

“Greetings from the Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force)”

It is the season of beautiful green leaves. To all readers of this website, I hope all of you have been well.

【At the start of new fiscal year】

A new fiscal year has begun, and many of you may be experiencing new beginnings, new encounters and new challenges. I would like to congratulate all of you who have newly joined the Japan Self-Defense Forces this spring. I am very happy to be able to serve with you having noble aspirations as a fellow member, and I look forward to seeing you when I visit your units in the near future. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you, especially the families who have sent their beloved ones to serve as JSDF service members.

Koku-Jieitai will continue to strive to maintain readiness, conduct various trainings, and provide logistical support regarding them to protect the lives and property of the people of Japan. In addition, while inheriting the good traditions, we will continue to make steady progress in defense capabilities enhancement effort, so that we can make further strides in our Shinka effort (進化 or Move-Forward initiatives) in the new fiscal year.

【US trip】

From April 4 to 7, I participated in the Space Symposium and the Space Chiefs' Conference in Colorado which Air Force Chiefs of Staff from all over the world attended. I took part as a panelist in a discussion on international cooperation in space and then held bilateral talks with senior Air Force and Space Force officials from various countries to deepen mutual understanding and trusts. Also, on April 8, I visited the U.S. Air Force Academy and spoke to U.S. Air Force cadets.

Furthermore, I visited the U.S. Department of Defense on April 11, where I met with senior officials of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, and U.S. Marine Corps to exchange views on ways to further strengthen our bilateral relationship.

On April 13, I attended the IHR (International Honor Roll) in Alabama, the commemorative ceremony to honor international graduates of the U.S.A.F. Command & Staff Course and U.S. Air University Advanced Course who later came to serve as the head of Air Force. By using this opportunity, I dialogued with Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force to exchange opinions about further collaboration between Koku-Jieitai and the U.S. Air Force.

Although I was tested positive for COVID-19 in a PCR test prior to my return flight to Japan and this may have caused concerns, the entire trip was very significant and conducive to various efforts to strengthen Koku-Jieitai's defense capabilities, deepen the relationship between Koku-Jieitai and other countries' Air and Space Forces, especially the U.S., and contribute to the improvement of the security environment surrounding Japan.

【International Situation and Situation surrounding Japan】

The international situation continues to change rapidly as we enter the new fiscal year. Regarding the situation in Ukraine, under the policy of the Japanese government to provide as much support as possible to Ukraine, the Koku-Jieitai has provided equipment and given transportation support.

In terms of the situation in and around Japan, on April 15, the Ministry of Defense announced the status of the scrambles in FY2021. The number of scrambles in FY2021 was 1,004 times, which was the second highest on record following the 1,168 scrambles in FY2016. We observed Chinese aircraft repeatedly passing the strait between Okinawa and Miyako Islands, joint flight by Chinese H-6 bombers and Russian Tu-95 bombers in the airspace over East China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Sea of Japan. Moreover, Chinese carrier-based fighter took off from aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean, and a new-type Chinese UAV flew. We confirmed these unusual incidents on top of violations of Japanese airspace by Russian aircraft on two occasions.

In response to such increasing military activities by neighboring countries, Koku-Jieitai will continue information gathering, warning and surveillance day and night to maintain readiness for every possible incident in FY2022.

【Concluding remarks】

In FY2022, I promise that Koku-Jieitai will continue to fulfil its missions and prepare for future threats by facing challenges and difficulties without fear and with a strong sense of mission and responsibility to live up to people's expectations. To this end, we will always need support from all the supporters of SDF. I would like to ask for your continued understanding and cooperation for Koku-Jieitai.

The Reliable Koku-Jieitai (JASDF) Is Just by Your Side
Looking Up at the Sky and Space 24/7

April 30, 2022

General IZUTSU Shunji

Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force)



Space Symposium



Participate in the panel discussion
Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai