

Address By Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia
On the occasion of Japan Self Defence Forces Day Reception On 5 July, 2023

Major Gen Dato Khairul Anuar bin Abd Aziz,
Assistant Chief of Staff Defence Operations and Training
Excellencies, Members of the Armed Forces,
Members of Military Attaché Corps,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 69th Self Defence Forces' Day celebration. I am particularly happy to hold this event on the occasion of 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation this year.

Ever since the Self-Defence Forces, or SDF, took its present composition in 1954 under the current peaceful constitution, SDF has consistently strived to build trust as the organization responsible for maintenance of peace and security of Japan. The path SDF has walked was never flat and smooth, but through tenacious efforts, SDF now has obtained wide-ranging understanding and support both domestically and internationally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last December, Japan renewed its security documents. These documents clearly highlight the need to reinforce Japan's defence capabilities in response to the current security environment surrounding us. Media tends to pay attention to issues of counterstrike capability and security budget increase described in this strategy, but I want to emphasize on this occasion that Japan's basic approach has never changed, and diplomatic capabilities remain as the first pillar for peace and security in this strategy.

One of the most severe and pressing security challenges that the world is now facing is Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The very foundations of the international order is shaken. We need to work together to overcome the challenges.

Looking to the East China Sea, we continue to witness unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in violation of international law. Japan is taking a firm stand against such attempts together with like-minded countries.

In order to maintain safety and security in Asia, we should see security environment through the framework of the two oceans, with Southeast Asia at the centre. Japan Self Defence Forces can work together with its counterparts in ASEAN to implement AOIP that shares fundamental principles with the Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The partnership of Japan with Malaysia has always been successful since we established diplomatic relations in 1957, and the bilateral defence co-operation is not an exception. Latest cooperation is implemented based on the bilateral MoU signed in 2018.

Now that the COVID-19 pandemic is over, defence exchanges are returning to previous levels. Japan Maritime SDF and Royal Malaysian Navy exchanged visits of ships. Last year, the current Chief of Navy, Admiral Rahman, came to Japan on Frigate KD Kelantan's visit. This year, Japan's Frigate Kumano was reviewed by Prime Minister Anwar at LIMA, Langkawi.

We exchange military personnel as well. Brigadier General Ahmad and three other Malaysians have graduated from the National Defence Academy of Japan, and seven are currently enrolled at the academy. On the other hand, 14 Japanese have studied at Malaysia Armed Forces Staff College so far, including Defence Attaché Colonel Morita and his successor, Defence Attaché Colonel Arita.

I hope these exchanges will create environment to further facilitate defence collaboration and contribute to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific in this challenging security environment.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expecting your continued support and cooperation to Japan's policy and its joint efforts with Malaysia and ASEAN countries. We hope our 50 years' of cooperation will continue another 50 years and beyond.

Thank you very much for your attention and please enjoy the rest of the reception.