

Text of Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi's letter to the Financial Times on 29 January 2014 regarding Prime Minister Abe's speech at Davos
(The Financial Times: <http://www.ft.com>)

Sir, I refer to your editorial "End drift to war in the East China Sea" (January 24), and wish to clarify that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's message on our relationship with China – voiced recently at Davos – is one of "peace and dialogue".

Mr Abe is frequently called upon to reflect on the second world war. This he does in order to renew his pledge that Japan shall never wage war again. Visiting Europe at the beginning of 2014, the centenary year of the outbreak of the first world war, he made the same pledge again. Mr Abe did observe that, as is often pointed out, economic interdependence between the UK and Germany failed to prevent war.

However, the critically important point here is that he explicitly stated: "We must ensure that this [ie, the war] does not happen." He referred to world war one precisely because he wanted to emphasise that we should never repeat the same mistake. Such sober reflection on history need not be seen as "chilling and inflammatory".

Furthermore, he stated in his Davos speech that we must turn Asia into a region of trust and order, not one of force and coercion. He also advocated restraining military expansion in the region. In addition, he renewed his call to Chinese leaders to engage in dialogue for peace as well as his proposal to establish a crisis management mechanism.

As a mature liberal democracy, governed by the rule of law, Japan is fully committed to peace and has demonstrated utmost self-restraint. It is based on Japan's strong desire for peace that Mr Abe declared that the tragedy of war should never be repeated and that we must instead seek dialogue.

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