

## Parliament Event - Japanese Businesses and the UK's Future Economy

18:00 – 20:00, 29th October 2019

Attlee Suite, Portcullis House

Speech transcript – The Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Ambassador Tsuruoka, thank you so much for those warm words. I think, on behalf of all of us, can we wish you a very happy last couple of weeks and a very successful time back in Japan after England has won the World Cup?

Ladies and gentlemen, Konichiwa, Good evening.

For decades, the UK and Japan have achieved so much more together – than they ever could have apart.

I just want to do a quick bit of history. In 1922, the first passenger car made in Japan – the A9 – was in fact a partnership with British car maker Wolseley. And nearly a century later – Japanese companies like Nissan, Hitachi and Horiba Mira – with a range of British partners – are about to attempt something special, with a fully-electric Nissan Leaf driving itself – completely autonomously, 230 miles from Cranfield to Sunderland.

Automotive is just one area where Japan excels and today of course, the eyes of the world are on Japan for various reasons. Last week, we saw the enthronement of Emperor Naruhito, and as you rightly point out Ambassador, this week, it's the final of the Rugby World Cup - next summer, it's the Tokyo Olympics. What an amazing start to Japan's Rei-wa era!

In the Rugby World Cup, thousands here in the UK were willing Japan on, possibly not the Scots, – as they became the first Asian nation to ever make it in the knockout stages, winning legions of British fans and I'm sure some of you will have seen the Japanese kids with their faces made up in the colours of the nations of the United Kingdom. What a wonderful sight to see and a fantastic contribution to rugby.

And I – personally – am a big fan of Japan's 'Society 5.0'. The Japanese government's vision for how new technologies will change lives for the better. Their website has some great videos to illustrate this. From drones delivering packages, to virtual appointments with doctors saving elderly people hospital trips. These are things that I'm sure in time the UK will benefit from. And from the challenges of an ageing population and climate change, to the fantastic opportunities of AI and robotics, the issues facing the UK and Japan are so often the same.

So as we leave the EU, we must work together to solve the Grand Challenges that are facing all of us today. When I met the UK Atomic Energy Authority just recently, I was amazed to discover that they have a full-scale mock-up of parts of the Fukushima nuclear reactor to help British firms develop new decommissioning technologies. Part of a partnership between Oxford Technologies and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

And Japan is very much helping us tackling climate change. MHI-Vestas – for instance – are recruiting hundreds of staff to make wind turbine blades on the Isle of the Wight here in the UK. Whilst the new Toyota Corolla, built near Derby, will be the firm's first model in Europe to offer a choice of two hybrid powertrains. And just as – in 1992 – the eyes of the world were on Kyoto – next

year, they'll be on Glasgow, which will be hosting COP26. This is going to be a big chance for Japan and the UK to accelerate the transition to a low carbon world and develop the planet-saving technologies of the future – from hydrogen, to Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage.

Space is another area where we both excel – a sector which employs 42,000 people here in the UK and Japanese company Astroscale are doing amazing things using satellites to burn up space debris, making the most of the UK's expertise by establishing their mission control centre in Harwell, near Oxford.

With three of the world's top 10 universities, the UK has so much to offer on science and innovation. And with Japan, we can do even more. UCL and Osaka University are doing pioneering research into dementia. In Cambridge – Toshiba are doing fantastic things with quantum cryptography – making online transactions safer.

And from infectious diseases, to regenerative medicine, Japan and the UK are jointly funding research which will change lives. My government wants to build upon successes like these and we're listening to Japanese and British businesses – and what they want to see in a bilateral trade deal. So I'd encourage you all to contribute to our 'Call for Input'.

Ladies and gentlemen, if there's one country that has always believed that – with hard work and dedication – nothing is impossible, it's Japan. In the next year, Japan will go from strength to strength and, in the UK, we really want to work with you - developing the technologies which will soon be part of everyday life – from York to Yokohama.

Arigato Gozaimasu.

Thank you very much.