

Introduction

This time's "Ottawa News" is about the 95th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces commemoration reception that the Embassy of Japan co-hosted with the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group on September 19th. Approximately 500 guests attended, including then-Speaker of the House of Commons Anthony Rota, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, Mental Health and Addictions Minister Ya'ara Saks, and Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe. The venue was the Great Hall of the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, located on Wellington Street in front of the Canadian Parliament Buildings. Named after the first prime minister, this building is one of the most prestigious in Ottawa.



Guest of Honour Speech: Anthony Rota, Speaker of the House of Commons (former)

We have heard from those involved with the Sir John A. Macdonald's Building that it is used for various events throughout the year, but that this reception for the Japanese Embassy was exceptional in both size and content. Ms. Anne Breau, President of the Ikebana International Ottawa Centennial Chapter No. 120, decorated the venue with flower arrangements. Chef Yasuhiro Shima, the official chef at my residence, made 1,500 pieces of sushi. I think we were able to effectively introduce Japanese culture to guests.

The purpose of this reception is, as the title suggests, to celebrate two events. The first is the 95th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada. We live in an age where people live for 100 years, so 95 years is not a long time. However, since it is the history of a country and a nation, there are many things to talk about. This reception was also the first ever the Japan Self-Defense Forces commemorative reception to be held in Ottawa. The steps we have taken to reach this point are significant. I would like to elaborate on this below.

The Genesis

First, I will provide an overview of Japan-Canada relations. The first recorded encounter between Japan and Canada dates back to 1833, 190 years ago, when three fishing brothers from Kishu (Otokichi, Tomekichi and Hisakichi) drifted in a storm and washed ashore in what is now British Columbia. At that time, Canada was still a British North American colony. In 1867, Canada was founded as a British dominion. In 1873, Canadians visited Japan for the first time in history. Two Methodist missionaries, G. G. Cochran and Davidson McDonald. These two founded a private school that later became Azabu Senior High School and Toyo Eiwa Jogakuin.

The first Japanese immigrant to Canada, Manzo Nagano, arrived in Vancouver on a British ship in 1877. Ten years later, in 1887, a regular route between Yokohama and Vancouver was launched and as a result, from then onward there was an increase in Japanese immigration. The first Japanese consulate in Canada was opened in Vancouver in 1889 and the relationship started deepening between Japan and Canada.

In January 1928, Prime Minister Yoshikazu Tanaka and Prime Minister Mackenzie King reached an agreement to establish formal diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada. Following this agreement, the Japanese government opened a legation in Ottawa in July of the same year. There is something I would like to emphasize in this connection. In 1928, Canada was still a dominion of the United Kingdom, and it was not until the Statute of

Westminster in 1931 that Canada became a sovereign nation in both name and reality. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada preceded the Westminster Statute by three years. At this stage, Canada had diplomatic relations with only three countries: the United States, France, and Japan. At that time, the Japanese Embassy was located on Wellington Street, in a prime location in front of the Canadian Parliament Buildings. The first Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary was Iemasa Tokugawa of Japan, the grandson of the 15th Shogun Yoshinobu Tokugawa. You can feel the energy of Japan in the early Showa era.



Japanese Embassy at the time

95 years of progress

The current extremely good Japan-Canada relationship should never be taken for granted; it has developed through the hard work of our predecessors. There have been difficult and painful times between the establishment of diplomatic relations 95 years ago and today. They were enemies in World War II. The property confiscation and forced internment of Japanese Canadians during the war was a grave mistake that must never be repeated. Many Japanese Canadians were at the mercy of national deception. After the war, Japanese Canadians rose

up and began the Redress Movement, demanding an apology and compensation for wartime injustices. On September 22, 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the National Association of Japanese Canadians President Art Miki signed the Redress Agreement. This was an attempt to sum up all the injustices committed against Japanese Canadians and break with the past.

In fact, 1988 was also the year that Canada joined the JET Programme, as I wrote about in the previous "Ottawa News". I think it is truly symbolic that JET, which is focused on the future, began in the same year as the Redress Agreement.

