

03 July 2013

A Message from Japan's Consul General

A year has passed since I wrote to you with my previous message. Cool and comfortable autumn/winter came around, and now it is summer again, and the holy month of Ramadan is just around the corner. I am surprised at how quickly the time has passed.

My first year in Dubai and the Northern Emirates was delightful and rewarding. For this I am truly grateful to my local friends. They have been kind, hospitable and always eager to help. Thanks to such open and warm people, my wife and I have been able to settle down and address ourselves to our mission.

Just like my personal relationships, Japan's bilateral ties with the country, including Dubai and the Northern Emirates, have developed well, and major progress has been made in a number of areas. The most significant event between our two countries was Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit in early May and his meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and the Ruler of Dubai. Not only did the two leaders have a very productive meeting, but they also witnessed the signing of three important documents, namely the Nuclear Agreement, the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and the Cultural Exchange Memoranda of Understanding. The first agreement will enable Japan

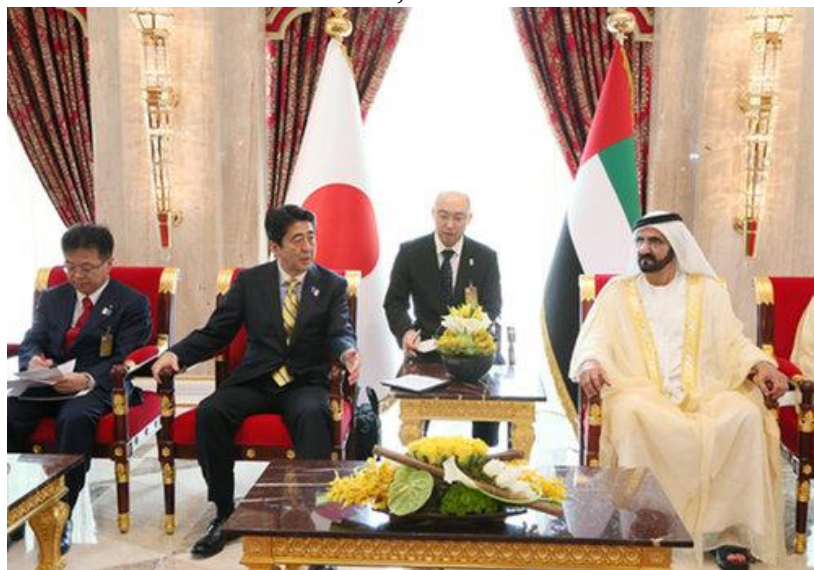


Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office

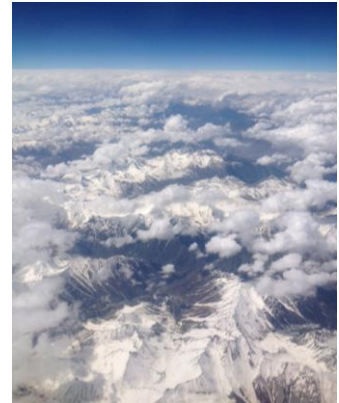
to cooperate with the UAE in its efforts to diversify energy sources. The second is expected to invigorate and promote mutual investment in our two countries. And the third is a set of memoranda to deepen our cultural understanding. Hopefully, we will be able to enrich our lives through better understanding of each other's culture.

Another significant event in our bilateral relationship was the inauguration of the Emirates flight route from Dubai to Haneda. Now Emirates fly every day to three airports in Japan, namely Narita, Kansai and Haneda. But Haneda Airport is closer to

the center of Tokyo, and also serves as a hub for Japanese domestic air flights, which means that Dubai has been brought even closer to the center of our capital city, as well as to various other places across Japan.

A significant increase in the number of tourists is expected in both directions. And during his visit to the UAE, Prime Minister Abe confirmed that a multiple visa would be issued to Emirati citizens. To be clear, once someone here acquires a visa for Japan, he/she can visit Japan as many times as he/she wants for the next few years. I sincerely hope the new Emirates flight route, combined with the new visa arrangements, will open up many more opportunities for the Emirati people to visit Japan and discover the charms of our country first-hand, and vice versa.

In fact, Emirates kindly extended an invitation for me to join its inaugural flight on June 3, and it really was a great experience. One of the highlights on the flight was a magnificent view of the Himalayas, a photograph of which is attached herewith. The plane arrived just after midnight on June 4, and there was a press conference and commemorative luncheon later the same day. The well-attended press conference was proof of the keen interest that people in Japan have taken in the new route.



So I think I can say that a fair wind is blowing in favor of our bilateral relations as I set sail on the second year of my voyage in Dubai and the Northern Emirates. During the next year, I will do my utmost to further promote friendship and goodwill between our respective leaders as well as our two peoples. And I very much hope that as I continue on this voyage of mine, I can rely on your ongoing friendship and support, which is always welcome and truly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

Matsunaga Daisuke
Consul General of Japan in Dubai

