

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. HAYASHI HAJIME,  
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE UK,  
FOR THE LUNCH MEETING OF  
THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON JAPAN

27 June, 2022

Mr. Hunt, Mr. Clark, My Lords, and Distinguished Members of Parliament,

It is indeed a great honour to be with you for a lunch meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Japan, APPG. I would like to thank the Chair for organizing the gathering today. Taking this opportunity, I would like to touch upon and share with you a few points of my interests.

First of all, I am delighted that the APPG can provide opportunities for us to exchange views in person for the first time since 2019, as it has been very difficult to hold such an occasion since the start of the pandemic caused by COVID-19.

Secondly, I am pleased to underline that the overall Japan-UK relationship is closer than ever before, thanks to the efforts taken by many people including the chair and the members of the APPG. In recent years, we have made significant progress in many fields of our relationship. One of them is obviously our economic relationship, with the Japan-UK Economic Partnership Agreement coming into force, and the UK's accession process to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership, CPTPP, for which Japan chairs its Working Group for the UK's Accession, moving ahead.

Thirdly, it goes without saying that the UK is one of the leading investment destinations for Japanese business, and the balance of direct investment in the UK at the end of 2020 will exceed 17 trillion yen. The UK continues to be a very important base for Japanese business, even after Brexit, and I am impressed at how the UK mobilises its policies to attract foreign direct investment from all the world. As a matter of fact, many Japanese companies have made fresh investments in the UK, especially in future orientated sectors such as green and digital. Meanwhile, during his recent visit to the UK in early May, Prime Minister Kishida emphasized the "New Form of Capitalism" and delivered a message saying that "The Japanese economy will continue to see robust growth. You can invest in Japan with confidence. Invest in Kishida", as Japan certainly welcomes investment from the UK to Japan as well.

Fourth, in order to promote economic relations and mutual investment in particular, it is quite important to facilitate personnel exchanges among business leaders between our two countries. For those travelling to Japan from the UK, the Japanese government has recently reviewed and eased its border measures, which had started under the difficult situation of the pandemic. In hope of making further progress, I would like to refer to the recent ongoing issues where some Japanese companies are facing difficulties to obtain working VISAs for their managerial personnel from the UK government.

Fifth, we are now witnessing the striking progress of security and defence cooperation between Japan and the UK. Last week, there were port calls of the two Maritime Self-Defence Force vessels to the UK, Kashima to London and Shimakaze to Portsmouth respectively. This could be a small reciprocation for the visit of the UK Carrier Strike

Group, CSG 21, to Yokosuka and other ports in Japan. In early May, when Prime Minister Kishida met with Prime Minister Johnson at 10 Downing Street, they confirmed ongoing joint initiatives such as the Future Combat Air System, FCAS, and the Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement, RAA. These projects will surely become the cornerstone of the future security and defence cooperation between our two countries, which is now certainly entering a new era.

Sixth, the year 2022 began with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and we are reminded of how important it is to maintain and strengthen cooperation and collaboration among allies and partners in the international community. Besides, it is also clear that the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and the Indo-Pacific region are inseparable. Thus, Japan will remain committed to this crisis on the European soil and will continue to work closely with the UK for the security in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, since we are facing a variety of global challenges today, such as pandemic, high commodity prices, aging population and climate change, more than ever before, there is a need for the international partners to work together in order to deal with these challenges and find out possible solutions. Against such backdrop, it is quite clear that partnership between our two countries is further growing its importance.

Last but not least, at a time when Japan and the UK are elevating our partnership to the next level, the role played by the APPG has never been more important. Over the years, the APPG has facilitated close interchanges and dialogues among political, business and cultural leaders of our two countries. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the chair and all its members.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.