This year marks 35 years since 1988. Today, Japan and Canada share fundamental values such as democracy, freedom, rule of law, human rights, and market economy. Both are G7 members. Together, we rebuilt the TPP after the US withdrawal and now includes the UK as a member. This would not have been possible without the cooperation of Japan and Canada. Economic relations have grown even closer from traditional agricultural products, oil and gas, and automobiles to areas such as important mineral resources, quantum technology, and AI. Cabinet ministers travel frequently between Japan and Canada.

The current international community is facing two serious challenges. One of them is geopolitical. Attempts to unilaterally change the status quo through force such as Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine are rampant. We must work to maintain and strengthen the international order based on the rule of law. The other challenge that we are facing is global warming, which is causing wildfires and abnormal weather events to become the norm. This is an issue that will determine the survival of humanity. Japan and Canada are essential partners on both challenges. Last October, Japan and Canada jointly announced the "Action Plan for contributing to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region." It lists specific items for Japan-Canada cooperation in six areas, from negotiating and concluding information protection agreements to cooperation in the environment and energy fields, and both Japan and Canada are currently working hard on them. Meanwhile, defense cooperation between Japan and Canada is progressing, reflecting the current harsh geopolitical realities.

Japan-Canada defense cooperation

If we look back at the Japan-Canada relationship in the defense field, it goes back to World War I. At the time, Canada was a self-governing dominion of the British Empire, but Japan and Canada were part of the same Allied Powers. Japan's Imperial Navy ships were called to Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, the current base of the Royal Canadian Navy on the

Pacific side, and worked jointly with the British Royal Navy's Grand Fleet, the predecessor of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Subsequently, as mentioned above, the Japanese Legation was opened in Ottawa, and as Japan-Canada relations developed, the staff of the Legation expanded. In August 1931, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, who would later become famous for his role in the Battle of Iwo Jima, was appointed as the first attaché to the legation.

When the Pacific War began on December 8, 1941, Japan and Canada were also at war. In the final stage, on August 9-10, 1945, fierce fighting took place at Onagawa Bay in Miyagi Prefecture, resulting in the loss of 158 members of the Onagawa garrison and Lt. Robert Hampton Gray, a Canadian Naval officer and pilot. I would like to write about this matter again.

A new postwar Japan-Canada relationship began with the San Francisco Peace Treaty on April 28, 1952. Japan's postwar reconstruction will then accelerate, it will achieve high economic growth, and its role as a responsible member of the international community will grow. However, defense cooperation between Japan and Canada was extremely limited.

In 2009, a defense attaché was appointed to the Japanese Embassy in Ottawa. However, at this stage, the Japanese defense attaché at the Japanese embassy in the United States also had jurisdiction over Canada and would travel to Canada as necessary. Nevertheless, defense cooperation between Japan and Canada began to deepen from around this time. Canada is a member of the Five Eyes, a NATO member and an ally of the United States. It is also the home country of Lester B. Pearson, the father of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The situation in the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly tense with North Korea, Russia, and China.

Canada, which has historically had deep ties with the Atlantic and Europe, will increase its involvement in the Asia-Pacific. Dialogue between uniformed leaders is also increasing, with the Japan Self-Defense Forces' Chief of Staff, Joint Staff visiting Canada and the Canada's Chief of Defense Staff General Wayne Eyre visiting Japan. In recent years, joint training between Japan and Canada has increased in frequency, expanding the number of regions and participating countries, and deepening its content from the perspective of improving tactical skills and strengthening cooperation. Furthermore, cooperation in the field of defense is progressing including dealing with North Korea's "ship-to-ship transfers", various policy

dialogues including the Japan-Canada vice-ministerial meeting ("2+2"), the entry into force of the Japan-Canada Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), and Japan's participation as an observer in Operation Nanook, a joint military exercise organized by the Canadian Armed Forces in Canada's Arctic. Meanwhile, in December 2022, Lieutenant-Colonel Takashi Ochiai took up his post at the Japanese Embassy in Ottawa as the first postwar defense attaché.

Therefore, the reception commemorating the 95th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations provided a great opportunity to reflect on the progress of defense cooperation between Japan and Canada, commemorating the historic first appointment of the defense attaché to Canada, and on the further development of Japan-Canada relations.

