

**His Excellency Ambassador SUZUKI Kazuhiro's commentary on
Japan's postwar efforts and the situation surrounding Japan-China relations
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I was surprised to see the Chinese Ambassador suddenly publishing an opinion piece on 8 December in *The Australian* regarding Japan. This has prompted me to respectfully explain Japan's postwar efforts and the situation surrounding Japan-China relations.

Japan has consistently contributed to the peace and prosperity of the international community since the end of the Second World War. Japan has always respected and adhered to international law, including the UN Charter, and has actively contributed to maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order underpinned by the rule of law in the global community.

I am extremely proud that more than 80% of Australians regard Japan's proactive contribution to the peace and stability of the region and the international community as "very valuable" or "valuable" for maintaining global peace and establishment of international order according to an opinion poll conducted in 2023 by Ipsos.

As many readers know, Japan's fundamental defense policy is the posture of passive defense strategy, which is exclusively defense-oriented, contrary to the Chinese side's claims. Japan also defines, through domestic law, situations in which the right of collective self-defense recognized under the UN Charter can be exercised, in a restrictive manner. The remarks by the Prime Minister of Japan Takaichi Sanae, as referred by the Chinese side, are also grounded in this position. Therefore, China's assertion that Japan would break its fundamental commitment to a path of peace is erroneous.

Japan's basic position on Taiwan is as articulated in the "Japan-China Joint Communiqué" of 1972. We reiterate our consistent position of expecting that issues concerning Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue.

Japan believes that the presence of pending issues and challenges necessitates all the more efforts to reduce them and enhance understanding and cooperation, and we will continue to respond calmly through dialogue. As we have repeatedly reiterated, we are open to dialogue with the Chinese side. I am encouraged by the strong bipartisan support in Australia for the Japanese Government's basic policy as outlined above. In this context, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles' recent visit to Japan, during which he expressed serious concern over the radar incident against Japan Air Self-Defense Force Aircraft by Chinese Military Aircraft and demonstrated strong solidarity with Japan, is a proof of our strong partnership, and highly appreciated.

As explained above, many of the assertions made by the Chinese Ambassador are inconsistent with facts. The article was unfortunate, as castigating and discrediting a certain country in the region on the basis of a one-sided argument runs counter to the very principles of multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and social cohesion that are so deeply valued here in Australia.

We look forward to deepening our cooperation on all fronts with all the people in Australia to further strengthen Japan-Australia relations that have evolved so much over the last 50 years based on the strong ties built between the people since the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia in 1976.

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