

Video Message by H.E. Mr. IWAYA Takeshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Dr. Hamre, CSIS President and CEO, Ambassador Sasae, JIIA President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend my congratulations on the 31st annual Japan-U.S. Security Seminar, co-hosted by CSIS and JIIA.

This year's seminar is particularly timely as it takes place soon after the first Japan-U.S. summit meeting following the inauguration of the Trump Administration.

During the summit meeting, Prime Minister Ishiba and President Trump confirmed their commitment to further strengthening the relationship between Japan and the United States. I myself accompanied the Prime Minister and witnessed firsthand the cordial personal ties between our two leaders. I also visited Washington D.C. last month to attend the inauguration ceremony, which, in fact, marked the first time for the Japanese Foreign Minister to do so. On that occasion, I had a very fruitful meeting with Secretary Rubio the day after his confirmation in the Senate.

The Japan-U.S. alliance is the cornerstone of our country's diplomacy and security. And to demonstrate the strength of the alliance to the world, our two countries made an excellent start right after President Trump took office. We will continue to work closely together at all levels to bring the bilateral alliance to new heights.

We are at a turning point in history, and the decisions we make today will determine the future of our globe. As the security environment surrounding us becomes even more severe, the Japan-U.S. alliance plays a growing role in realizing our shared vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” so-called FOIP.

In this context, I believe that the following three perspectives are important for further modernizing the alliance.

First, we must further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the alliance. Both governments have been constantly discussing strategic challenges to address evolving situations.

In the recent summit meeting, we reaffirmed the priority matters of the bilateral security and defense cooperation. Those matters include: upgrading alliance command and control; increasing presence in the Southwest Islands; further reinforcing extended deterrence; and enhancing defense equipment and technology cooperation.

In order to implement the commitment made by both leaders, I would like to hold a "2+2" meeting together with my colleagues as early as possible. By doing so, I will devote my personal efforts to steadily advancing Japan-U.S. security and defense cooperation.

Next, close cooperation with like-minded countries is essential to realize our shared vision of a FOIP. Last month, I visited the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Palau to confirm our coordination to this end.

In addition, the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meeting we had last month was the first diplomatic engagement for Secretary Rubio, only one hour after he entered the State Department building. This shows America's strong commitment to a FOIP. We will carry on these efforts to build multilayered and effective networks of like-minded countries.

Last but not least, we need to address emerging demands of this new era to further develop the Japan-U.S. alliance. The boundaries between peacetime and contingency have become increasingly ambiguous in recent years. It is necessary to deepen discussions on security including from an economic perspective, while working with various stakeholders, both governmental and private.

In this regard, I welcome the new initiative of this seminar to include economic security topics and a session with the business sector. I hope this will help expand the network of Japanese and American experts who shape public opinions on security issues in the Indo-Pacific region.

Please allow me to conclude my remarks by wishing for fruitful outcomes from this year's seminar. Thank you.

(7)