

## Event Report

**Title: Defense Ministers' Forum**

**Date: 15 December 2020**

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Ms Rabea Brauer and Mr Tomonori Yoshizaki (NIDS) co-moderated the event.

### **Keynote Statement by Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer**

She explained Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines and emphasized the importance of Japan as a shared value partner country in the Indo-Pacific region.

Below is the summary of her presentation:

The political and economic centre of the world is shifting to the Indo-Pacific from the Atlantic and its Indo-Pacific guidelines are about promoting stability and prosperity in the region and Germany's contribution to them.

There is increasing competition. With China expanding its military activities in the region and with DPRK's missile and nuclear weapons, security is a big concern for the region.

Germany is committed to international laws. The country values its ties with Japan. Germany wants to bolster military contacts and presence in the region. Germany was to send a naval vessel to the region this year, however, that had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. It is planned for the next year, in 2021. Valuing multilateralism, Germany is to enhance security cooperation with like-minded partners in the region.

### **Keynote Statement by Minister Nobuo Kishi**

He explained Japan's situation in the Indo-Pacific region. Below is the summary of his presentation:

Japan highly values Germany's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and its new guidelines, which are in line with the FOIP concept, stressing the security environment becoming much more severe and uncertain, which would affect Europe as well. DPRK and China are grave concerns for the region. DPRK develops missile and nuclear weapons against COVID, and China keeps trying to change the status quo in the region

that includes the East China Sea and the South China Sea. As China is challenging the Senkaku islands, Japan is resolute to defend its territory and its country. Germany's dispatch of naval vessels to the region deserves high praise and Minister Kishi expressed big expectations towards their port calls to Japan and Germany-Japan cooperation against DPRK.

Mr Yoshizaki opened the questions with the following points: How can Germany and Japan encourage the U.S. to contribute to maritime connectivity in the Indo-Pacific, and what impact maritime connectivity will have in the Indo-Pacific? Following this, Ms Brauer asked how Germany should handle China.

Below is the summary of the response from Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer: Free sea lanes are crucial for any country, especially for a trading country like Germany and Germany is willing to cooperate with like-minded countries and abide by the UN Convention on the Sea of Law. Because the EU and NATO are on missions in the waters around Europe, and Germany is to engage likewise in the Indo-Pacific region, NATO should take a closer look at China. Her expectations of Japan, NATO's oldest partner in the region, to take a special role as a mediator in this regard is high.

China is a country with two aspects: a strategic partner and a systemic rival. It is a strategic partner in the sense that the world cannot achieve human rights issues and climate issues without China's cooperation. However, China has different values from Europe, and she stressed the importance of rules-based order.

Mr Kiuchi Minoru (Member of the House of Representatives, Secretary General, Japan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship League) joined as a questioner and asked what the Minister thought about the need for a "2 plus 2" or something similar for Japan and Germany to deepen their cooperation in the security field. Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer told that the Indo-Pacific Guidelines show how important the region is and that she is in favour of the 2 plus 2.

### **Closing remarks by Mr Yoshizaki.**

Minister Kishi emphasized the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific with common values partners to promote cooperation between Japan and Germany. He

was convinced that it is important for Japan and Germany to connect seamlessly and be in discussions at a high level. He was able to confirm that there are high expectations towards Germany's dispatch of battleships to the Indo-Pacific region and the importance of maritime connectivity with their common ally, the United States.

Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer thanked Minister Kishi and the audience and expressed her hope for a law-based world, order, and fairness for areas of further cooperation with Japan and ASEAN countries.