

JAAGA Memorial Lecture

12 May 2015

USAF 18th Wing Commander

Brig.Gen. Barry R. Cornish

Dedication to Mutual Security and Prosperity

-- Opening Comments --

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at such an event, one whose prestigious history reaches back many years.

I am honored to have the opportunity to address the distinguished professionals of the Japan America Air Force Goodwill Association Convention, and to take part in the continued promotion of friendship and mutual understanding between the Japan Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Air Force.

I would like to extend my highest respect to General Hokazono and General Yada - Thank you for having me.

-- The History of Our Alliance --

For more than 50 years, the U.S.-Japan Alliance has been the foundation of peace and security in Northeast Asia and the cornerstone of U.S. engagement in the region.

This year marks the 20th JAAGA convention, 70 years since the end of World War II, and the 55th anniversary of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the U.S. and Japan. Fifty-five years is a long time for two countries to maintain such strong ties.

We have built a number of strong partnerships and alliances in this region, and we have no stronger friend and partner than Japan.

-- What This Alliance Enables Us to Do --

The post-war period of regional peace and stability cannot be taken for granted
Our alliances form the foundation of security and prosperity in the region.

Deploying our most capable units forward enhances the U.S.'s ability to contribute to the
defense of Japan and meet our commitments under the terms of the Treaty of Mutual
Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America.

There have been hundreds of projects that have strengthened our alliance over the years and
many of those would not have been made a reality without those of you here today.

Released just two weeks ago, through our new guidelines for defense cooperation, you
expressed your desire to take on a more robust international role in some of our shared concerns
in the region.

Again, thank you for all you do.

-- Kadena's Role in the Fight --

I serve as the Commander of the 18th Wing, Kadena Air Base, home to the Air Force's largest
combat wing and often referred to as the "Keystone of the Pacific" due to its location on
Okinawa - only about 900 miles from Tokyo, Manila, Seoul and Hong Kong.

The wing operates a fleet of 80 combat-ready aircraft to perform air superiority, aerial refueling,
airborne warning and control, and combat search and rescue functions.

Kadena's force of 8,000 trained Airmen is postured to support Air Force commitments in the
Pacific region as well as U.S. military commitments around the world.

As you know, their integration with their Japan Self Defense Force counterparts has never been
higher.

--Our Humanitarian Footprint--

The guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation include expanding the scope of cooperation to reflect the global nature of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, encompassing such areas as counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, peacekeeping, capacity building, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and equipment and technology enhancement

What we really need is to find practical ways to put these guidelines into action.

We must continue to cooperate with one another, especially when disaster strikes.

Natural disasters are among the most significant threats to security and prosperity in the region, putting countless lives and resources at risk every year.

March 11th marked the fourth anniversary of Operation Tomodachi, a time when this nation was faced with a natural disaster of epic proportion.

We are very proud of our support to Japan in integration of our forces for the betterment of the people of Japan

In the wake of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Nepal just two weeks ago, U.S. Air Force C-17s with a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team, an Urban Search and Rescue team and 45 short tons of cargo departed for Nepal from Kadena to provide life-saving support.

Additionally, U.S. Pacific Command activated Joint Task Force 505 at Kadena to work closely with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies to ensure continued, timely and swift responses to requests by the Government of Nepal.

Using air power to rapidly bring aid into the country, Joint Task Force 505 will continue to support Nepal's government as long as needed.

This underscores the strategic importance of air power and Okinawa

-- Regional Threats to Peace and Stability--

Hostile neighbors continue to isolate themselves from the international community and threaten this level of cooperation.

Nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation, cyber-attack, and acts to cause economic destabilization are serious threats to international peace and stability and regional security.

The Asia-Pacific region contains some of the largest and highly populated countries in the world.

Three of the four largest economies are here in this part of the world, the economic engine that drives the world today.

Over half of everything that moves on the surface of the Earth generates out of the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

And that number is growing.

The three largest missile arsenals in the world are also in the region; and many of those missiles are pointed at us and our friends.

