

(Press Release)

August 27, 2020
Japan Ministry of Defense

Japan-Finland Defense Minister's Video Teleconference

On August 27, 2020, Minister KONO had a video teleconference with Mr. Antti Kaikkonen, Minister of Defence of Finland.

1 The two ministers exchanged views on issues such as the roles to be played by the defense authorities given the global spread of COVID-19. Minister Kono explained the Japan Self-Defense Forces activities on the cruise ship Diamond Princess, quarantine measures at the airport, efforts to prevent community transmission, infection-preventative measures undertaken in their operation which resulted in having no deployed member infected with the virus, and analysis by the SDF Central Hospital by using the presentation document. Minister Kaikkonen also explained the latest situation and measures taken in Finland.

2 Furthermore, the two ministers also exchanged views on the current regional security issues including the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and they agreed to continue close communication on this matter. They also reaffirmed the importance of free and open maritime order based on the rule of law. Minister Kono shared his view that Japan strongly opposes unilateral attempts to change the status quo by coercive measures and any activities that increase tensions, taking into account the current situation in the region.

3 The two ministers also discussed defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Finland. Minister Kono pointed out the importance of continuing cooperation with other countries that share values and interests from the perspective of maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order that has been a cornerstone of peace and prosperity of the world. Moreover, Minister Kono, taking into consideration the implications of COVID-19, expressed that it's important to maintain seamless defense posture by the two countries and continue and strengthen bilateral defense

cooperation to uphold and reinforce a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. Minister Kono also expressed his expectation for JGSDF participation in Military Music Festival Hamina Tattoo next year.

4 The two ministers agreed on the following three points bearing in mind the circumstances caused by the spread of COVID-19:

- (1) sharing information, knowledge and lessons learned about the measures taken by the defense authorities towards overcoming COVID-19 at the earliest stage;
- (2) necessity of sharing recognition of threat based on the current circumstances and of potential effects of the spread of COVID-19 on defense policy of each country from the view point of the role of defense authorities; and
- (3) promoting vigorously defense cooperation and exchanges and maintaining communication between the defense authorities.