

Speech: PM statement alongside PM Shinzo Abe of Japan: 10 January 2019

Prime Minister Abe. It is a pleasure to welcome you to Downing Street.

The UK and Japan are natural partners. Thriving, innovative, island nations – committed to defending the global rules that we have shaped together.

Your visit comes at a crucial time. As the UK prepares to leave the EU and raise our horizons towards the rest of the world, our relationship with countries such as Japan will be increasingly important, and your Presidency of this year's G20 allows us to work together towards our shared goals on the global stage.

Our people face many of the same challenges. But we also both have immense opportunities. And today we agree a deep and dynamic partnership to shape the 21st Century together.

Japan and the UK, as the world's third and fifth largest economies, are already close economic partners. Japanese companies employ 150 thousand people here in Britain and trade between our two countries totalled £28 billion in the past year.

Our exit from the EU provides an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen this trade and investment relationship.

I welcome your renewed commitment, Prime Minister Abe, to us securing an ambitious bilateral arrangement, building on the deal already agreed between Japan and the EU. This gives businesses the stability and confidence to plan for the future, supports jobs, and gives more choice and lower prices to consumers.

Our enhanced bilateral relationship will also allow us to explore ways to go further.

We are already opening up export markets by ending the ban on sales of British beef and lamb to Japan. This will create opportunities worth over £120 million over five years, supporting farmers from the valleys of South Wales to the Highlands of Scotland.

Our enhanced co-operation shows that, at a time when global tensions are escalating, we stand together to promote free and fair trade.

As two of the world's most innovative economies, we are uniquely placed to address the Grand Challenges of our time: an ageing society, the need for clean growth, how we respond to the increasing use of AI and data, and the future of mobility.

Today we mark the start of a significant joint programme of research and collaboration that will transform the way people live in the 21st Century.

British and Japanese experts, working side by side, will help people live independently in their home for longer, develop new treatments for chronic conditions like dementia and heart failure, and ensure a cleaner world for future generations.

Together we will also ensure businesses and innovators are able to use big data legally, ethically and safely in the future. This is our modern Industrial Strategy in action.

Our two cultures already inspire one another's people. A quarter of a million Japanese tourists come to the UK each year, and we see growing numbers of British tourists visiting Japan.

As part of our cultural exchange the National Gallery will send a major exhibition to Japan – including the famous 'Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh, a painter himself inspired by Japanese art.

And with Japan set to host the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and the Olympics and Paralympics in 2020, the UK is sharing our experience of delivering these events safely and successfully.

Global economic growth is underpinned by security.

In Tokyo, we signed a Joint Declaration that transformed our defence partnership and stepped up our collective response to the threats we both face.

We saw the strength of our relationship when Japan added its voice to condemn the nerve agent attack in Salisbury. I want to thank you, Shinzo, for the support your nation showed.

This year, we are increasing the number of combined exercises between our defence forces – on sea, land and air.

And we will deploy the Royal Navy warship HMS Montrose to the region, following on from three naval visits in the past twelve months.

This will help us to enforce sanctions against the DPRK as part of our joint determination to a peaceful resolution to tension in the region and the complete denuclearisation of North Korea.

I also welcome our collaboration on new technologies, including exploring co-operation on future combat aircraft and missile development that will ensure our forces remain an effective deterrent, while supporting high-skilled jobs and industries.

Working closely with Japan and our partners in the region ensures a more connected Asia that is free, open and stable.

And British expertise will help deliver infrastructure projects in the Pacific region, unlocking commercial opportunities for companies across the UK.

2019 is an historic year for Japan. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure a more peaceful, prosperous world.

And I am confident that our shared optimism and close friendship will see our nations stand together to shape our shared future.