The 72nd JSDF Day Reception: Remarks by Ambassador Osawa
(21 October 2026)

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

- Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshal Tony Davies,
- 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 72nd anniversary of the founding of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). I am absolutely delighted to see you all this evening.

As was shown in Minister Koizumi's video message, JSDF has been undertaking a wide range of missions and expanding multilayered networks among allies and like-minded countries including New Zealand.

In particular, as many of you may remember, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship "JS Kumano" made a port call in Wellington alongside the Royal New Zealand Navy frigate "HMNZS Te Mana" in May of this year. Two consecutive years of port calls in Wellington showcase the strong relationship between our two navies. It was also a wonderful opportunity for many New Zealanders to witness Japan's Mogami-class frigate up close, right here in Wellington. I once again would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you who were involved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
As we look toward the future, I am delighted to highlight that next year, 2027, marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and New Zealand. I truly welcome New Zealand's announcement that Japan's upgraded Mogami-class frigate has been chosen as one of the candidates for the replacement of the ANZAC-Class frigates. I would like to emphasise Japan's intention to continue close coordination on this matter, including through information sharing. I also welcome that Japan and New Zealand now have the legal framework provided by the ISA and ACSA. These demonstrate the strong partnership between our two countries in promoting a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

Today, we are proud to host exhibitions of four distinguished Japanese companies from our defence industries for the first time. They are: NEC Corporation, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, and Hitachi. Each company has a dedicated booth here today. While I am fully aware that you are all eager to taste the Japanese food, I highly encourage all of you to also visit their booths, explore their cutting-edge technologies, and engage in fruitful discussions.

Lastly, to celebrate this occasion, we have prepared special dishes related to the JSDF. They are fried chickens called “Kara-age.” Each JSDF base has its own unique recipe of Kara-age, and we have prepared two of them for you tonight.

Please enjoy the rest of the evening, the wonderful food, and each other's company. Thank you very much.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa