

Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (2+2)

Secretary of State Blinken, Secretary of Defense Austin, Minister for Foreign Affairs Motegi, and Minister of Defense Kishi held the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee in Tokyo, Japan on March 16, 2021. They reaffirmed that the U.S.-Japan Alliance remains the cornerstone of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan resolved to enhance its capabilities to bolster national defense and further strengthen the Alliance. The United States underscored its unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan through the full range of its capabilities, including nuclear. Amid growing geopolitical competition and challenges such as COVID-19, climate change, and revitalizing democracy, the United States and Japan renewed their commitment to promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.

The United States and Japan acknowledged that China's behavior, where inconsistent with the existing international order, presents political, economic, military, and technological challenges to the Alliance and to the international community. The Ministers committed to opposing coercion and destabilizing behavior toward others in the region, which undermines the rules-based international system. They reaffirmed their support for unimpeded lawful commerce and respect for international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea. The Ministers also expressed serious concerns about recent disruptive developments in the region, such as the China Coast Guard law. Further, they discussed the United States' unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan under Article V of our security treaty, which includes the Senkaku Islands. The United States and Japan remain opposed to any unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo or to undermine Japan's administration of these islands. The Ministers underscored the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. They reiterated their objections to China's unlawful maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea and recalled that the July 2016 award of the Philippines-China arbitral tribunal, constituted under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, is final and legally binding on the parties. The Ministers shared serious concerns regarding the human rights situation in Hong Kong and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Recognizing that North Korea's arsenal poses a threat to international peace and stability, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea and urged Pyongyang to abide by its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions. The Ministers also confirmed the necessity of immediate resolution of the abductions issue. Trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the Republic of

Korea is critical for our shared security, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

The United States and Japan reaffirmed that the strength of the Alliance comes from our shared values and is amplified by our network of close partnerships with like-minded democracies. The March 12 Quad Summit demonstrated to the world our shared vision of a free, open, and inclusive region anchored by universal values and unconstrained by coercive power. The Ministers pledged to work with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), affirming their strong support for its centrality and unity, as well as for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

Recognizing the increasingly serious regional security environment, the Ministers recommitted to enhancing close coordination to align security policy, deepen defense cooperation across all domains, and bolster extended deterrence by consulting on Alliance roles, missions, and capabilities. They highlighted the importance of domains such as space and cyber, as well as further strengthening information security. In addition, they reiterated that realistic bilateral and multilateral exercises and training are necessary to maintain the Alliance's operational readiness and deterrent posture, as well as to meet future challenges.

The Ministers acknowledged the importance of close coordination as the Department of Defense conducts its Global Posture Review. They welcomed progress on force realignment efforts and reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the current arrangements in ways that maintain operational readiness and a sustainable presence, while mitigating the impact on local communities. They reconfirmed that the plan to construct the Futenma Replacement Facility at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and in adjacent waters is the only solution that avoids the continued use of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, and committed to completing construction as soon as possible. Regarding Host Nation Support, having agreed to a one-year extension amendment to the current Special Measures Agreement, the Ministers instructed their negotiators to work toward a new mutually beneficial multi-year agreement.

In remembrance of the thousands of lives lost to the Great East Japan Earthquake and its aftermath in March 2011, the Ministers underscored the cooperative spirit of the Alliance and reaffirmed their commitment to working alongside one another to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

In recognition of the depth and breadth of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the need to increase momentum on numerous shared policy priorities, the Ministers called for another Security Consultative Committee meeting later in the year.