

Canada - Japan
Inter-Parliamentary Group



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - Japon

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation

Annual visit by the Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Tokyo (Japan)
April 21-25, 2008**

Report

The Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG), conducted the CJIG annual Co-Chair's visit to Tokyo (Japan) from April 21 to 25, 2008. The primary purpose of the visit was to build upon the 15th Annual Bilateral Meeting of Canadian parliamentarians and Diet members held in Canada in August 2007 as well as to discuss the parameters for the upcoming 16th Bilateral Meeting between Canadian and Japanese parliamentarians to be held in Japan in 2008. The visit also allowed the Co-Chair to reaffirm to his Japanese counterparts the importance of the Canada-Japan partnership. Mr. Wilfert was accompanied by Mr. Paul Cardegna, Executive Secretary for the CJIG.

Objectives

- To follow-up on the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group/Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League 15th Bilateral meeting of August 2007 and discuss the objectives and parameters for the 16th Bilateral meeting (Japan, 2008);
- To raise Canada's profile in Tokyo through strategic engagement of Diet members, local officials and Japanese and Canadian businesses; and
- To reinforce links between parliamentarians from Canada and Japan.

Participants:

A complete list of people who met the Co-Chair appears in the Appendix A of this report.

Tokyo:

The Co-Chair commenced his visit to Tokyo by receiving very comprehensive briefings by Ambassador Joseph Caron and Program Managers of the Canadian Embassy. Recurring themes throughout the Tokyo meetings between the Co-Chair and his Japanese counterparts were bilateral relations, domestic politics, trade and investment, the environment and climate change, peace and security and peacekeeping and future bilateral meetings between the CJIG and the Japan Canada Diet Friendship League.

Japan-Canada Bilateral Relations

Both sides agreed that Japan and Canada enjoy a privileged relationship which is based on similar values such as the rule of law, a similar view towards business, strong social programs and long democratic traditions. Both countries favour stable business

investment in their economies which are complimentary in nature. Interveners from both countries agreed that exchanges should be increased at all levels of government and society and see benefits in long-term joint investment projects and further integration of the Japanese and Canadian economies and governmental initiatives. 2008 marks the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada. The Co-Chair explained that, in honour of this milestone, the CJIG was planning to organize a one-day symposium on Parliament Hill in Ottawa entitled "Japan on the Hill", which would take place on May 14, 2008. This activity would gather together academics, politicians, bureaucrats, business leaders and others who are involved in Japan-Canada bilateral relations and would allow for a full and spirited discussion of the relationship between the two countries. Finally, there was a strong feeling that while this relationship was already robust in nature, further efforts to strengthen it should be pursued vigorously.

Japanese Domestic and International Politics

The Co-Chair was appraised of the current political situation in Japan. Japanese parliamentarians expressed some frustration with the current political arrangement. The governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) controlled the Lower House of the Japanese Diet while the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) controlled the Upper House. The split between the two Chambers was making the adoption of bills difficult and had already resulted in the defeat in the Upper House of the government's initiative to increase the gasoline tax.

According to public opinion polls, neither party appeared to have sufficient support to win a majority in upcoming elections. Both parties decided to postpone national elections until after Japan hosted the G-8 leaders summit in Hokkaido in June 2008. After that activity, the timing of future elections would likely be the subject of considerable speculation and discussion. Domestically, Japan continued to face a crisis over the ageing of Japanese citizens and the increased cost which this would cause for social services, a problem which was a large contributor to the increasing Japanese national debt.

In international relations, Japan was eager to host the G-8 leaders summit and had recently begun strengthening relations with the Republic of Korea and China in the hopes of creating closer economic collaboration between the three Asian nations. In January 2008, Japan adopted a special law allowing for the continued Japanese refuelling of allied ships in the Indian Ocean, an initiative which was appreciated by Canada and all other allied nations involved in international efforts to combat terrorism. The bill was the subject of considerable debate in the Japanese Diet and its adoption was delayed by the opposition-controlled Upper House. Eventually, the Lower House voted to override the decision of the Upper House and adopt the bill.

Trade and Investment

Despite the robust trade that exists between Japan and Canada, Mr. Wilfert focussed his comments on the fact that both countries can benefit from further economic integration. He reiterated that Canada could be a stable source of oil, beef, pork, wheat, canola and other products for Japan. He noted that Japan was already the second largest export market for Canadian pork and that Canada was a more democratic and stable source of oil than the Middle East.

