

Japan-UK Friendship Forum in London

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Honorable members of the Parliament!

Distinguished guests!

Ladies and gentlemen!

On behalf of the Japanese delegation visiting London, I thank you for your warm welcome. This Japanese delegation includes dozens of the most dedicated members of the UPF movement in Japan as well as Ambassadors for Peace who have shown distinguished efforts in their fields for peace. May I ask you to give big hands of applause for these individuals? Thank you.

Thanks to dedication and hard work of these people as well as many other active members of UPF and Ambassadors for Peace, our primary activities of the UPF Japan have proved to be very much relevant and useful to the challenges Japan faces at this very juncture.

Since I took charge in the UPF Japan, I have tried to introduce wisdom and experiences of the post-war Europe that have enabled the current state of peace, integration of nations and freedom from dictatorial regimes. So, I invited a couple of distinguished European leaders to Japan for their lectures. They include Dr. Werner Faaslabend, Austria's longest-serving defense minister, and Dr. Walter Schwimmer, also Austrian politician and former secretary general of the Council of Europe.

I also organized fact-finding tours to Europe. This Japanese delegation is to learn directly from European friends.

Having spent a decade as the chair of the UPF Europe before going to Japan, I realized vital lessons to be learned by Asia in general from post-war Europe's struggles for peace, integration and victory over communism.

As you know, with different cultural, ethnic and developmental gaps rampant, Asia is far from any real integration. Besides, with China as the largest economic and military power in the region, the communist ideology and one-party dictatorship assert their tacit legitimacy, hampering progress in human rights, freedom and rule of law.

In this picture of Asia, Japan's role is critical to disseminate mature democratic culture, respect for human dignity as well as freedom of faith and conscience on top of the economic and technological advancements in the entire Asia. I would like to urge European friends to help Japan fulfill her civilizational roles for Asia at this very crucial juncture.

Let me explain some challenges Japan faces today. Aside from solving the decades of deflationary economy through what they call Abe-nomics, the most pressing agenda of the government led by 60-year-old Shinzo Abe is the gloomy prospect of dwindling and aging population, threatening nearly half of the villages, towns and cities across Japan to lose their administrative functions in a couple of decades.

The current extraordinary Diet session is convened mainly to tackle this agenda, for which a powerful politician was charged exclusively to revitalize rural communities in a newly-created ministerial portfolio.

In order to help solve this particular agenda, UPF Japan has been actively engaged in a nationwide campaign to revitalize families by promoting traditional family values and ethics, encouraging the youth to marry and disseminating familial cultures in the local communities under the name of True Family Movement.

As you know, UPF's overall vision is 'One Family under God', transcending nationality, religion or ethnicity. Recently, we organized a major convention of 10,000 youth in the metropolitan zone by the name of Global Youth Festival. It celebrated global harmony and cooperation as demonstrated by our Japanese overseas volunteers, international marriages and multi-cultural co-habitation within the Japanese society. Several Diet members attending the festival were marveled by the depth and magnitude of our dynamism and a future vision of Japan.

Riding on Japan's globalization drive, Prime Minister Abe has visited 49 nations and held summit meetings with more than 120 heads of state or government, promoting what he termed a proactive peace diplomacy. However, apparently in collusion with Chinese leadership, the South Korea's President has

declined to hold a summit meeting with Mr. Abe. This situation has come to a level where the United States' government, which is the security partner with both countries, is seriously annoyed.

With our strong conviction that Japan and Korea should play important roles for peace, prosperity and freedom in Asia and beyond, our UPF chapters in both countries have been promoting mutual understandings through dialogue and mutual visits by Ambassadors for Peace.

In a much longer term, UPF of both countries are pushing both governments to consider construction of an undersea tunnel connecting Japan and Korea. In Japan, more than 20 prefectures have formed local councils to campaign for the tunnel project. Our affiliated foundation has been engaged in drilling of research shafts in a couple of tunnel sites as well as in conducting substantial geological and maritime research and analysis.

According to them, there are good prospects of technology and funding for the tunnel construction. What is needed is the political will among leaders and peoples of both countries. In this sense, the Euro Tunnel linking Britain and France across the channel is a great model not only in technical terms but in diplomatic terms, overcoming historic difficulties between the two nations. Your experiences and insights will be very useful to both Japanese and Korean peoples.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Japan and Britain were engaged in the alliance, purportedly against the advancement of the imperial Russia into China and Korea. It was the first of its kind between a western power and an eastern nation on a rather equal footing those days. Since then, partly thanks to similarities such as the island geography and the royal family, Britain has been a cherished model of Japan's modernization for many decades. Japan adopted the parliamentary democracy and the left-side car traffic system.

When Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was reviving British economy, then Japanese premier Yasuhiro Nakasone collaborated with her in setting up a political forum called 'Japan-Britain Commission for the 21st Century'. This commission has continued its active discussions ever since, reporting their outcomes to successive prime ministers.

There are Japanese scholars who assert re-alliance with Britain, both as sea powers and mature democracies. A new Japan-Britain Alliance may indeed contribute to liberating China from communism, Russia from national alienation while encouraging USA to become the confident leader of the free society. If necessary, our UPF chapters in both countries may act as a bridge to form such an alliance.

If you are inspired to share any such experiences or insights with Japanese friends, you are most welcome to Japan as our guests. Such mutual visits and exchange will one day revive the Japan Britain Alliance for peace and prosperity of the 21st century Asia and the world.

Once again, I thank you for your time to share with this Japanese delegation in this forum. (end)