

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador SUZUKI Kazuhiro at the Conferral Ceremony for the
Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon on ABF Commissioner
Gavan Reynolds, AO
Thursday, 19 March 2026**

It is a pleasure to be joined by you all here at my Residence for this conferral ceremony for the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon on Commissioner of the Australian Border Force, Gavan Reynolds.

Commissioner Reynolds has had a long and distinguished record of service to his country, both as a 40-year veteran of the Australian Army and more recently as Commissioner of the Australian Border Force and Comptroller-General of Customs.

As the inaugural Chief of Defence Intelligence, Commissioner Reynolds laid the groundwork for the emergence of the Defence Intelligence Group as an integral part of Australia's and the region's intelligence network.

His knowledge, accumulated from decades of working at the forefront of military operations and in coordination with overseas counterparts, gave the DIG the depth and reach necessary to best inform government and fellow agencies, culminating in the release of the 2024 National Defence Strategy.

Yet Commissioner Reynolds' achievements are not confined to these shores.

In his capacity as Chief of Defence Intelligence, then-Lieutenant General Reynolds played an instrumental part in forging much closer and much stronger relations with Japan's Defense Intelligence Headquarters.

More specifically, in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, it was Lieutenant General Reynolds who issued directives to encourage a much more dynamic, much more active exchange of personnel between the DIG and the DIH.

Sparing no effort in sharing both intelligence and analysis techniques, in 2023 Lieutenant General Reynolds led the first ever DIG analysis team visit to the DHI.

That visit, and the insights Lieutenant General Reynolds shared with his Japanese

counterparts, directly led to improvements in the development of analysts within the DHI and the quality of its products.

Lieutenant General Reynolds was also an enthusiastic supporter of sending ADF personnel to observe the Bilateral Intelligence Analysis Cell, so much so that in 2023 the ADF participated in the BIAC for the first time.

This in turn laid the foundation for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (or ISR) cooperation among the trilateral partners of Japan, Australia and the United States.

Lieutenant General Reynolds continued to emphasise the importance of strengthening intelligence networks not only between Japan and Australia, but also with the United States.

In doing so he drafted proposals outlining the frameworks for both high-level and working-level discussion groups and ensured that they were regularly conducted.

Lieutenant General Reynolds, in his capacity as Australian Military Representative to NATO, was also instrumental in promoting Japan's involvement in the Interoperability Initiative Advisory Group and giving his support to measures encouraging greater Japanese partnership with NATO.

Commissioner Reynolds has proven time and again that consistent advocacy coupled with people-to-people interaction can forge the closest bonds of trust.

The robust relationship shared between the defence intelligence networks of Japan and Australia thereby owes a great debt of gratitude to the industrious manner through which Commissioner Reynolds has pursued his roles.

In particular, the transformative manner in which Commissioner Reynolds reshaped defence intelligence sharing not only between Japan and Australia but with the US and other multilateral partners has greatly strengthened our relationships.

The improvements in Japan's intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities have clearly benefitted enormously from his efforts.

And so, it is in recognition of this outstanding contribution to the Japan-Australia relationship that we are gathered here today to honour Commissioner Reynolds and celebrate his achievements.

May his and the Australian Army's ties with Japan endure.

Congratulations, Commissioner Reynolds, and very well done.

Thank you.

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