Canada felt that the 2005 Joint Economic Framework should be the starting point for discussions leading to a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries. The Japanese were reticent to commit to further discussions leading to an FTA due to the effect that this type of agreement would have on the Japanese agricultural industry. Japanese parliamentarians noted that the agricultural lobby in Japan was very strong and had previously resisted FTAs with countries that had strong agricultural sectors. Japan feared that entering into an FTA with Canada would seriously damage the Japanese agricultural industry at a time when Japan was struggling to increase its food self-sufficiency. Mr. Wilfert argued that an FTA with Canada would mean cheaper food products for Japanese citizens, which was crucial at a time when high oil prices were driving up costs.

The Co-Chair also suggested that Japan's energy source vulnerability could be alleviated by increased Japanese investment in Canadian tar sand oil production as well as Canadian expertise in environmental technologies such as nuclear power, hydroelectric power, solar and wind power and biofuels. Finally, the Japanese were told that Canada remained committed to advocating for better access to Japanese domestic markets for Canadian beef products.

Environment and Climate Change

Climate change and global warming was a very popular subject during Mr. Wilfert's meetings in Tokyo. Both the Co-Chair and the Japanese parliamentarians that he met agreed that all nations, both developing and developed, had to implement measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A "sectoral strategy", wherein a specific industry is targeted to reduce emissions on an international level rather than a general national strategy was seen as a more effective way to ensure the uniform implementation of environmentally-friendly processes. However, both sides were conscious of the fact that all industries must eventually reduce emissions.

Mr. Wilfert noted that Canada aimed to develop cleaner fuels and more efficient cars and was interested in exporting Canadian expertise in clean water, clean energy, biomass and other environmental technologies to Japan. He noted that to promote wind power generation, Canada created and published a wind atlas of Canada indicating the areas where wind generators would be the most efficient. With the increase in global oil prices, Japanese parliamentarians were very interested in promoting conservation and cleaner technology in an effort to reduce energy vulnerability. They remained committed

to meeting the targets outlined in the Kyoto Protocol and planned to continue research into carbon capture and storage methods and nuclear power generation. Both sides agreed that environmental technologies were an area in which great economic opportunities existed for both Canada and Japan. They also agreed that all nations needed to regard environmental degradation as a common responsibility that required the full participation of every nation to combat.

Peace and Security

Mr. Wilfert suggested that peace and international security was another area where Japan and Canada could work together. He noted that the two countries had taken part in joint peacekeeping operations in the Golan Heights and suggested that Canada would offer to share its peacekeeping training and expertise with Japan. To increase joint operations between the military of both countries, Mr. Wilfert suggested that the Japanese Embassy in Ottawa could benefit from a Japanese military attaché amongst its staff. If this was not possible, he suggested that one of the military attachés from the Japanese Embassy in Washington could be accredited for Ottawa as well.

He expressed Canada's appreciation for the refuelling operation that Japanese ships continued to provide in the Indian Ocean for allied forces. The Japanese explained that the bill authorizing this action had originally been defeated by the opposition-controlled Upper House. The Japanese government had to use its majority in the Lower House to ensure that the bill was adopted allowing for the continued refueling assistance by the Japanese military.

Japanese parliamentarians were very eager to learn more about Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. Mr. Wilfert explained that Canada's role in the Asian country would continue until 2011, but after 2009 would be focused on training, development and reconstruction rather than active, military operations and that the House of Commons had established a special parliamentary committee to review and oversee developments on this file.

He also suggested that since Japan has invested over \$1.2 billion in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, Japanese parliamentarians should visit the war-torn country to evaluate the situation and the effectiveness of Japanese resources. He also suggested that Japanese personnel should be deployed in Afghanistan in order to learn more about "provincial reconstruction teams" (PRT).

The Japanese explained that article 9 of the Japanese constitution prohibited the Japanese government from engaging in military operations, therefore, Japan was unable to take a larger role in international security operations. Mr. Wilfert suggested that Japan should consider amending its constitution in order to allow for a more robust, activist foreign policy, particularly in light of Japan's recent aspirations to achieve a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Another of Japan's foreign policy preoccupations was the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea's (DPRK) continued nuclear aspirations. This, coupled with the long-standing allegations of the abduction of Japanese nationals by the DPRK, had increased the importance of the 6-party talks, in which Japan was deeply involved. Japanese parliamentarians described these concerns to Mr. Wilfert who, in turn, reaffirmed Canada's support for the 6-party talks and continued dialogue and engagement with the DPRK. Finally, the other major security concern in the region for the Japanese was the increased military spending of China. In response, Japan has sought strengthen its security arrangement with the United States.

