

US, Japan and South Korea pledge to improve intelligence sharing

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Leaders from the United States, Japan and South Korea met on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit last Sunday in Cambodia to further develop US war preparations, ultimately aimed at China.

The trilateral meeting between US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol lasted only about 15 minutes, but a joint statement released afterward said the three had agreed to expand intelligence sharing, while also making thinly-veiled denunciations of Beijing.

The improvement of intelligence sharing between Tokyo and Seoul has long been a goal of the US, seen as critical to its anti-ballistic missile system in the region and other war plans. Falsely couched as a defensive response to the supposed “threat” from North Korea, the three countries on Sunday pledged “to share DPRK (North Korea) missile warning data in real time to improve each country’s ability to detect and assess the threat posed by incoming missiles, a major step for deterrence, peace and stability.”

Mixed in with these claims of protecting “peace and stability” was a threat to destroy North Korea. Biden reiterated “that the US commitment to defend Japan and the ROK (South Korea) is ironclad and backed by the full range of capabilities, *including nuclear*.” (Emphasis added.)

In the past several months, Washington has goaded North Korea into conducting a series of missile tests by scrapping a de facto agreement between the previous Trump administration and Pyongyang.

Under Trump, the US agreed to scale down joint military exercises with South Korea in exchange for the North’s moratorium on long-range ballistic missile and nuclear tests, which was in place until this year. Pyongyang hoped to receive economic relief in return,

but Washington instead continued brutal US-led sanctions that have created an economic crisis.

Washington and Seoul also have agreed to the de facto permanent stationing of nuclear-capable strategic assets in South Korea for the first time since 1991. Nuclear-capable B-52 bombers are being stationed in northern Australia as well.

Washington does not need nuclear weapons to destroy North Korea, an impoverished country of 26 million people. The US has plenty of experience at decimating poor and defenseless countries. The true target of Washington’s nuclear threats and increased intelligence sharing is China.

Washington has major bases in both Japan and South Korea, with approximately 50,000 and 28,500 troops stationed in each country respectively, as well as air bases that could be used to attack China. This places the people of both countries on the front lines of any conflict.

The US anti-ballistic missile system is designed to protect its bases from counterattack in a war instigated against Beijing.

The US missile system includes a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery in South Korea and a AN/TPY-2 X-band radar. Dispelling notions that THAAD has anything to do with defense, at its current location THAAD does not have the range to cover Seoul, home to ten million people. An additional THAAD battery is located on Guam in the western Pacific.

Two US X-band radars are stationed in Japan, one in the north in Aomori Prefecture and another further south in Kyoto Prefecture, while Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force, the formal name for the navy, operates eight Aegis destroyers, with two more being constructed.

The Aegis system is similarly portrayed as a defensive weapon against incoming ballistic missiles. The US wants to ensure intelligence gathered between these systems is shared as quickly as possible to further its war effort.

In the past, the Japanese and South Korean militaries have shared real-time intelligence from these Aegis destroyers during military exercises, but the latest agreement would allow this to take place at any time when intelligence is requested. It is also considered a step up from the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which was signed in 2016, but does not allow real-time intelligence sharing.

The GSOMIA deal was nearly scrapped in November 2019 during the administration of previous South Korean President Moon Jae-in from the Democratic Party of Korea, as a result of trade disputes between Tokyo and Seoul and other issues stemming from Japan's colonisation of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

Since right-wing President Yoon came to office in South Korea in May, Seoul has made a concerted effort to repair relations with Tokyo. That also included a bilateral meeting with Kishida on Sunday after the joint discussions between the two and Biden. It was the first official meeting between leaders from South Korea and Japan in nearly three years, with the two reportedly agreeing to quickly resolve their bilateral disputes.

Furthermore, Kishida and Yoon voiced support in Sunday's joint statement for the war drive against China, while calling for "maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait." Kishida in particular has been a prominent anti-China hawk, regularly claiming that "Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow" and promoting the US accusation that Beijing is planning an unprovoked invasion of Taiwan.

While Sunday's statement did not specifically name China, it included obvious denunciations of Beijing, saying the three leaders "strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in waters of Indo-Pacific, including through unlawful maritime claims, militarization of reclaimed features, and coercive activities."

However, it is the US, backed by Tokyo and Seoul, that has deliberately inflamed tensions by increasingly questioning the "One China" policy, which states that there is only one China, including Taiwan. Since 1979,

Washington has had no formal diplomatic relations with Taipei, a de facto recognition of Beijing as the legitimate government of all of China.

Under both the Trump and Biden administrations, Washington has carried out numerous provocations toward Beijing, providing Taipei billions of dollars' worth of arms while US politicians make visits to the island, including that by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August, which triggered a sharp escalation in tensions and pushed the region closer to war. The latest agreement between Washington, Tokyo and Seoul will only inflame this dangerous situation.



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