

Ambassador's Speech at the Self-Defense Forces Day Reception

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Yang Mulia Raja Dato' Nurshirwan bin Zainal Abidin,
Director General of National Security Council,

Excellencies,

Members of the Armed Forces,

Members of the Military Attaché Corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assallam alaikum and Good evening,

1. It is a great honor for me to welcome so many distinguished guests to this reception celebrating the 71st anniversary of Self-Defense Forces Day. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your presence.
2. In 1954, the current Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense

Forces were established. Since then, establishing trust with foreign countries as well as with the Japanese people has been a constant endeavor of the Self-Defense Forces. The Self-Defense Forces are not only responsible for the defense of Japan but are also expanding their international role around the world, including United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), and anti-piracy measures.

3. Today, I wish to touch upon the following three issues, i.e, regional and global security environment, Japan-Malaysia Security Cooperation, and bilateral people to people exchanges.
4. First, I would like to start by addressing the current regional and global security environment. The level of uncertainty remains high, and the international situation is very volatile. Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine remains a grave violation that undermines the very foundation of the global order. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the recent developments in military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, not only because they are likely to further worsen the situation in Ukraine, but also due to their potential impacts on the regional security in the Indo-Pacific.

5. In the Middle East, amid prolonged fighting, Japan is seriously concerned about the critical humanitarian situation in Gaza. In this regard, Japan and Malaysia, together with Palestine, are planning to co-hosting a ministerial meeting called CEAPAD in July at the occasion of ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting to help the recovery and reconstruction of Palestine.
6. On the situation surrounding Iran, we believe that the most important thing is to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible. At the same time, Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons must be prevented. We feel a profound sense of alarm over the growing number of countries acquiring nuclear capabilities.
7. As you know, the situations in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia are closely interconnected. What happens in one region inevitably affects the others. Peace and stability in the Middle East are extremely important to Japan, and we will continue to make all necessary diplomatic efforts in cooperation with the international community.
8. Now, looking at this Indo-Pacific region, we continue to witness unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, in clear violation of international law, particularly in the East and South China Seas.

9. In such a challenging and complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, we are steadily advancing a fundamental reinforcement of our defense capabilities. At the same time, we are strengthening our deterrence posture by introducing new measures—such as systems to neutralize servers that launch cyberattacks against us. In light of these realities, Japan must continue to build up its defense capabilities as a sovereign and responsible nation.

10. In addition, we must enhance our cooperation with like-minded country. Japan has been actively promoting "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," or FOIP. FOIP, which shares fundamental principles with ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, or AOIP, is to lead the international community towards cooperation rather than division and conflict, based on the rule-based international order in the Indo-Pacific.

11. The Self-Defense Forces play a vital role in advancing FOIP, enhancing deterrence, strengthening response capabilities, and fostering deeper security cooperation among like-minded countries. At the Shangri-La Dialogue last month, Defense Minister Nakatani advocated the spirit of OCEAN, One Cooperative Effort Among Nations: Perspective for the Indo-Pacific. From our Indo-Pacific perspective, this spirit signifies

that nations with shared values and interests unite together to create powerful synergies through cooperative initiatives.

12. As OCEAN shows, Japan needs to cooperate with like-minded nations like Malaysia that share values and interests. This year, Malaysia is playing an even greater role as chair of ASEAN to address various challenges the region faces, and Japan is strongly supporting Malaysia in exercising its leadership. Japan and Malaysia share a trusted partnership, elevating our bilateral ties to the level of "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." This January, Prime Minister Ishiba chose Malaysia as the destination for his first official overseas visit. During the visit, both leaders pledged to continue the enhancement of cooperation in the security area, including bilateral exercises and Official Security Assistance, or OSA.
13. Secondly, in terms of Japan-Malaysia security cooperation, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Royal Malaysian Navy have conducted the bilateral exercise named "MALPAN" three times in the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. The content of these exercises has been getting deeper. As stated in Japan's "National Security Strategy" announced in 2022, we are enhancing our security cooperation with ASEAN countries. As part of this strategy, we established a new

framework for Official Security Assistance or OSA. We chose Malaysia strategically as one of the first four recipient countries of the OSA in 2023, and will provide security-related equipment to Malaysia soon. Additionally, Japan's Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology have been revised to enable smoother transfer of defense equipment overseas, which will facilitate effective defense equipment cooperation between us. In April, Japan and Malaysia held the first Defense Industry Forum in Port Klang. This forum provided an excellent opportunity for the defense industries of both countries to gain a deeper understanding of each other. Some of the Japanese companies came back to today's reception. I firmly believe that these engagements will open the door to our new collaboration in the future.

14. Thirdly, bilateral people to people exchanges in the security field have also been deepening. This year, students from the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College, MAFSC, visited Japan, and the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College, MAFDC, is also scheduled to visit Japan. On the other hand, President of Japan's National Defense Academy and students of Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies recently visited Malaysia. In terms of long-term study abroad, we are pleased to note that the first Malaysian student during the past 27 years has

graduated from Japan's National Defense Academy this March. Currently, nine Malaysian students are enrolled in the Academy. On the other hand, fourteen students from Japan, including Defense Attaché Arita, who is here with me today, have graduated from the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College. In addition, we have also invited Malaysian Armed Forces participants to such programs as the professional airmanship program, ship rider program, HA/DR seminar, and the Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Capacity Building Program. I strongly hope that these types of exchanges will continue to grow across various security fields.

Very lastly, I would like to conclude my remarks by asking for your continued support and cooperation with Japan's defence policy and Japan's joint efforts with Malaysia and other like-minded countries to maintain and ensure peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention, and please enjoy the rest of the reception, including defense industry exhibition, Tea Ceremony, Origami, Tanabata or the Star Festival Celebrated on July 7th, as well as Japanese food and dishes!

ありがとうございました。Terima kasih.