

## “New Cooperation among Allies and Partners in Indo-Pacific and Atlantic”

### 1. Opening Remarks

Lord Sedwill,  
Excellencies, Admiral, Generals,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by expressing my heartfelt appreciation to Lord Sedwill and the organisers of this Forum for kindly inviting me to address this august gathering.

My name is Hiroshi Suzuki, the new Japanese Ambassador to the United Kingdom. I have just arrived in London 3 weeks ago after serving in Delhi as Ambassador for two years.

Today, I would like to share my views regarding the security situation in the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic, bearing in mind the topics and context of the discussions here today.

## 2. War in Ukraine and its Implications

I will have to start from the war in Ukraine. One thousand days have passed since Russia's unprovoked, unjust, and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine started.

In solidarity with the G7 countries, Japan is providing Ukraine with military equipments such as trucks, drones, body armours and generators, which is critically important for energy supply during the cold winter as part of our 12 billion US dollars assistance package, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest bilateral assistance in the world. We are also imposing tough economic sanctions against Russia, in coordination with G7 partners. This represents a fundamental change from Japan's traditional foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia.

Because, we have been negotiating tirelessly with Russia since the 1950s on our Northern Territories, which were unilaterally taken by force after World War II had ended. Naturally, Japan's principled stance against Russia in the wake of the invasion brought forth suspension to this negotiation. 15,000 inhabitants were kicked out of their ancestors' land, and several thousand of them are aged in their 80s and 90s, longing to go back to their home islands.

Nonetheless, we are paying a high price but are maintaining our principled stance against Russia because “today’s Ukraine could be tomorrow’s East Asia”. We strongly believe that the security of Indo-Pacific and the security of the Euro-Atlantic have become inseparable. The recent deployment of 10,000 soldiers from North Korea to Russia is a case in point.

We need to seriously deal with this Russian invasion of Ukraine so that we can deter possible aggression in the Indo-Pacific, especially in the Taiwan Strait and the Senkaku Islands.

### 3. FOIP

From 2012 to 2020, I served Shinzo Abe as his Private Secretary for diplomacy.

Prime Minister Abe created a whole new geo-political concept, that of the Indo-Pacific, and advocated the vision of a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’.

Initially, the term ‘Indo-Pacific’ was novel to most people, but by now, it has become established in the international

community.

The vision of a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ aims at upholding the international order based on the rule of law.

More specifically, it aims at safeguarding fundamental principals such as freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight and freedom of commerce, so that the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean can be utilised as global commons.

In light of Russia’s outright aggression against Ukraine, we must make sure that the international order based on Rule of Law, not the Law of the Jungle, will prevail. The importance of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific has increased its significance due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

#### 4. Japan’s Defence Policy

Turning our eyes to the Indo-Pacific, two major challenges are on the horizon. First, of course, is the rise of China. Its attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force is progressing day by day in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait and in the East China Sea, espeically

around the Senkaku Islands. China is providing Russia with political, diplomatic and material support to its war of aggression against Ukraine.

Second, North Korea's nuclear and missile development programmes. Its test launches of ballistic missiles, including ICBM's, as well as nuclear tests clear violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. North Korea provides Russia with ballistic missiles, ammunitions and soldiers, and in return, they are acquiring military technologies, oil and other quid pro quo.

In response to these threats and challenges, Japan is on the course of a major transition in its defence policy.

We revised the National Security Strategy in 2022, and for the first time in the post-war era, Japan decided to possess long range counter strike capabilities. This is a major departure from several decades of purely defensive defence policy, where even when Japan is attacked by adversaries, Japan will not attack its operating base. However, counter strike capability is actually permitted under the interpretation of our Constitution.

This new policy has paved the way for us to acquire 400

US-made Tomahawk missiles, which will be delivered from next year. This will greatly strengthen our deterrence along with our own stand off long range missiles.

With regard to Japan's defence budget, it is 7.7 trillion yen for this year, with the current exchange rate, this is roughly 47 billion pounds. By comparison, UK defence expenditure for this fiscal year is 55.6 billion pounds, including support to Ukraine. Tokyo has already made the decision to increase its defence budget by 10% each year for the next 3 years until 2027.

## 5. Partnerships and Cooperation

Japan has been strengthening its security partnership with the UK under the recognition that the security of Indo-Pacific and that of the Euro-Atlantic have become inseparable.

Our flagship endeavour in this regard is GCAP (Global Combat Air Programme).

At the sidelines of the Rio G20 Summit, Prime Minister Ishiba had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Starmer, followed by a trilateral meeting with Prime Minister Meloni, and the three leaders confirmed their strong commitment to

go ahead with the GCAP.

This is the only existing programme in the world to develop the 6<sup>th</sup> generation Fighter Jets.

In 2035, this 6<sup>th</sup> Generation Fighter Jets will be in the air, protecting the free world from adversaries.

As allies of the US, interoperability with the US is a prerequisite for all three of us, and it will be guaranteed. GCAP will be the front runner for interoperability that suits the future operational environment.

Also, Japan is moving forward with its cooperation regarding AUKUS Pillar 2. We will first start our cooperation with interoperability of Maritime Autonomous vehicles.

And we will continue discussing with AUKUS to seek opportunity for cooperation in developing defence technologies such as AI.

Furthermore, we are very much looking forward to welcoming the UK Carrier Strike Group led by HMS Prince of Wales to Japan next year.

We appreciate the UK's stance to regard the security in the Indo-Pacific as a global issue and matter of its self interest, and is proactively continuing its engagement in the region.

We also appreciate NATO's proactive engagement with Japan and AP4 to strengthen our solidarity to safeguard security on both sides of the globe.

## 6. Closing remarks

In the programme for this afternoon, I am glad to see that critical undertakings such as AUKUS and QUAD are taken up, but also important issues like economic security and technological innovations will be discussed.

I look forward to listening to the experts on these panels and learning from their insights.

Thank you very much.