

France National Day Special

Strong partners tackle global issues

LAURENT PIC
AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE



Two weeks ago, President Emmanuel Macron made his first official visit to Japan. This visit saw tremendous developments in our bilateral relations. The president and Prime Minister

Shinzo Abe, who were meeting for the seventh time since 2017, drew a new road map for the five years to come, covering all fields of cooperation between our two countries.

As France and Japan are hosts of the G7 and G20 summits in 2019, the strength of our bonds will be instrumental in tackling the many global challenges we are facing. This includes reducing inequalities both in our countries and among nations,

maintaining and strengthening our multilateral framework to regulate trade and fight against climate change by enforcing the Paris agreement with a new level of ambition, fighting ocean plastic pollution, strengthening peace and security and promoting full empowerment of women. At a time where seclusion is a tempting option for many, France and Japan have a duty to show that there is much we can do together to shape a better future for our people and the world.

The past three years were marked by unprecedented developments in our political and defense dialogue, epitomized last May by a joint exercise in the Indian Ocean involving the nuclear aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and her Japanese counterpart, helicopter carrier Izumo, as a part of a larger mission aimed at enforcing our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific, the security of which is paramount for international safety. 2019 also saw French military assets take part in surveillance

operations of illicit maritime activities as a part of measures undertaken to enforce

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U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea. The new road map that we agreed upon during the president's visit to Japan will formalize our cooperation in this area through a new partnership for the Indo-Pacific that will not only cover security, but also projects in the field of sustainable development and infrastructure. A global maritime dialogue will be set up to foster this cooperation, with its first meeting taking place next September.

In the field of economy, the entry into

force of the economic partnership agreement between the European Union and Japan offers a lot of opportunities for our companies to develop further partnerships centered on innovation.

The president also met with prominent artists who embody the passionate bonds underlying our century-old cultural partnership. After the outstanding success of "Japonismes 2018," organized in France on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, the president announced that a French cultural season will be organized in Japan in 2021. This series of events will showcase the diversity and the modernity of French culture and "art de vivre" to the Japanese public.

September will see Japan host the Rugby World Cup, followed in 2020 by the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Japan will then hand the baton over to France for the organization of the RWC in 2023 and the Paris Olympics in 2024. Sports will be another key element underlying our



President Emmanuel Macron speaks at a news conference with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Osaka on June 26. SOIZIG DE LA MOISSONNIERE / PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC

cooperation for the upcoming years as we share a common goal to connect those international events to global issues and make them more sustainable and socially responsible.

As I was standing at the Imperial Palace and saw the president of the republic meet with the emperor, on the threshold of the Reiwa Era — the president was the second

head of state to be bestowed with such an honor since the enthronement of his majesty — I felt that the coming years would see our friendship thrive as never before.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Ambassador Laurent Pic gives gold, collected by recycling smart phones in Paris, to Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike in February in Tokyo. The metal will be used for medals in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. EMBASSY OF FRANCE



Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and helicopter carrier Izumo at a joint exercise in the Indian Ocean in May. FRENCH NAVY

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