

Statement by Ambassador Ishikawa Hiroshi at  
The Self-Defense Force Reception 2025

04 November 2025

Major General Kelvin Fan, Chief of Air Force, Republic of Singapore,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to you. Welcome to the Self-Defense Forces Day reception.

Since its foundation in 1954, the Self-Defense Forces celebrate their 71st anniversary this year. Throughout this period, the Self-Defense Forces have consistently played their role in safeguarding Japan's peace and independence, as well as in contributing to the peace and stability of the international community. The scope of their missions has also expanded over the years.

Today, Self-Defense Forces engage in various defense cooperation and exchanges, based on the belief that realizing a rules-based, free, and open international order is essential for advancing Japan's national interests as well as contributing to the peace and prosperity of the region and the world.

Now let me touch upon our bilateral defense relationship with Singapore.

Japan and Singapore share fundamental strategic interests in proactively pursuing a rules-based international order. This is reflected in Singapore being the first partner with whom Japan signed its Memorandum on Defense Exchange in Southeast Asia in 2009. Since then, a wide range of forms of cooperation have steadily progressed under this memorandum, culminating in the signing of the Defense Equipment and Technology Transfer Agreement in June 2023.

Looking back on the past year, in May, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's cutting-edge destroyer "Yahagi" participated in the International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX Asia 2025) hosted by Singapore. In September, the submarine "Kuroshio" visited Changi Naval Base to participate in the Western Pacific submarine rescue exercise known as "Pacific Reach 2025." This marked the first visit by a Japanese submarine to Singapore in 15 years. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude once again to the Singapore Armed Forces for hosting our ships. As the Self-Defense Forces expand their international contribution activities, Singapore's importance as a base for these operations is expected to grow further. We kindly ask for the continued support by the Singapore Armed Forces for the activities of the Self-Defense Forces.

Within the ADMM-Plus framework, with the support of Singapore as Japan's country coordinator, the Japan Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces are deepening cooperation with ASEAN nations through a number of initiatives, including the Ship Riders Program and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) seminars.

We have also had many high-level exchanges. This year alone, Chief of Staff, MSDF Admiral Saito, visited Singapore for IMDEX, while Defense Minister Nakatani and Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, General Yoshida attended the Shangri-La Dialogue. Additionally, Special Adviser to Defense Minister Mr. Wakamiya and Chief of Staff, GSDF, General Arai conducted a bilateral visit, respectively. We also had the honor of welcoming Senior Minister of State Mr. Zaqy Mohamad to Japan in August.

I understand that today's Guest of Honor, Major General Kelvin Fan, is scheduled to begin an official visit to Japan tomorrow. I am most grateful that you have taken the time to join us this evening. I am confident that security cooperation between Japan and Singapore will deepen further under the recently formed new Japanese government.

Among those present here today are graduates of Japan's National Defense Academy and Command and General Staff Course. The National Defense Academy has welcomed students from Singapore for decades, forming the foundation of the strong relationship between the Self-Defense Forces and the Singapore Armed Forces. In June, I hosted a networking event at this residence for alumni of the National Defense Academy and

Command and General Staff Course, reaffirming that the network of these alumni is an invaluable asset for deepening bilateral defense exchanges. We look forward to welcoming more students from Singapore in the future and further strengthening our personal ties.

Having discussed our relationship with Singapore, I should note that the Self-Defense Forces also engage in various forms of defense cooperation and exchanges with the countries represented by those gathered here today. While I cannot detail individual initiatives here, I wish to express our gratitude for the cooperative relationships built with these nations and our desire to deepen these ties even further in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us now celebrate the 71st Self-Defense Forces Day and propose a toast.

Here's to your health and success! Cheers!