

## Queen Elizabeth II's birthday

## U.K.-Japan friendship spans many years, many fields

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BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 83rd birthday. Every year, we receive many kind messages from all over Japan, which show the great warmth and affection that the Japanese people hold for the royal family. It is also an indication of the deep friendship between the United Kingdom and Japan.



2008 was a very special year for us. We celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of the U.K.-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which became the basis of diplomatic relations between our two countries. To mark this historic anniversary, the British Embassy and the British Council held the "U.K.-Japan 2008" campaign, which included over 300 events, performances and exhibitions, cele-

brating the best of contemporary arts, science and the creative industries, and was attended by millions of visitors. "U.K.-Japan 2008" was outstandingly successful in creating new collaborations, and in strengthening existing partnerships between the U.K. and Japan.

The political ties between the U.K. and Japan remain strong and our priorities as closely aligned as they ever have been. Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited Japan on the occasion of the G-8 meeting in Hokkaido in July 2008, at which Japan played an important leadership role in pushing forward the debate on climate change. Since then, of course, the world has been engulfed in the most serious economic crisis since the 1930s. The recent London summit, which agreed a \$1.1 trillion package to support the global economy, as well as new resources for the poorest countries, an agreement to with-

stand protectionism, and a renewed commitment to work toward a sustainable and low-carbon economic recovery, was a significant success. The scale of the financial crisis made it clear that a global solution was needed.

The U.K. welcomed the international response to the summit's ambitious goals. And we were grateful for the leadership shown by Japan, especially on the question of new resources for the international financial institutions.

Action to ensure that all this is consistent with our moving to a low-carbon society is another shared priority for the U.K. and Japan. We continue to collaborate closely in this vital area. The work of researchers from the U.K.'s Hadley Centre, using the Earth Simulator supercomputer at the Japan Agency for Marine Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) in Yokohama, has added powerful evidence to the scientific



Royal celebration: Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her 80th birthday at Windsor in 2006. PRESS ASSOCIATION

consensus that we need to tackle global warming urgently.

The U.K. is determined to remain an international leader on climate change policy and last autumn passed three new laws, on climate change, energy and planning, which together will set a tight, legally binding framework for government decisions on emissions reductions and provide the foundation for a faster, strategic low-carbon transformation. We are continuing an intensive dialogue with the Japanese government and business on the negotiations for a new international framework after 2012, and on the practical policy framework required to speed up the development and deployment of relevant technologies. I welcome the news that Japan will devote a significant part of the latest financial stimulus package explicitly to what Prime Minister Taro Aso called a "low-carbon revolution." In every crisis there is an opportunity — we now have a golden opportunity to make strategic investments to set our economies on a long-term low-carbon path.

The environment was the main theme for His Royal

Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall when they visited Japan in October last year. During this visit, the prince was able to enjoy the splendor of C.W. Nicol's sustainably managed Afan Forest in Nagano, and gave a powerful speech on the dangers of "the climate crunch" and deforestation at the Miraikan Museum in Odaiba. No one who saw the spontaneous warmth of the welcome given to the royal couple wherever they went, in Tokyo, Nara and Nagano, and the excitement surrounding their visit, will forget the experience.

Throughout (and despite) the financial downturn, our business links have continued to develop. The U.K.'s flexible labor systems, skilled workforce and open markets mean that we remain the largest recipient of Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Europe, accounting for about a fifth of the total. There are over 1,400 Japanese investors in the U.K., employing some 100,000 people in various sectors, including automotive, ICT, biopharmaceutical and health care, and services.

Last year saw further significant investments from

Japanese companies such as Eurus Energy, Nissan and Daiichi Sankyo, creating hundreds of jobs in the U.K. It is not an easy time for investment. But we remain committed to supporting Japanese companies in the U.K. U.K. trade with Japan also continues to grow, with the value of U.K. exports to Japan reaching over ¥1.1 trillion, balanced equally between goods and services.

And exchanges between British and Japanese people continue as well; at all levels, including business, research and education. Over 70,000 Japanese visit the U.K. every year for study. The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET), for overseas language assistants, remains one of the most popular choices for U.K. graduates. There are currently over 17,000 U.K. nationals living in Japan and the U.K. is fortunate to have some 60,000 residents from Japan.

