

Japan-Australia Leaders' Meeting

Joint Statement

17th November, 2020

Overview

1. The Prime Ministers of Japan and Australia reaffirmed that the Special Strategic Partnership between the two countries is based on shared values, including a commitment to democracy, human rights, free trade and a rules-based order; shared strategic interests in the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and beyond; and deep economic complementarity. They renewed their determination to deepen cooperation to promote a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region where disputes are resolved peacefully and without the threat or use of force or coercion, and where the sovereignty and rights of all states under international law are upheld. In this regard, they welcomed the continued commitment of the United States to this region and stressed the importance of close cooperation with the United States to contribute to the peace and stability of the region.
2. The Leaders confirmed that both countries continue to spare no effort to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, protect lives and livelihoods, and mitigate the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. They recognised that global solidarity, cooperation and effective multilateralism through international frameworks, rules, organisations and institutions are required more than ever, including to defeat the virus and support economic recovery. The Leaders also committed to further enhancing coordination with like-minded countries, including through existing opportunities, such as the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (Japan-Australia-US) and Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting (Japan-Australia-US), the Japan-Australia-India-US quadrilateral meetings, and various dialogues with ASEAN, particularly the East Asia Summit as the region's premier forum for strategic dialogue. The Leaders welcomed the success of the second Japan-Australia-India-US quadrilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo in October 2020 and the 15th East Asia Summit in November 2020. The Leaders reiterated their strong support for ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led architecture, and the ongoing importance of the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, including openness, transparency, inclusiveness, the rule of law, good governance and respect for international law. In this context, the Leaders welcomed the adoption of the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, and the 2nd ASEAN-Australia Summit on 'A Strong Partnership for Recovery'. The Leaders also looked forward to cooperating on shared priorities at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and the G20 Leaders' Summit.
3. The Leaders expressed serious concerns about the situation in the South China Sea and reconfirmed their strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral attempts to change the status quo and thereby increase tensions in the region. They also shared serious concerns about the recent negative developments and serious incidents in the South China Sea, including continuing militarisation of

disputed features, dangerous and coercive use of coast guard vessels and 'maritime militia', launches of ballistic missiles, and efforts to disrupt other countries' resource exploitation activities. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of respecting freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and that all disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and that the 2016 final award in the South China Sea Arbitration, which was issued by legitimate procedures under UNCLOS, is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute. They called for any Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to be consistent with international law as reflected in UNCLOS, not prejudice the sovereignty and legitimate rights and interests of non-parties to the Code of Conduct or the rights of all states under international law, reinforce existing inclusive regional architecture, and strengthen parties' commitments to ceasing actions that would complicate or escalate tensions.

4. The Leaders also expressed serious concerns about the situation in the East China Sea. They 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.
5. The Leaders shared their grave concerns over the situation in Hong Kong, and emphasised the importance of upholding Hong Kong's democratic processes and institutions, as well as the high degree of autonomy set out in the Basic Law and Sino-British Joint Declaration.
6. The Leaders reiterated their commitment to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles of all ranges of North Korea, and emphasised the importance of full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions by the international community. In this regard, they also reaffirmed their commitment to international efforts in addressing illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers. They called on North Korea to end human rights violations and abuses and to resolve the Japanese abductions issue immediately.
7. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and the basis for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

Deepening and Expanding Bilateral Relations

8. With a view to contributing to peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, the Leaders determined to elevate bilateral security and defence cooperation under the Special Strategic Partnership to a new level.
9. In this regard, the Leaders reiterated their strong belief that a reciprocal access

agreement between Japan and Australia ("Japan-Australia RAA") will serve as a solid foundation for both countries' commitment to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region and for further enhancing strategic cooperation between the two countries.

10. The Japan-Australia RAA is a landmark bilateral agreement that will facilitate cooperative activities, such as joint exercises and disaster relief operations, between the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF), through the establishment of procedures and the clarification of legal status for the visiting force of one party in the territory of the other party, thereby improving the interoperability of the forces of the two countries. Areas covered by the Japan-Australia RAA will include streamlining procedures to facilitate deployment and joint activities, including for entry and departure of the visiting force, customs duties and taxes, and criminal jurisdiction.
11. The Leaders welcomed the agreement in principle reached between the two countries on the Japan-Australia RAA. They confirmed that both sides would continue to work on the remaining tasks necessary for signing the Japan-Australia RAA at the earliest possible opportunity.
12. The Leaders instructed their respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence to further strengthen bilateral security and defence cooperation and hold the next Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") at the earliest convenient time in 2021. They welcomed the outcomes of the Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meetings in Tokyo in October 2020 and the discussions on further developing, broadening and deepening the security and defence relationship. In this context, they reaffirmed the importance of enhancing cooperation between the SDF and the ADF, such as by increasing the complexity and sophistication of bilateral exercises and operations. They also reiterated the importance of enhancing regular bilateral and multilateral cooperative activities in the Indo-Pacific region, including maritime activities in the South China Sea, to maintain a free, open, secure, inclusive and prosperous region.
13. The Leaders stressed the significance of creating a framework to protect ADF assets by SDF personnel under Article 95-2 of the SDF Law (Provision for the protection of weapons and other equipment of the units of the US Armed Forces and armed forces of other foreign countries) and concurred to progress the necessary coordination to implement this cooperation.
14. The Leaders decided to coordinate efforts to mitigate the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, and to accelerate the development and equitable access to diagnostics, therapeutics, and safe, effective and affordable vaccines for COVID-19. The Leaders also shared the view that they would work together with partner governments to strengthen health systems, increase health emergency preparedness, and work towards achieving universal health coverage to ensure essential health services are maintained. The Leaders decided to cooperate on WHO reform to ensure it has the authority and capability to prevent and mitigate future pandemics.

