

Day of German Unity Special

A bright future for all through working together

CLEMENS VON GOETZE
AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY



On Oct. 3, we remember the unification of Germany, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the crumbling of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War. The merging of East and West Germany was not

merely the removal of barriers, but the rekindling of families, people and shared history. This historic day 33 years ago reshaped the course of Germany and blazed a trail for the transformation of Europe, leading to a new world order of reconciliation. Today, Russia's aggression against Ukraine threatens our rules-based international order, sovereignty and — most importantly — peace. The war poses a global challenge and amplifies the importance of having strong alliances in the 21st century. It reminds us that unity is not merely the absence of walls and borders.

I firmly believe that German-Japanese ties are a great example of such alliances. Our close cooperation not only in the Group of Seven leading industrial nations, but also bilaterally and in other multilateral formats like the Group of 20 and the United Nations, demonstrates this perfectly. During Japan's G7 presidency, our countries have been at the forefront of shaping effective policies and strategies, from tackling climate change and environmental conservation to the promotion of inclusive economic growth, from global health challenges to sustainable cities, from protecting the rules-based international order to the advancement of gender equality.

This year, we celebrate 50 years of Germany in the United Nations. Now more than ever, Germany is campaigning for a multilateral order and for cooperation. Together with our partner Japan, we are predominantly striving for a reform of the United Nations Security Council to reflect the realities of the 21st century and maintain its relevance, legitimacy and authority.

Earlier this year, Germany and Japan held

their first intergovernmental consultations. Along with six Cabinet members and a business delegation, Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Japan for the second time in less than a year to discuss the protection of critical infrastructure, the safeguarding of trade routes in a rules-based global order, energy supply security and other issues.

This new energy in our bilateral relations reflects our joint commitment to strengthening our cooperation in all areas — economics, policy, society, culture and defense. The last two years have already shown a significant increase in our defense cooperation. After the visit of the frigate Bayern in 2021 and a joint exercise involving our air forces in 2022, this year a delegation of the German infantry held talks with its Japanese counterparts. In 2024, we will again deploy two navy vessels to the Indo-Pacific. These examples show that Germany is committed to addressing evolving security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and to upholding peace in the region, in conjunction with its partners.

We focused on our support of multilateral trading systems based on free and fair trade

and our dismissal of coercive economic measures and unlawful state-led technology acquisition initiatives. We mutually seek to build secure, sustainable and resilient supply chains in strategic areas, including mineral resources, semiconductors and batteries, and to incentivize partnerships in our nations' industries. The Russian aggression accelerated our transformation to future technologies and energy markets with reliant partners. On this, Germany and technology leader Japan will invest in a global market for hydrogen together.

I am convinced that our relations, grown over 160 years, will continue to play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges of our time and in building a brighter future for all nations. In this regard, I believe it to be of utmost importance for our people to continue their close-knit exchanges in all areas.

Dear readers of The Japan Times, I wholeheartedly thank you for your time and interest. In a world that grapples with division and conflict, the Day of German Unity should remind us of the reliability and importance of German-Japanese friendship.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his wife, Britta Ernst, greet Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his wife, Yuko, at Peace Memorial Park during the G7 summit on May 19 in Hiroshima.

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