

Mr David Taylor MP,
Minister Chris McDonald,
My Lords, My Ladies,
Members of Parliament,
Mr Alderwick,
Distinguished Guests,

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr David Taylor and all the members of British-Japanese Parliamentary Group for organising today's working lunch on geopolitics.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Minister McDonald for attending this event. I would also like to thank MBDA for kindly sponsoring the lunch.

Today's theme, "Geopolitics", could not be more timely, as the situations in the Middle East, Ukraine, and the Indo-Pacific continue to affect us severely.

On Iran: Japan relies on the Strait of Hormuz for about 93% of its crude oil imports. The most important priority at present is to work toward a negotiated settlement, including ensuring the safety of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Japan is engaging directly with Iran at both Prime Minister's and Foreign Minister's levels.

Japan has participated in the UK-led joint leaders' statement on the Strait of Hormuz and is working to expand the number of signatories. Foreign Minister Motegi has attended a VTC meeting on the Iran situation hosted by Foreign Secretary Cooper.

Japan is leading an IMO proposal to establish safe maritime corridors and is working to contribute to its endeavours. Japan will continue to work closely with the international community, pursuing all possible diplomatic avenues.

On Ukraine, whilst much media coverage has shifted to Middle East, attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo by force must never be allowed. It remains essential for countries to stand united in support of Ukraine. Japan has extended assistance, totalling 14.5 billion pounds, in areas such as:

- (a) countermeasures against landmines,
 - (b) support to energy sector to survive harsh winter,
 - (c) recovery of agricultural production,
 - (d) strengthening democracy and governance,
 - (e) public-private partnerships,
- among others.

In the Indo-Pacific, China has specifically targeted Japan for economic coercion by imposing arbitrary export controls on rare earth. This has potential serious negative impacts to third countries including the UK through supply chain.

In addition, it has recently tightened export controls on dual-use technologies, placing 20 Japanese companies on export ban list, and another 20 companies on severe restriction list. While such economic coercion is unacceptable, Japan has refrained from taking countermeasures so as not to escalate tension. Japan remains open to dialogue with China.

Under these circumstances, it is an urgent priority for Japan to cooperate on economic security with likeminded nations.

Last year, Japan and the UK launched an Economic Security Partnership. Japan will deepen its cooperation with the UK on strengthening supply chain resilience, in line with the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy.

Security in the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific are inseparable. Against a backdrop of global instability, it is of the utmost importance to advance defence and security cooperation on GCAP. I welcome that recently, GIGO and Edgewing signed an initial contract worth 686 million pounds. I look forward to further milestones in the near future through continued close collaboration.

Prime Minister Starmer's visit to Tokyo in January was followed up by Foreign Minister's Meeting in March. Looking ahead, I hope Prime Minister Takaichi will be able to visit the Chequers on the invitation by Prime Minister Starmer at a mutually convenient time. Also, I am excited at the prospect of a 2+2 meeting between the foreign and defence ministers to be held by the end of this year.

I hope that today's event will go a long way in creating many new encounters, thereby contributing to facilitate further cooperation and collaboration between Japan and the UK across multiple fields. I strongly believe our two countries should work together to contribute to peace, security, and prosperity in the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific.

Thank you very much.