

**Remarks by His Excellency Ambassador YAMAGAMI Shingo to
the Advancing AUKUS Conference, National Press Club
Canberra, 14 November 2022**

1. Introduction

- Before I start my remarks, I would like to first thank Paul and the University of New South Wales for the opportunity to address you today.
- Paul's efforts to engage with Japan and increase its profile here in Australia is deeply appreciated by both myself and in Kasumigaseki, and long may our work together continue.
- Ladies and gentlemen, on that note, it is indeed a pleasure to join such illustrious company in the familiar surrounds of the National Press Club to speak on Japan's position concerning AUKUS and what we envision our contribution to the trilateral arrangement between Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom will be.
- At first glance, some might argue that Japan has no skin in this game.
- After all, AUKUS is primarily a defence technology sharing agreement between three long-term allies, all from English-speaking countries of European extraction (Brexit notwithstanding!) with a long history of inter-operability, personnel exchanges and technology sharing.
- A quick glance at Australia's defence sector would reinforce this view.
- Just look at the names alone – Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumann, and BAE Systems. The degree of integration of US and UK defence industry involvement in the Australian Defence Force is unmistakable and speaks to the long history of these three nations in reinforcing one another's capabilities.

- So why should AUKUS matter to Japan? Well ladies and gentlemen, I am here to tell you that AUKUS matters to us – a lot.
- That was made abundantly clear at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Washington last year that came almost immediately after the AUKUS announcement.
- Then Prime Minister SUGA categorically declared, and as the first leader to do so in the region, that Japan welcomed the formation of AUKUS, which would play an important role “for the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region”.
- But what does Japan’s support mean in practical terms, and what implications does it have for Japan’s cooperation with the AUKUS partners?

2. Alliances, relationships, and the significance of AUKUS

- It would not have escaped your attention that recently Japan and Australia reached another milestone in our defence relationship.
- Last month I had the honour of accompanying Prime Minister KISHIDA in his historic visit to Perth to meet with Prime Minister Albanese and sign the updated Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation.
- The most significant development from that new document was the promise to consult one another on any regional contingencies that may arise in the future.
- This makes Australia Japan’s most important defence and security partner outside of our pre-existing alliance with the United States.
- It was a step that we were prepared to take with our Special Strategic Partner, and evidence of the deep degree of trust and shared interests that we have with Australia.

- Coupled with the signing of the Reciprocal Access Agreement between Japan and Australia in January this year, which itself will dramatically increase the number and range of exercises undertaken between the JSDF and ADF, 2022 has been a watershed year in forging a new security dynamic between Japan and Australia.
- In terms of Japan's relationship with the United Kingdom, this has also undergone significant developments in recent years.
- Japan played host to a visit by Royal Navy Carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth last year, and has engaged in multiple bilateral exercises with the armed forces of the United Kingdom, including a bilateral submarine exercise that coincided with the carrier visit.
- Using our pre-existing Agreement on the Transfer of Arms and Technology with the UK, the creation of which owes much to the efforts of the late ABE Shinzo, Japan and the UK are in talks to merge our Tempest and F-X fighter aircraft programs, and have already started research on a Joint New Air-to-Air Missile (or JNAAM).
- As many observers have noted, in much the same terms as they use to describe our security relationship with Australia, Japan and the UK share an 'alliance in all but name'.
- As for Japan's security relationship with the United States, its importance both to us and to the region as a whole is self-evident.
- Japan is the lynchpin for US force projection into North East Asia.
- Under our pre-existing security treaty with the US, Japan is home to the US 7th Fleet at Yokosuka, the III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, US Forces Japan at Yokota Air Base, the US 5th Air Force, and houses 56,000 active US personnel from all four service arms.

- All this emphasis on alliances, relationships and agreements shows that any arrangement involving the defence ties between Australia, the US and the UK is bound to influence Japan's defence and security sectors – in other words, what matters to you, matters to us too.
- This is why the announcement of AUKUS, which itself came as a great surprise to Tokyo (and here I must give kudos to Australia for maintaining the finest example of information control I've ever seen!) was greeted with such expectation in Japan for the many things it promises to deliver – both for Australia itself and for regional deterrence.

3. Deterrence and the technology-sharing promise of AUKUS

- That is one of the key words that we can take from the formation of AUKUS – deterrence.
- At a time when the regional security environment continues to deteriorate, the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines by Australia and the superior deterrence capabilities that they provide is a critically important point.
- Over the past few decades, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force has been building on its relationship with the RAN.
- This has come in the form of submarine rescue drills in Perth, to involvement in Exercises KAKADU and TALISMAN SABRE, to our main bilateral naval exercise NICHIGOU TRIDENT.
- We are currently hosting Exercise MALABAR off the coast of Japan this month together with Quad partners India and the US.
- Should Australia acquire nuclear submarines, we envisage that this will increase the type and scale of exercises that both the JMSDF and RAN will be able to conduct together with Japan's 155 ships, including 24 submarines, and 346 maritime aircraft.

- That has created a great sense of anticipation within Japan's defence circles.
- Such submarines will also increase regional deterrence, which is a point that Japan has been at pains to emphasise.
- Prime Minister KISHIDA made this plain in his comments at the Shangri-La Dialogue this year, when he said "Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow".
- In terms of nuclear submarines themselves, Japan for many years has played host to visits by US Navy nuclear submarines.
- This has generated a need for detailed precautions concerning the operation of nuclear reactors and a clear explanation to the public on how these precautions are applied.
- In the future, Japan may also be playing host to Australian nuclear submarines. So measures are already in place to receive them should they come.
- AUKUS is also not just about submarines. It also offers the possibility of cooperation on the transfer of defence technology that will increase regional deterrence and ensure superior capability across a range of areas.
- Cutting-edge tech development – be it Artificial Intelligence and autonomy, Quantum technologies, Undersea capabilities, Advanced Cyber, electronic warfare, Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities and the acquisition of such technology - are all of vital importance to Japan.
- It is true that cooperation within AUKUS on cutting-edge technology has not yet reached the stage where it can involve outside partners.
- However, Japan stands ready to discuss with Australia, the US and the UK areas where we can cooperate bilaterally on defence

technology.

- The example I gave earlier of Japan and the UK discussing the joint development of fighter aircraft is a case in point.
- With bilateral cooperation advancing in strides, there is plenty of potential for Japan to collaborate on a specific project within the framework of AUKUS.
- There are certainly expectations in Japan regarding just such a development.
- This brings me back to Prime Minister KISHIDA's visit to Perth.
- As part of the Joint Declaration, which forms the basis of our defence relationship for the next decade, it stated that we will cooperate on cutting-edge technologies not only on a bilateral basis but with the US and other partners.
- That in itself promises to increase interoperability between the JSDF and ADF across the board.
- So as you can see, Japan's cooperation with AUKUS holds great potential.

4. Conclusion

- At a time of great uncertainty, where the rule of law is under threat and autocrats seek to undermine the dual causes of peace and stability, an arrangement like AUKUS is an expedience born of necessity.
- While Japan is an outlier to the core purpose of AUKUS, we are no less influenced by its intentions and will certainly be influenced by its results.
- If Japan may play a part in bringing this plan to fruition, our bilateral and multilateral ties with each of the AUKUS partners will reap the

benefits.

- So in the meantime we'll do as an old Japanese proverb dictates -
石の上にも三年 – “wait on a stone for three years”, for patience
brings its own rewards.