

Ambassador Kusaka's Message No.64

***Japan Self Defence Forces Day Reception – reflecting on Japan-Australia defence cooperation***

17 July 2018

Dear Friends,

The Embassy of Japan hosted the annual Japan Self Defence Forces Day Reception on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.

Invitees were predominantly drawn from defence and security-related organisations and institutions, and the reception aims to contribute to the further strengthening of the relationship between Japan and Australia, especially in terms of security and defence.



The reception was also an opportunity to have an exhibition of Japanese defence-related industries. Held for the third consecutive year, we hope that the exhibition will contribute to the promotion of future Japan-Australia defence equipment and technology co-operation.

When looking back over the past year in Japan-Australia relations, the first thing that comes to mind is the visit made by Prime Minister Turnbull to Japan in January this year.

During meetings with Prime Minister Abe, discussions were held on a broad range of issues, but centered on future Japan-Australia security co-operation in the Indo-Pacific region.

In order to bring about the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy' currently being promoted by Japan, co-operation with Australia is particularly significant.



Japan and Australia are both maritime nations facing the Pacific and Indian oceans. We both benefit from the free passage of goods and people, ships and aircraft across the vast Indo-Pacific region, and securing an open Indo-Pacific is a shared strategic interest between both of our countries.

With this in mind, Japan has promoted security and defence co-operation with Australia in order to contribute to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific.

Of course, the Indo-Pacific is vitally important not only to Japan and Australia, but to ASEAN countries, the U.S, India, and many other nations. Together with these like-minded nations, we must uphold the regional order based on the rule of law.

In addition to the many joint exercises that have been held between the Japan Self-Defense Force and Australian Defence Force to date, plans have been made for an inaugural joint exercise involving fighter aircraft from the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and the RAAF to take place in September this year.

Expectations are that developments in security co-operation across all levels will in turn help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Yours sincerely,

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Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia