

**Speech Presented by HE Mr YAMAGAMI Shingo, Ambassador of Japan to Australia
on the Occasion of the Commemoration Service for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of
the Coral Sea
6 May 2022**

(Dignitary Acknowledgements)

- Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, representing the Prime Minister.
- The Hon. David Smith, representing the Leader of the Opposition,
- Mr Michael Goldman, Charge' d' Affairs at the US Embassy,
- Lieutenant General John Frewen, representing the Chief of the Defence Force,
- Mr Bill Mason, President of the Australian-American Association, Canberra,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- The Battle of the Coral Sea was a pivotal event in the history of naval warfare, marking the first time that carrier-based aircraft were involved in a direct clash against one another.
- It remains the largest naval battle fought off the shores of Australia, whose scale and ferocity exacted a heavy toll with casualties of both sides amounting to more than 1,600 personnel.
- In gathering here today, we remember the sacrifice made by the generation at the time, who served in their respective roles to the best of their ability and convinced of the cause of their nation.
- The dangers that the crews of the three navies endured reflected their dedication to their duty, honour and country, as the chaos of war engulfed them.
- In the post-war world, former foes came together to forge a more peaceful, more ordered, and indeed a safer world in which the rule of law, human rights, the ethos of free trade and spirit of democracy would define relations between states rather than conflict and avarice.
- That world, which brought prosperity to billions, promoted technological innovation and scientific discovery, enfranchised billions more through universal suffrage and brought humanity to a new pinnacle in achievement, owed its success to a generation convinced

that freedoms so dearly bought should not be squandered and should be upheld as an example to all mankind of its potential for greatness.

- In the last decade or so, it has become increasingly evident that the principles that have underpinned a global system of order are not shared by all members of the international community.
- Some will and have attempted to challenge the status quo by force, and drag humanity back into the mire of destructive confrontation stemming from misplaced hubris and partisan ahistorical grievances.
- In order to respond to this, it has become incumbent upon democracies to work in tandem to ensure that “might equals right” does not become the dominant practice of international relations in the 21st century.
- In order to rise to the challenge posed by authoritarian states, Japan, Australia, and the United States have forged even stronger, even closer defence and security ties, promoting the rule of law and freedom of the seas and skies.
- The defence relationship between Japan and Australia reached a new stage with the signing of the Reciprocal Access Agreement in January of this year, a momentous achievement for two nations of such divergent histories and cultures but whose shared commitment to the region has never wavered.
- Through the course of this and many years to come, Japan and Australia, together with our mutual ally the United States, will embark on exercises and training missions of even greater scale and complexity, promoting our inter-operability and fostering that most crucial element in person-to-person ties – trust.
- The events of 80 years ago are currently being echoed in the destruction wrought against Ukraine, and we – Japan, Australia, and the United States - have responded with a speed and resolution that no authoritarian state can deny.
- We stand by our mates in times of strife, for we know that trust cannot be bought but must be earned.
- We will not stand by and watch the world our forebears built vanish into chaos and division, but will defend it so long as we have the strength and will to do so.

- So long may our ties endure, for we owe it to previous and future generations to preserve and protect the peace and security of our region for all time.
- It is our greatest mission and our greatest challenge. Yet I can think of no better partners, and no more loyal allies, to share this task with than Australia and the United States.
- Let us remember our sacrifices, and then let us prepare for what lies ahead.
- 珊瑚海海戦の全ての戦没者の御霊に平安を、ご遺族の皆様にはご多幸を、心よりお祈り申し上げます。
- Thank you.

[Ends]