

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

The rainy season has sets in, and it has been slightly hot these days. To all readers of this website, I hope all of you have been well. After Golden Week holidays in May, Koku-Jieitai had various kinds of events and activities.

【Defense Cooperation and Exchanges】

From May 16 to 20, we officially invited Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari, Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force (IAF) to Japan and deepened our mutual understanding through exchange of views and visits to air bases. We also agreed to further promote defense cooperation and exchanges. Koku-Jieitai and Indian Air Force have continued mutual visits between their leaders, and I visited India in December 2020. Japan and India share fundamental values and strategic interests, and India is an important partner for Japan in maintaining and strengthening the vision of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). Also, this year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-India diplomatic relations, and I think it is a significant accomplishment that we were able to enhance the relationship between Koku-Jieitai and Indian Air Force at that juncture.

On May 23, I met with Air Vice Marshal Meredith, Deputy Chief of Royal Australian Air Force and discussed the security environment surrounding Japan and Australia as well as Japan-Australia defense cooperation and exchanges. Considering these two visits and my trip to the United States last month, it is significant that I met with air leadership of key partner countries (including from the QUAD) in the last two months to reaffirm the strengthening of respective air-to-air relations

Moreover, on May 25, I was awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honor, a decoration with long history and honor, by the French government at the residence of French Ambassador to Japan. While I am delighted and privileged to receive such an honor which is more than I deserve, I attribute the decoration not to my own achievement but to everyone’s support and the solid Japan-France relationship which our seniors have established, so once again, I would like to extend my appreciation to all of you. I will continue to play a role in deepening the bilateral relationship.

【International Situation and Situation Surrounding Japan】

As for the situation surrounding Japan, from early to mid-May, in the waters south of Okinawa, we observed Chinese carrier-based fighters and helicopters taking off and landing on Chinese Navy aircraft carrier, Liaoning more than 300 times intermittently. We assess these activities as being aimed at enhancement of the ability to operate in distant sea and air spaces including the Pacific Ocean.

Furthermore, on May 24, Chinese H-6 bombers and Russian Tu-95 bombers flew together over the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. This indicates improvement of China-Russia bilateral operational capabilities and the deepening of the two countries’ ties in light of the current security environment, so we need to pay attention to future trends. Also, North Korea has been launching missiles very frequently and in new patterns, with four launches in May alone and sixteen since the beginning of this year, including cruise missiles.

To respond 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.

Turning our eyes to the international situation, since early May, Ministry of Defense /Japan Self-Defense Forces have been sending Koku-Jieitai's transport aircraft to deliver humanitarian supplies to help the people affected by the crisis in Ukraine under the PKO Act (Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and other Operations). So far, four transport missions have been conducted, delivering plastic sheets and solar lamps. We will continue to contribute to peace and stability of the international society by making use of Koku-Jieitai's transportation capabilities.

【Concluding remarks】

Koku-Jieitai will continue to confront immediate difficulties and challenges and prepare for future threats 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

May 31, 2022

General IZUTSU Shunji

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



Meeting with Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force



Meeting with Deputy Chief of Royal Australian Air Force



Gen. Izutsu was awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honor by French government