

Mr. Speaker,  
Honorable Ministers and Members of Parliament,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and welcome.

It is a great pleasure to see so many friends of Japan gathered here today to celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your presence and for your continued friendship toward Japan.

His Majesty gave an interview on his 66th Birthday on the 23rd of February. An interviewer asked a question about His Majesty's recent visits to a variety of places, including Mongolia, to console the spirits of those who died in the war, as last year marked the 80th year since the end of the Second World War. His Majesty, who was born in 1960, 15 years after the war, talked about how he was touched by the stories he heard from survivors of the war, and underlined the importance of handing over the tragic memories of the war to the next generation so that we can think and act to preserve peace

We gather this afternoon at a time when the world is marked by uncertainty, strain and violence. In moments such as these, and here in Finland where the nation has an admirable preparedness to maintain peace, I believe His Majesty's words find a natural resonance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan and Finland share a relationship grounded in common values: democracy, the rule of law, and a firm commitment to the multilateral international system. Even though we are geographically distant, we are close in heart and spirit.

Over the past year, relations between Japan and Finland have reached a new level of depth and significance.

The most significant milestone was the visit of His Excellency President Alexander Stubb to Japan in June 2025. Our leaders, recognizing the growing interconnection between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security environments, adopted a new Joint Statement that sets a clear direction for the future relationship — strengthening cooperation in advanced technologies,

economic security, defense and resilience, recognizing the growing interconnection between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security environments. The visit provided political guidance for moving our partnership from dialogue to concrete cooperation.

This direction has been reinforced and advanced through a series of high-level exchanges. In May last year, General Yoshida, Chief of Staff of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, visited Finland, and then, State Minister of Defense, Mr. Honda, came to Finland in August.

In addition, four Finnish ministers visited Japan last year in connection with the Osaka Expo, advancing cooperation in trade, education, research, health, life sciences, and bioeconomy.

At the same time, our economic relationship is becoming increasingly dynamic and forward-looking.

In January this year, a mission of the Japan Business Federation visited Finland with a focus on expanding industrial partnerships in the circular economy and sustainable technologies — areas in which Finland has globally recognized expertise and strong innovation ecosystems.

This was followed in February by a Business Mission organized by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which brought total 22 major corporations and start-ups to Finland. The Mission focused on advancing cooperation in deep-tech, dual-use and defense-related industries.

These engagements demonstrate how the solid foundation of trust, shared values, and a common outlook toward the future is now being translated into concrete cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contribute daily to the development of Japan-Finland relations – across government, Parliament, business, academia, culture, civil society, and the diplomatic community. I am confident that, together, we will continue to deepen and elevate this partnership in the years to come.

Thank you very much.