US, Japan Coast Guards Formally Expand Cooperation



Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Vice Adm. Yoshio Seguchi, Japan Coast Guard vice commandant for operations, and members of their staffs pose in front of the Japan Coast Guard Ship Bukou (PL 10), May 18. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

TOKYO — The United States and Japan coast guards formally expanded cooperative agreements and established a new perpetual operation during a ceremony May 18 in Tokyo, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, and Vice Adm. Yoshio Seguchi, Japan Coast Guard vice commandant for operations, represented their respective services during the historic document signing ceremony and celebration at Japan Coast Guard Headquarters.

Although a memorandum of cooperation between the sea services

has existed since 2010, strengthened relationships, increasing bilateral engagements and continued focus on maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific necessitated expansion of the memorandum.

The new operation’s name, Sapphire, is an acronym for Solid Alliance for Peace and Prosperity with Humanity and Integrity on the Rule of law-based Engagement, and it honors the gem regarded as an emblem of integrity and affection found throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Operation Sapphire encompasses all the annual interactions between the Japan and U.S. coast guards, with the goal of increasing interactions over time.

To formalize the expanded cooperation, annexes were added to the existing memorandum of cooperation outlining Operation Sapphire to include standard operating procedures for combined operations, training and capacity building, and information sharing.

“We rely on our partners, allies, and like-minded nations to achieve our shared missions,” said McAllister. “As evidenced by this agreement, our relationship with the Japan Coast Guard is stronger than ever, and I am looking forward to many more decades of partnership and collaborative operations in the Indo-Pacific.”

“We will conduct smooth cooperation in the fields of joint operation, capacity building and information sharing by this agreement,” said Seguchi. “Sapphire embodies the rule-of-law based engagement between the coast guards, and we will expand the principle of Free and Open Indo-Pacific to other nations.”