

U.S. Independence Day Special

Mutual cooperation across range of areas

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U.S. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.



On behalf of the U.S. Embassy and consulates in Japan, I would like to wish the readers of The Japan Times a happy Independence Day on July 4, the 244th anniversary of the founding of the

United States. Although normally a time of large gatherings, barbecues and fireworks, this year's holiday may have a somewhat different feel. With the continuing challenge of COVID-19 and the reenergized movement for racial justice and equality in the United States, this July Fourth will likely be more reflective than in years past. Yet, we still have abundant reason to celebrate. The partnership between the United States and Japan stands as strong as ever and has reached sig-

nificant milestones during the year to date.

We began 2020 commemorating the 60th anniversary of our countries' Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the textual foundation of our alliance. Since the treaty's historic signing ceremony with President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, our alliance has become the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Time and again, our security partnership has demonstrated immeasurable value in safeguarding our security interests and addressing the evolving challenges of the region and beyond.

The start of the year was also a milestone for our robust economic relationship. In January, two important agreements entered into force: the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA) and our first ever digital trade agreement. We are already seeing the fruits of these achievements. The USJTA has opened our respective markets wider to two-way trade, especially in key sectors like agriculture. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Japan Digital

Trade Agreement has positioned our countries to be global pace-setters in digital innovation and online commerce.

Although we continue to grapple with the wide-ranging effects of COVID-19, the crisis has highlighted many avenues of cooperation between the United States and Japan. As the virus spread onboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship, our countries worked together to coordinate care for those who fell ill and to repatriate American passengers. Our close collaboration has also been seen in joint trials and research efforts by U.S. and Japanese health experts in search of potential treatments.

While this Independence Day may not have the sort of visible commemoration activities as in years past, the reasons we celebrate remain unchanged. Just as the founders wrote in the historic Declaration of Independence in 1776, we remain firm in our conviction that all are created equal with inalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. We recognize that more

work — hard work — is necessary to realize true equality and “a more perfect union,” but we are fortunate to travel the road ahead with close friends like Japan that share our values and global vision. Best wishes to all of our friends in Japan, America's tremendous Ally. Happy Fourth of July!



Charge d'Affaires Joseph Young greets elementary school students during “Go For Gold,” a sports diplomacy initiative sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. U.S. EMBASSY



Charge d'Affaires Joseph Young addresses influential business and policy leaders at the 2019 Mt. Fuji Dialogue.
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Congratulations to the American People on Their Independence Day



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