
Remarks By Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the Australian Parliament

Parliament House

Canberra, Australia

Tuesday, 8th July 2014

The Honourable Tony Abbott MP,
Prime Minister of Australia,
The Honourable Bronwyn Bishop
MP, Speaker of the House of
Representatives,
Senator the Honourable Stephen
Parry, President of the Senate,
The Honourable Bill Shorten MP,
Leader of the Opposition,
Members and Senators,
Distinguished guests,
I would like to respectfully
acknowledge the Traditional
Owners of the Land on which this
event is taking place and their
elders past and present.

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Now, ladies and gentlemen, When
we Japanese started out again
after the Second World War, we

thought long and hard over what
had happened in the past, and
came to make a vow for peace
with their whole hearts. We
Japanese have followed that path
until the present day.

We will never let the horrors of the
past century's history repeat
themselves. This vow that Japan
made after the war is still fully alive
today. It will never change going
forward. There is no question at all
about this point.

I stand here in the Australian
legislative chamber to state this
vow to you solemnly and proudly.

Our fathers and grandfathers lived
in a time that saw Kokoda and
Sandakan.

How many young Australians, with bright futures to come, lost their lives? And for those who made it through the war, how much trauma did they feel even years and years later, from these painful memories?

I can find absolutely no words to say. I can only stay humble against the evils and horrors of history.

May I most humbly speak for Japan and on behalf of the Japanese people here in sending my most sincere condolences towards the many souls who lost their lives.

There is a story from 1968 that pulls at my heartstrings even now.

Australia invited a Japanese woman to come here. Her name was Matsue Matsuo, and she was 83 years old.

She accepted Australia's invitation and, in memory of her son, poured Japanese sake into Sydney Bay.

Her son was on a small submarine that had sunk in Sydney Bay during an attack on Australia. The people of Australia kept his valour in memory so many years, and brought over the brave soldier's mother from Japan.

This is so beautifully open-minded.

"Hostility to Japan must go. It is better to hope than always to remember."

These are the words of Prime Minister R.G. Menzies when he restarted Australia-Japan ties after the war.

Again speaking both for Japan and for the Japanese people, I wish to state my great and whole-hearted gratitude for the spirit of tolerance

and for the friendship that
Australia has shown to Japan.

We in Japan will never forget your
open-minded spirit nor the past
history between us.

* * *

Prime Minister Menzies was the
first to welcome a Japanese prime
minister to Australia after the war.
That was 57 years ago.

We signed a Commerce Treaty
between us.

That propelled us on the road to
prosperity, which we still enjoy
today.

It was my grandfather, Nobusuke
Kishi, who signed it.

This was the start of Australian
coal, iron ore, and natural gas
coming into Japan. The second-

coming of Japan's industry after
the war first became possible
through the help of Australia, our
indispensable partner.

Just as Prime Minister Menzies and
my grandfather did, Prime Minister
Tony Abbott and I hope to make a
truly new base for our relations.

This afternoon, Prime Minister
Abbott and I will sign the Japan-
Australia Economic Partnership
Agreement.

Seven years ago, when our talks on
this EPA began, many asked if we
would ever see this day. I think
even many members of this
honourable body felt the same way.

Let us congratulate each other for
the many efforts that brought us
here today.

The next step for us will be the TPP.
After that, RCEP. And then the

FTAAP. Let us walk forward together, Australia and Japan, with no limits.

Yes, we can do it. After all, when Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and Japan's Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira said that the creation of a Pacific community was a significant long-term objective, we built the cornerstone for APEC. That was no less than 34 years ago.

Visions always come from a longitude of 135 degrees east, do they not?

Of course, we are the ones who benefit by making markets that are broad, open, and free.

Ladies and gentlemen, opening up Japan's economy and society is one of the major engines for my Growth Strategy.

I am now working to reform systems and norms that have not changed in many decades. Japan will grow by increasing its productivity while keeping good fiscal discipline.

To do that, I will become like a drill bit myself, breaking through the vested interests and the norms that have deep roots.

Reforms are now starting in the fields of agriculture, energy policy, and medicine for the first time in decades. We also started to reform old norms in our labour regulations.

Since the beginning, I have stressed that I want to make Japan a place where women shine. I have also said time and again that for non-Japanese with a can-do spirit and ability, Japan and Japanese society must be a beacon of hope.

This EPA with Australia will be a great catalyst to spark further changes as we open up Japan's economy.

It will also give us a great push forward as we work towards the TPP.

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Japan and Australia have deepened our economic ties. We will now join up in a scrum, just like in rugby, to nurture a regional and world order and to safeguard peace.

