

Address by H.E Ambassador YAMAGAMI Shingo to the Highgate Sub-Branch of the West Australian Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia, ANZAC House Perth, 24 August 2022

1. Introduction

- Mr Duncan Anderson

- Mr Geoff Simpson

- I acknowledge Mr Vince Connelly too.

- Distinguished Members of the RSLWA Board and Trustees

- Ladies and Gentlemen

- Thank you for that kind introduction.

- I am feeling very at home, coming from a military family, coming from the Japanese Police Force. I would like to be in uniform once again. Thank you for having me.

- This is my second appearance in WA this year, and I honestly don't know why I don't visit more often, now that the gate of WA is finally open.
- Distance is obviously a factor – if I'm going to cross three time zones I need a good reason to step on a plane, and escaping the cold of Canberra doesn't always cut it as an excuse.
- But the opportunity to address you today presented an ideal chance for me to again venture out West.
- There is a lot here that draws me back; from the beautiful weather, to the majestic scenery, to the fabulous cuisine that is on offer. In WA you are free to roam like an Eagle, or perhaps in light of the current season, heave ho like a Docker from Freo.
- Western Australia is a state where going down to the shops could mean either a 3 minute or a 3 hour trip. It is where politicians almost walk on water, and grey nomads flock to it like a bucketlist mecca.

- The attraction of WA to Japan has been apparent for decades, for WA made and continues to make a substantial contribution to Japan's industrial development through its export of iron ore.
- I think it would be fair to say that without the regular supply of minerals from the Pilbara, Japan's industries wouldn't have grown as rapidly as they did, and the end products from those industries wouldn't have reached the Australian market as early or in as great a quantity as they did.
- This symbiotic partnership between WA and Japan continues today, not only in mining but also in the form of LNG extraction and agricultural production. Indeed, 15% of all wheat imports to Japan come from WA.
- During my last visit here I talked to the AEGIC, the Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre, where I learned all about the wheat grown for Japan's udon noodle market, and what a successful venture that has been.

- As I said at the time, every time I slurp udon noodles in Japan in the future, I'll think of WA.
- Japan is WA's second largest export destination, with 37% of all WA oil and gas exports going to Japan, by far its largest market.
- Japanese goods also make up 77% of WA's machine and transport vehicle market. Chances are that if you're driving a car, or planning to build something substantial, the machine doing the work is Japanese designed and made.
- We also have robust people-to-people links. WA and Japan share 10 sister city relationships, and 2 sister port relationships.
- WA is also the sister state to Hyogo Prefecture, a lovely part of Japan that houses the port of Kobe. If any of you have been to Kobe, you'll know it from its mid-nineteenth century Western architecture, built after it opened up to foreign traders in the mid-nineteenth century. Besides, Kobe beef is juicy and tasty enough to keep you satisfied.

- As travel between Australia and Japan is now increasing gradually, I can highly recommend it as a destination to visit.

2. Defence Industry Relations with Western Australia

- However I didn't come all this way to merely quote statistics to you or do the work of Japan's Tourism Bureau for it.
- My reason for joining you today is to provide some insights into the Japan-Australia relationship, specifically our security and defence relationship, and how it continues to evolve and what that means for our region.
- As a starting point, I'd first like to draw your attention to the Defence West WA Defence Capability Plan released this year.
- That plan projects that WA defence industries will be generating around \$6 billion in revenue for WA by 2030, taking advantage of WA's geostrategic location and its expertise in robotics, autonomous operations, amphibious warfare and cyber security.

- The truth is that the defence industry in WA is an exciting sector undergoing steady growth in conjunction with an overall expansion in Australia's defence capabilities.
- AUSTAL is obviously the most prominent of WA's defence sector corporations, whose activities in aluminium hull ship design and construction have certainly caught the attention of Japan's business community.
- AUSTAL has already produced a trimaran for JR Kyushu, while the AUSTAL designed 'WestPac Express' was used by the Okinawa-based Third Marine Expeditionary Force in response to the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.
- The potential for WA's defence industry sector to work with their counterparts in Japan is significant and demands further attention.
- Robotics is obviously a prominent candidate for collaboration, as is space security.

