

*Greetings*  
*by the Minister of State for Defense*

Having once served as Defense Minister in 1987-88, it is an honor to be appointed once again to that position. Since that time, the domestic and international environment has changed greatly, as witnessed by the disintegration of the Cold War structure, and concurrently, the roles of Japan, the Defense Agency and the Self-Defense Forces are also evolving.

As the new Defense Minister, I hope to fulfil my responsibilities to the greatest extent possible, not only so that Japan may maintain her security and continue peaceful relations with other countries, but also so that Japan may contribute to the further stabilization of international society.

Since my previous experience as Defense Minister, I have been a strong proponent of security dialogue and defense exchanges. As we open the second International Symposium on Security Affairs, I would like to outline some of my ideas on such activities.

First, we must go back eleven years in time, to when the Cold War was still being fought. As the newly appointed Defense Minister, I felt that it would be extremely important for those countries, especially in Southeast Asia, which were deeply interested in Japan's defense policies to understand them. I therefore decided to strongly promote exchanges of military and defense-related personnel, and initiated a defense research exchange program involving Southeast Asian countries, hoping that it would be at the forefront of further dialogue among defense authorities.

Last year was the tenth anniversary of the defense research exchange program, and I am very happy that it has developed into an extremely fruitful and meaningful program. I further believe, however, that dialogue among defense-related personnel should not be limited to such programs, but should be expanded into more areas.

From that standpoint, therefore, the international symposium which will be held over the next two days is extremely important as an event for exchanging ideas on security and defense.

There are two reasons for this. First, this symposium is significant because we have in attendance, or have received papers from, distinguished researchers from Great Britain, the United States, Russia, China and Australia, and because this symposium is open to the public.

It goes without saying that these countries have played important roles in twentieth century international politics, and will continue to play such roles in the twenty-first. Ten years ago, it would not have been possible to imagine that speakers from those major powers would gather in one place and publicly exchange views on defense and national security.

Second, this symposium is significant because of its theme, which is "War and Peace in the 21st Century: Reflections upon the Century of War." I think that it is of great significance that researchers from the countries which have played major roles in twentieth century international politics shall reflect upon the wars of that century and share their views on what war and peace may be like in the next. I think that this is an appropriate theme, given the fact that we are about to enter a new millenium and a new century.

Since this symposium shall revolve around presentations and discussions of high academic quality, I hope that many creative ideas shall emerge from the objective and frank exchange of ideas among the speakers. As a firm believer in security dialogue and defense exchange, I shall be more than pleased if this symposium aids in increasing discussion on defense and security issues, not only among those who are attending, but also among those who could not come in person, and if it contributes in some way towards the building of a consensus on the maintenance of security around Japan and throughout the world.

In closing, I would like to express once again my hope that this symposium shall be a fruitful and beneficial event.

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Tsutomu Kawara  
Minister of State for Defense  
Japan