

# Video Message by H.E. Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

## 1. Introduction

I am KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere condolences for the loss of eight crew members due to the Osprey crash November last year, and to extend my deepest sympathy to their families. They devoted themselves to carrying out their missions day and night to maintain peace and security of Japan and the surrounding region. The deterrence by the Japan-U.S. alliance is made possible by the strong determination of the members of the U.S. Forces like them who risk their lives in carrying out their missions and with the support from their family members.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Seminar. This seminar has been instrumental in drawing up the post-Cold War blueprint of our alliance. It is a great honor for me to send you this video message on this occasion.

My aspiration to become a politician began 35 years ago when I studied in the United States and worked as a policy planning staff member for a U.S. Senator. That was a valuable experience that allowed me to “see Japan from abroad”. I expect that today's public session will also provide valuable perspectives from legendary figures that have witnessed the Japan-U.S. alliance from various viewpoints over the years.

In my speech, I would like to begin by explaining the role given to this seminar from the context of U.S.-Japan relations at the time of its birth.

## **2. 30 years of the Japan-U.S. Security Seminar and the Japan-U.S. alliance**

The Japan-U.S. Security Seminar was launched in San Francisco in March 1995. It is thanks to the visionary sages in both countries that this seminar was made possible.

The Cold War had ended only a few years before that, and faced with various difficulties, the state of the alliance at that time was even described as alliance adrift. There were even extreme opinions that the U.S. military presence in Japan was no longer necessary.

Against this backdrop, in April 1996, the year after the first Japan-U.S. Security Seminar was held, Prime Minister Hashimoto and President Clinton issued the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security, an important document defining the post-Cold War Japan-U.S. Security arrangements. On this occasion, President Clinton made a speech on the deck of U.S. aircraft carrier Independence with the attendance of U.S. military members and JSDF members. In his speech, he stated that this Declaration is “to strengthen our alliance and prepare it for the challenges of the 21st century together”.

The following year, in September 1997, the 1978 Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were revised for the first time. History has proven how those involved at that time made the right decisions at critical junctures. I would like to pay my sincere respect to them.

The birth of this seminar paralleled significant events in the history of the alliance in the post-Cold War era, and this is by no means a coincidence. In fact, there was an underlying awareness among Japanese and U.S. government officials and experts that the post-Cold War Japan-U.S. Security arrangements should be reevaluated and given new significance.

Since then, this seminar has worked as a forum for intellectual exchange of views on the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and related issues in a broad and diverse manner. And with each successive seminar, it has taken on more and more ambitious topics that were followed by actual discussions of the alliance, such as extended deterrence. Gradually, the discussions in this seminar have also influenced and supported the formulation of policies related to the alliance.

### 3. Present state of the Japan-U.S. alliance

I would now like to turn to the present state of the Alliance.

We stand at an inflection point in history. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has brought a complete end to the so-called post-Cold War era, and we are entering an era of turmoil where the foundations of the existing international order are being shaken to the very core. We are at a critical juncture where the decisions we make today will determine our future for decades to come.

Under the strong leadership of Prime Minister KISHIDA, Japan has been working with the United States based on the National Security Strategy formulated at the end of 2022 and the Joint Statement of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee in January 2023.

Our two governments have already clearly identified the way forward. We are discussing cooperation for;

- 1) Possession and operation of counterstrike capabilities,
- 2) Alliance Coordination and Command and Control (AC3) with a view to establishing a permanent Joint Headquarters,
- 3) Defense of southwest islands, and

4) Expanding network of cooperation with allies and like-minded countries, with the U.S. and Japan working as a hub. Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and the Quad are examples of such cooperation.

At the Japan-U.S. Security Seminar last March, I understand that the participants agreed that the visions, priorities, and goals of the two countries have never been more aligned, and that implementation is of the utmost importance. We are now at the stage where Japan and the United States are making steady progress in the same direction.

What is important now for the alliance is implementation, implementation, and implementation. And that needs to be accompanied by a sense of urgency. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I assure you that I will do my utmost in this regard.

#### 4. The future of the Japan-U.S. alliance

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

The environment surrounding the Japan-U.S. alliance has changed dramatically over the past 30 years, and its severity and complexity are increasing by the day. In the future, the military buildups in the vicinity of Japan will advance rapidly, and grey zone situations over territories, cross-border cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructure, and information warfare through spread of disinformation, will constantly take place, thereby further blurring the boundary between contingency and peacetime. Furthermore, the scope of national security will expand to include fields such as economics and technology that were previously considered non-military. Thus, the boundary between military and non-military fields will no longer be clear-cut either.

In the future, the environment may change so drastically that even the changes described here may seem obsolete. We need to stay ahead of the ever-changing security environment, and to do so, it is important to keep new and fresh perspectives. One example is WPS, or Women, Peace, and Security. The future of the alliance lies in its constant efforts to transform itself.

At the same time, some things do not change. That is the importance of the “people” who support the Japan-U.S. Alliance. In this sense, it can be said that the future of the alliance lies also in the “people”.

The Japan-U.S. alliance is supported by the dedicated civilian and military personnel in our governments, as well as intellectuals and citizens at large. It is the ties between these people that can weave the future of the alliance. The Japan-U.S. relationship has never been better, but it is precisely because of this situation that we must not fail to invest more in nurturing the people who will support the future of the alliance.

Our predecessors often compared the Japan-U.S. alliance to gardening, and it is extremely important that we “water” it well and nurture the trust and friendship between our peoples to make the garden even more beautiful.

Japan and the United States have nurtured the friendship and strengthened the alliance through a long-lasting and multilayered people-to-people exchange. Former Prime Minister ABE also supported various exchange initiatives such as the Kakehashi Project and the Tomodachi Initiative.



Since 2017, we have also been implementing the “Think of Okinawa’s Future in the United States” or TOFU program for short. The program provides young people in Okinawa, who will shape the future of that Prefecture, with the experience of being in direct contact with the “United States” from a young age.

Nurturing people and fostering friendships, that is precisely what I expect most from the Japan-U.S. Security Seminar. I hope that the Seminar will play an even more active role in fulfilling its important role of fostering young professionals and creating a network of experts.

## 5 Conclusion

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our respective peoples, the Japan-U.S. alliance has reached unprecedented heights. But we must not rest on our laurels.

Let us look far into the distance with high ideals to take the alliance to new heights. And let us continue to work together to further enhance our alliance.

In doing so, the Japan-U.S. Security Seminar will and must continue to play an important role. On the 20th anniversary of the Seminar, Ambassador Armitage stated as follows; “The meetings have been a reliable barometer of concerns in the Japan-U.S. relationship, a microscope to explore problems, and a telescope to look over the horizon at issues and potential solutions. It has been a forum for candid exchange, out of the box thinking, and creative problem-solving.” What Ambassador Armitage stated applies today, and I sincerely hope it will continue to do so in the future.

Once again, I would like to thank you for this valuable opportunity. I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my personal commitment to further advance the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Thank you very much.