- Last year, JAXA, the Japan Space Agency, was able to monitor the flight of Epsilon Rocket No.5 using the SSC Australia space tracking station at Mingenew.
- Space security was one of the areas mentioned in the Joint Statement issued after last year's Japan-Australia 2+2 foreign and defence ministerial meeting, and we both committed to working closely together in this field.
- Quantum computing is another frontier where Japan's expertise is helping to boost Australia's defence capabilities.
- Last year NEC Australia and D-Wave Systems were selected by the Australian Department of Defence to develop hybrid quantum computing technology to optimise how autonomous vehicles can resupply army forces using a central depot.
- This was an historic moment, as it was the first time NEC's quantum computing applications had been put to use outside of Japan.

- NEC is also helping to keep Australia's airports and points of entry safe.
- If you've flown anywhere in Australia in the past year, you'll have passed through NEC designed and built facial recognition scanners.
- The Japan-Australia Defence Technology Sharing Agreement signed in 2014 already provides us with the framework to embark on greater levels of technical consultation and collaboration.
- I expect that as we move forward to greater levels of interoperability between the Japan Self-Defence Forces and the ADF, that this closeness will also be reflected in our defence industry sectors.

3. Defence Relations with Western Australia

- This presents an ideal situation for WA defence companies to develop products in conjunction with Japanese partners. One might describe this as a natural development given the fact that WA and Japan share a history of defence cooperation going back over a century.

- If you make your way to the Princess Royal Fortress in Albany, you'll see a display there that commemorates the involvement of the Imperial Japanese Naval Cruiser 'Ibuki' in providing an escort to ANZAC troop ships embarking from Albany in 1914.
- That historic event was commemorated in 2014 by the port visit to Albany of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force frigate 'Kirisame'.
- Port visits to WA have also been a feature of expeditions to Antarctica by the JMSDF icebreaker 'Shirase'. Over many years, the Shirase has called into Fremantle and HMAS Stirling to re-supply on its way to the Showa base in Antarctica.
- While the COVID pandemic has presented some complications, the Shirase still managed to make it to Fremantle last year despite competition from elsewhere and is expected to call again this year.

4. The Japan-Australia Defence Relationship

- This is but one aspect of a defence and security relationship that has steadily grown over the past decade.

- Since the signing of our Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2007, a document that owed its existence to the ambitions of the late ABE Shinzo and then Prime Minister John Howard and which is expected to be updated soon, we have implemented a range of frameworks and agreements to both streamline our information sharing and the inter-operability of our forces.
- One of the most significant developments in our defence relationship came with the elevation of the relationship to that of a 'Special Strategic Partnership' in 2014, a milestone that again stemmed from the foresight shown by the ABE and Abbott governments to bring two like-minded democracies closer together.
- The elevation of the partnership resulted in the first ever participation by the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force in Exercise Talisman Sabre, and also witnessed the commencement of negotiations to create an agreement that would provide the legal framework under which the dispatch of personnel and equipment to each other's country could be facilitated.

5. The Reciprocal Access Agreement

- The culmination of all that effort came in January this year when the leaders of Japan and Australia signed the Reciprocal Access Agreement.
- This Agreement constitutes a ‘game-changer’ in our defence and security relationship, as for the first time ever it outlines the scope of actions that our military personnel can undertake and the use of their equipment.
- This Agreement is historic for a number of reasons, but most poignant among them is the fact that this is the first such Agreement that Japan has made with any country.
- What the RAA signifies is that the Japan-Australia defence relationship has come of age and that we can expect more developments in the years ahead.

- In the meantime we will continue to build upon our achievements. All three services of both of our countries now regularly engage in exercises, both bilateral and multilateral, aimed at everything from air interdiction, to amphibious landings, to combined field operations.
- As a reflection of this growing partnership, Japan extended its protection to ADF assets under the JSDF Law, the first time it has done this for any country other than the United States.
- You will see JMSDF sailors sharing a bottle of Little Creatures with RAN personnel during Exercise NICHIGOU TRIDENT, while JGSDF personnel have fired off artillery rounds and gone on assault courses with the Australian Army and US Marines during Exercise SOUTHERN JACKAROO.
- RAAF fighter aircraft were among the first outside the United States to undertake exercises with the JASDF in Japan in 2019 during Exercise BUSHIDO GUARDIAN.

