

Australia-Japan-United States Trilateral Strategic Dialogue
Joint Statement
August 7, 2017
Manila, Philippines

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Julie Bishop, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Taro Kono, and the Secretary of State of the United States, Rex Tillerson, met in Manila, the Philippines, on August 7, 2017, for the seventh ministerial meeting of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD).

The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the trilateral strategic partnership among these three countries to ensure a free, open, peaceful, stable, democratic, and prosperous Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region and world, based on the rule of law, and reiterated their enduring commitment to further deepening coordination and cooperation to achieve this goal. The Ministers noted that the partnership, which is founded upon the robust Australia-U.S. and Japan-U.S. Alliances, rests on the unshakable foundation of shared interests and values, including a commitment to a rules-based international order, respect for international law, open economies, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The Ministers condemned in the strongest terms North Korea's unlawful pursuit of a nuclear weapons program and unprecedented ballistic missile activity since last year, including the launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles on July 4 and July 28, 2017. These actions blatantly violate multiple United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and clearly demonstrate that North Korea increasingly poses new levels of threat to regional stability and global security. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the unanimous adoption of UNSC Resolution 2371 on August 5 which imposes a total ban on certain North Korean exports. The Ministers called on the international community to implement strictly UNSC resolutions and impose additional diplomatic and economic measures to address the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threat posed by the North Korean regime and its destabilizing behavior, and to make further efforts to urge North Korea to abandon its current threatening and provocative path and immediately take steps to denuclearize. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strong autonomous sanctions measures on North Korea and will coordinate these sanctions and capacity building measures, including in the area of export control to detect and disrupt North Korean WMD proliferation networks. The Ministers also urged ASEAN member states to maximize pressure on North Korea. The Ministers called on North Korea to immediately and fully comply with relevant UNSC resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005. The Ministers also called on North Korea to end its systematic human rights violations and abuses and to immediately release all foreign nationals being held in North Korea, including Japanese abductees and American citizens.

The Ministers underscored the importance of upholding the rules-based order, called on all states to respect freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the seas, and reiterated that the three countries will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

The Ministers expressed serious concerns over maritime disputes in the South China Sea (SCS).

The Ministers voiced their strong opposition to coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions. In this regard, the Ministers urged SCS claimants to refrain from land reclamation, construction of outposts, militarization of disputed features, and undertaking unilateral actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment in areas pending delimitation. The Ministers called on all claimants to make and clarify their maritime claims in accordance with the international law of the sea as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and to resolve disputes peacefully in accordance with international law. The Ministers called on China and the Philippines to abide by the Arbitral Tribunal's 2016 Award in the Philippines-China arbitration, as it is final and legally binding on both parties. The Ministers noted the significance of the UNCLOS dispute settlement regime and the Tribunal's decision in discussions among parties in their efforts to peacefully resolve their maritime disputes in the SCS. The Ministers urged ASEAN member states and China to fully and effectively implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). The Ministers acknowledged the announced consensus on a framework for the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea (COC). The Ministers further urged ASEAN member states and China to ensure that the COC be finalized in a timely manner, and that it be legally binding, meaningful, effective, and consistent with international law.

The Ministers welcomed the development of trilateral cooperation on capacity building for maritime security and safety in Southeast Asia. The Ministers resolved to advance and build on this cooperation through ongoing exchanges of information and dialogue on regional needs. The Ministers reiterated the commitment of the three nations to continue coordinating their respective assistance programs and to identify ways they can more closely collaborate in the future.

The Ministers expressed strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions in the East China Sea and will remain in close communication about developments in the area.

The Ministers discussed ways to work together to counter terrorism and violent extremism. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the counter-terrorism-specific trilateral strategic dialogue to enhance coordination and programming. The Ministers noted the importance of increasing engagement in regional and multilateral organizations such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The Ministers expressed support for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and called for its implementation. The Ministers resolved to continue to support internally displaced persons and to coordinate on protecting soft targets and countering terrorist financing. The Ministers also resolved to advocate for and strengthen existing information sharing mechanisms, such as those provided by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and to combat the flow of foreign terrorist fighters both to and from conflict areas. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to continue coordinating their respective assistance programs and to identify ways to collaborate in the future. The Ministers expressed their concerns regarding the recent attacks by the ISIS-affiliated groups in Marawi, the Philippines, the loss of life, and the displacement of local populations. The Ministers urged increased cooperation in the region to counter such terrorist activity and pledged their continued support for these efforts.

The Ministers underscored the importance of advancing cybersecurity, and committed to supporting the strategic framework for international cyber stability based on the application of existing international law; adherence to voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behavior in cyberspace in peacetime; and the implementation of confidence building measures, supported by coordinated capacity building programs. The Ministers affirmed their mutual commitment to promote operationalization of voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behavior recommended by the report of the 2015 *UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security*. The Ministers supported the establishment of a new ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs) as a dedicated international forum for advancing cyber cooperation among member states.

Congratulating ASEAN on its 50th Anniversary, the Ministers noted the central role ASEAN has played in the development of the Asia-Pacific regional architecture and its contribution to the region's stability and prosperity. The Ministers resolved to work together to strengthen regional ASEAN-centered organizations, especially the East Asia Summit (EAS). The Ministers stressed the value of the EAS as the premier Leaders-led forum in the region to address political and strategic issues and reiterated the importance of strengthening it in accordance with the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Tenth Anniversary of the East Asia Summit. The Ministers recognized the complex challenges facing the Pacific Island Countries, and underscored the importance of further trilateral cooperation to enhance economic resilience, sustainable development, and regional peace and security.

The Ministers recognized the importance of ensuring free and open sea-lanes as well as enhancing regional connectivity, including through quality infrastructure development.

The Ministers resolved to continue to work closely together and with their partners to promote strong, sustainable growth and prosperity, including by supporting good governance, the rule of law, and human rights.