

Canada - Japan  
Inter-Parliamentary Group



Groupe interparlementaire  
Canada - Japon

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary  
Delegation of the  
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group**

**to the**

**Fourteenth Annual Bilateral Meeting  
Japan  
(Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka)  
November 12 – 17, 2006**

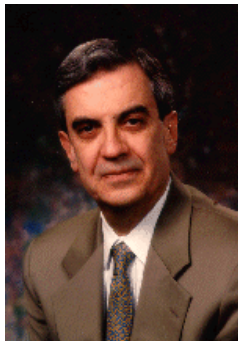
**The Canadian Delegation  
14th Bilateral Meeting of the  
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group**



***Hon. David Tkachuk  
Senator, Co-Chair  
Leader of the delegation***



***Mr. Gerald Keddy  
M.P., Co-Chair  
Leader of the delegation***



***Hon. Pierre DeBané  
Senator***



***Hon. Donald H. Oliver  
Senator***



***Ms. Nina Grewal  
M.P.***



***Mr. Serge Ménard  
M.P.***



***Ms. Yasmin Ratansi  
M.P.***

# Report

## Context

The delegation was comprised of the following people:

Mr. Gerald Keddy, M.P., Co-leader of the delegation  
Hon. David Tkachuk, Senator, Co-leader of the delegation  
Hon. Pierre DeBané, Senator  
Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Senator  
Ms. Nina Grewal, MP  
Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.  
Mr. Serge Ménard, M.P.  
Mr. Paul Cardegna, Association Secretary

The objectives of the visit were to:

- Strengthen the bonds of friendship between Canadian and Japanese parliamentarians and promote the bilateral relationship;
- Obtain the views of Japanese parliamentarians on issues of mutual interest;
- Promote bilateral trade and commercial investment between the two countries in the areas of energy, environment, technology and forestry;
- Promote cultural/educational/tourism exchanges;
- Promote cooperation in international initiatives, such as security, over-fishing and the war on terrorism

The delegation participated in vigorous discussions with Japanese parliamentarians during both the Fourteenth Annual meeting and the courtesy calls that they paid on the Presidents of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors of the Japanese Diet.

## 14th Annual meeting

The discussions during the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting were divided into six broad subject areas, which were reflected in the agenda which was as follows:

- Outline of policies of the Canadian Conservative government/Outline of the policies of the new Japanese administration under Prime Minister Abe
- Public Security (including justice system, rates of incarceration and criminality)
- Environment
- Economy (including energy, economic and trade issues)

- Natural Resources (including forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, over fishing and conservation)
- Peace and Security (including Afghanistan and North Korea)

### **Policies of the new Governments**

As both Japan and Canada have elected new governments since the last Annual consultations took place (the 13<sup>th</sup> annual consultations took place in Canada in August 2004), parliamentarians from both countries were curious about the policies of the new administrations. The Canadian delegates began describing the new policies of the Conservative government which was elected in January 2006. The main priorities of the government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, namely: accountability, democratic reform, strengthening Canada-USA relations, reform of environmental laws and regulations, revision of criminal legislation, child care and tax reductions, were detailed at length. After which, the Japanese delegates explained the main priorities of the new government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who was elected in September 2006. Prime Minister Abe's government seeks to enact sweeping reforms of Japan's education law, constitution, justice system, social security system and economy through a strong focus on scientific innovation and a revitalized, streamlined government bureaucracy. In diplomatic affairs, strengthening the Japanese-US alliance has been identified as a high priority for the new government, as well as international cooperation aimed at containing international terrorism and North Korean nuclear ambitions.

### **Public Security**

The Japanese parliamentarians described recent initiatives introduced by the government designed to reform the legal system. While Japan's crime rate is still below that of most industrialized nations, there has been an increase in the crime rate of late. Proposed changes to the Juvenile Law Act are focussed more on incarceration rather than reparations and seek to lower the recidivism rate from its current rate of 50%. These reforms are part of larger revision of the justice system, particularly with regards to efficiency, which are due to be completed by 2009. Japanese parliamentarians identified the breakdown of the tradition family unit in Japan as being a contributing factor in the recent increase in the crime rate. Finally, the Japanese government has resolved to better engage citizens groups in crime prevention initiatives and improve links between the police and these groups.

Canadian parliamentarians, noting Japan's low crime and incarceration rates, cited Japan as an example for reform of the Canadian penal system. While the new government in Canada has proposed to increase the length of sentences for violent crimes, rehabilitation and preventative measures are still central to Canadian public security system. The respective gun control laws of both countries were also discussed and compared.

