

U.S. Department of State

Diplomacy in Action

Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

April 19, 2019

The following statement was released by the Security Consultative Committee.

Begin Text:

On April 19, 2019, the U.S.–Japan Security Consultative Committee convened in Washington, DC, with the participation of Secretary of State Pompeo, Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan, Minister for Foreign Affairs Kono, and Minister of Defense Iwaya. During the meeting, the Ministers affirmed their strong commitment to realize a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” a shared vision for a region in which all nations are sovereign, strong, and prosperous. Decades after the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security was signed, the U.S.-Japan Alliance serves as the cornerstone of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and remains iron-clad amid an increasingly complex security environment. The Alliance will continue to play an indispensable role in upholding a rules-based international order and promoting the shared values of the American and Japanese people.

The Ministers welcomed the alignment of the strategic policy documents of both countries, namely the United States’ National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, and Japan’s National Defense Program Guidelines. These strategies show that the U.S.-Japan security partnership continues to adapt to be stronger, more advanced, and more effective, consistent with the objectives of the bilateral 2015 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation.

The Ministers acknowledged their shared concern that geopolitical competition and coercive attempts to undermine international rules, norms, and institutions present challenges to the Alliance and to the shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. The Ministers highlighted the need for an increasingly networked structure of alliances and partnerships, anchored by the U.S.-Japan Alliance, to counter these challenges. The Ministers also expressed concern about rapidly evolving technological advancement in new domains, including space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum. The Ministers highlighted the need to address these challenges jointly to ensure the Alliance’s superiority in a contingency and to safeguard our institutions and rules-based order during peacetime.

The Ministers affirmed that their two nations’ strong bilateral security relationship continues to be the foundation of the U.S.-Japan Alliance. As such, the Ministers decided that cooperation in cross-domain operations, enhancing the Alliance’s capabilities, and increasing operational readiness and cooperation should be core objectives to advance our defense relationship. The United States welcomed Japan’s proactive steps to strengthen its defensive capabilities, with the Ministers confirming that both nations need to constantly re-evaluate their roles, missions, and capabilities.

Acknowledging the changing dynamics of warfare, the Ministers highlighted the importance of developing capabilities and increasing operational cooperation in both conventional and non-conventional domains. The Ministers highlighted space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum as priority areas to better prepare the Alliance for cross-domain operations.

On cyberspace issues, the Ministers recognized that malicious cyber activity presents an increasing threat to the security and prosperity of both the United States and Japan. To address this threat, the Ministers committed to enhance cooperation on cyber issues, including deterrence and response capabilities, but as a matter of priority, emphasized that each nation is responsible for developing the relevant capabilities to protect their national networks and critical infrastructure. The Ministers affirmed that international law applies in cyberspace and that a cyber attack could, in certain circumstances, constitute an armed attack for the purposes of Article V of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The Ministers also affirmed that a decision as to when a cyber attack would constitute an armed attack under Article V would be made on a case-by-case basis, and through close consultations between Japan and the United States, as would be the case for any other threat.

The Ministers recognized the critical role that U.S. extended deterrence plays in ensuring the security of Japan, as well as the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The United States reiterated its commitment to the defense of Japan through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, including conventional and nuclear.

The Ministers reiterated the importance of the international community's ongoing commitment to achieving North Korea's abandonment of all of its weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, and related programs and facilities in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The Ministers welcomed the United States' diplomatic efforts to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the U.S.-North Korea Summits. The Ministers affirmed their commitment to lead international efforts in UNSCR implementation, particularly in combatting illicit ship-to-ship transfers, and the Ministers committed to strengthen and enhance cooperation with other partner countries participating in UNSCR implementation. The Ministers also recognized the successful efforts to bring back U.S. nationals held in North Korea, and called upon North Korea to resolve the Japanese abductions issue immediately.

The Ministers reaffirmed that U.S. force posture in the region would remain robust and grounded in a clear-eyed assessment of threats, and they determined to deepen consultation on ensuring deterrence and security in the region. The Ministers also highlighted the importance of cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and committed to work together to promote trilateral security cooperation and exercises.

The Ministers expressed serious concern about, and strong opposition to, unilateral coercive attempts to alter the status quo in the East China Sea (ECS) and South China Sea (SCS). The Ministers renewed their determination to work together to safeguard the peace and stability of the ECS, and reconfirmed that Article V of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands and that both nations oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of these islands.

The Ministers renewed their commitment to work both together and multilaterally to further support a free and open Indo-Pacific, including through joint exercises and port calls with partners in the region, capacity building in such areas as maritime domain awareness and law enforcement, and promotion of sustainable economic development and connectivity through quality infrastructure. The Ministers also recognized the crucial role of the U.S.-Japan Security arrangements in facilitating the greater presence of U.S. forces in the region.

To enable the United States to continue to maintain forward deployed forces in Japan, the Ministers reaffirmed the two Governments' commitment to steadily implement the realignment of U.S. forces. The Ministers also welcomed the significant progress on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) and reconfirmed that the plan to construct the FRF at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and adjacent waters is the only solution that avoids the continued use of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma. The Ministers underscored their strong determination to achieve its completion as soon as possible.

In recognition of the depth and breadth of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the Ministers agreed to release a **fact sheet** (<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2019/04/291262.htm>), detailing additional areas of bilateral cooperation.

End text.

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