

**Greetings by Guest of Honor Shigeo Yamada, Ambassador  
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States  
of America for the Maritime Symposium 2024:  
Sea Lane Safety and Supply Chain Resilience for Economic  
Security**

Good afternoon and thank you, Professor Calder and Mr. Shukuri for your remarks as well as thank you for bringing us together here at SAIS for this very important Maritime Symposium.

As Japan's Ambassador to the United States, I am reminded every day that our strong bilateral relationship is built on the solid foundation created by various non-governmental players in business, culture, and academia.

Both JITTI and the Reischauer Center at SAIS have long been leaders in this regard and I am grateful for all that you do.

We all recognize the critical role of the sea in the security and prosperity of our countries.

Japan is an island nation; we rely on international maritime transport to import and export vital goods such as energy and food.

Last year alone, Japan's seaborne trade volume approached 800 million metric tons, and more than 80 percent of the volume of international trade in goods travel by sea.

That means the strength of global supply chains depend on the reliability of sea lanes, but as we look around the world, that reliability is at risk.

We see environmental risks such as devastating water shortages – as in the Panama Canal.

We are also facing growing threats to the regional security situation affecting international trade.

We live in a world where problems anywhere can easily move into problems everywhere.

We saw it in the Black Sea and we saw it in the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, in Asia, we remain on guard against unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

The challenges we face are real, but so are the opportunities for partnership.

The timing of this symposium is very fitting.

Japan and the United States must continue our leadership in securing sea lanes of communication, and we do-must we do-need to continue strengthening our cooperation with other like-minded countries.

At the recent Quad leaders meeting, our two countries along with Australia and India announced our joint commitment to strengthening maritime security and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.

These efforts include a new regional training initiative to enable our partners in the region to monitor and secure their waters, and next year the Quad countries will launch a first-ever Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission to improve interoperability and advance maritime security.

Our shared commitment to maritime security enhances international connectivity, strengthens the global supply chain, and contributes to sustainable development and shared prosperity.

This year marks the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Amity between Japan and the United States, when Japan opened Shimoda and Hakodate and began to connect with the world.

And 170 years later today, the alliance between Japan and the United States has never been stronger; our bilateral relationship has evolved into a truly global partnership.

Together, we are working to uphold and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

So, I am grateful to all of you for the role you play in this effort.

So, finally, I would like to wish you all a productive and engaging symposium today.

Thank you very much.