

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 13-18, 2010**

Report

The Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG) and the Honourable Richard Neufeld, Senator and Acting Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG) conducted the CJIG annual Co-Chair's visit to Tokyo (Japan) from February 13 to 18, 2010. The primary purpose of the visit was to discuss the parameters for the upcoming 17th Bilateral Meeting between Canadian and Japanese parliamentarians, to be held in Canada. 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 17th Bilateral Meeting in Canada;
- 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 whom the Co-Chairs met appears in Appendix A of this report.

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, including the results of the election in Japan, trade and investment including the global financial crisis and the effects this crisis has had on the economy domestically, peace and security and future bilateral meetings between the CJIG and the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League.

Japan-Canada Bilateral Relations

The remarkable highlight of the Canada-Japan relationship culminated in the historic visit of Their Majesties, The Emperor and Empress of Japan in celebration of the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This was the first visit of the Emperor since 1953, when he visited as a Crown Prince. Their Majesties were warmly received right across the country.

The August 2009 elections in Japan led to a tremendous change in the political landscape of the country. Prime Minister Hatoyama's Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) soundly defeated the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which had governed the country

for the past 54 years. This victory on the part of the DPJ was considered a protest vote, and not an endorsement of DPJ policies. Most particularly, the Japanese electorate was expressing a frustration of the inability of the LDP to address the social needs of the country. Five months following the election, the DPJ government is not without its challenges. Approval ratings have fallen from 70 to 45%, and Hatoyama and DPJ Secretary Ozawa have both been linked to financial controversies. Elections in the Upper House take place in July 2010.

In 2010, while Canada is chairing the G8 and G20 Summits, Japan is chairing APEC. This will provide for reciprocal visits of Ministers and Prime Ministers. Moreover, Canada's hosting of the 2010 Winter Olympics will do much to raise Canada's profile in Japan.

Canada and Japan enjoy a relationship based on similar values such as the rule of law, a common approach towards business and banking, strong social programs and long democratic traditions. Together, they help to shape the future of the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the areas of economic viability, political relations, and the development of less advantageous regions. Moreover, both realize the benefits of long-term joint investment projects and further integration of the Japanese and Canadian economies and governmental initiatives. On the peace and security front, Japan is a key partner for Canada both bilaterally and multilaterally on a wide range of global issues, such as North Korea, Afghanistan, the Middle East, human rights, arms control and disarmament. Moreover, strong people-to-people links have been maintained through immigration, tourism and education.

Japanese Domestic and International Politics

The Japanese outlined the challenges facing the Japanese economy, such as an ageing population, low birthrate, strong yen and deflation. The August 30, 2009 elections in the Lower House brought to victory the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) for the first time in 54 years, winning 308 of the 480 seats. These election results rejected the status quo while centring on issues related to solving the economic crisis, as well as economic security issues such as unemployment, healthcare and pensions. Yukio Hatoyama and the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) won a landslide victory, sweeping away more than 50 years of nearly unbroken rule by the conservative LDP (Liberal Democratic Party). The DPJ won 308 of the 480 seats in the House and then formed a coalition with the two smaller parties – the Social Democratic Party and the People's New Party – to give it a majority in the Upper House. Apart from a two-year period, the LDP had been in power continuously since its founding in 1954. Domestically, Japan has continued to face a crisis over the ageing of Japanese citizens and the increased burden placed on social services, a problem which was a large contributor to the increasing Japanese national debt. Japanese voters had been experiencing an increasing frustration with LDP policies, particularly in the area of social need, and the resulting election outcome was very much a protest to these policies.

In international relations, Japan hosted a most successful G-8 leaders' summit and has been working to strengthen relations with the Republic of Korea and China in the hopes of creating closer economic collaboration between the three Asian nations. Also, Japan continues to maintain its firm alliance with the United States of America.

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 R and D capacities.

Japan was the hardest hit of all the G8 countries with respect to 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 means of cheque book diplomacy, contributing \$5 BN 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.