Bilateral Consultations

The Co-Chair met with his counterparts from the Japan Canada Diet Friendship League. It was agreed that the 16th Bilateral meeting take place in Tokyo and Hokkaido from July 16 to 23, 2008. The agenda would likely include peace and security, economic cooperation and the environment amongst other subjects.

Miscellaneous

Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan:

While in Tokyo, the Co-Chair met with representatives from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ). The CCCJ planned to focus its efforts on the 15 areas of cooperation that were identified in the Joint Economic Framework which was signed in 2005 between Japan and Canada. The CCCJ sought to identify the points relevant to Canadian business interests and then lobby the relevant Japanese parliamentarians on behalf of Canadian companies. One such linkage that the organization was attempting to create was partnerships between Japanese and Canadian universities to promote joint research and development projects. Mr. Wilfert suggested that the Government of Canada should consider offering bursaries to increase student exchanges between Japan and Canada and contribute money directly to Canadian universities for the purpose of creating links with their Japanese counterpart institutions.

Mr. Wilfert was also asked to include the CCCJ in future meetings and activities with Japanese parliamentarians in order to increase its input and raise the profile of the Canadian business community in Japan. The CCCJ noted that 50% of foreign direct investment in China came from Japanese companies and that Japan remained the primary investor in China and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries. It suggested that improved Canadian investment in China and ASEAN nations could best be achieved through Japanese corporations, which already had strong links in the region.

Conclusion

The Canadian Parliament and the Diet of Japan have a very privileged relationship. This relationship, cultivated through visits such as this, accentuated the importance of the Canada-Japan partnership. This visit to Tokyo was an excellent opportunity for the Co-Chair of the CJIG to further expand his knowledge of and contacts in Japan as well as to undertake necessary discussions related to the planning and organization of the 16th bilateral meeting in Japan. It was also vitally important at that time for the Co-Chair to raise Canada's profile in Japan in order to strengthen, reinforce and reinvigorate the already robust relationship which existed between Canada and Japan.

A summary of the travel costs is appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Marie-P Poulin, Senator
Co-Chair

Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

Hon. Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.
Co-Chair

Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Annual Co-Chairs Visit
DESTINATION	Tokyo (Japan)
DATES	April 21-25, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P., Co- Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter- Parliamentary Group (CJIG)
STAFF	Mr. Paul Cardegna, Executive Secretary for the CJIG
TRANSPORTATION	\$19, 407.97
ACCOMMODATION	\$3,046.39
HOSPITALITY	\$858.90
PER DIEMS	\$961.44
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$449.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$4,737.05
TOTAL	\$29, 460.75

Appendix A

List of People who met with the Co-chair during the
2008 Annual Co-Chair's visit of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
Tokyo (Japan)
April 21-25, 2008

Mr. Keiichiro Asao, Shadow Minister of Defence, Member of the House of Councillors

Ms. Patricia Bader-Johnston, President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Mr. Kenzo Fujisue, Member of the House of Councillors

Ms. Wakako Hironaka, Former Chair, Upper House Research Commission on Economy, Trade and Employment and Former Environment Minister, Member of the House of Councillors

Professor Andrew Horvat, Visiting Fellow, Tokyo Keizai University

Mr. Tokio Kanoh, Secretary General, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Research Commission on Oil, Resources and Energy, Member of the House of Councillors

Professor Masaru Kohno, School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University

Mr. Takeshi Maeda, Former Chair, Upper House Committee on Fundamental National Policies, Member of the House of Councillors

Mr. Yoshitaka Murata, Secretary, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League, Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. Hiroshi Nakai, Standing Secretary, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League, Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone, Former Prime Minister of Japan

Mr. Gen Nakatani, Former Minister of Defence of Japan

Mr. Sadaaki Numata, Executive Director, The Japan Foundation Centre for Global Partnership and Former Japanese Ambassador to Canada

Mr. Akihiro Ohata, Chief Secretary, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League, Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. Quentin O'Mahony, Governor, Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Mr. Philip O'Neill, Vice President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Mr. Taro Sasaki, Assistant to Secretary General, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League

Professor Yasunori Sone, Graduate School of Media & Governance, Keio University

Mr. Naokazu Takemoto, Chair, Lower House Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport and Former Parliamentary Secretary for Economy, Trade and Industry, Member of the House of Representatives

Ms. Shinako Tsuchiya, Secretary General, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League, Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. Tamisuke Watanuki, Chair, Japan Canada Diet Friendship League, Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. Taku Yamasaki, Chairman, Research Commission on Foreign Affairs, Member of the House of Representatives