

Canada - Japan  
Inter-Parliamentary Group



Groupe interparlementaire  
Canada - Japon

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation to the  
Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to Japan**

**Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG)**

**Tokyo, Japan  
February 19-24, 2011**

# Report

The Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG) and Terence Young, M.P. Acting Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG) conducted the CJIG annual Co-Chair's visit to Tokyo (Japan) from February 19 to 24, 2011. The primary purpose of the visit was to discuss the parameters for the upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Meeting between Canadian and Japanese parliamentarians, to be held in Japan. The visit also allowed the Co-Chairs to reaffirm to their Japanese counterparts the importance of the Canada-Japan partnership. The Co-Chairs were accompanied by Ms. Elizabeth Kingston, Executive Secretary for the CJIG.

## Objectives

- To discuss the objectives and parameters for the 18th Bilateral Meeting in Japan;
- 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.

## Tokyo

The Co-Chairs began their visit to Tokyo by receiving a briefing by Ambassador Jonathan Fried. Discussions with Japanese Parliamentarians focused on bilateral relations, domestic and international politics, trade and investment, including the recent signing of a declaration committing both groups to the promotion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the two legislatures, peace and security, as well as future bilateral meetings between the CJIG and the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League.

## Japan-Canada Bilateral Relations

Japan remains a key factor in Canada's strategic and economic interests. Both countries have maintained a vibrant relationship, based on strong people-to-people and economic links, as well as cooperation on issues both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, including those related to the environment and development and security matters.

Although Japan has been overshadowed by the rapid growth of China, it does stand as one of the world's largest economies and one of Canada's most important economic and commercial partners. Moreover, it is important as a high-technology economy that offers significant potential for further partnership in their respective priority sectors.

The Co-Chairs arrived in Japan at a time when the government faced many pressing domestic and foreign issues, including a slow growth rate, a strong yen which has undermined Japan's export competitiveness, and difficult budget deliberations within the Diet. Since Prime Minister Kan had been elected as the new Prime Minister in June 2010, he has faced much criticism for both his domestic and foreign interventions. However, any

legislative action has been hampered due to a majority of seats by the opposition party, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP), in the Upper House. The ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) does not have the two-thirds majority needed in the Lower House to overrule the Upper Chamber on non-budgetary bills. While Prime Minister Kan had managed to fend off a leadership challenge by Ichiro Ozawa in September 2010, questions still remain as to whether or not he will continue to hold his party together in the wake of the many challenges facing both the party and the country.

The Co-Chairs heard much about the recent signing of the 2010 Canada-Japan Joint Declaration on Political, Peace and Security Cooperation by Prime Minister Harper and Prime Minister Kan in November 2010 following the APEC Meeting in Yokohama, Japan. Building on the 1999 and 2005 Canada-Japan Action Agendas for Peace and Security Cooperation, the Joint Declaration stipulates initiatives leading to the improvement of both countries' peace-building and conflict resolution capabilities, while encouraging global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and strengthening the rule of law internationally. Joint discussions would cover a broad range of issues, including counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime, global energy security, maritime security, natural disaster response, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management, and cyber-security.

### **Domestic and International Politics:**

The Co-Chairs raised the issue of The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, encouraging Japan to be party to the Convention. Given the large number of unresolved abduction cases resulting from children being brought to Japan following a divorce or separation. The Convention protects children by ensuring that their best interests are determined by the country in which they are habitually resident. There are presently 37 cases affecting Canadian families.

The Co-Chairs also commented on the appointment of a military attaché accredited to the Japanese Embassy in Ottawa, and congratulated those Diet members who had been instrumental in working towards this realization.

Canada has been looking to have increased airport access privileges in the Tokyo area, most specifically at Haneda Airport, given the fact that Narita is located over an hour's drive from downtown Tokyo and Haneda only presently offers night landing rights, which does not make it viable for connections to other parts of Japan and Asia. It was stated that work is presently underway for the expansion of Haneda, which would allow for Canadian airlines to have enhanced access, although not likely prior to 2013. The Co-Chairs expressed the hope that this work could possibly be expedited.

