutual logistical support between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Australian Defence Force. They acknowledged positive progress in negotiations toward an agreement to reciprocally improve administrative, policy and legal procedures to facilitate joint operations and exercises, and reiterated the expectation expressed by Prime Ministers Abe and Turnbull in January 2017 that negotiations be concluded as early as feasible, preferably in 2017.

6. The Ministers welcomed the second meeting of the Japan-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue in August 2016 as well as intensified engagement between the two countries in the area of space, including the Japan-Australia Space Security Dialogue in October 2016. They stressed the importance of further strengthening coordination and cooperation in these domains.

7. The Ministers highly valued the long-standing and indispensable contribution made by the United States to the peace, security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. They welcomed the intention of the United States to strengthen its presence in the region. The Ministers reaffirmed the enduring importance of the US alliances with Japan and Australia, which are the cornerstones of these countries' security as well as regional stability and prosperity. They expressed their willingness to continue working closely with the United States to ensure the peaceful and prosperous future of the region.

8. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance trilateral cooperation between Australia, Japan and the United States, underlining the importance of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and the Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the 2016 Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement as one of the concrete outcomes of the Security and Defence Cooperation Forum.

9. Acknowledging India's strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, the Ministers reaffirmed their intention to further develop trilateral cooperation and coordination among Japan, Australia and India, including by holding a third senior officials' trilateral dialogue in the coming weeks in Canberra.

Regional and International Issues

10. The Ministers discussed the importance of working through regional fora to support security, stability, economic growth and regional integration. They reaffirmed the critical role of the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the region's premier leaders-led forum

for strategic dialogue, and welcomed efforts to strengthen it. The Ministers also welcomed the continued contributions of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus).

11. The Ministers remained seriously concerned about the situation in the South China Sea. They emphasised the importance of self-restraint and their opposition to any unilateral actions which increase tensions. The Ministers also expressed their opposition to the use of disputed features for military purposes and urged all parties to pursue the demilitarisation of such features. They reaffirmed the importance of the 1982 United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and urged relevant states to make and clarify territorial and maritime claims based on international law. The Ministers called on parties to disputes in the South China Sea to refrain from using force or coercion in trying to advance such claims, and to seek to settle disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law.

12. The Ministers also re-emphasised the importance of upholding the rules-based regional and international order, and called on all states to respect freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded trade. The Ministers encouraged early finalisation of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) on the basis of international law, and in light of the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal under the UNCLOS on 12 July 2016. They reiterated the need for ASEAN member states and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety.

13. The Ministers reaffirmed their intention to further enhance bilateral and Japan-Australia-US trilateral coordination and cooperation on maritime security capacity building in Southeast Asia.

14. The Ministers reiterated their opposition to any unilateral or coercive actions that could alter the status quo or increase tensions in the East China Sea. They also expressed their intention to remain in close contact on the situation in the area.

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

16. The Ministers reiterated condemnation in the strongest terms of North Korea's nuclear tests, multiple ballistic missile launches and proliferation activities. They strongly urged North Korea to cease its destabilising and provocative actions immediately and to fully comply with its international obligations and commitments,

including those under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Ministers welcomed the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2321 and emphasised the importance of enhancing pressure on North Korea through full, thorough and sustained implementation by Member States of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including Resolutions 2270 and 2321. The Ministers discussed Japan's and Australia's approaches to autonomous measures and noted their complementarity. They strongly urged North Korea to end its human rights violations, to resolve the abductions issue immediately, and to focus on the great unmet needs of the people of North Korea.

17. The Ministers welcomed the growing number of bilateral foreign policy consultations, including on North Asia, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and development cooperation, and reaffirmed their intention to further enhance bilateral coordination and cooperation on regional issues.

18. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the first meeting of the Japan-Australia Pacific Policy Dialogue in October 2016. Recognising the complex challenges facing the Pacific region, they underscored the importance of further cooperation among Japan, Australia and the Pacific island countries to build economic resilience and regional peace and security. The Ministers reaffirmed their determination to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the Pacific region under the Japan-Australia Strategy for Cooperation in the Pacific issued by Foreign Ministers in February 2016. They resolved to cooperate closely towards the success of the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 8), scheduled to be held in May 2018 in Iwaki, Fukushima.

19. The Ministers expressed great concern at the continuing violence and lack of humanitarian access in Syria. They also expressed great concern at the use of chemical weapons in Syria and reiterated their strong support for the necessary work of the OPCW in respect of such use. The Ministers called on all countries with influence on the parties to the conflict to ensure they engage in the negotiations under UN auspices to find a political solution as soon as possible.

20. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continue their coordination on their respective efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism including in the region, while expressing strong support for relevant efforts by the international community to address those threats.

21. The Ministers welcomed the Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was adopted at the Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting

in New York in September 2016, co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Japan and Australia. This meeting marked the 20th anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and demonstrated the strong global norm against nuclear testing. The Ministers also welcomed Resolution 2310, adopted by the UN Security Council in September 2016, and reiterated the importance of cooperation towards the early entry into force of the Treaty.

22. The Ministers reaffirmed Japan and Australia's determination to continue cooperation towards a world without nuclear weapons, through efforts on nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including practical progress towards the commencement of Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations and further cooperation on nuclear disarmament verification. As co-founders of the twelve-nation Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), the Ministers underlined the crucial importance of all three mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the success of the 2020 NPT Review Conference with the first Preparatory Committee meeting in May 2017. The Ministers welcomed the 2016 EAS Leaders' Statement on Non-Proliferation.

23. The Ministers stressed the strategic importance of a free and open, rules-based trading system for regional stability and prosperity. In this regard, they reaffirmed the strategic and economic significance of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement and shared the intention to continue to work on a way forward. The Ministers also reaffirmed that a high-quality and commercially meaningful Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) offers opportunities for closer regional economic integration.

24. Australia offered to host the next meeting of Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations.