

Remarks by H. E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the U.K.,  
on the Occasion of  
the Conferment of the Ambassador's Commendation  
to Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee  
for Peace and Reconciliation  
at the Coventry Cathedral  
on Friday, July 2, 2021

Lord Mayor McNicholas,  
Councillors,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is with great pleasure to have an opportunity to celebrate the conferment of the Ambassador's Commendation on Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee for Peace and Reconciliation today. I would like to say just a few words to congratulate all those who have contributed to the Committee's activities. While most of you are well aware of the Committee's history and its achievements, I touch upon some of the background to the decision to confer this award.

It is so sad and regrettable to remind the air raid on Coventry in the night of November 14, 1940, one of the first indiscriminate bombings against innocent civilians during the Second World War. Although it was such a horrible tragedy, it paved a way for developing a city-to-city relationship with Hiroshima, which was destroyed by an atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. Coventry Lord Mayor's

Committee for Peace and Reconciliation, established in 1975, holds the Hiroshima Day Service to console the souls of the victims of Hiroshima every year since 1987. This annual service has certainly strengthened the bonds between Coventry and Hiroshima and I fully appreciate dedication and tireless efforts of the Committee in organising such an important event for more than 30 years.

Last year marked the 80th Anniversary of the air raid on Coventry as well as the 75th Anniversary of the dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. It was in commemoration of the two anniversaries and in recognition of the Service's long and distinguished contribution to the deepening of friendship between Japan and the UK that the government of Japan decided to honour the Committee with the Ambassador's Commendation last August. However, due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19, we had to wait for nearly a year to hand over the commendation. Now, I am most satisfied to come here and finally realize the mission with all of you today.

In a spirit of profound gratitude for what the Committee has been doing, it is my great pleasure to be able to award Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee for Peace and Reconciliation. May peace and our bonds continue for long!

Thank you very much for your kind attention.