15. The Leaders affirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation with Pacific island countries in response to COVID-19, including support for health systems and economic assistance. They committed to deepen cooperation on humanitarian and disaster response and maritime security priorities in the Pacific island region, including through closer engagement between Australian and Japanese civil-maritime agencies on maritime security training with Pacific island countries and enhanced information sharing on maritime domain awareness. Recognising the severe economic impacts of COVID-19 on Pacific island countries, they committed to close coordination on financing support and continued close cooperation on Pacific infrastructure.
16. The Leaders decided to enhance cooperation in Southeast Asia, including expanded support for quality infrastructure development in accordance with international standards expressed in the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment, such as openness, transparency, economic efficiency in view of lifecycle costs and debt sustainability, which will be an important part of the region's economic recovery from COVID-19 and support for sustainable development in the Mekong sub-region. The Leaders concurred to enhance cooperation on health, and welcomed the official announcement of the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases.
17. The Leaders acknowledged that assuring economic security is becoming increasingly important as a result of digital transformation and ICT innovation as well as the outbreak of COVID-19. They confirmed that a key element of bilateral security cooperation is to promote coordination in the area of economic security, and expressed their desire to seek concrete ways to deepen cooperation in this area including information exchange. The Leaders reiterated that the mutual prosperity of both countries depends on secure and reliable supply chains for critical goods and services. They also underlined the need to strengthen cooperation on space and cyber issues, digital and critical technologies and infrastructure including 5G networks and submarine cables, and on resource security including the establishment of open, secure, resilient and efficient supply chains of critical minerals.
18. The Leaders underlined the importance of maintaining free and open markets and enhancing the resilience and efficiency of supply chains in the Indo-Pacific region to promote trade and investment. In this regard, they welcomed the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on 15 November 2020, while reiterating that the RCEP remains open for India. The Leaders confirmed their commitments to expanding a free, fair, inclusive and rules-based trade and investment environment and to keep our markets open in this region and beyond, including through the implementation and expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). They also expressed their hope to further deepen bilateral economic relations under those agreements and the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA). They stressed the need to work together to reform and strengthen the WTO including

rule-making on e-commerce as co-conveners of the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI). The Leaders affirmed their strong support for rules-based open trade, based on market principles and in line with their bilateral and international commitments. Such trade builds prosperity and underpins trust and deep links between nations. They further affirmed that trade should never be used as a tool to apply political pressure. To do so undermines trust and prosperity. The Leaders also shared the view that they would work closely to ensure market-oriented conditions and a level playing field to foster a non-discriminatory trade and investment environment.

19. The Leaders underscored the importance of resuming cross-border travel between the two countries in a mutually beneficial manner in order to facilitate economic recovery and people-to-people links, and expressed their desire to make concrete progress in this area as health conditions permit.
20. The Leaders concurred to continue close cooperation to ensure secure and reliable energy supply including LNG and to reduce emissions through new and emerging low-emissions technologies and supply chains, including hydrogen, Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) and Carbon Recycling (CR). They welcomed the progress made to date on the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain project in the state of Victoria in Australia. The Leaders concurred to advance hydrogen cooperation to support national and global transitions to a resilient, low emissions economy. In this context, Prime Minister Morrison acknowledged the recent announcement by Prime Minister Suga that by 2050, Japan will aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero, that is, to realise a carbon-neutral, decarbonised society. Prime Minister Suga acknowledged that Australia is implementing a Low Emissions Technology Roadmap to reach net zero emissions as soon as possible, and has already reduced emissions by 14% since 2005.
21. The Leaders affirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in agricultural production, particularly to overcome the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Leaders recognised the potential for the two countries to boost agricultural exports into international markets and concurred to explore greater collaboration on regional and global agri-food supply chains.

Prime Minister of Japan
SUGA Yoshihide

Prime Minister of Australia
Scott Morrison