

**Remarks by His Excellency Mr SUZUKI Kazuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Australia
at the Conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star
on Nicholas Peter Warner AO, PSM
Friday 31 January 2025**

Mr Warner,

It is an honour and a delight to be able to hold this conferral ceremony for the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, for you.

It would be safe to say that the name Nick Warner is synonymous with Australian intelligence and security.

With your illustrious career in the service of the Australian government, highlighted by your roles as Secretary of the Department of Defence, Director General of ASIS and Director General of the ONA, ultimately overseeing its transformation into the ONI, for decades you have been a steadfast defender of Australia and its people.

You have also been a trailblazer in bringing the role of the intelligence community into the light, so to speak, to explain why it does what it does and why this matters to the Australian people.

Yet what brings us here today is to recognize and reward the extraordinary contribution that you have made to furthering the intelligence ties between Japan and Australia.

You have been a long-time champion of strengthening intelligence sharing between our countries. It is no exaggeration on my part to say that under your leadership, the level of cooperation between our intelligence agencies has undergone a dramatic and dynamic expansion.

For topics as diverse as regional affairs through to counter-terrorism, the degree of information exchanged between us has proven vital in informing our decision makers.

As Secretary of the Department of Defence, you also had a key role in the formation of the security relationship that is now one of the defining aspects of our bilateral ties.

In March of 2007, then Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe and John Howard signed the Japan-

Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, a ground-breaking document that signaled the intent of both nations to boost our security ties.

This new level of cooperation was further solidified with the Update to the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2022, making us, as I often point out, allies in all but name.

All this progress is a direct result of the tireless work by you to bring our security establishments closer together. The Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation quickly led to our first ever '2+2' Defence and Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

In the years since then, in spite of successive changes in government, you have served in a non-partisan manner, earning the praise of many both here and in Japan for your role in increasing our intelligence cooperation, which in turn has greatly helped to promote our defence cooperation.

Last year, the Governor General of Australia bestowed the Intelligence Medal on former National Security Advisor and former Director of Cabinet Intelligence Mr Shigeru Kitamura.

Given the exemplary way in which you were able to work with Kitamura-san in forging closer intelligence ties between us, it seemed only fitting that this honour be reciprocated in recognition of you and your contribution to this process.

And so it is indeed an honour to convey to you, Nick, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star. Long may your ties with Japan continue, for you have truly proven yourself an outstanding confidant and friend of Japan.

Congratulations, and very well done.

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