

**Remarks by H.E Ambassador YAMAGAMI Shingo
at the Conferral Ceremony for the Order of the Rising Sun
on Emeritus Professor Paul Dibb AM
Friday 3 February 2023**

Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Residence this evening for this conferral ceremony of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon on Emeritus Professor Paul Dibb.

It is an award befitting such a great friend of Japan, who over many decades has tirelessly worked to strengthen our security relationship, championing the ties between our two great democracies and calling for increased cooperation and coordination between our respective defence and intelligence agencies.

On a more personal level, I owe Paul and Rhondda an enormous debt of gratitude for being so welcoming to both Kaoru and myself upon our arrival here in Canberra two years ago.

In fact, they were the first couple to invite us to visit their lovely home.

Before setting foot on *Terra Australis*, I sought out SATOH Yukio, a former Japanese ambassador to Australia and brains-trust on all things Australian to seek his advice on whom I should meet and how I should approach this role.

Former ambassador SATOH, whom I regard as a mentor, was unequivocal in his recommendation – “You have to meet Paul Dibb. Make him a priority!”

Coming from such an authoritative voice as former ambassador SATOH, you can bet that I made my way to Paul’s front door ASAP to introduce Kaoru and myself and discover what made this transplanted Yorkshireman so renowned among Australia’s defence and intelligence community.

I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that what followed was a revelation. To many in this room, this will come as no surprise given their long association with Paul, yet the sheer breadth and depth of his knowledge and experience at the very heart of Australia's government, particularly his analysis of Soviet and then Russian motives and tactics and their Chinese equivalents was astounding.

It was like being in the presence of a master craftsman – able to draw together threads to see where connections lie and then propose how they might relate to an overall plan – 'seeing the whole elephant', you might say.

What made Paul particularly engaging was his direct, no-nonsense approach to analysis.

Speaking as a former Director-General of the Intelligence and Analysis Service in Japan's Foreign Ministry, I can't begin to tell you what a relief it was to hear analysis without layer upon layer of provisos.

It's a technique that can only be applied by those with the experience and knowledge to "call it as they see it", with the added benefit that they are correct.

In that sense, Paul should be regarded as the patron saint of 'getting to the point'.

Contribution to Japan-Australia Defence Ties

While canonization is beyond my power to confer, what I can draw your attention to is the patient, methodical manner in which Paul helped to establish and then develop the defence relationship between Japan and Australia.

It was the historic Dibb Report that first conceived of a closer degree of defence cooperation between Japan and Australia.

In stressing the importance of Japan to regional security, Paul in effect laid

the foundation for consideration of and interaction between our respective defence agencies, a fact reflected in the increased level of analysis of Japan's capabilities in the 1987 Defence White Paper.

Not one to be content with merely mouthing platitudes, Paul, in his then-capacity as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defence, travelled to Tokyo in 1990 together with then Vice-Chief of the Defence Force Admiral Alan Beaumont to meet with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence counterparts, thus initiating the 'Dibb-Beaumont Dialogue'.

That this ground-breaking bilateral initiative became a reality is as much a testament to Paul's drive as it is to the interest shown by former ambassador SATOH in forging a closer defence relationship with Australia.

As the first ever defence dialogue conducted by Japan with any country other than the United States, this dialogue paved the way for further discussions between us.

In time it led to the establishment of the 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' Meeting that now underlines our security relationship.

After exiting the public service to take up the position of head of the ANU's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Paul's enthusiasm for our bilateral strategic ties only increased.

During the 2000s, when China had all the charm of the Piper of Hamelin, Paul continued to advocate for greater ties with Japan.

Through articles, speeches, and parliamentary submissions, Paul strove to increase awareness in Australia of Japan's role in the region and its importance.

The foresight that Paul showed has in turn benefitted both of our nations in the wake of security developments in this region over the past decade.

It would thus be both fair and proper to acknowledge Paul's wisdom in

bringing both of our countries' defence and security communities together.

The signing of the Reciprocal Access Agreement and updated Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation last year owe their existence to Paul's efforts over so many decades.

That I have the privilege of conferring an award recognizing that extraordinary contribution is an honour that I am only too happy to fulfill.

Conclusion

At a time when our regional security situation has grown more dire with each passing year, we should be grateful that we are able to benefit from the astute analysis that Paul continues to provide.

Its piercing logic cuts through the pack with all the surety of a Stirling Moss at Monaco, backed up with Jack Brabham-like confidence.

No Sunday driver, Paul has led from the front time and again.

I should also like to offer my gratitude to Rhondda and the entire Dibb clan, whose love and patience has provided Paul with so much support over so many years to enable him to make such an historic contribution to our bilateral relationship.

So it is in recognition of this and much more that I confer the Order of the Rising Sun upon the outstanding scholar, analyst, and Nissan-enthusiast seated before me this evening.

Congratulations, Paul!

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