So, our ability to counter those missiles in a bilateral and integrated fashion, including medium range, short range and cruise missiles, is a priority.

A peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific benefits all nations and the people of the region.

With stability comes the jobs and opportunity derived from free shipping and trade, the hope to raise children without the specter of conflict, and living in a society that protects and respects universal values.

But, if we fail?

What happens to our nations, our people we have sworn to defend?

The economy?

The environment?

Our families?

What happens to our future?

-- Actions to Ensure our Joint Success --

The United States and Japan are aligned on these concerns and we stand shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure we do not fail.

The United States remains as committed as ever to upholding our treaty obligations with our Japanese allies.

We will continue to be active partners here in the Asia-Pacific, to help shape a future of greater security and prosperity that benefits all nations and people of the region.

The United States remains committed to being a leader and partner in the advancement of shared global interests in safety and security, a stable and strong economy, ballistic missile defense, counter-proliferation, counter-piracy, and peacekeeping.

In the words of our previous Defense Secretary, “We can raise our alliance to a new level, and we intend to do that.”

We are ensuring a promising future through Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) drills; Flight training through frameworks such as the Aviation Training Relocation (ATR) program; Artillery Relocation Training, which is under consultation for improvement to better reflect current and future contingency environments; other bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral training with our partners in the region.

(EXAMPLE ONE)

One highly valued example of our cooperation in training is the NCO exchange program, which Kadena last hosted on March 3rd.

This chance for JASDF and U.S. service members to work with their respective counterparts over the two-week period shows our mutual commitment to modernize this alliance.

As we have worked, ate and trained together for the past 14 years, we have been connecting on a personal and professional level and creating long-lasting relationships between our air forces.

And now between our armies as well.

It is proof that the Japanese and U.S. force posture and cooperation is moving forward into the 21st century.

We are enabling each other to be there as a friend and ally when needed.

(EXAMPLE TWO)

Another example is the U.S. Pacific Command's Theater Security Package

These rotational forces increase our military combat capabilities, which are essential to U.S. power projection and security obligations.

TSPs enable our nation's military and the forces of our coalition and bilateral partners to engage in integrative training opportunities.

By routinely deploying aircraft to this region, we intend to deepen ties with you, our allies, and solidify our relationships within the international community.

These deployments are a necessary measure to ensure peaceful access to the global commons and promote joint as well as ally mil-to-mil interoperability of forces.

We believe these rotations are an excellent investment given their exceptional benefit to operational readiness, interoperability, and regional deterrence

The deployment of rotational fighters throughout the Pacific provides unique opportunities to integrate to our JASDF partners.

They enhance interoperability without the need for heavy infrastructure buildup

Movement of U.S. Air Force aircraft into the Pacific has been a routine and integral part of U.S. Pacific Command's unique capable air forces and regional force posture since March 2004, in

order to maintain a prudent deterrent against threats to regional security and stability.

(EXAMPLE THREE)

A third example is that USFJ and the Japan Self-Defense Forces plan and conduct a rigorous and realistic program of joint/ bilateral exercises to increase the credibility of the U.S.-Japan security commitments and maintain their readiness.

But we can give more

Japan has demonstrated over the last 60 plus years an abiding commitment to peace, democracy, and the rule of law.

-- Closing Comments --

Our PACOM Commander, Admiral Locklear, reminded us that as we go through the decades, things change within both of our nations, and things change in the region - we must continually adapt.

Military advancements happen, and it is important that occasionally, that we as an alliance take a pragmatic look at how the alliance is performing and how it will be shaped for the future security environment.

This alliance is so important that we need to ensure we get it right as we look together at how to ensure that this alliance remains strong throughout the next century.

We have a mutual defense treaty that we take very seriously, and there should be no question that the United States will always honor its obligations to the defense of Japan.

Today, deep-rooted mutual trust, friendship, support, cooperation between our two countries and organizations like JAAGA define the U.S.-Japan relationship

Thank you again, Hokazono-san, Yada-san, ladies and gentlemen for having me.

To speak with you has been an honor.

Domo arigato gozaimasu.