

U.S. Independence Day Special

Honoring our commitment to the ideals of democracy

RAHM EMANUEL
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN



Democracy is difficult. The Founding Fathers understood this when they penned the Declaration of Independence 248 years ago. They recognized that the true struggle to protect and

preserve the visionary ideals enshrined in the document was just beginning.

"I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States," John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, on July 3, 1776.

The 56 Founding Fathers understood that their new nation's ideals of freedom, equality and liberty would need to be secured, safeguarded and celebrated by each subsequent generation of Americans. Those democratic principles could never be taken for granted.

Over the years, decades and centuries, Americans have been reminded of democracy's fragility, with painful and precarious moments along the way. But our undaunted determination to uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy has continued to draw millions from distant shores to the United States, all willing to sacrifice everything for a chance to champion those same core beliefs.

July Fourth is an opportunity for all Americans to reaffirm our commitment to the ideals that bind us as a people and define us as a nation. The day also serves as an undimmed beacon of hope to the world and to those deprived of the basic freedoms enjoyed by Americans and the



U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel (left) stands with Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata at the Independence Day Reception at the ambassador's official residence in Tokyo in June.
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citizens of other democratic nations.

Those same deep-rooted democratic beliefs have propelled us to stand alongside allies and partners to uphold the international rules-based order, call out coercion, defend human dignity and individual rights, and preserve peace and prosperity.

As a nation that shares the same ideals as the United States, Japan has emerged as a true global partner of the U.S. in recent years. This was reinforced during Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's state visit to Washington in April, the first by a Japanese prime minister in nine years. The visit marked a high point for an alliance President Joe Biden called "a beacon to the entire world."

The alliance is seeing unprecedented

levels of cooperation in security, science, education and technologies like quantum computing and artificial intelligence that will shape the future of peoples across the globe.

Our collaboration is not limited to Earth. A longtime trusted partner of NASA in all areas of aeronautics and space technology, Japan is an integral part of ambitious lunar projects. And decades after Neil Armstrong first stepped on the dusty lunar surface, an American astronaut will return to the moon, this time together with a Japanese astronaut.

Just as the American people are the custodians of the ideals that underpin our nation, the peoples of the United States and Japan are the guardians of the



Left: The ambassador poses with members of Japan's Air Self-Defense Force Band at the reception, which featured a fireworks show in the evening.
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U.S.-Japan relationship.

That's why programs that deepen ties and elevate mutual understanding between our countries are so critical. Understanding this, the two leaders announced new educational endowment initiatives to support high school and university exchange students during April's state visit. Together with our established Fulbright and Mansfield Fellowship programs, they will inspire the next generation of custodians of the alliance.

Since that "formal and solemn announcement to the world," as John Adams referred to the Declaration of Independence, it has inspired the birth of other nations and has emboldened leaders around the world to strive to create societies that value equality, freedom and tolerance.

As we celebrate our own nation's founding, we should also use the day to fortify our resolve to continue to live up to the democratic ideals inscribed on parchment 248 years ago. Happy Fourth of July.

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



Emanuel and his spouse Amy Rule listen as Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara delivers a speech at the reception.
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Congratulations to the American People on Their Independence Day



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A Community Worth Celebrating

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To our international family of members, we're a place to unwind, socialize, work out, learn something new or forge friendships.

We're also simply home.



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