The Co-Chairs also raised the issue of Canadian beef access to Japanese markets. While in 2005, Japan allowed access of Canadian beef under 21 months of age to its highly lucrative market, Canada has consistently made the request to increase the month acceptance to under 30 months of age, as a first step towards full beef access.

## **Political Situation**

On June 4, 2010, the Diet elected Naoto Kan as the new Prime Minister, Japan's sixth in four years, following the resignation of Yukio Hatoyama. Both are from the DPJ. Prime Minister Kan is a founding member of the DPJ and came to office with a reputation for strong leadership. The government faces a multitude of pressing domestic and foreign policy issues, including low growth, a strong yen, and difficult negotiations with the United States over the two countries' security alliance, government debt, and demographic decline. However, bold legislative action will be difficult since the opposition parties hold a majority in the Upper House. The ruling DPJ party does not have the two thirds majority in the Lower House in would need to overrule the Upper Chamber on non-budget bills.

One issue of concern was raised by the Co-Chairs with respect to Japan's accession to the Hague Convention on civil aspects of international child abduction. Given the large number of unresolved abduction cases resulting from children being brought to Japan following a divorce or separation, Canada has been pushing for Japan to become a signatory to the 1980 *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*. This Convention protects children by ensuring that their best interests are determined by the country in which they are habitually resident. While Japan is not yet a signatory, the Co-Chairs received an indication from the Diet members with whom they met that they would pursue the matter. There are 37 cases affecting Canadian families.

## **Trade and Investment**

While overshadowed by the rapid growth of China, Japan does continue in its position as one of the world's largest economies and one of Canada's most important economic and commercial partners. It enjoys a large, sophisticated consumer market that allows for considerable potential for Canadian exporters. Moreover, its efficient manufacturing and exporting firms have leading-edge technologies, design and research and development capacities.

Japan was the greatly affected by the global recession, faced with a domestic credit crunch, a collapse in equity markets, and dramatic falls in exports. All acknowledge that the recovery of Japan's economy in the face of the crisis will be long and challenging, with a firm need for fiscal consolidation. In the wake of the crisis there have been significant layoffs of permanent workers in favour of non-permanent workers, leading to significant inequality outcomes between these two employment categories. Such a situation has allowed for an intriguing environment for the discussion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Japan. This subject was pursued with vigour by the Co-Chairs throughout their meetings. Of greatest importance to the Japanese in pursuing these discussions is the issue of tariffs on agricultural products, and the DPJ government hopes to use the existing EPA momentum to commit to essential and sustainable agricultural reforms. In this respect, the Co-Chairs stated that Canada could be a stable source of beef, pork, wheat, canola and other products for Japan, while at the same time would not interfere with Japan's exports of rice and citrus fruit. They also stated that Canada holds the second largest oil reserve in the world, and would provide a fair, sustainable and reliable supply base to Japan.

## **Peace and Security**

Peace and security cooperation between Canada and Japan is based on strong shared values and common interests, resulting in a dialogue of cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally on a wide range of regional and global issues including the situation in North Korea, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. While Japan contributes to Afghanistan, it does so by contributing \$5 billion towards reconstruction and re-integration efforts, given its limited capacity to send troops due to constitutional restrictions (Article 9) on its activities. While the DPJ has not changed its policy in this regard, discussions on the role of the Self Defence Forces (SDF) are ongoing. Canada would like to see a greater emphasis on troop participation from Japan. The number of personnel from Japan in Afghanistan amounts to 130.

The debate in Japan regarding the relocation of the United States Military Base in Okinawa was discussed, and expressed within the context of Japan's wider relationship with the United States.

