

JOINT STATEMENT

Issued on the occasion of the meeting between H.E. Mr Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General and H.E. Mr Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan

Prime Minister of Japan, KISHIDA Fumio, and Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jens STOLTENBERG, met in Tokyo on 31 January, 2023. Building on Prime Minister Kishida's historical participation in the NATO Summit in 2022 for the first time as Japanese Prime Minister, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen cooperation between Japan and NATO, as reliable and natural partners, who share common values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as well as strategic interests.

Challenging strategic environment at a historical inflection point

The international community is facing changes defining an era. The free and open international order based on the rule of law is at stake, and we are witnessing changes in power balances and intensifying geopolitical competition. The world is at a historical inflection point in the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shattered peace and shaken the foundation of the rules-based international order. It has gravely altered the security environment in the Euro-Atlantic and beyond. The balance of power is also rapidly shifting in the Indo-Pacific, and we share the view that unilateral change of the status quo by force or coercion is not acceptable anywhere in the world.

We recognise that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and of the Indo-Pacific is closely connected and stress the necessity of further strengthening cooperation between Japan and NATO, in order to respond to the changing strategic environment. Japan welcomes NATO's determination to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific. We welcome Japan's vision for realising a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). We reaffirm our resolve to uphold and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Complex strategic challenges facing the international community

We condemn, in the strongest terms, the unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine. We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders extending to its territorial waters. We underscore that Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric is unacceptable and that any use of nuclear weapons would meet with unequivocal international condemnation and severe consequences. We reaffirm our unwavering support for and solidarity with Ukraine in the face of the ongoing Russian war of aggression. We highlight with concern Russia's growing military cooperation with China, including through joint operations and drills in the vicinity of Japan.

We strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea. We express serious concern about reports of militarisation, coercion and intimidation in the South China Sea. With regard to China's rapid strengthening of its military capabilities and expansion of military activities, we strongly encourage China to improve transparency and to cooperate constructively with international efforts for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Our basic positions on Taiwan remain unchanged, and we emphasize the importance of 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 North Korea's ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles including ballistic missile launches over the past year with unprecedented frequency and in an unprecedented manner, and urge North Korea to fully comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, and any other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We call on all member states of the United Nations to fully implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, we also express serious concern on North Korea's flagrant violation of human rights and, in particular, strongly urge North Korea to immediately resolve the abductions issue.

Japan-NATO cooperation in the new strategic environment

Japan welcomes the adoption of NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept, which refers to the importance of the Indo-Pacific. We also welcome the adoption of Japan's National Security Strategy, including fundamental reinforcement of its defence capabilities, and its continuous support to Ukraine. In addition, we welcome progress towards the new framework cooperation document between Japan and NATO, the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP), in order to elevate current Japan-NATO cooperation to new heights that reflect the challenges of a new era.

We welcome developments in Japan-NATO cooperation in tackling traditional security challenges such as maritime security and arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition, given the severe international security environment and new security challenges, we reaffirm the importance of cooperation in areas such as cyberspace, outer space, disinformation and strategic communications, countering hybrid challenges, resilience, critical and emerging technologies, and innovation to bolster our capacity to address emerging challenges in new domains. Furthermore, we are exploring expanding cooperation to areas such as defence science and technology including activities with the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO).

This new cooperation between Japan and NATO will effectively help address emerging threats in new domains such as cyberspace, outer space, cutting edge science and technology, and supply chains, and enhance our resilience to hybrid threats accordingly. We will also reinforce our efforts to promote our fundamental values including through cooperation on gender and human security.

Upgrading Japan-NATO cooperation in a new era

In this context, we are enhancing our strategic coordination on Japan-NATO cooperation, utilizing appropriate frameworks, for the purpose of taking stock of the progress made so far and considering way forward on Japan-NATO cooperation.

We welcome NATO's observation of the Japan-U.S. Joint Field Training Exercise in 2022 (Keen Sword 23) as symbolic cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific and a further strengthening of such cooperation.

We are accelerating our efforts to enhance information sharing between Japan and NATO. In addition, we welcome Japan's intention to participate in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the NATO Chiefs of Defense meetings on a regular basis.

We are convinced that Japan-NATO cooperation will demonstrate its value under this severe and complex security environment. Through our staunch partnership, we are determined to contribute to upholding and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law.