

JOINT STATEMENT
H.E. MR ISHIBA SHIGERU, PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN AND H.E. MR MARK RUTTE,
NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

On April 9, 2025, Mr. ISHIBA Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan, and Mr. Mark Rutte, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held a meeting in Tokyo.

Today, we reiterate our firm belief that Japan and NATO share strategic interests and common values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and recognise our partnership is of strategic importance for the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions. We reaffirm our commitment to international peace and stability. We recognise that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and of the Indo-Pacific are interconnected, and that we face many of the same challenges. A strong NATO benefits Japan as well. We share the belief that in a changing and uncertain security environment, continuing Japan-NATO cooperation will benefit the security and resilience of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions.

Today, our cooperation is extensive, focusing on challenges that can impact the security of Japan and NATO. With the steady development of our partnership, we are taking steps to increase our ability to address these challenges in our respective regions, through our strategic cooperation in areas like cyber defence, space, emerging and disruptive technologies, and interoperability.

Strategic Challenges facing the International Community

We reiterate our position that Russian aggression against Ukraine is a serious violation of international law, including the UN Charter. We affirm the importance of diplomatic efforts, which are currently ongoing, by relevant countries to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. Secretary General Rutte welcomes Japan's continued provision of non-lethal equipment to Ukraine through NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) Trust Fund for Ukraine, including Japan's contribution to military medical and rehabilitation support. Secretary General Rutte welcomes Japan's willingness to participate in the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU). We affirm the importance of continued Japan-NATO consultations on the situation in Ukraine.

We strongly condemn the increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, including Russia's use of North Korean missiles against Ukraine and the engagement of North Korean troops deployed to Russia in combat against Ukraine. We share a deep concern about any political, military, or economic support that Russia may provide to North Korea's illegal weapons programmes, and urge Russia and North Korea to immediately cease all such activities and abide by relevant UNSCRs. We are also concerned by China's support to Russia's defence industrial base. We urge countries with ties to Russia and North Korea, including China, to uphold international law by opposing this dangerous expansion of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and by implementing all relevant UNSCRs.

We affirm the importance of upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. We strongly encourage China to improve military transparency and to cooperate constructively on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Our basic positions on Taiwan remain unchanged, and we emphasize the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as an indispensable element in security and prosperity in the international community. We encourage a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

We strongly condemn the advancement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, reaffirm the importance of the complete denuclearisation of North Korea in accordance with the relevant UNSCRs, and insist upon North Korea's abandonment of its

nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and any other weapons of mass destruction in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. We underscore the need to deter and counter illicit means of generating revenue that fund its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programmes. We urge North Korea to immediately resolve the abductions issue.

We reaffirm the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and the framework for international cooperation in sharing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology.

Japan-NATO Cooperation

Both the National Security Strategy of Japan and the Strategic Concept of NATO underscore the importance of cooperation between our regions. Our cooperation focuses on the goals of the 2023-2026 Japan-NATO Individually Tailored Partnership Programme. We welcome Japan's participation in successive NATO Summits, meetings of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs, a meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence and Military Committees in Chiefs of Defence Session, as well as the first visit by the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to Japan in February 2024 as significant moments for our partnership. We welcome the appointment of a dedicated Ambassador to the Mission of Japan to NATO and our work towards developing our information sharing framework.

Strengthening defence industrial cooperation is a shared priority. We will accelerate cooperation in this area, including with a view to developing dual-use technologies, advanced technologies, and enhancing standardisation. Japan continues regular participation in the Conference of National Armaments Directors, the NATO Industrial Advisory Group, and the Main Armaments Groups.

We welcome steps forward on cyber defence cooperation to address the threat of state-sponsored malicious cyber activities, including the first Japan-NATO Cyber Dialogue in 2023, and Japan's participation in the Cyber Champions Summit in 2024, NATO's Cyber Coalition and Locked Shields exercises, and NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE). We also welcomed the dispatch of a Japanese official to NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (StratCom COE).

We welcome the first ever international disaster relief operation by Japan Air Self Defense Force aircraft in cooperation with NATO in March 2023 following the earthquake in the Republic of Türkiye, joint exercises between Japan Maritime Self Defence Force's Training Squadron and the Standing NATO Maritime Groups in the Mediterranean Sea in August 2024 as well as NATO's observations of Japan-U.S. joint exercises (Keen Sword), the Self-Defense Forces Joint Exercise (JX), and the Self Defense Forces Joint Exercise for Rescue (JXR). We welcome Japan's commitment to continuing to post Japanese Self Defense Forces officials to NATO.

Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his intention that Japan will continue to play a leading role in deepening cooperation between NATO and the partners in the Indo-Pacific, which Secretary General Rutte welcomed. Secretary General Rutte expressed gratitude to Japan for its active contributions to the four flagship projects launched at the 2024 Washington Summit by NATO and the partners in the Indo-Pacific. In this context, Secretary General Rutte welcomed that Japan hosted the Japan-NATO Conference on Strategic Communications in February this year, which has paved the way for future cooperation between NATO and the partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Going forward, we are committed to maintaining a regular dialogue.