Another of Japan's foreign policy preoccupations is the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea's (DPRK) continued nuclear aspirations. The Co-Chairs expressed the need for Japan to take on a more activist foreign and security policy, and to amend Article 9 of its Constitution. Moreover, the long-standing allegations of the abduction of Japanese nationals by the DPRK had increased the importance of the 6-party talks. The Co-Chairs affirmed Canada's support for the 6-party talks and continued dialogue and engagement with the DPRK, working towards a re-integration of the Korean Peninsula.

### **Bilateral Consultations:**

The Co-Chairs met with their counterparts from the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League. It was agreed that the 18<sup>th</sup> bilateral meeting would take place in Japan, during the fall of 2011, with consideration being given to a delegation visit to Okinawa, Japan.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan:

While in Tokyo, the Co-Chairs met with representatives from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ). The CCCJ is composed of a broad cross-section of business people and entrepreneurs and has served to promote the development of business between Canada and Japan since 1975. Having as its membership over 300 members, it represents some 40 business sectors and is the longest serving Canadian Chamber in Asia. Over the years, the chamber has evolved into a strong and capable organization that plays a vital role in promoting trade and commerce between Canada and Japan.

Members of the CCCJ were delighted to hear of the joint declaration recently signed by Japanese and Canadian parliamentarians on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> Bilateral. This declaration called for members of the respective inter-parliamentary groups to encourage their respective governments and relevant parties concerned to take appropriate action for

the revitalization of negotiations leading to an economic partnership agreement between the two countries. They remarked that both the United States and Australia have a visible economic presence in Asia and Canada should do more.

One of the means to indicate the importance of the Canada-Japan relationship is by initiating discussions leading to an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Following on the 2005 agreement between Prime Ministers Martin and Kiozumi, the Chamber would like to see invigorated talks in this regard. It was noted that Japan seems to be more Asia-focused, and the difficulty of doing business in Japan during these economic times was confirmed. They acknowledged that with the changing business environment, Japanese businesses are re-thinking their business priorities, in an environment where rising protectionism, low consumption and price sensitivity have become the norm. They fear that Japan is developing the perception of being the old Asia, particularly when compared with the economic powerhouse that China has become.

## **Conclusion**

The Canadian Parliament and the Diet of Japan share a most privileged relationship, built on mutual respect, similar economic goals, and respect for traditions, both social and cultural. Enhanced through visits such as the annual Co-Chair visits, it allows both legislatures to acknowledge the importance of the Canada-Japan partnership and to work towards a better understanding of the more immediate pressing issues indicative of the political and economic climate of the respective countries. This visit to Tokyo was an excellent opportunity for the Co-Chairs of the CJIG not only to fortify but also to create new contacts in Japan. Moreover, it allowed the Co-Chairs to undertake necessary discussions with their counterparts related to the planning and organization of the 18<sup>th</sup> bilateral meeting in Japan.

A summary of the travel costs is appended to this report

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. JoAnne Buth, Senator  
Co-Chair  
Canada-Japan  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Mr. Mike Wallace, M.P.  
Co-Chair  
Canada-Japan  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

## Travel Costs

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ASSOCIATION</b>                           | Canada-Japan<br>Inter-Parliamentary Group                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>ACTIVITY</b>                              | Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to Japan                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>DESTINATION</b>                           | Tokyo, Japan                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>DATES</b>                                 | February 19-24, 2011                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>DELEGATION</b>                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>SENATE</b>                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>HOUSE OF COMMONS</b>                      | Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.,<br>Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-<br>Parliamentary Group (CJIG)<br><br>Terence Young, M.P., Acting Co-Chair<br>of the Canada-Japan Inter-<br>Parliamentary Group (CJIG) |
| <b>STAFF</b>                                 | Ms. Elizabeth Kingston, Executive<br>Secretary                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>                        | <b>\$ 22,420.72</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>                         | <b>\$ 4,179.65</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>HOSPITALITY</b>                           | <b>\$ 2,081.01</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>PER DIEMS</b>                             | <b>\$ 1,970.60</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>                        | <b>\$ 2,199.34</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS /<br/>REGISTRATION FEES</b> | <b>\$ 5,134.67</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>\$ 37,985.99</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |