

Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Ministerial Statement 4 August

1. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Julie Bishop, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Taro Kono, and the Secretary of State for the United States, Michael R. Pompeo, met in Singapore on 4 August 2018 for the eighth ministerial meeting of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD).

2. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the trilateral strategic partnership and of deepening coordination between Australia, Japan and the United States. They underscored their commitment to working together to maintain and promote a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. They committed to work through partnership with countries in the region to uphold a rules-based order, including to ensure that: disputes are resolved peacefully in accordance with international law and without the threat or use of force; states are resilient to coercion; freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the sea are upheld; and markets remain open.

3. The Ministers noted the achievements of ASEAN in fostering regional peace and prosperity, including through its role as the convenor of the regional security architecture. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for ASEAN centrality and unity, and underlined the value of the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the region's premier Leaders-led forum for addressing political-security challenges. The Ministers recognised the important role of other Indo-Pacific forums, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association and Pacific Islands Forum, in facilitating dialogue on regional issues of importance. The Ministers shared their intention to further strengthen trilateral cooperation to promote the security, stability, resilience, and economic and governance development of countries throughout the region, including the Pacific Island countries.

4. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the international community's goal for the final, fully verified denuclearisation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as agreed by Chairman Kim Jong-Un of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK. The Ministers reiterated that the international community needs to achieve the dismantlement of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs in accordance with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The Ministers welcomed discussions between the United States and the DPRK, and called on the DPRK to take immediate, significant and concrete steps towards denuclearisation. The Ministers noted the DPRK's potential to be a prosperous and successful member of the region. The Ministers called on all members of the international community to maintain pressure on the DPRK, including through the full implementation of UNSC resolutions.

5. The Ministers welcomed North Korea's return of the remains of fallen service members from the Korean War on 27 July 2018, as part of fulfilling the DPRK's commitments in the U.S – DPRK Joint Statement dated 12 June 2018, and encouraged

North Korea to take further action toward fulfilling all of its commitments in that statement, including to complete denuclearisation. The Ministers also called on the DPRK to end human rights violations and abuses, and to immediately release all foreign nationals being held in North Korea, including Japanese abductees.

6. The Ministers expressed serious concerns about developments in the South China Sea (SCS), including the deployment of advanced weapons systems on disputed features. The Ministers voiced strong opposition to coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions such as land reclamation, construction of outposts, militarisation of disputed features, and other actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment in areas pending delimitation.

7. The Ministers underscored the importance of the July 2016 Philippines-China Arbitral Tribunal's Award for the two parties. The Ministers emphasised the importance of non-militarisation of disputed features, resolving disputes through full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without the threat or use of force and in accordance with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and full respect for freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the seas in the SCS and around the world.

8. The Ministers acknowledged recent movement towards a Code of Conduct (CoC) for the SCS. Ministers called for the CoC to be: consistent with existing international law, as reflected in UNCLOS; to not prejudice the interests of third parties or the rights of all states under international law; to reinforce existing regional architecture; and to strengthen parties' commitments to cease actions that would complicate or escalate disputes.

9. The Ministers shared their intention to remain in close communication about the situation in the East China Sea and expressed strong opposition to any coercive unilateral actions that seek to alter the status quo and increase tensions in the area.

10. The Ministers welcomed ongoing trilateral cooperation on capacity building for maritime security and safety in Southeast Asia and committed to enhancing cooperation in this area, as well as with Pacific Island countries in close consultation with those countries. The Ministers resolved to advance this cooperation through ongoing exchanges of information on regional needs. The Ministers reiterated the commitment of the three nations to continue coordinating their respective assistance programs, in consultation with partners, and to identify ways they can more closely collaborate in the future.

11. The Ministers emphasised the importance of enhancing connectivity through the development of sustainable infrastructure in an open, transparent, non-exclusive, and financially responsible manner, in accordance with international standards, that unlocks

the potential of the private sector to invest in the region and help close the infrastructure gap. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed growing cooperation among TSD partners to address the significant infrastructure investment needs in the Indo-Pacific, including the announcement of a trilateral partnership between the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United States Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation for infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific.

12. The Ministers expressed their concern that states and their proxies are increasingly willing to pursue their objectives by undertaking malicious cyber activities. The Ministers affirmed that the rules-based international order must encompass online activities. The Ministers reaffirmed their joint commitment to promote an international stability framework for cyberspace based on the application of existing international law to state behaviour in cyberspace, adherence to voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace in peacetime, and the implementation of confidence building measures, supported by coordinated capacity building programs. The Ministers decided to deepen practical cooperation to better deter, mitigate, publicly attribute, and counter malicious cyber activity, and provide clear and consistent messaging of the consequences of such activity. The Ministers resolved to continue to call out unacceptable behaviour in cyberspace.

13. The Ministers discussed ways to work together to counter terrorism and violent extremism, including through trilateral counter-terrorism consultations. The Ministers resolved to coordinate on protecting soft targets and countering terrorist financing. The Ministers also resolved to advocate for and strengthen existing information sharing mechanisms, and to combat the flow of foreign terrorist fighters both to and from conflict areas. The Ministers expressed their concerns regarding the potential for ongoing violent extremist activity in the southern Philippines. They urged increased cooperation in the Indo-Pacific to counter such terrorist activity and pledged their continued support for these efforts.

14. The Ministers are committed to meeting regularly, and to deepening cooperation with each other, and with partners, to promote strong and sustainable growth, including by supporting good governance, the rule of law and human rights. They directed officials to explore possible new areas of practical cooperation in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.