

Japan, U.S. and South Korea reaffirm resolve on tackling security threats from North Korea

The defense ministers of Japan, the United States and South Korea affirmed on Thursday their intention to work together in dealing with North Korea, which continues to test missiles.

In telephone talks that lasted about 35 minutes, Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook shared the view that North Korea's ballistic missile launches are in violation of relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and are destabilizing regional security.

It was the first time since November 2019 that the three countries' defense ministers have held talks. In the phone talks, Kishi, Austin and Suh agreed to work to meet in person.

North Korea has fired ballistic and cruise missiles seven times this year. Tokyo, Washington and Seoul are increasingly alarmed not only by the launches but also because North Korea has suggested the possibility of resuming nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests that have been suspended since 2018.

Meanwhile, relations between Japanese and South Korean defense authorities have been strained due partly to a December 2018 incident involving accusations of a South Korean warship locking its radar onto a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force patrol plane.

With the threat from North Korea on the rise, the United States has been calling on the two Asian neighbors to mend fences.

The three countries initially planned to hold a face-to-face meeting of their defense ministers in Hawaii in mid-January, but it was canceled due to a resurgence of the novel coronavirus.

Source:

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