On two particular points, we would be grateful for assistance. The British Embassy in Tokyo is recruiting people who have a close connection to the U.K. for its network of wardens across Japan. The role of this network is to help British nationals in Japan in times of emergency, such as earthquakes. And I would strongly encourage U.K. nationals to register with the embassy while they are in Japan. For details of both these programs, please see the box below, or visit the British Embassy Web site: <http://ukin-japan.fco.gov.uk>

Sports is another area in which the U.K. and Japan share strong ties. In June this year, Japan will welcome participants from across the world for the Junior Rugby World Cup. Teams from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales are competing in this event, and I wish them all the best of luck in the tournament. Looking forward, the London Olympics in 2012 will be the

centerpiece of the U.K. sporting calendar, and I hope that athletes from around the world — not just the U.K. and Japan — will enjoy what will surely be a spectacular event.

At the British Embassy we are also looking all the time at how best to present our work, and Britain, publicly. We launched our new Web site in September last year, which provides up-to-date information about the U.K. and our work here in Japan. But we are always keen to do more. In January, I became one of the British Diplomatic Service's "bloggers" (<http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/roller/warren>). Through this new Web-based medium, I am trying to tell people more about the work that we do

## Working to build cultural bridges around the world

People who know about the British Council, do so for many different reasons. Those interested in the arts may have attended a performance, exhibition or symposium organized, or supported by us; those planning to study overseas will probably know us as a gateway for information about U.K. educational opportunities, and perhaps as provider of the IELTS qualification for entry into English-speaking universities. Because people tend to experience just one facet of our work, it's important that we let our customers and partners know that the business of the British Council is, at heart, all about cultural relations.

In everything we do we are looking to build engagement and trust between people of different cultures through the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Whether this exchange takes place in one of our English-learning classrooms in Tokyo and Osaka, or whether it occurs between our network of young International Climate Champions, what we're trying to do is respond to aspirations, and build understanding and trust.

The most obvious area of exchange we promote is the movement of people between countries. Around 70,000 Japanese a year travel to the United Kingdom for study purposes. Increasingly, first-rate research in all fields has an international aspect, and our role is to help U.K. universities and colleges find the best partners for long-term, sustainable relationships for mutual benefit. Similarly, Japan offers enormous opportunities for the U.K.'s creative sector.

Exposure to Japan's extraordinarily sophisticated

here. All feedback about my blog will be gratefully received!

In closing, I want to emphasize again the close ties that exist between the U.K. and Japan. These are nowhere more closely reflected than between the Japanese Imperial family and the British royal family. Last year, during their visit to Japan Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall met Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako. Both in celebration of the strong relationship between the U.K. and Japan, and for the 83rd birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, I am delighted to be able to send my warmest greetings to all the readers of The Japan Times.



Sporting excellence: London will host the 2012 Summer Olympics. BRITISH EMBASSY

## Birthday Greetings to

# Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



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## Volunteers wanted for emergency warden network

The warden network is a group of volunteers with links to the British community who can assist the British Embassy and British Consulate General in times of crisis by relaying information between the embassy and British nationals in the affected areas. Other important duties include helping us encourage British nationals to register on our LOCATE database, testing communication channels and attending training events.

Japan lies in a major earthquake zone and is often affected by severe typhoons. In times of natural disasters it is often very difficult for our

consular staff to get to the scene immediately. Having volunteers "in the field" enables us to gather information on the situation quickly and pass on messages to loved ones back home.

With over 17,000 British nationals living in Japan, we are always looking for more volunteers, not only in highly populated cities but also remote areas. If you are interested in helping us, please e-mail us at [warden-network.tokyo@fco.gov.uk](mailto:warden-network.tokyo@fco.gov.uk) (for people living in eastern Japan) or [warden-network.osaka@fco.gov.uk](mailto:warden-network.osaka@fco.gov.uk) (for people living in western Japan), or alternatively visit our Web site ([ukin-japan.fco.gov.uk](http://ukin-japan.fco.gov.uk)) for more details.

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