To increase joint operations between the military of both countries, the Co-Chairs reiterated Canada's interest in having Japan designate a Military Attaché to its Embassy in Ottawa. Currently in Washington, Japan holds six attaché positions. While the preference would be to have a military attaché in Ottawa, it was suggested by the Co-Chairs that as an immediate alternative at least one of the positions in Washington could be designated to have authority for Canada. Both of these options were warmly received by those to whom they spoke.

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 17th bilateral meeting would take place in Canada, during the winter of 2011, and would likely be concentrated on the west coast. While in Japan, the Co-Chairs had the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Canada-Japan Diet League, the equivalent organization to the CJIG, and witnessed the election of the executive.

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.

Members of the CCCJ expressed the positive diplomatic outcome of the visit of Their Imperial Majesties to Canada on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Moreover, the G8 – G20 Summits have done much to favour a more Canadian focus in Japan.

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 confirmed the difficulty of doing business in Japan during these difficult economic times. 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 17th bilateral meeting in Canada.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Japan
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Hon. Richard Neufeld, Senator
Acting Co-Chair
Canada-Japan
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to Japan
DESTINATION	Tokyo, Japan
DATES	February 13-18, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Honourable Richard Neufeld, Senator, Acting Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CJIG)
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-Japan Inter- Parliamentary Group (CJIG)
STAFF	Ms. Elizabeth Kingston, Executive Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$8,140.02
ACCOMMODATION	\$3,487.71
HOSPITALITY	\$375.65
PER DIEMS	\$1,776.90
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$906.00
MISCELLANEOUS / INTERPRETATION	\$3,125.24
TOTAL	\$17,811.52

APPENDIX A

List of people who met with the Co-Chairs during the 2010 Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to Japan

Embassy of Canada in Japan

Mr. Jonathan Fried, Ambassador
Mr. Robert Derouin, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission
Mr. Paul Thoppil, Minister (Commercial)
Mr. Michael Eyestone, Counsellor (Economic and Financial)
Mr. Christopher Burton, First Secretary (Political)
Ms. Mayuko Toho, Political Officer

Former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone

Mr. Takuji Yanagimoto, Member of the House of Representatives (Acting Chair of the Japanese Diet Delegation to APPF in Singapore)

Former Ambassadors of Japan to Canada

Mr. Sadaaki Numata, Advisor, Kajima Co.
Mr. Michio Mizoguchi, Standing Advisor, Kajima Co.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ)

Mr. Eric DeGroot, President, CCCJ
Ms. Monica Merz, ToysRUs
Mr. Chris Garton, Air Canada
Mr. Shawn Lawlor, Canada Wood
Mr. Bill Varvaris, Executive Director, CCCJ
Representatives from Maple Leaf Foods and Manulife

Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League

Mr. Takahiro Yokomichi, Diet League President
Mr. Akihiro Ohata, Chief Secretary
Mr. Yasukazu Hamada, Secretary General
Mr. Yuichi Goto, Deputy Secretary General

Senior Japanese Journalists

Mr. Ikuya Tanaka, Economic Reporter, Asahi Shimbun GLOBE

Ms. Kazuyo Nakamura, Reporter, Asahi Shimbun GLOBE

Mr. Eiji Furukawa, International News Reporter, Nikkei

Mr. Keiichi Hirose, Economic Reporter, Kyodo News

Mr. Hideomi Kinoshita, Political Writer, Kyodo News

Mr. Yoshio Hanada, Assistant International Editor, Manager for International Affairs, Yomiuri Shimbun

Mr. Takeshi Yamashina, Deputy Editor of Political Dept., Mainichi Shimbun

Lower House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr. Muneo Suzuki, Chair

DPJ International Department

Mr. Yukihisa Fujita, Director-General

Mr. Ikuko Tanioka, Deputy Director-General

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Shuji Kira, Parliamentary Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Lower House Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry

Mr. Shozo Azuma, Chair

Upper House Committee Budget

Mr. Kenji Fujisue, Member of the Upper House Committee Budget and the Leader of the 2009 Upper House ODA Research Mission to Ottawa

Liberal Democratic Party

Mr. Itsunori Onodera, Director, Foreign Affairs Division