### **Environment**

On the issue of the environment, Canadian parliamentarians began by describing how there has been a fundamental shift in Canada's environment policy. Under the previous government, Canada had been a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol. The new Conservative government in Canada felt that the greenhouse gas emissions targets contained in the Kyoto Treaty were no longer realistic. Instead, the government has introduced the Clean Air Act which contains revised targets aimed at reducing dangerous gases such as carbon dioxide, while maintaining the viability of the economy. All Canadian delegates were anticipating a vigorous discussion on the environment when the Clean Air Act is debated in the Canadian Parliament.

Japanese parliamentarians detailed the challenges that the country faces with regards to the environment. A large percentage of Japanese power is still created from coal-burning and nuclear power, though the government is still committed to attaining the greenhouse gas reductions outlined in the Kyoto Protocol. The government has used a combination of incentives and taxation to deter industry from using material and processes that contribute to global warming, as well as raising awareness amongst consumers about recycling and reducing consumption. Finally, larger cities such as Tokyo have initiated regulations which have led to improved air quality.

### **Economy**

While the Japanese economy has recovered after years of sluggish performance and levels of imports and exports remain healthy, Japanese parliamentarians expressed some concern about the effect of the recent increase in oil prices. Due to its heavy reliance on overseas sources for energy the government has been formulating a new energy strategy focussed on diversification of energy sources and improving relations with energy-producing nations. Newer, more efficient energy technologies are also being developed such as drilling techniques to allow tapping into undersea gas fields. New technological innovations in nuclear reactors are also being pursued and are expected to be fully implemented by 2010. With regard to trade, Japan recently concluded free trade agreements (FTA) with Singapore, Mexico and Malaysia and continues to vigorously pursue these types of agreements with other countries.

Canadian parliamentarians noted that Canada is the largest exporter of energy resources in the world and that the Canadian oil reserve is second only to that of Saudi Arabia. Canada is the world's largest exporter of uranium as well as Japan's largest supplier of coal. The Canadians considered cooperation on energy matters between Canada and Japan as being vital to the future of bilateral trade and urged the Japanese to pursue a more global view of energy-development opportunities. While traditionally a resource provider, Canada is also interested in developing high technology and

research and development projects with Japan and attaining better access to the Japanese market. To this end, Canadian parliamentarians argued strongly that it would be mutually beneficial to develop a Japan-Canada FTA which would provide great growth and development opportunities for both countries.

Japanese parliamentarians explained that the main impediment to the development of a Canada-Japan FTA is the agricultural industry, which would suffer if the Japanese market was open to cheaper Canadian agricultural products. Japan wants to develop a robust agricultural industry so as to be able to ensure a stable, sufficient food supply and is, therefore, reticent to lower tariffs which protect this industry. Both sides resolved to continue discussions on this subject.

### **Natural Resources**

The Canadians began the discussion on natural resources by underlining how central these resources are to the Canadian economy and, therefore, how serious resource depletion is, such as over fishing. As a result, Canada has focussed on the strategic management of resources in order to increase sustainability and hopes to develop new research and development projects for resource management with Japan, particularly in the aquaculture and forestry industries.

The Japanese parliamentarians admitted that natural resources are not central industries to the Japanese economy. The fishing industry in Japan represents only 1.6 trillion yen of the yearly 500 trillion yen gross domestic product of Japan. Whereas over 800,000 people are employed yearly in Canada in the forestry industry, the Japanese counterpart employs only 65,000. While Japan does have abundant supplies of lumber (65% of Japan is covered in forests) transportation costs make it cheaper to import lumber rather than harvest it and Japanese forestry companies have to be subsidized in order to be profitable. The fishing industry in Japan is also subsidized and fish products are no longer exported for profit. Japan is concerned about depleted herring stocks and has resolved to work closely with the international community to restore them.

### **Peace and Security (including Afghanistan and North Korea)**

Japan is concerned that the growth of the Chinese and Indian economies may eventually destabilize the world economy and order. This, coupled with the firing of cruise missiles by North Korea in July 2006 and its subsequent nuclear test in October 2006 have heightened concerns about regional security issues. Japanese defence policy is focussed on two major objectives, namely: to prevent direct threats and to improve internal security cooperation. Japan plans to achieve these objectives by working closely with the United States of America, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. Japan continues to support the 6 party talks which are ongoing concerning North Korea and appreciated Canada's support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718. On the subject to boarding North Korean ships to ensure that sanctions are being respected, Japanese delegates responded that the Japanese constitution prevents them from actively searching foreign vessels but that they would play a support role in conjunction with U.S. and U.N. operations.

