

June 3, 2018

**Japan – Republic of Korea – United States Defense Ministers Meeting
Joint Press Statement**

Japanese Minister of Defense Itsunori Onodera, Republic of Korea (ROK) Minister of National Defense Song Young-moo, and U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis, convened the 10th Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting in Singapore on June 3 on the margins of the International Institute for Strategic Studies 17th Asia Security Summit (2018 Shangri-La Dialogue). During the meeting, they held discussions on North Korea, the regional security situation, and trilateral security cooperation.

The three ministers welcomed the results of the two recent Inter-Korean Summits, include the “Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity, and Unification of the Korean Peninsula,” and noted the positive changes that have been brought about are setting favorable conditions for the U.S.-North Korea Summit. They expressed their hopes that the upcoming U.S.-North Korea Summit will contribute to comprehensively resolving matters of security and humanitarian concerns for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, and to this end, pledged to strengthen security cooperation among the three countries.

The three ministers welcomed North Korea’s recent announcement to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile tests, as well as steps to close Punggye-ri nuclear test site. The ministers agreed to remain united in support of the ongoing diplomatic efforts in the pursuit of the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. They also agreed to continue enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The ministers welcomed sustained international cooperation to deter, disrupt, and ultimately eliminate illicit activities, such as illegal ship-to-ship transfers. The ministers noted that should North Korea come into full compliance with its international obligations, it would dramatically improve the security and prosperity of the North Korean people.

The three ministers noted that multilateral security cooperation led by the three countries plays an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the region, and also committed to continuing existing security cooperation, including information sharing, high-level policy consultation, combined exercises, and other exchanges, by using trilateral or multilateral mechanisms.

The three ministers also discussed other regional security issues, including the importance of maritime security and the maintenance of a rules-based order, and reaffirmed that freedom of navigation and overflight must be ensured, and that all disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law. In addition, the three ministers shared the recognition that military-level confidence-building among countries in the region is important, and committed to strengthening cooperation to institutionalize such efforts.

The United States reaffirmed its ironclad security commitments to the ROK and Japan, and they pledged to continue to work closely together for peace and stability in the region and around the world.