

Joint Statement on U.S.-Japan-the Republic of Korea Trilateral Vice Foreign Ministerial Meeting

The following is the joint statement released by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and the Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Begin text

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo, and Republic of Korea (ROK) First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyundong met today in Washington, D.C. to deepen cooperation among the three countries on pressing global issues. The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the trilateral partnership, grounded in their shared values and dedicated to their shared security and prosperity, as evidenced by their three vice-ministerial dialogues in the past year and numerous other coordination efforts. Today's discussion also built upon the November 2022 leader-level Phnom Penh Statement on Trilateral Partnership for the Indo-Pacific as well as the September 2022 Joint Statement on the U.S.-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministerial.

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers expressed their deep condolences to the people of Türkiye and Syria in the aftermath of the devastating recent earthquake and committed to continue building upon the emergency aid already delivered by their three countries.

The Deputy Secretary and the Vice Ministers strongly condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) unlawful ballistic missile launches, which reached an unprecedented number in 2022, as well as a flurry of conventional military action and its threat of further destabilizing actions. They confirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and called on all UN member states to consistently implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions. They committed themselves to further strengthening and diversifying security cooperation to counter the threat the DPRK poses to regional and global security. The Deputy Secretary reiterated that the U.S. commitments to defend Japan and the ROK are ironclad and backed by the full range of capabilities, including nuclear, and reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to strengthen extended deterrence with Japan and the ROK. The Deputy Secretary and the Vice Ministers condemned the DPRK's increasingly aggressive rhetoric regarding its nuclear program and called on the DPRK to immediately cease its irresponsible actions and to abide by its obligations under all relevant UN Security Council resolutions. They called on the DPRK to return to the negotiating table and reiterated that the only path to peace and stability is through sustained dialogue. To this end, the Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister Mori expressed support for the goal of the ROK's "Audacious Initiative." The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers expressed grave concern over the human rights situation in the DPRK and underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation to improve

the human rights situation in the DPRK, and in this context, the Vice Ministers welcomed the nomination of the U.S. Special Envoy on DPRK Human Rights Issues. They also committed to work together to achieve an immediate resolution to the abductions issue as well as the immediate release of ROK citizens detained in the DPRK.

The three countries lauded the resounding success of the 2022 trilateral exercises on ballistic missile defense and anti-submarine warfare, which they committed to continue. They further committed to determining new areas for security cooperation and reaffirmed their intention to share DPRK missile warning data in real time as expressed by the Leaders in Phnom Penh.

Noting the upcoming one-year mark of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers reaffirmed their determination to stand firmly with Ukraine and strongly condemned Russia's ongoing attacks, which are killing civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure. They reiterated their unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. They stated unequivocally that Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric is unacceptable and that any use of a nuclear weapon by Russia in Ukraine would be an act of hostility against humanity and unjustifiable in any way. They committed to continue collaboration to impose strong sanctions against Russia and provide assistance for Ukraine, including rehabilitating Ukraine's energy infrastructure and addressing Ukraine's future economic needs.

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, including in the Indo-Pacific. They reiterated their firm commitment to the rule of law, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. They emphasized that their basic positions on Taiwan remained unchanged and reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as an indispensable element of security and prosperity for the international community.

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers reaffirmed the outcomes of the November 2022 leader-level Phnom Penh Statement and underscored their shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is inclusive, resilient, and secure, is best achieved by leveraging each of their countries' unique advantages and experiences in the region. The Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister Mori welcomed the announcement of the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy and hoped it would facilitate trilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Based on their firm support for ASEAN centrality and unity as well as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers committed to coordinate closely with ASEAN partners and within ASEAN-led regional architecture to address the full range of regional challenges, including climate change, digital connectivity, security, public health, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. They committed to further enhancing cooperation for the development of the Mekong sub-region within the sub-regional cooperation frameworks including the

Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and the Mekong River Commission.

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers reasserted their commitment to the Pacific Island countries and the importance of working in partnership with the Pacific Islands in a transparent and effective way guided by the Pacific Islands Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. They dedicated themselves to work together, including through the Partners in the Blue Pacific, and Deputy Secretary Sherman and Vice Minister Mori welcomed the ROK's joining of the partnership and the ROK's plan to hold the first Korea-Pacific Islands Summit this year. The Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister Cho also welcomed Japan's cooperation with the Pacific Island countries on the forthcoming Ministerial Interim Meeting ahead of the tenth Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (PALM10).

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers affirmed their shared commitment to strengthening consultation among the three governments on economic security, including the dialogue the Leaders announced in Phnom Penh. They concurred on the urgent need to address economic security challenges and reaffirmed their commitment to stand up to economic coercion.

The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers further committed to use and strengthen existing platforms and leadership mechanisms to address pressing global challenges including the need to protect human rights, prevent democratic backsliding, ensure equitable and transparent economic growth, and advance global women's economic empowerment. In that regard, the Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister Mori welcomed the ROK's upcoming role as the regional co-host of the second Summit for Democracy. The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers shared the importance of the deepening of a trilateral development policy coordination, including among USAID, JICA, and KOICA. They committed to promoting transparent and responsible development finance in cooperation with international financial institutions. The Deputy Secretary and First Vice Minister Cho commended Japan for hosting the upcoming G7 Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. They also committed to cooperate on a cancer moonshot initiative and, as a first step, to hold a trilateral dialogue between their respective national cancer centers to explore research and treatment areas that can uniquely benefit from the expertise of the three countries.

Throughout their discussions, the Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers underscored that U.S.-Japan-ROK cooperation is vital not only to the security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region but also to their shared global interests. The Deputy Secretary and Vice Ministers looked forward to further strengthening the trilateral partnership at their next meeting in the ROK.