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## — Opinion

# Japan-Australia mateship will now be forged in economic resilience

I intend to reaffirm with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese our two-way partnership on energy security, and for us to **Sanae Takaichi** work together to contribute to energy stability across Asia. *Japanese PM*



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This year marks a truly historic milestone: the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia – known as the NARA Treaty, a name that resonates personally with me as it shares its name with my hometown of Nara.

I am therefore especially delighted to visit Canberra, the beautiful capital city nestled around Lake Burley Griffin and a sister city to Nara, on this momentous occasion.



Of particular significance is Australia's decision to introduce the general-purpose frigates based on Japan's upgraded Mogami-class design.

Over the past five decades, Japan and Australia have steadfastly nurtured our friendship and, even amid today's challenging international environment, have actively worked as stabilising forces for the peace and prosperity of our region.

With the next 50 years firmly in view, I wish to reaffirm with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese our shared commitment to elevating the Japan-Australia relationship to even greater heights during this visit – including through the following two key areas of co-operation.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Japan's vision for a "free and open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). Today, the world faces intensifying geopolitical competition and a shaking of the international order – from Russia's aggression against Ukraine to mounting tensions across the Middle East.

Against this background, we are updating FOIP to reflect the changes and challenges that have emerged in the past 10 years. The severe international environment makes it necessary for each nation in our region to enhance their resilience and promote their freedom to decide for themselves even as we remain bound together in complex and deeply intertwined relationships of mutual interdependence.

Japan and Australia have the will and capability to play a leading role in realising FOIP and form the central pillar of the co-ordination of like-minded countries,

which is taking on even more significance in light of more severe and complex international situations.

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**“I look forward to forging an even deeper bond with Prime Minister Albanese – who, like me, has a real passion for rock music.”**

Both our nations face the challenge of promoting our freedom to decide for ourselves and strengthening resilience, and thus it is imperative that we further deepen our co-operation on economic security, including the strengthening of supply chain resilience.

In particular, ensuring a stable supply of critical minerals is a strategic priority for both our countries. Japan and Australia have already made meaningful progress through public-private collaboration: the Lynas project has seen the commencement of heavy rare earth exports to Japan, while the Alcoa project has advanced a gallium production initiative involving trilateral co-operation between Japan, Australia, and the United States.

Drawing on the lessons of such projects, I look forward

[<https://www.afr.com/world/asia/japan-s-pm-seeks-strong-win-in-election-to-beef-up-defence-20260208-p5o0ib>]to deepening discussions with Prime Minister Albanese on how we can further accelerate Japan-Australia co-operation, working in concert with the United States and other like-minded partners.

Furthermore, as the Middle East situation continues to affect both our countries, ensuring stable energy supplies and strengthening supply chain resilience have become matters of pressing urgency.

Last month, I convened the Asia Zero-Emission Community Plus online summit on energy resilience, with the participation of Australia and other regional partners, and announced the Partnership on Wide Energy and Resources Resilience Asia – an initiative to advance co-operation including maintaining supply chains for crude oil and petroleum products and diversifying energy sources.

I intend to reaffirm with Prime Minister Albanese our two-way partnership on energy security, and for us to work together to contribute to energy stability across Asia.

# An ever-deepening security and defence partnership

Japan and Australia, which were once at war, have together woven a postwar history of friendship and co-operation and today stand as “special strategic partners” sharing fundamental values – freedom, democracy and the rule of law. As fellow allies of the United States, our security and defence co-operation continues to deepen.

Of particular significance is Australia’s decision to introduce the general-purpose frigates based on Japan’s upgraded Mogami-class design

[<https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/historic-australia-and-japan-to-seal-10b-warship-mega-deal-20260417-p5zoou>]. This landmark program will take our security partnership to a new level and stands as a defining symbol of our co-operation in this momentous year of our relationship.

I am firmly convinced that through endeavours such as this, Japan and Australia can make an even greater contribution to the peace and stability of our region and to the international community.

During this visit, I also look forward to discussing with Prime Minister Albanese new areas of strategic co-operation – including in the cyber domain – that will build upon the strong foundation of our existing security and defence partnership.

In 2014, former prime minister Shinzo Abe – a leader I hold in the deepest respect – addressed the Australian parliament and celebrated the historic transformation of the Japan-Australia relationship into a new “special relationship”. In the 12 years since then, that special relationship has made steady and substantial progress across every conceivable area.

Building on this shared experience, I wish to work with Prime Minister Albanese during this visit to chart a new future for Japan and Australia – one that looks to the next 50 years and seeks to broaden our co-operation further in every field: security, economic security, trade and investment, people-to-people exchanges, tourism, education and research.

I genuinely look forward to forging an even deeper bond of personal trust with Prime Minister Albanese – a fellow leader who, like me, has a real passion for rock music [<https://www.afr.com/link/follow-20180101-p5o05p>] – letting our respective strengths resonate with each other to create a powerful, dynamic harmony.