

## Written evidence submitted by Dr Yuichi Hosoya (INR0093)

### The UK-Japan Global Strategic Partnership

#### *Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" Vision meets "Global Britain"*

1. Both the UK and Japan are facing the necessity of finding a new international identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the UK began to present a new vision of "Global Britain" with more proactive global diplomacy in October 2016,<sup>1</sup> Japan launched a new diplomatic vision of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) strategy in August 2016<sup>2</sup>, which has attracted leading players in the region including the US, Australia and India.
2. Therefore, it was natural for two political leaders, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and then Prime Minister Theresa May, to conclude "Japan-UK Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation" on 31 August 2017. It was stated in this Join Declaration that "Japan and the UK will strengthen cooperation globally, and particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, conscious of its importance to global security and prosperity."<sup>3</sup> Geographically, the Indo-Pacific links the UK to Japan. This region is now becoming a source of dynamism and vigorous economic growth. From the view of Japan, the UK is welcomed to this region for some reasons.

#### *The UK-Japan Global Strategic Partnership*

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Global Britain, Sixth Report of Session 2017-19, HC 780, 12 March 2018,

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmffaff/780/780.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), Saturday, August 27, 2016, Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi, Kenya.

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e\\_000496.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e_000496.html)

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), "Japan-UK Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation", 31 August 2017, Tokyo, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000436675.pdf>.

3. The UK and Japan are generally seen as two leading players in defending the rules-based international system. Lowy Institute Poll 2020 suggests that the UK and Japan are the most trusted countries among the 7 global powers.<sup>4</sup> While the UK and Japan attracted 84% and 82 % of the respondents in Australia respectively, only 23% of them trusts China. According to this opinion poll, both the US and China are losing trust recently, while the UK and Japan have occupied the top two positions in the last nine years. In addition, the UK and Japan are generally seen in the US as the most important allies in Europe and in Asia respectively. There are several reasons that the three powers, the UK, the UK and Japan should enhance their global partnerships in the current turbulent time.
  
4. It is important to remind that “the UK and Japan have a global strategic partnership, underpinned by mutual interests, common values and a commitment to upholding the rules-based international system” as agreed in January 2019 in the “UK-Japan Joint Statement”.<sup>5</sup> The reason why Japan needs “Global Britain” is that the UK is one of the leading powers which has a proud history of defending the rules-based international system.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told to *The Financial Times* that Japan would welcome the UK to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) “with open arms”.<sup>7</sup>
  
5. Several indicators show that both the US and China become less trusted in the

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<sup>4</sup> Natasha Kassam, *Lowy Institute Poll 2020*, Lowy Institute, Sydney, 2020, p.7.

<https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/report/>

<sup>5</sup> MOFA, “UK-Japan Joint Statement“, January 10, 2019, London,

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000436675.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Yuichi Hosoya, “Defending the Liberal International Order: The UK-Japan Partnership in an Uncertain World”, in John Nilsson-Wright (ed.), *The UK and Japan: Forging a Global and Proactive Partnership*, Chatham House Report, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, May 2019, pp.73-83. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/uk-and-japan-forging-global-and-proactive-partnership>

<sup>7</sup> Lionel Barber and Robin Harding, “UK would be welcomed to TPP with ‘open arms’, says Shinzo Abe”, *The Financial Times*, October 8, 2018.

<https://www.ft.com/content/57c4e3ce-ca22-11e8-b276-b9069bde0956>

international community under the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Although the UK and Japan cannot be equal to the two giants in its power, the two liberal democracies with a long maritime tradition can have some roles to play in the current unstable geopolitical rivalries. One of these roles would be to defend the rules-based international system, as Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Boris Johnson have been declaring several times in their speeches.

6. As neither of the two cannot maintain international system unilaterally, the UK and Japan need to deepen and broaden their diplomatic and security cooperation. Thus, at their meeting at Lancaster House London on 5 August 2020, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab “welcomed that Japan and the UK have made significant tangible progress on their security and defense cooperation in recent years, and shared the view on promoting further cooperation including joint exercises, maritime security, addressing ‘ship-to-ship’ transfers, transfer of defense equipment, and joint research”.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Japan as UK’s Ally in the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”***

7. It is then Foreign Secretary William Hague who repeatedly used the word, an “ally”, to express Japan. When he visited Tokyo in October 2013, Foreign Secretary Hague stated that “Japan is a vital ally for the UK, on regional and international security and development, and as the second biggest source of new inward investment in the UK last year. We are bound by common values and sincere friendship between our peoples, and this is a relationship of immense importance to us in the UK government.”<sup>9</sup> Allies need share common values such as the rules of law, human rights, freedom, and democracy, all of which the UK has championed. This is why the UK should remain a leading power in the “free and open Indo-Pacific”.

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<sup>8</sup> MOFA, “Japan-UK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting”, August 5, 2020, London.

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/gb/page6e\\_000207.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/we/gb/page6e_000207.html)

<sup>9</sup> British Embassy Tokyo, “Foreign Secretary strengthened UK ties in Japan”, 16 October 2013. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-strengthens-uk-ties-in-japan>

***September 2020***