

Fumio Kishida on the Japan-Australia relationship

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Q1. How would the Prime Minister describe the Australia/Japan relationship, especially in connection with security co-operation and collaboration in the Quadrilateral Dialogue, and what is the potential for the relationship in the future?

Japan and Australia now form the core of a partnership of like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region. During my visit, through a series of engagements including my meeting with Prime Minister Albanese, I want to take the relationship between Japan and Australia, with whom we share basic values and strategic interests, to a new level. I would like to do so by deepening and strengthening co-operation with Australia across the three areas of (a) security and defence co-operation, (b) the promotion of 'A Free and Open Indo-Pacific', and (c) resource and energy co-operation.

In particular reference to defence and security, ever since the signing of the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2007, and in response to the changing strategic environment in our region, Japan and Australia have been developing bilateral frameworks such as the Agreement on the Security of Information, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, and the Reciprocal Access Agreement which was signed in January this year. Using these as a base, our two countries have steadily engaged in concrete defence and security co-operation. On the occasion of my visit to Australia, and building upon this foundation, together with Prime Minister Albanese I intend to outline the direction for Japan-Australia security relations for the next decade.

The Quad is not a framework for security co-operation. It is a framework for the promotion of a wide-range of practical co-operation aimed at realising "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific". Japan, together with Australia, intends to provide leadership for initiatives in our region such as the

Quad, and to further strengthen co-ordination on a variety of issues including co-operation with Pacific Island nations.

The export of resources and energy in the form of coal, iron ore, and LNG from Australia to Japan, and the investment in those sectors from Japan to Australia, have underpinned the economic relationship between our two countries. Japan highly appreciates Australia's role as a stable supplier of resources and a trusted destination for investment. Furthermore, co-operation on decarbonisation, including in the area of hydrogen and ammonia which form an integral part of the Green Transformation (GX), is a new frontier for the Japan-Australia economic partnership. I have also been promoting the realisation of the vision for a "Digital Garden City Nation", and want to further co-operation between Japan and Australia in the use of digital technology. I am confident that Japan and Australia will continue to deepen our co-operation in all of these areas.

Note: The vision for a "Digital Garden City Nation": A policy initiative of Prime Minister Kishida aimed at achieving rural-urban digital integration, including by building digital infrastructure, or developing human resources.

Q2. Is the Prime Minister concerned with repeated Chinese incursions into Japanese air space and Japanese waters, and similar Chinese actions in relation to Taiwan?

Unilateral attempts by China to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, as well as the expansion and increased vigour of its military activities in the vicinity of Japan, are of serious concern to the security of the region which includes Japan as well as to global security.

Japan intends to resolutely and comprehensively defend our territory, territorial waters, and territorial airspace including the Senkaku Islands, and to uphold a free and open international order with the US-Japan Alliance forming the cornerstone of our peace and stability. Meanwhile we will firmly maintain and assert Japan's position and strongly request that China take responsible actions.

In addition, a series of military activities by China in the vicinity of Taiwan in August, in particular the launch of ballistic missiles into the seas adjacent to Japan including into our Exclusive Economic Zones, presented a grave concern to both the security of Japan and the safety of our citizens. We strongly condemned and objected to these actions by China, and urged China to immediately cease its military exercises which were seriously impacting on the peace and stability of the international community.

Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are not only vital for the security of Japan, but also for the stability of the international community. Our consistent position has been that we expect the issue surrounding Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue. On this point, Japan, Australia, and the G7 countries, share the position that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are important.

Q3. Is the Prime Minister concerned with the prospects for nuclear exchange and destabilisation arising out of the Russia/Ukraine conflict, and is the Prime Minister similarly concerned with recent North Korean missile firings?

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a threat to the very foundation of the international order, an order which has been developed through the strenuous efforts and great sacrifices of the international community over many years.

Amid this, threats to use nuclear weapons have contributed to worldwide concern that yet another catastrophe resulting from nuclear weapon use is a real possibility.

We should never tolerate the threat of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia, let alone the use of nuclear weapons. We must ensure that Nagasaki remains the last place to ever suffer an atomic bombing.

I myself have repeatedly advocated this, including recently at meetings of the NPT Review Conference and at the United Nations General Assembly. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan will continue to strongly advocate its position at various international forums.

As for North Korea, its repeated actions, including its launch of a ballistic missile that flew over Japan on October 4th, present a serious and imminent threat to the national security of Japan and threaten the peace and security of the region and the international community. Such actions are absolutely unacceptable.

Following the launch of the ballistic missile on October 4th, I held telephone conversations with President Joe Biden of the United States and President Yoon Suk-yeol of the Republic of Korea. Through co-ordination at multiple levels, including these telephone meetings, we confirmed to continue close co-ordination with both the US and the Republic of Korea.

On the other hand, amid repeated violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions by North Korea, it is deeply regrettable that the Security Council failed to take action in response to

North Korea's serious provocations and repeated violations of these resolutions due to the negative behaviour of a few members of it.

Given this state of affairs, on October 18th Japan imposed additional asset freezes on five entities involved in the development of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

North Korea may engage in further provocative actions in the future, including another nuclear test. Through co-operation with the international community, including with the US and Australia, Japan will continue to advance the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and aim for the denuclearisation of North Korea.

Q4. Is the Prime Minister concerned with inflation in the global economy, and the prospect of a global recession, and are trade groupings like the TPP able to counter any of these negative economic pressures?

Amid the worldwide price increases as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the following global monetary tightening, fears of a global recession present a major risk factor to the Japanese economy.

Addressing negative economic pressures in the global economy such as inflation and recession is also recognized as an important issue among the CPTPP members.

In the meantime, the CPTPP Commission Meeting held in Singapore on October 8th, the ministerial-level highest decision-making authority under the CPTPP, confirmed the notable contribution of the Agreement to the global economy. Furthermore, it was decided that the CPTPP members would make efforts for fostering a better environment for the flow of trade and investment and conduct a review to strengthen supply chains within the region, leveraging the strong partnerships that exist within the CPTPP.

Japan will take a greater leadership role, in close co-operation with Australia and other CPTPP members, to strengthen the free trade regime and to enhance the resilience of supply chains by promoting this Agreement, including through the accession process of the UK.

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