Canadian parliamentarians explained that Canada is committed to international efforts to combat terrorism and the mission of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. Canada favours United Nations sanctions against North Korea as it feels that the nuclear test was disruptive and destabilizing to the balance of power in Southeast Asia.

### **Courtesy call on President Chikage Ohgi President of the House of Councillors**

The Canadian delegation had the honour of making a courtesy call on President Chikage Ohgi, President of the House of Councillors of the Parliament of Japan. President Ohgi lauded the good working relationship that exists between the Diet of Japan and the Parliament of Canada as well as the long history of cordial relations that exist between the two countries. She also described the historic role of the House of Councillors in Japanese political history. The Canadian delegation focused their comments on two areas: a free-trade agreement between Canada and Japan and the issue of the wrongful removal of children from Canada to Japan. Canadian delegates stressed that they were interested in strengthening relations with Japan through a formal trade agreement and increased parliamentary and governmental exchanges.

### **Courtesy call on Speaker Yohei Kono Speaker of the House of Representatives**

The Canadian delegation had the honour of making a courtesy call on Speaker Yohei Kono, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Japan. Speaker Kono began the meeting by noting that of the over 100 friendship groups which exist in the Parliament of Japan, the Canada-Japan Diet Friendship League is the most active, which is a testament to the strong relationship which exists between the two countries. He explained how Japan has focused recently on bilateral rather than multilateral trade agreements, but mused that the expanding and deepening scope of larger trading blocks are changing international trading relationships. The Canadian delegates welcomed his comments and reiterated Canada's desire to negotiate an FTA with Japan, citing the similar values that bind the two countries and the mutual benefit that can be derived from this type of agreement. Finally, the reconstruction of Afghanistan was discussed, as well as the issue of the wrongful removal of children from Canada to Japan.

### **Miscellaneous**

During their visit to Japan, the Canadian delegation had an opportunity to tour the Toyoto manufacturing plant in Nagoya and Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR), a high-tech company in Nara specializing in telecommunications research and robotics. They attended a Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Yokohama Commonwealth War Cemetery and witnessed the daily auction at the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo. Finally, delegates visited the following cultural sites: Kinkakuji Temple, Nijo Castle, Kofukuji Temple and Osaka Castle.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the mention of certain bilateral irritants such as the issue of wrongfully removed children from Canada to Japan, discussions during the 14<sup>th</sup> Bilateral consultations

between Japanese and Canadian parliamentarians were vigorous, amiable and spirited. Parliamentarians from both countries sought to strengthen the already robust relationship that exists between both countries by focussing of the common values that bind them. Both sides felt that the discussions contained a frank and positive exchange of ideas and concepts and look forward to continuing these discussions during the 15<sup>th</sup> Bilateral consultations which will take place in 2007 when Japanese parliamentarians visit Canada.

A summary of the expenditures incurred for this activity is also appended.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Gerald Keddy, M.P.  
Co-leader of the delegation  
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

The Honourable David Tkachuk, Senator  
Co-leader of the delegation  
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group



## **Appendix A**

### **List of parliamentarians from the House of Counselors and the House of Representatives of the diet of Japan met by the delegation**

Mr. Tamisuke Watanuki (Chair of the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League)

Ms. Shinako Tsuchiya (Secretary General of the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League)

Ms. Fukuyo Nakamori

Ms. Wakako Hironaka (Standing Secretary, Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League)

Mr. Akihiro Ohata (Chief Secretary, Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League)

Mr. Asahiko Mihara

Mr. Seishiro Etoh

Mr. Naokasu Takemoto

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	14th Bilateral Meeting
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Japan (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka)
<b>DATES</b>	November 12-17, 2006
<b>SENATORS</b>	Hon. David Tkachuk, Senator Hon. Pierre DeBané, PC, QC, Senator Hon. Donald H. Oliver, QC, Senator
<b>MEMBERS</b>	Mr. Gerald Keddy, MP Ms. Nina Grewal, MP Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, MP Mr. Serge Ménard, MP
<b>STAFF</b>	Mr. Paul Cardegna, Association Secretary
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 64,029.37</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 14,841.28</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 159.50</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 3,593.99</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 836.88</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 152.74</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 83,613.76</b>
<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group