Closing Remarks

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that all of you have well done through the three day symposium. It is my great pleasure that you had fruitful discussions though I think three days is not enough.

In this year’s symposium whose main theme was “The Challenge to the Future of Maritime Security in Asia-Pacific Region,” I expected that every participant to make a presentation on maritime security environment surrounding each country as well as problems facing each country, which would make clear the difference in the participating countries’ awareness. I wanted you to understand the difference and promote mutual understanding among the participants through the symposium.
I observed your excellent presentations and active discussions, so I can conclude that the purpose of the seminar has been completely accomplished.
In addition, your positive manners revealed that you have made careful preparations and great efforts for your participation in advance of your arrival in Japan.
I would like to pay my deep respect to all the participants for your positive participation in the symposium. I hope that what you have learned through the symposium will help you a lot in your duties and lead to the stability of the region in the future.

As you know, you will take a cultural tour and a base tour in the next two days. I hope that you will have a better understanding of Japanese history and culture and learn a lot about the JMSDF. The two day tour will also further strengthen the friendly ties among the participants.

By the way, in Japan, we have an old saying “Ichigo Ichie.” It is literally translated “one precious opportunity to meet someone in all your life.” Originally the word is one of the important rules of a Japanese tea ceremony, which means that when you have a tea ceremony, you must do your best thinking it is only one chance to have a ceremony with people there at that time in all your life. When you have a Japanese tea in Kamakura tomorrow, please remember what I am saying.
The same thing can be applied to meeting people. Even if you may have another opportunity, you should think that it is only one chance or the last one to meet them in all your life. We, Japanese people have lived with this old saying in mind for many generations and always considered it important to keep good relations with other people.
The seminar lasts one week and it is only a short time in all your life. But this is “Ichigo Ichie” for you. It will be a precious experience for you to have discussions in a candid manner with your new friends here. I sincerely hope that the new friendship will last a long time and help to lay the foundation of maritime security in the Asia Pacific region.

Finally, on behalf of the JMSDF Staff College, I would like to express my appreciation to all the participants for taking time out of your busy duties to attend the seminar and to all your organizations for sending excellent participants to the seminar, such as 14 Navies, RUSI: Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, OPRF: Ocean Policy Research Foundation, JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency and Japan Coast Guard.

I would like to close my remarks and officially announce the end of the symposium part of the seminar, wishing the future prosperity of all the participating Navies and organizations and the stability of the Asia Pacific region. Thank you for your attention.

Vice Admiral Izuru Fukumoto
President, JMSDF Staff College