

**Keynote Speech by Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa
at the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm
on Saturday 13 May, 2023**

Your Majesty,

Your Royal Highness,

Minister Billström,

High Representative Borrell,

Distinguished representatives,

I am honoured to attend this Forum today and to deliver a keynote speech.

Today, I would like to highlight three points.

Firstly, it is more important than ever to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Secondly, as the embodiment of this order in the Indo-Pacific region, we are aiming to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

Thirdly, it is essential for Japan and European partners to deepen cooperation to this end.

The international community is now at an historic turning point. Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has shaken the very foundation of the international order. Any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force cannot be tolerated anywhere in the world. This challenge to the free and open international order based on the rule of law is not just a regional issue; it is also a common challenge that the international community must address together in unity. Otherwise, similar challenges will arise in other regions, and the existing order which has underpinned our peace and prosperity could be fundamentally overturned.

In this sense, the security of Europe and that of the Indo-Pacific can no longer be discussed separately. Against this backdrop, it is extremely important and timely

that Ministers from both Europe and the Indo-Pacific gather here in Stockholm today to discuss the importance of the free and open international order based on the rule of law, and the need for this order to be upheld in the Indo-Pacific as well. I would like to express my respect and gratitude to Minister Billström and High Representative Borrell for once again hosting this forum.

Last month I hosted the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting, where we robustly demonstrated the G7's strong will to defend the free and open international order based on the rule of law. This vision underscores the necessity for the rule of law, especially for vulnerable states, in order to enjoy freedom. It also highlights the necessity for diversity, inclusiveness and openness in the international community, and the importance of not imposing values on others. This is a vision that many countries can share and provides the basis for ensuring the unity of the international community. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit to be held next week, we will again demonstrate to the world our strong determination to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

The "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" or "FOIP" is the embodiment of this order in Asia.

However, in the Indo-Pacific region, China is continuing and intensifying its unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East and South China Seas. China is also increasing its military activities around Taiwan. In addition, China and Russia are strengthening their military collaboration, including joint flights of their bombers and joint naval exercises in the vicinity of Japan. During my visit to China in April, I directly delivered to my Chinese counterparts our serious concerns about these points.

In addition, North Korea is escalating its provocations by repeatedly launching ballistic missiles, with a frequency and in a manner that are unprecedented, including ICBM-class ballistic missiles, one of which fell within Japan's EEZ.

In the face of this challenging security environment in the Indo-Pacific, it is vital to work not only with countries in that region but also with like-minded countries in Europe in order to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law. Japan welcomes the increasing engagement of European partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

Japan is committed to unwavering support for ASEAN centrality and unity and to promoting cooperation in line with the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific". We also firmly support the realization of the "2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent" and will promote our partnership with Pacific Island countries.

In March this year, Prime Minister Kishida announced a new plan for FOIP. Based on this new plan, Japan will expand cooperation with other countries for the realization of the FOIP in order to lead the international community away from division and confrontation towards unity and cooperation.

One of key pillars of the FOIP plan is strengthening connectivity. In the new FOIP plan, Japan announced that by 2030 we will mobilize a total of more than 75 billion US dollars in public and private funds for the Indo-Pacific region through private investment and ODA loans, so that we can grow together with these countries.

These efforts are in line with the cooperation proposed in the EU's Global Gateway strategy. Japan will enhance cooperation with the EU on sustainable connectivity and quality infrastructure, based on the Japan-EU Connectivity Partnership, which was launched in 2019.

In addition to this connectivity and quality infrastructure cooperation, the EU is an important partner for Japan in the Indo-Pacific. I am encouraged by the EU's increasing engagement in the Indo-Pacific in recent years, including the expansion of its Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) to the Indian Ocean. On the occasion of the next Japan-EU Summit, Japan would like to set out new directions for security and defence cooperation in order to promote our alliance in this area.

Furthermore, it is essential to enhance cooperation with the EU in the area of economic security. New challenges have been emerging such as the vulnerability of global supply chains, theft of critical technologies, forced transfer of intellectual property rights and the pursuit of national interests through coercive means backed by economic power. It is important for Japan and the EU to work together with like-minded partners, including those from emerging and developing economies, to reinforce our deterrence and our capabilities to address these challenges.

Allow me to conclude my remarks today by saying that Japan will lead efforts by the international community, in partnership with like-minded countries both in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific, to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Thank you.