

## Remarks of HE Ambassador Jota Yamamoto on the occasion of the Self-Defense Forces Day reception on 28 June 2018

Excellencies, Honorables, Distinguished Guests,

It is my great honor to receive you in this Self-Defense Forces Day Reception. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all.

How to describe the host country? That is the usual, but sometimes very tough question for diplomats. But we are very lucky, as we have already a very clear, simple, and convincing answer on how to describe our host country Finland.

“Finland is a small, integrated and secure country. Finland has an equal, educated and resilient people. This is why Finland can face challenges tenaciously, agilely and strongly.”

Quotation from address given by HE Mr. President of the Republic.

Japan is proud to expand defense exchange with such a small, but integrated and secure Finland. Japan will continue to learn from such an equal, educated and resilient people of Finland. Thus I believe that Japan & Finland can together face challenges tenaciously, agilely and strongly. Our strategic partnership will make it possible.

The recent visit of Defense Minister Mr. Onodera to Helsinki is a demonstrative and important, but just one example among many moves towards our strengthened defense relationship.

## Remarks by Lieutenant Colonel Shinya Matoba

Excellences, Honorables and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we have been blessed with good weather and we are very honored to be able to hold our Self-Defense Force Day reception. Let me take this occasion to say a few words to express our welcome.

As you know, this year is centenary of the establishment of the Finnish Defence Forces. Our Japanese Self Defense Forces were inaugurated 64 years ago on 1th of July in 1954. During that time, Japanese Self-Defense Forces have experienced many reforms under the recent international circumstances around Japan.

Especially Japan Ground Self-Defense Force has made big reforms at the end of March this year since it was established. One of them is the establishment of the Ground Component Command, which centralizes 5 Armies in Japan and command, operate their troops at the emergency. And simultaneously, as the direct control troop, Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade that shoulders the core of the defense of Japanese islands was also inaugurated.

By the establishment of the Ground Component Command, Joint operations by 3 Self-Defense Forces have been newly started and it enables us to address flexibly, appropriately and rapidly for the all kinds situations that can occur in Japan.

And this year on 4<sup>th</sup> MAY, at the bilateral meeting between Minister of Defence His Excellency Dr. Jussi Niinistö and Minister of Defense of Japan Itsunori Onodera, there was the consent between both countries in respect of increasing defense cooperation and defense exchange. From now on we think that the defense exchanges will be deepening. There is one concrete example.

That is the Port Call of the Japanese Training Squadron of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force at Helsinki. The video about the Japanese Training Squadron will be showed here later. Approximately 580 crew will call at the Port of Helsinki from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August.

The Port call of the Japanese Training Squadron at Helsinki will commemorate the centenary year of the establishment of the Finnish Defence Forces. It will be the symbol that promotes defense cooperation and defense exchanges between Japan and Finland.

Finally let me conclude my remarks by expressing my hope for further enhanced defense cooperation and defense exchange between our two countries and for the good health and wellbeing of all you present here today.

Paljon kiitoksia tästä päivästä.