

France National Day Special

Securing the future with our allies in the Indo-Pacific

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AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE



Since 1880, the French National Day has been well known for its military parade, which passes down the Champs-Élysées from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde.

This year, this event is being held under the theme "Winning the Future" as a tribute to resilience in the face of the health crisis, a message of hope for the future, and an expression of the unity and cohesion of the nation.

This popular event is also intended to honor and show our recognition of the armed forces, including those of France's allies. In 2018, Japan's Self-Defense Forces were among the foreign forces invited to participate in the parade as guests of honor.

Since the establishment of the Partenariat d'exception between France and Japan in 2013, significant progress has been made in the many areas this partnership encompasses, particularly in the field of security and defense.

In this regard, a new stage was reached last May as French forces, together with Japan's Self-Defense Forces, the United States Navy and Marine Corps, and the Royal Australian Navy, successfully conducted a joint amphibious exercise on the southern range of Kyushu. This operation, named ARC21 and initially suggested by

France, was unprecedented in terms of scope, participating forces and theater of operation. It allowed all the allies concerned to improve further the interoperability of their assets, with the aim of enhancing our preparedness and capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.

This region, which will account for 60% of global growth by 2030, is indeed of strategic importance. France has many sovereign interests to protect in this region, which accounts for 93% of its exclusive economic zone and is home to 1.5 million French citizens, including some 8,000 military personnel. With Japan and other partners in the region, we share the same commitment to security and stability, respect for international law and freedom of navigation. In this context, following former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's initiative for a free and open Indo-Pacific, President Emmanuel Macron set out in 2018 a national strategy to make France act as an inclusive and stabilizing mediating power in the region. France is also working with its EU partners to define a European strategy. This will be a key issue during the next French presidency of the European Union Council in the first half of 2022.

Our vision for the Indo-Pacific also goes beyond security issues. France's strategy aims at not only increasing stability, but also at promoting the common good, such as by strengthening health care, education, infrastructure, and, overall, sustainable development among countries surrounding the Indian and Pacific Oceans. At a time when our societies are facing global challenges, cooperation and partnership with key play-



ers such as Japan are even more crucial.

Less than two weeks from the beginning of the Olympic Games, vaccination is progressing at a steady pace in France and in Japan as the world enters a new phase of the fight against the pandemic. On this global front line, France and Japan have a major role to play. Within the Group of Seven, both countries have pledged to provide support to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, and in particular to its COVAX facility. Laboratories from France and Japan are also teaming up to produce future vaccines, which will allow us to fight the pandemic in the long run.

In a few days, the president of the French Republic will visit Japan to attend the opening ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. I am convinced that this wonderful competition, in which more than 500 French Olympians and Paralympians will take part, will pave the way to a post-COVID-19 world that will offer tremendous opportunities for deepening the friendship between France and Japan.

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

French forces participate in the ARC21 multilateral exercise in Kyushu in May.
MARINE NATIONALE



Ambassador Philippe Setton visits the Unigen Inc. plant in Ikeda, Gifu Prefecture, where France's Sanofi S.A. plans to produce a new COVID-19 vaccine.
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