

# U.S. Independence Day Special

## A year of significant progress and leadership

**RAHM EMANUEL**  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN



Two hundred and forty-seven years ago today, 56 individuals felt freedom's gravitational pull. They put pen to paper and developed what was then a daunting and daring idea: America.

Our founding fathers envisioned something new based on ideals thousands of years old. Nearly three centuries later, liberty's light still burns brightly and globally.

From Ukraine to Myanmar and Somalia to Syria, our country's creed continues to appeal with the tempest-tossed who sense the same gravitational pull of freedom, calling for governance by inspiration, not intimidation.

Whether at home or abroad, the United States and our No. 1 ally Japan will never

shy away from any adversity or any adversary that undermines our values. This work will determine the destiny of the democratic example in the 21st century.

President Joe Biden's visit to Hiroshima in May to meet with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and other leaders from the Group of Seven industrialized nations came as we face a critical juncture. But our nations can confront common challenges united in the belief of our shared interests, our shared values, and our shared goals.

Alongside the leaders of Canada, Italy, France, Germany, the U.K. and host Japan, the president reaffirmed America's commitment to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on the rule of law; uplift universal human rights and human dignity; counter coercion; and stand with the people of Ukraine, who fight for their freedom.

In our history, America arose as a new, distinct and powerful idea.

This year, the theme for our Independence Day celebration in Tokyo is America's National Parks — places American

novelist Wallace Stenger called, "the best idea we ever had."

In support of this theme, last week Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui and I concluded a sister park agreement between two hallowed sites: Pearl Harbor National Memorial and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Both reflect the darkest days of our two countries, which went from bitter foes to the best of friends. Both recall the cruelties of war so we always have the courage to seek peace. Both remind us that America and Japan have accomplished far more for our peoples united than we could ever claim through war divided.

This sister park arrangement is our second with Japan; the first was signed in 2016 between Gettysburg National Military Park and Gifu Sekigahara Battlefield Memorial Museum. These four battlefield parks — Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, Gettysburg and Sekigahara — each tell a story about us and define our national character. They serve as constellations that help our peoples find their way forward. They define the future as much as they interpret the past.

The most powerful reflection of reconciliation is the friendship and future that America and Japan are forging together. These four sister parks amplify their individual importance and together signify a combined message to the world.

Just as our national parks set apart the most beautiful, inspiring and important places in America for the benefit and enjoyment of all — visitors, citizens and residents alike — the United States works with like-minded countries like Japan to promote possibility and prosperity for people around the world. Or, as the G7 leaders put it, "to meet the global challenges of this moment and set the course for a better future." That is something all Americans can be proud of.

Amy and I wish a happy Independence Day to all our fellow Americans on this Fourth of July.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



**Above left: U.S. Ambassador Rahm Emanuel and Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui sign a sister park agreement in June. Above right: Ambassador Emanuel poses with U.S. service members during an Independence Day event at his residence in Tokyo.** U.S. EMBASSY



***Congratulations to the American People  
on Their Independence Day***

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PRESIDENT: SATOSHI IHARA

VISCOUNTESS SUITE 110, 1-11-36, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052  
Telephone: 81-3-3584-6171 Facsimile: 81-3-3505-0939  
E-mail: [sun@sunrealty.co.jp](mailto:sun@sunrealty.co.jp) <https://sunrealty.co.jp/>