

Japan – Republic of Korea– United States Defense Ministerial Meeting

Japanese Minister of Defense Takeshi Iwaya, Republic of Korea (ROK) Minister of National Defense Jeong Kyeong Doo, and U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis convened the 11th Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting in Singapore on October 19 on the margins of the 2018 Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus. During the meeting, they held discussions on North Korea, regional security situation, and trilateral security cooperation.

North Korea

The three ministers reaffirmed that they will continue to maintain defense cooperation in support of ongoing diplomatic efforts, and noted the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) commitment to complete denuclearization.

The ministers welcomed the recent summit meetings and declarations between the leaders of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the DPRK, and between the leaders of the United States and the DPRK, as a contribution towards complete denuclearization in a final, fully verified manner towards lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The ministers reiterated their commitment to fully implement United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) regarding the DPRK, which call for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear, WMD, and ballistic missile programs.

The ministers reaffirmed their commitment to working with the international community to ensure the full implementation and strict enforcement of DPRK-related UNSCR sanctions, including sustained international cooperation to deter, disrupt, and ultimately eliminate North Korea’s illicit ship-to-ship transfers.

Regional Security

The three ministers discussed other regional security issues, including the importance of maritime security and the maintenance of a rules-based order. The ministers 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.

Multilateral Security Cooperation

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. The Ministers committed to bolster multilateral security cooperation, including information sharing, high-level policy consultations, and various combined exercises.

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