- The JASDF is also expected to play a more prominent part in Exercise PITCH BLACK this year, with the first ever participation of JASDF air assets.
- The SDF and ADF are also working closer than ever on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Many of you would be aware that in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the RAAF flew 3 of its C-17 aircraft to Japan to help in transportation and logistics.
- Part of that assistance included flying an equipment coolant from here in WA to Japan to help cool down the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.
- In return, the JASDF was dispatched to Australia during the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020, with our C-130 transport aircraft assisting the ADF in transporting personnel and monitoring the spread of the fires.

- More recently, the JASDF assisted in the aftermath of the Tongan volcano emergency by flying supplies out of RAAF base Amberley, while SDF members were dispatched to HQJOC outside Canberra to liaise with the ADF and other regional partners on the response.

6. The Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue

- On a bigger picture, Japan and Australia, together with our alliance partner the United States, have also been engaged in upholding the rule of law and exercising deterrence.
- We have undertaken joint patrols of the South China Sea, and the RAN and RAAF are actively involved in preventing illegal ship-to-ship transfers of equipment and material by North Korea in the East China Sea in violation of UN sanctions.
- Our commitment to ensuring that the rule of law continues to prevail in our region to the benefit of all of its inhabitants is reflected in our involvement in the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue.

- This framework, which also owes its existence to the vision held by the late ABE Shinzo, brings together Japan, Australia, the US and India to cooperate across a wide range of areas, including maritime security for the Pacific.
- This four-way partnership has become a key part of our shared strategic planning, a point that was reaffirmed when Prime Minister Albanese and Foreign Minister Wong, merely hours after being sworn in, hopped on a jet to Tokyo to participate in the Quad Leaders' Meeting.
- I was fortunate enough to greet them on their arrival, and their enthusiasm for the Quad and its mission were evident throughout their visit.

7. The Strategic Environment of the Indo-Pacific

- The Quad, together with the RAA, form the foundations for what will be a challenging period for both of our countries in the years ahead.

- The emergence of a new regional power, for whom the rule of law does not always apply, has overturned accepted protocols and increased the risk of major conflict for the first time in generations.
- This reality was commented on by Japanese Prime Minister KISHIDA during the Quad Leaders' Meeting in Tokyo in late May.
- In his statement issued after the meeting, Prime Minister KISHIDA declared... "I consider it to be of paramount importance that from Tokyo we sent out a powerful message to the world that unilateral changes to the status quo by force cannot be tolerated in any region of the world, and especially not in the Indo-Pacific region."
- These words reflect the egregious and entirely illegal invasion of Ukraine perpetrated by Russia. What Russia has done is to drag humanity back into the quagmire of destruction and devastation out of a misplaced sense of hubris and ahistorical grievances.

- Our own region is no stranger to threats and belligerent activity. China's response to the visit to Taiwan by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in which it fired ballistic missiles into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, were described by Foreign Minister Wong as 'disproportionate' and 'destabilising'.
- Japan agrees with her, for such activity is inherently dangerous. It threatens our safety and security, and the economic prosperity of our region.
- It therefore becomes incumbent upon the democracies of the world to act in defence of order and the rule of law.
- If the law of the jungle is allowed to prevail, our safety and that of humanity as a whole will be placed in grave jeopardy.
- Japan, Australia, the United States and India will not simply stand by and watch the world that our forebears sacrificed so much to achieve disappear at the point of a gun.

- We shall do everything within our power to protect and preserve the peace and security of our region so long as we have the strength and will to do so.
- It is in these times of strife that one looks to one's mates, and in our region, Japan has no better mate for the road ahead than Australia.
- Using what we've already achieved together, we will defend the rules based regional and international order with every means available to us.

8. Conclusion

- Ladies and gentlemen, that is the state of our region and our defence and strategic relationship at present. It is unprecedented in its scope, its ambitions, and its potential.
- Together we shall work for the benefit of our people and for the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific. There is no greater role for us to play, and no finer countries tasked to do it.

- In the meantime I very much look forward to watching how WA's defence industries grow and become more involved with partners in Japan.
- Then I'll have every reason to hop over the Nullarbor to raise a glass to this relationship between the best of mates!
- Thank you.

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