

Remarks by H.E. Mr HAYASHI Hajime, Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at “The Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Japan's Strategic Vision Goes Global”
at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, University of Oxford
on 11 March 2024

Distinguished Guest,

Thank you for inviting me to this wonderful conference. First of all, I would like to pay tribute to Professor Hugh Whittaker, Director of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, and to Dr Giulio Pugliese, Departmental Lecturer in Japanese Politics, who have played a significant role in organising this conference. At the same time, let me place on record my great appreciation of the longstanding leading role of the Nissan Institute in promoting understanding of Japan in all its aspects not only here in Oxford but also in the UK and beyond.

Before this meeting today, I attended a symposium on circadian rhythms and sleep in a different venue in the same University of Oxford. This is very instructive event to understand the importance of good sleep for our health and lifestyle. But whether I got a good sleep in this symposium or not I will leave to your imagination! Returning back to the Indo-Pacific from sleep and insomnia, I profoundly enjoyed the lively discussions here among first-class speakers having come all the way from Japan and across the UK and Europe. I was particularly struck by the depth of the deliberations and the multifaceted way in which FOIP was addressed.

I believe that the notion of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific is the masterstroke of Japan’s diplomacy in recent decades. I would say it is rather rare to see a diplomatic concept promoted by Japan having infiltrated the international arena and become a fashionable topic for discussion not only among practitioners but also among academia. More importantly, tangible cooperation under the flag of FOIP is under way among like-minded nations such as the US, Australia, India and ASEAN countries – and, of course, the UK, which is one of the most important partners for realising a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

While 2023 was a difficult year, in which the international community faced serious challenges, it was also a rich and rewarding one with numerous landmark developments for the Anglo-Japanese partnership. Japan assumed the G7 Presidency, hosting the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May. On that occasion, Prime Ministers Kishida and Sunak announced the “Hiroshima Accord; Enhanced Japan-UK Global Partnership”, reaffirming our strong relationship. Continued progress was also forged in the realm of security and defence cooperation, namely through the signing of the RAA and GCAP, as well as in the economic field, such as through developments regarding the CPTPP. These are some compelling examples of our collaboration.

What is necessary now is to continuously update the concept of FOIP to foster tangible cooperation and gather broader support from the world, in particular, from the so-called “Global South”. I trust that the deliberations at this conference will generate a great deal of food for thought for the future of FOIP.

Before concluding, may I thank you once again for inviting me to this conference. No doubt more lively discussions lie ahead for us tomorrow as well.

Thank you very much.