

Japan and Europe
Securing World Peace for the Next 50 Years

Fumio Kishida
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

For the past fifty years, the Munich Security Conference has magnetized those wishing for a more peaceful and stable Europe and beyond. Its magnetism continues to grow even stronger over the next half century, as the conference has extended its arms to the other sphere of the world, particularly the Asia-Pacific.

The Asia-Pacific is the epicenter of the rapid shift in the global power balance. The region is also the driver of global economic growth. These trends are incremental but decisive. The region is full of hope, yet not without anxieties. In a world where everything is connected, the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific are closely intertwined with those of Europe, and vice versa.

That is why Japan is ready to even more closely work with European partners.

Japan has pledged to be a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation. Our resolution is simple but robust: Japan is going to contribute even more proactively in securing peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, in cooperation with our partners.

Based on this principle, the Government of Japan has already launched some new initiatives. They include the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) and the adoption of the National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS presents in the clearest manner what and how Japan aims to achieve as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace.” Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation, upholding freedom and democracy after the war. As the year 2015, the 70th anniversary since the end of World War II, approaches, I would like to emphasize how much peace, democracy and human rights have long formed an integral part of the identity of Japanese people. The NSS clarifies Japan will continue this path. The NSS also reveals how much importance Japan attaches to collaboration with Europe.

All major powers share responsibility for securing peace and prosperity in the world. Therefore, Japan will strengthen relationships, based on trust and cooperation, with our partners inside and outside of the region while deepening cooperation with the United States, our ally. In this context, Japan believes that cooperation with Europe, including

through the EU and NATO, has vast potential which has yet to be fully cultivated.

Japan and Europe have both the capability and will to make this world safer and better. Our strength lies in our common belief in freedom, democracy, human rights, and other fundamental values. In particular, our shared commitment to the rule of law will be a beacon that blazes the way for our future collaboration.

First, Japan and Europe should further cooperate towards upholding maritime order based on the rule of law including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, since Japan and Europe highly benefit from “Open and Stable Seas.” Specifically, ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight over the high seas is critical not only for global prosperity but also for stability.

Supporting coastal states in enhancing maritime law enforcement capabilities is one promising area. Japan and Europe are working together to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. We can encourage the parties concerned in the South China Sea to conclude an effective and legally-binding Code of Conduct and ensure peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with relevant international law - not by force or coercion. The EU decided to establish its maritime security strategy by June. Japan is looking forward to further collaborating with Europe based on our respective new strategies.

Second, Japan and Europe should further cooperate toward consolidating the rule of law in cyberspace. Our daily lives are thoroughly dependent on cyberspace. It is surprising and disturbing that there is no agreement in the international community on what rules govern this global commons. Japan believes that existing international law, including the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, applies to cyberspace. When we talk about cyberspace, geographical distance has no meaning. Cyberspace reminds us how closely interlinked are the securities of Europe and Asia, as well as other parts of the world.

Third, Japan and Europe need to ensure free access to, and sustainable use of, outer space. Preventing anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) testing and avoiding collisions between satellites benefits us all. Japan and Europe should increase efforts to quickly realize an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. Technological advancement has brought a massive opportunity and a new threat at the same time. Together, by strengthening the rule of law in this field, Japan and Europe can secure the benefits of outer space while minimizing the risks.

Our strength also lies in our commitment to peace supplemented by astute realism. Disarmament and non-proliferation demand such strength. As the Foreign Minister of the only country to ever suffer atomic bombings and as a person from Hiroshima, I would like to focus here on how Japan and Europe can cooperate towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The world is still riddled with over 17,000 nuclear warheads. The Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues, as well as the threat of nuclear terrorism, are sources of serious concern for the international community. In pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons, we should be mindful of both the humanitarian consequences of their use and the reality of increasingly diversified nuclear risks. Based on this recognition, I propose “three preventions” for non-proliferation: the prevention of emergence of new nuclear-weapon states, the prevention of proliferation of materials, equipment as well as technologies which could contribute to nuclear weapon program, and the prevention of nuclear terrorism. I further suggest “three reductions” for nuclear disarmament: the reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons, and the reduction of incentives for the development and possession of nuclear weapons. I would appreciate support and cooperation from Europe when propelling this initiative.

Non-proliferation and disarmament is an urgent challenge. Japan and Europe should substantially contribute to the success of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and its process as well as the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I am pleased to have worked with my colleagues from Europe including Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Turkey, among others, through the NPDI (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative), an initiative to make practical proposals in this field. The next NPDI meeting will be held in Hiroshima in April. I would like to send a powerful message towards realizing the lofty goal of a world free of nuclear weapons from a city to have suffered atomic bomb. As for nuclear security, Japan and Europe should ensure that the Nuclear Security Summit 2014, to be held in the Hague, will bring about tangible outcomes. Regarding export controls, Japan and Europe should lead by example through implementing responsible export controls for arms and dual-use items and technologies, particularly to countries of concern.

These are some of the paths Japan and Europe can take hand in hand with other partners for the good of the world. We can drive change by exhibiting leadership anchored by our shared values as well as our commitment to peace and realism. I eagerly await taking these actions with our European friends.