

21 December 2016

Dear friends,

I hope this email finds you well.

Autumn in Japan this year was the season of diplomacy.

From the end of September to the beginning of December, the leaders of four ASEAN countries--Singapore, the Philippines, Myanmar and Malaysia--as well as India, visited Japan and held a series of summit meetings with Prime Minister Abe.

ASEAN and India are important partner for Japan, both politically and economically. For these countries, Japan has made large-scale cooperation through ODA (Official Development Assistance) in areas such as infrastructure development and capacity building.

Japan is also strengthening its cooperation with ASEAN and India across trade and investment as well as security, while cultural and human exchanges are also growing. Japan engages with and promotes multi-layered cooperation with these countries. I would like to share with you some of their important outcomes from these meetings.

i. The current situation in the South China Sea

This is an important issue for both Japan and ASEAN. In discussions with Prime Minister Abe, the leaders of Singapore and Malaysia both confirmed the importance of the rule of law, and cooperation among the international community on the South China Sea.

Philippines President Duterte, who was on his first visit to Japan since taking office, confirmed that as an arbitral award has been issued on the South China Sea issue, there is no choice but to hold discussions based on this, and that the Philippines has the same standpoint as Japan. As such we should have peace of mind.

President Duterte also stated that freedom of navigation in regard to maritime issues must be assured.

During the summit meetings, Prime Minister Abe said that he welcomed the signing of official documents related to the provision of two large patrol ships with the Philippines and Malaysia. These will contribute to and enhance maritime security and safety.

2. Maritime security and defence cooperation

Japan is progressing maritime security and defence cooperation with ASEAN and India. At the Japan–Philippines Summit Meeting, the two leaders signed an agreement to transfer the Maritime Self-Defense Forces' TC-90 aircraft.

At the Japan–Malaysia Summit Meeting, Prime Minister Abe stated his intention to strengthen cooperation in defence equipment and technology. This includes accelerating efforts to achieve an early conclusion on an agreement to transfer defence equipment and technology, and cooperation and exchanges between the defence authorities of the two countries.

At the Japan–India Summit Meeting, Prime Minister Abe confirmed that Japan will further promote cooperation on defence equipment and technology. In response, Prime Minister Modi confirmed India's commitment to maritime security cooperation with Japan.

At the Japan–Myanmar Summit Meeting, Prime Minister Abe expressed his hopes to expand defence personnel exchanges between the two countries, and reiterated Japan's support for capacity building. Myanmar's State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, welcomed cooperation with their military under a democratic government.

3. Quality infrastructure investment (high-speed rail)

Japan is promoting the international development of quality infrastructure investment, with ASEAN and India at the forefront. High-speed rail (the bullet train) is a symbol of this.

Last year, the Indian Government decided that the Mumbai–Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor would be based on Japan's high-speed Shinkansen technology. Prime

Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi confirmed that the railway's operation would commence in 2023.

The high-speed rail project between Malaysia and Singapore is also progressing. Prime Minister Abe encouraged the leaders of Malaysia and Singapore to adopt Japan's Shinkansen system for their rail projects, which both leaders praised for its reliability, safety and technology. In the summit meeting with Myanmar, Prime Minister Abe announced Japan's plan to contribute 800 billion yen over five years at both the public and private level in areas including electric power and airport infrastructure. The funding will also assist with other areas including ethnic minorities, agriculture and human resource training.

4. TPP

The results of the US presidential election have created much interest around the future of the TPP. In the summit meetings with Malaysia and Singapore, Prime Ministers Abe, Najib and Lee agreed to work with Japan for the TPP's early entry into force.

5. Japan-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement

The Japan-India Summit Meeting was also notable for Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi's historic signing of the Agreement for Cooperation and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

Both men expressed their hope for the agreement's implementation.

Prime Minister Abe explained that India's commitment to a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing was necessary for future nuclear energy cooperation. In response, Prime Minister Modi explained India's implementation of a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing.

H.E. Mr.Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore

(9/28) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/sg/page4e_000538.html

H.E. Mr. Rodrigo R. Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines

(10/26) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/ph/page3e_000608.html

H.E. Ms.Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Union of Myanmar

(11/2) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea1/mm/page4e_000547.html

H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

(11/11) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/in/page3e_000616.html

H.E. The Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul,

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

(11/16) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/my/page4e_000552.html

H.E. Dr.Tony TAN Keng Yam, President of the Republic of Singapore

(12/1) http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/sg/page4e_000562.html

Yours Sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia