

Ambassador's Message No.48 (Japan-United States-Australia Trilateral Strategic Dialogue)

18 August 2017

Dear friends,

As some of you may already know, last week, Japan, Australia and the United States held the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue on the occasion of the ASEAN Foreign Minister's Meeting in Manila, Philippines. It was the 7th meeting of its kind and was attended by the Foreign Minister of Japan, Taro Kono who has taken his post recently, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Julie Bishop and U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson. A Joint Statement was released after the meeting and I have attached a copy for your information. ([Text of the Joint Statement](#))



In this dialogue the chairman, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and foreign minister Bishop showed unity for regular Japan-US-Australia talks and deep collaboration. They also noted the extremely meaningful discussions that were held. Immediately after the TSD, foreign minister Kono also said that he was very happy to have attended the event. The three cabinet ministers exchanged opinions on the region's various tasks concerning North Korea, the South China Sea, the East China Sea and countering violent extremism measures. In addition, the ministers also reached an agreement where Japan, the US and Australia will cooperate and work closely on tasks that develop from now and into the future.

The Ministers condemned in the strongest terms North Korea's unlawful pursuit of a nuclear weapons program and unprecedented ballistic missile activity since last year, including the

launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles on July 4 and July 28, 2017. The Ministers also urged ASEAN member states to maximize pressure on North Korea.

With regards to North Korea in this dialogue, foreign minister Kono said that North Korea has become a threat to the region and international community. He added that in order to further increase the pressure on North Korea a collaborative strong message based on strong deterrence and strong sanctions is needed. The three cabinet ministers committed to continue to work closely together. Foreign minister Kono stated that a solution to the abduction problem is one of significant importance for Japan. Foreign minister Kono received support and understanding from both America and Australia for his efforts on this matter.

The Ministers expressed serious concerns over maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Furthermore, the Ministers urged ASEAN member states and China to fully and effectively implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

The Ministers welcomed the development of trilateral cooperation on capacity building for maritime security and safety in Southeast Asia.

This dialogue was the first meeting between Foreign minister Kono and Foreign minister Bishop. Building on this meeting both foreign ministers will tackle various tasks in the region and the international community through future bilateral meetings as well as various other opportunities by exchanging frank opinions, holding discussions and further building on their trusting relationship. To this end, I will work hard whilst collaborating with my Australian government counterparts.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia