

The 71st anniversary of the founding of the JSDF: Remarks by Ambassador Osawa
(13 November 2025)

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

- Vice Chief of Defence Force, Rear Admiral Mathew Williams,
- Deputy Secretary, Policy and Planning, Mr. Richard Schmidt,
- Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. Thank you very much for coming to celebrate the 71st anniversary of the founding of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).

This year marks the 71st anniversary of the JSDF, established in 1954. Over the past 71 years, the JSDF has been fundamentally reinforcing Japan's defence capabilities with independence and initiative, in an effort to protect the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese people and resolutely defending Japan's territorial land, waters, and airspace.

The JSDF has also been promoting multilayered defence cooperation with like-minded countries, including NZ. Notably, NZ is an important strategic cooperative partner that shares fundamental values with Japan. We are truly grateful to see the steady progress of Japan-NZ defence cooperation and exchange, such as the deployment of the NZ Air Force P-8A and the NZ navy ship "Aotearoa" to Japan.

In August, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ships "Ise" and "Suzunami" conducted joint exercises with the NZ Navy ship "Canterbury", and all ships entered Wellington Harbour together. We deeply appreciate the warm welcome extended to the JMSDF by the NZ citizens. This symbolic and remarkable port visit could not have been made without the full cooperation of the Royal New Zealand Navy and other related parties. I would like to take this opportunity once again to express my gratitude to everyone involved.

High-level exchanges between Japan and NZ are also progressing. At the end of last month, newly appointed Prime Minister Takaichi exchanged greetings with Prime Minister Luxon at the APEC Summit. She is promoting the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" as a pillar of our diplomacy and further evolve this vision in

line with the times.

Furthermore, earlier this month, our newly appointed Defense Minister Koizumi had a meeting with Minister Collins in Malaysia. They welcomed the steady progress in coordination towards the development of legal frameworks, such as the Information Security Agreement (ISA) and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).

Tonight, we have prepared two JSDF-related dishes, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Curry and Japan Air Self-Defense Force Fried Chicken. You can find information about their origins and how to enjoy them on the board in the next room. We will also have a performance of the Shakuhachi, or bamboo flute. Please enjoy the evening.

Now, let us raise our glasses to celebrate the strong defence partnership between Japan and NZ, and to the continued success to everyone. Cheers!

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa