



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

Hearing that cherry blossoms have started to bloom, I feel that spring is approaching, and I hope things are going well for all the visitors to our website.

The earthquake that occurred in southeast Turkey on February 6 caused severe damage to areas from southern Turkey to northern Syria. I would like to express my condolences to those who lost their lives due to this earthquake and convey my sympathies to the many people affected.

Following the earthquake, on February 13, based on the Act on the Dispatchment of the Japan Disaster Relief Team, the Minister for Foreign Affairs held a meeting, and the Minister of Defense ordered Koku-Jieitai to carry out transportation by its aircraft. On the same day, B-777 special transport aircraft of Special Airlift Group located in Chitose Air Base delivered equipment necessary for the medical team operating on site. Koku-Jieitai will continue to ensure readiness to conduct missions.

One year has passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. The same as before, we recognize that the invasion by Russia is a unilateral change of the status quo by force and an extremely serious situation that shakes the foundation of the international order. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

In the vicinity of Japan, North Korea launched an ICBM-class ballistic missile on February 18, and it is analyzed that it landed inside Japan's EEZ. North Korea maintains its stance of strengthening its nuclear and missile capabilities, and North Korea is likely to continue to take further provocative actions such as launching various types of missiles and conducting nuclear tests.

Koku-Jieitai is striving to improve capabilities so that we can conduct information gathering, warning and surveillance around the clock, maintaining readiness for any contingency. Besides, Global Hawk newly deployed at Misawa Air Base began flying in December last year.

On January 31, His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General visited Iruma Air Base. Secretary General Stoltenberg delivered remarks of encouragement to the Koku-Jieitai personnel, and through the visit, we reaffirmed that Japan and NATO will continue to work closely together as "reliable and natural partners" who share common values and strategic interests.

In addition, from February 11 to 15, Vice Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai participated in Aero India, one of the largest international aviation exhibitions in Asia, where he was able to promote mutual understanding and confidence-building as well as defense cooperation and exchanges through meetings with air chiefs from various countries.

I myself participated in Avalon Airshow, an international aviation exhibition held in Australia from February 24 to 28, and was able to further facilitate defense cooperation and exchanges through meetings with air chiefs of various countries including Chief of Royal Australian Air Force.

Today, no country can protect its national security on its own. As we continue to face challenges to the international order since the end of World War II, it is essential for Japan to deepen cooperation and coordination with the allies and like-minded countries, which share universal values and

strategic interests. Koku-Jieitai will take every opportunity to build and strengthen a network of close partnerships with the air forces of like-minded countries.

Koku-Jieitai is looking up at the sky 24/7 and will continue to be committed to our missions for the peace and security of Japan. I would like to ask for your continued understanding and cooperation for the Koku-Jieitai.

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

February 28, 2023
General IZUTSU Shunji
Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force)