The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Central Band + The Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces

This was the first Self-Defense Forces commemorative reception in history, and many defense officials and military attachés from various countries attended. Minister of National Defence Bill Blair and Chief of Defense Staff General Wayne Eyre were on a business trip overseas, so Lieutenant-General Allen delivered wonderful remarks as the guest of honour.



Reception guests

In order to make this reception a worthy event for the first time in history, the embassy staff worked hard together. At the reception, it is essential to have songs representing each Japan and Canada, including the national anthems of both countries, as well as background music while the guests are mingling. Both the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Canadian Armed Forces have music bands of the highest standard. Therefore, we thought that if the Japanese and Canadian bands performed together, it would be a wonderful symbol of cooperation between Japan and Canada in the field of defense. Actually, casting ideas to shape can be incredibly complex and challenging. After going through difficult procedures in both countries, including scheduling and budget arrangements, selecting personnel, etc., the Japanese and Canadian bands were able to perform together.



Co-starring Japanese and Canadian Band Wind Quintet

The Japan Self-Defense Forces has music bands in various areas, but to celebrate the first-ever Japan Self-Defense Forces reception in Ottawa, we welcomed the Central Band of

Japan Ground Self Defense Force, which has released several CDs. The members are Major Ken Yamashita, head of the performance group, Sergeant Major Hiyori Wagatsuma, flute player, Reiko Tanaka, Sergeant, bassoon player, and Mr. Soichi Fukuda, specialist in public affairs from the Internal Bureau. On the Canadian side, the Ottawa-based Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces was represented by Master Corporal Patrick M. Cauthers on the horn, Sergeant Marat Mulyukov on the oboe, and Corporal Mike Dassios on the clarinet.

We selected songs to perform, exchanged music scores, and practiced each part in advance. The Japan Self-Defense Forces team then arrived in Ottawa on the night of Saturday, September 16th. Over the course of two days, on Sunday, September 17th and Monday, September 18th, we held joint rehearsals at the Canadian Armed Forces Central Band Studio near the Ottawa Airport. Although it was a short rehearsal on Monday, I was able to observe it. I was deeply moved by the wonderful harmonies, which did not seem like were produced by a temporarily formed wind quintet.



Joint rehearsal

The venue was filled with invited guests by 6 p.m. on Tuesday, September 19th. Many guests were still at the receiving line, but at 6:30 p.m. the MC announced the opening of the reception. When the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Canadian Armed Forces wind quintet played "O Canada" and "Kimigayo," the entire audience cheered loudly.

During the second half of the reception, songs representing Canada and Japan were performed, specially arranged for the evening. "Barrett's Privateers", composed by Stan Rogers, and "Sakura Sakura Medley" were performed. The closing song, "Super Mario Brothers," was presented by performers wearing hats from the Super Mario Brothers franchise made by the Japan Self-Defense Forces Band. The venue was filled with warm excitement. It was amazing. The encore was the Beatles' "Let It Be," which I also participated in. While I was playing the piano, I felt the friendship between Japan and Canada.

Conclusion

In fact, at the exact same time as this reception was taking place, a special committee on relations between India and Canada was being held in Parliament. It was unfortunate that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, members of parliament, and high-level government officials who were scheduled to attend the reception were unable to join us due to the committee meeting. Still, we welcomed many guests, and I think it was a great opportunity to demonstrate the depth of Japan-Canada relations.

I took this opportunity to write an article about the 95th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada for The Hill Times, a parliamentary and political newspaper published in Ottawa. I hope you take a look at it when you have time.

Furthermore, the day after this reception, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura visited Ottawa. This is the first visit to Canada by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry in 10 years. A memorandum of understanding was also signed between Japan and Canada regarding the battery supply chain and the promotion of cooperation in industrial science and technology between the two countries. This signing was done based on the transition to a green economy towards net zero by 2050 as a countermeasure against global warming. It symbolized the progress in Japan-Canada relations on the business front as well.



Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura visit to Canada

I would like to report again on the recent deepening bilateral business ties between Japan and Canada.

I hope that your autumn will be a fruitful one.