

Japan and Australia sign Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)

The **Third Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations** were held in Tokyo on 19 May, attended on the Japanese side by Mr Katsuya Okada, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr Toshimi Kitazawa, Minister of Defence, and on the Australian side, the Hon. Stephen Smith, MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Senator the Hon. John Faulkner, Minister for Defence.

On that day, Foreign Minister Okada and Defence Minister Faulkner signed an important agreement, the *Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-servicing Agreement* (ACSA). This is a significant agreement which will promote cooperation between the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and actively contribute to the United Nations led effort toward international peace.

The JSDF and ADF are increasingly cooperating in fields such as UN peace-keeping operations and overseas disaster relief efforts. The ACSA lays down a framework for the reciprocal provision of supplies and services for activities in these fields, promoting greater efficiency when the Forces perform their respective roles. In addition to peace keeping and relief operations, other activities include joint defence force exercises and training.

Japan noted its upcoming dispatch of military liaison officers to the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste where Australia is playing a central role. This is an example of the key role Japan and Australia play in the Asia-Pacific region.

Also in the area of bilateral security cooperation, Japan and Australia agreed to accelerate negotiations toward an agreement on information security.

The Japan-Australia ACSA is the second ACSA for Japan, the first being with the United States. Tri-lateral Japan-Australia-US co-operation was among issues discussed at the meeting and both Japan and Australia reaffirmed the importance of the US presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Other issues discussed were nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, regional architecture, and several global and regional strategic issues.

Japan-Australia ACSA

www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2010/5/0519_02.html

For more on Japan-Australia relations see:

www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/index.html

A new Prime Minister for Japan ahead of Upper House Elections

In the lead-up to the upper house election expected to be held in July, Mr Naoto Kan was appointed as Japan's new prime minister on 8 June, following the resignation of his predecessor, Dr Yukio Hatoyama.

On Wednesday 2 June, the then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama announced his intention to resign as prime minister and leader of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). On Friday 4 June, then Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Kan was designated as prime minister.

The new Prime Minister formed his cabinet on Tuesday 8 June, and Prime Minister Kan and his Cabinet were formally inaugurated at an attestation ceremony held by the Emperor that evening.

Former Prime Minister Hatoyama had led the DPJ to its historic electoral victory in August 2009, which resulted in the Liberal Democratic Party being decisively routed after an almost unbroken rule for more than half a century. However, since assuming power his party's fortunes had flagged. The DPJ saw an immediate rise in newspaper polls after the change of leadership was announced.

Prime Minister Kan (63) unlike recent prime ministers does not come from a political family. He was born in Yamaguchi prefecture as the son of a salaryman, and after studying physics at university, opened his own patent office. He had a history as a local political activist before being elected to parliament.

The new Kan Cabinet has maintained 11 of the Hatoyama Cabinet ministers, including Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada. There are five new ministers and the former State Minister in Charge of National Strategy, Mr Yoshito Sengoku, has become Chief Cabinet Secretary.

The DPJ ruling coalition now only consists of the DPJ and the Kokumin Shinto (People's New Party) after the Social Democratic Party left the coalition due to major differences over the decision regarding the Futenma base in Okinawa.

For more about Prime Minister Naoto Kan:
www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/index-e.html

For the line-up of the Kan Cabinet see:
www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kan/meibo/daijin/index_e.html

Voting at the Consulate-General of Japan Sydney

Japanese expatriates will be able to lodge their votes at the Consulate's polling station that will be set up ahead of the upper house election.

Japanese eligible to vote can find more details on our website at

www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/index_j.htm