Today I stand in front of you, who represent the people of Australia, and state solemnly that now Japan and Australia will finally use our relationship of trust, which has stood up through the trials of history, in our cooperation in the area of security.

Australia and Japan have now freed ourselves from one old layer and are now moving towards a new "special relationship."

Prime Minister Abbott and I confirmed that already, on April 7 in Tokyo.

Today, Prime Minister Abbott and I will sign an agreement concerning the transfer of defence equipment and technology.

That will make the first cut engraving the special relationship in our future history.

That is not all. So far as national security goes, Japan has been self-absorbed for a long time.

Now, Japan has built a determination. As a nation that longs for permanent peace in the world, and as a country whose economy is among the biggest,

Japan is now determined to do more to enhance peace in the region, and peace in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is to put that determination into concrete action, that Japan has chosen to strengthen its ties with Australia.

Yes, our countries both love peace. We value freedom and democracy. And we hold human rights and the rule of law dear.

Today is the day that we bring life to our new special relationship. To make its birthday today, I should have brought a huge cake to share a piece with every one of you.

There are many things Japan and Australia can do together by each of us joining hands with the United States, an ally for both our nations.

Japan is now working to change its legal basis for security so that we

can act jointly with other countries in as many ways as possible.

We want to make Japan a country that will work to build an international order that upholds the rule of law. Our desire is to make Japan a country that is all the more willing to contribute to peace in the region and beyond. It is for this reason that Japan has raised the banner of “Proactive Contribution to Peace.”

Whatever we decide to do, I will tell you that Japan will continue to work together with our neighbour at a longitude of 135 degrees east.

This is why we have made this “special relationship.”

Let us join together all the more in order to make the vast seas from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian and those skies open and free.

In everything we say and do, we must follow the law and never fall back onto force or coercion. When there are disputes, we must always use peaceful means to find solutions.

These are natural rules. I believe strongly that when Japan and Australia, sharing the common values, join hands, these natural rules will become the norm for the seas of prosperity that stretch from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian.

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Today is the day our special relationship is born. It is fitting that I conclude my speech with words of gratitude to our dear friends and with an appeal to our young people.

I would ask the members of this esteemed body to please look to

the gallery, where you will see Mr. Robert McNeil of the Fire and Rescue New South Wales.

Mr. McNeil, to you I give my deep appreciation.

Minamisanriku in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture was one of the towns that suffered the very worst damage from the tsunami that hit our Tohoku region on March 11, 2011.

Mr. McNeil, leading a team of 76 people and two dogs, immediately came to Minamisanriku.

There, he worked together with fire fighters from Japan. Mr. McNeil said, "When the Japanese fire fighters were grieving, we were able to share their grief. There were no walls of communication between us."

We will keep his words in our hearts warmly forever.

Then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard stood motionless, with her upper lip tight, upon seeing the terrible sight of Minamisanriku. I would like to express once more my sincere thanks for the leadership that Prime Minister Gillard showed.

Furthermore, this is an excellent example, isn't it, showing that Australia-Japan relations go beyond fences between political parties.

Andrew Southcott, Michael Danby, Gary Gray, and of course Andrew Robb are some of many who have advanced exchanges with Japanese Diet members, which will become more and more important.

There are many more who have been active in this way, so forgive me for naming only these very few.

I wish to thank all those who have made efforts to connect with your fellow lawmakers in Japan. I very much hope you will continue those efforts.

Japan and Australia also have ties made through the Japan Exchange and Teaching, or “JET,” Programme. The New Colombo Plan will certainly give rise to the leaders of the future.

Tokyo will become a place where these young Australians come across new chapters in their personal stories. Japan will become a country that will take these young people visiting from Australia as important members of society.

Japan and Australia will each work to make our youth exchanges stronger, better, and bigger. This is the era that has now begun.

I ask all the honourable members of this body to take back to your home districts the message that Abe said that young people should head to Japan. I will do the same for you. I will tell the youth of Japan that they should head to Australia.

In 2020, Tokyo will once again host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. As for me, I watched the 1964 Olympics, and I was one of the many who were dazzled by the power of Ms. Dawn Fraser, who is in the gallery today.

Ms. Fraser, to me, you were Australia. Thank you very much for coming here today.

What spirited athletes will you send to Tokyo in six years? We all look forward to seeing that.

Ms. Fraser—Dawn— I hope we see you in good shape, in Tokyo once

more in 2020. I hope very much that you bring forth a new dawn to Japan and a new dawn to the future of Australia-Japan relations.

Thank you very much.