

Bastille day

France and Japan, partners in a multipolar world

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AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

Franco-Japanese relations, which last year marked their 150th anniversary, are excellent.

In the political sphere, our two countries have in common the values that France is celebrating today, on Bastille Day — the values of democracy and peace, freedoms and human rights. This may appear commonplace to say, but it is important to remember at a time when, from North Korea to Iran, certain regimes are stepping up their provocation. France was the first country to express its support for a reform of the United Nations Security



Council whereby Japan would become one of the permanent members, and we are delighted today to see the archipelago strengthen its presence on the international scene through its logistics support operations in the Indian Ocean and by fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia.

In the economic sphere, trade between our countries is rich and has a long history. France is the second-largest foreign investor in Japan, with 10 percent, and it is the first destination of Japanese investment in the euro zone.

It is also important to recall the mutual esteem of our peoples: Japanese is the second most translated language in France after English and France remains one of the favorite destinations of Japanese tourists, who go there especially to see the 33 sites list-

ed by UNESCO.

This closeness should prompt us to search for new paths of cooperation.

We are orienting ourselves more and more toward a multipolar world, which is marked by the emergence of new powers but also by the appearance of global threats. In order to be stronger together, France, Europe and Japan should bolster their strategic dialogue and consider solutions to the great issues of our day, whether they be international peace and security, the environment or the economic and financial crisis.

As countries that respect human rights, France and Japan are working hand in hand at the United Nations to watch over their defense in the world at large, and we are the originators of many initiatives in this domain. One subject is an

exception: the death penalty. Its growing application in Japan these past several years is something we find regrettable. France abolished it in 1981, like its European partners and like most of the grand democracies today, with the notable exception of Japan and the United States. The European Union as a whole considers the death penalty to be a futile sentence, inhuman and contrary to human rights.

France also lends its voice to the appeals calling on Japan to ratify the Hague Convention on international abductions of children. The question of foreign parents divorced from Japanese spouses exercising their parental rights and being deprived of visiting rights today affects more than 168 children born of American, Canadian, British and French parents, and the pain these

fathers experience is quite legitimate.

In the economic domain, our relations harbor great potential. More high-quality, extremely safe French products like beef, medicines and many foodstuffs containing additives approved by the World Health Organization, and used by most countries of the planet should be allowed to enter the Japanese market. Too many nontariff obstacles stand in the way, but we are working with our Japanese partners to improve this situation. We would also like foreign enterprises to be able to compete in the various open tenders under satisfactory conditions that the present imprecise law does not allow in the public sector.

In regards to investment, the good numbers mentioned above must not prevent us

from setting more ambitious objectives. I have been struck since my arrival here by the way France and Japan have a common approach to the practice of capitalism. Our two countries support on their soil a genuine national industry. They encourage a long-term industrial vision in which social responsibility remains essential.

They believe in the role of the state. This year has shown us how useful this can be, how well-crafted regulations can help avoid worldwide catastrophes. The difficult times that our companies are experiencing make recourse to stable and confident shareholders necessary: Our industrialists must be able to count on one another.

It is in this spirit of cooperation and friendship that I wish my 10,000 compatriots living in Japan a very good Bastille Day.



Comic book hero: "Manga" artist Riyoko Ikeda, best known as the author of "The Rose of Versailles," receives the French National Order of the Legion of Honor from Ambassador Philippe Faure at the French Embassy in Tokyo on March 11. EMBASSY OF FRANCE

Aeronautics: favorable conditions for cooperation

People speak very often about French cuisine and culture, which are justifiably appreciated all around the world. On the other hand, it is less common to hear mention of another facet of our country, that of high technology and in particular, the capabilities of our aerospace industry.

The early days of aviation in Japan were closely linked with France: Thus we celebrate this year the 100th anniversary of the first flight in Japan of a glider designed by the Frenchman Le Prieur. This took place in December 1909 at Ueno. The first motorized Japanese flight took place one year later in Tokyo. That aircraft, a biplane designed by Henri Farman, arrived from France and was piloted by Capt. Tokugawa, who received his flight training in France. Later, the first airplanes and engines produced by Japanese manufacturers like Mitsubishi and Kawasaki were French aircraft made under license.

The world of aeronautics has changed a great deal since then, but France has maintained its place among the leaders, often playing a major role, together with its European partners, in many programs that have become benchmarks of the sector.

Arianespace, Airbus, Eurocopter, Thales, Safran, Dassault Aviation as well as ATR figure among the great names worldwide. The Airbus A380 is today the flagship of world air transport just as the Concorde was in its day. The Concorde was the first — and till now the only — supersonic civil air transport. As regards the Bourget air show, which also celebrated its centenary this year, it is the oldest and largest air show in the world in terms of the number of exhibitors and visitors.

Together with its European partners, the French aeronautical industry has earned many wonderful successes among Japanese clients. Arianespace, the world leader in placing commercial payloads in orbit, today is responsible

for three-quarters of all Japanese launches of commercial satellites; Snecma (Safran Group), the No. 4 engine manufacturer worldwide, equips all Japanese airlines with the CFM56 engine, which it developed and produces in a 50/50 joint venture with General Electric; Eurocopter, which recently bought its distributor Euroheli as well as the helicopter activities of the maintenance company ANAM, today holds a 57 percent share of the civil and parapublic helicopter market in Japan, and has great expectations for penetrating the defense market with its new helicopter, the NH90.

While these companies have succeeded in taking their place in the Japanese market, other companies, some well known globally, have not managed to break through in Japan.

We might cite, for example, Airbus Industries, whose market share of civil aircraft in Japan is weak, whereas it was 53 percent in the United

States in 2007. But the wind is turning. Ties between the Japanese and French aeronautical industries, which have been slack ever since World War II, are in the process of drawing closer. EADS recently opened an office in Japan and added this country to its list of priority suppliers. Cooperation on the development of a supersonic airliner is becoming more vigorous, and other industrial and commercial forms of collaboration are under study.

These bonds, which are drawing closer together, allow us to expect gains benefiting everyone: Japanese manufacturers, who will find new outlets; French manufacturers, who will find in Japan new reliable suppliers and high-quality products; and airlines and their passengers everywhere in the world, who will in the end be able to enjoy airplanes that better respect the environment, are more economical to operate and more comfortable.

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