

**Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the JSDF Reception
on 8th September 2025**

Lord Coaker,
My Lords,
Members of Parliament,
Permanent Secretary,
Generals,
Distinguished Guests.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all
to the annual Japan Self Defense Forces
Day Reception.

First of all, I would like to once again
thank Ms Nozomi Fukushima, who sang

the UK and Japanese national anthem so beautifully.

I believe all of us who are gathered here this evening see a common challenge in front of us. The challenge to stand tall against the Russian aggression into Ukraine. The war is continuing for three and a half years and shows no sign of ending.

Ukraine has been fighting very bravely. They have been fighting to defend their people, their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Not just that, they are fighting for the fundamental values we share: freedom, democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

If President Putin is allowed to claim victory, the wrong lessons will be drawn, i.e., that the unilateral use of force to change borders is permissible. This will be tantamount to the retrogression in the history of mankind. We stand at a crossroad: whether or not we allow the world to backslide into an age of the law of the jungles.

This is why Japan is doing its utmost to support Ukraine. Japan's assistance to Ukraine stands at £10 billion, which is the 5th largest bilateral assistance.

Japan will host a major international conference on de-mining in Ukraine next month in Tokyo. Japan is imposing severe sanctions on Russia, together with G7 and like-minded partners.

Today's Ukraine may be tomorrow's Asia. Security is indivisible between the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific. North Korea is providing troops, Iran is providing drones, and China is providing dual-use components for weapons, enabling Russia to sustain its war efforts.

What happens in the Indo-Pacific affects the Euro-Atlantic, and what happens in the Euro-Atlantic affects the Indo-Pacific. Authoritarian states are stepping up their cooperation. Therefore, we must strengthen our cooperation in the Western Alliance.

Japan and the UK are stepping up to this call. The dispatch of the UK Carrier Strike Group, led by HMS Prince of Wales to Japan, is a case in point. This demonstrates the UK's unwavering commitment to the Free and Open Indo Pacific.

For the first time, the Japanese Self Defense Forces have provided security to Royal Navy ships and RAF aircrafts. For the first time, a British F35 fighter jet has landed on the flight deck of a Japanese ship, JS Kaga. For the first time, soon, Japanese F15s will fly to the UK.

Japan and the UK are moving full steam ahead with the Global Air Combat Programme, or GCAP. This is a programme to jointly develop the next generation of supersonic stealth fighter jets by Japan, the UK and Italy.

This is the first time that Japan has partnered with other countries on such a programme. Likewise, this is the first time that the UK has partnered with a country outside of Europe on a programme like this.

This evening, we have Mr. Oka, the Chief Executive of GCAP International Government Organisation, or GIGO, and Mr Zoff, the CEO of Edgewing, the joint venture of trilateral consortium.

Equipped with the capability to overcome and suppress airborne threats, its initial deployment is set to 2035. GCAP is, truly, a new game changer for the future, and I expect it to be at the core of the progression to the next generation's global defence ecosystem.

Our partnership goes beyond in the skies and on the seas. The UK is the first European force to conduct joint exercise with Japanese Self Defense Forces on Japanese soil.

In cyber, our two countries have collaborated in one of the largest international cyber defence exercises outside the US.

The UK is Japan's closest security partner in Europe, and I know that the UK sees Japan in the same way. Secretary Healey's meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and Defence Minister Nakatani have confirmed this.

I am much looking forward to the next Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministers' meeting, or the 2+2, to be held in the UK next year. Our two countries

are now in a golden age of defence cooperation.

At the same time, we must not become self-complacent. Because authoritarian states are also advancing rapidly to develop capabilities to counter our strength.

In a more dangerous world, we must work all the more closely together. So that our children and grandchildren's generations will not have to ask the question: where were you when all of this

was happening in the defining moment of history?

In closing, I am most delighted to be able to celebrate the Japan Self Defense Forces Day with everyone.

Tonight, in the next room, we have photo panels of UK-Japan defence co-operation, and explanations on GCAP. There is also a sushi counter in the next room. I hope that you can take a look at them while enjoying sake and delicious Japanese food.

Once again, thank you all very much for attending tonight's reception.