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24<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Thank you for your contribution to the recent Question for Short Debate on 08 July. I am writing to address the concerns you raised about our relationship with China and Japan.

UK-Japan bilateral relations are the strongest they have been in years. We have a deep and dynamic partnership based on democratic values and goals, and a shared vision of the Rules-Based International System. We have a common interest in promoting multilateral trade and security organisations, as well as an increasingly strong security and prosperity partnership.

PM Abe's visit to the UK earlier this year demonstrated further the strength of our ties, which has led to deepened collaboration. Commitments made between the Prime Ministers in London will guide the relationship for the coming years on prosperity, security and innovation.

As the Prime Minister set out during Japan's G20 Summit in Osaka, the UK remains committed to the global rules-based trade system and to trade that is fair as well as free. Working closely with partners like Japan is central to this. In addition, our already strong bilateral trade and investment relationship with Japan will expand further as the UK leaves the EU. The Prime Minister and PM Abe have agreed to use the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as the basis for the future economic relationship between Japan and the UK, and to make the new partnership as ambitious, high standard and mutually beneficial as the EPA.

We continue to deepen our security and defence ties with Japan as we work together to enhance our collective response to global security threats. The UK's Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 described Japan as 'our closest security partner in Asia'. Four Royal Navy ships have deployed to the region since 2018, including taking part in maritime enforcement of DPRK sanctions with Japan. UK troops exercised jointly with their Japanese counterparts in Japan last year for the first time ever.

China is among the most important of the UK's bilateral relationships. Our policy on China is clear-eyed, evidence-based and rooted in our national interest. We recognise

China's growing economic significance and the importance of engaging China on global challenges, as well as China's increasing role as a provider of development assistance and infrastructure.

Trade and prosperity together are central to the relationship. Trade is worth £68.5bn a year - the fifth-largest with any country. China is also our sixth-largest export market with more than 10,000 UK businesses selling goods and services to China. In science, we are China's second-biggest research partner. Our joint projects include China's match-funding for a £180m Government research fund addressing food security, antimicrobial resistance and disaster resilience.

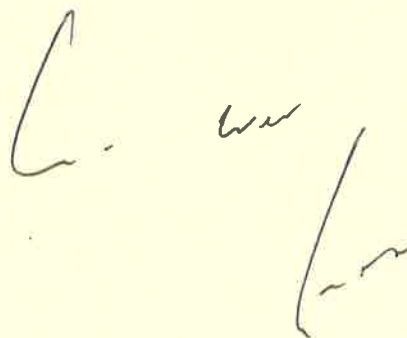
Working internationally, as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and members of the G20, we have forged constructive collaboration with China on regional security and global issues such as health, climate change and the illegal wildlife trade.

Our people to people links are also thriving. For example, in the year to March 2019, the UK issued around 750,000 visas to Chinese nationals, of which approximately 606,000 were visit visas

However, there are areas where we disagree with China. Our relationship is robust enough for us to raise concerns, including the violation of the human rights of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. Similarly, the UK is fully committed to upholding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms under the "One Country, Two Systems" framework, which is guaranteed by the legally binding Joint Declaration of 1984 and enshrined in the Hong Kong Basic Law. We do not see a choice between securing growth and investment for the UK, and raising human rights. Our experience is that political freedom and the rule of law are vital underpinnings for both prosperity and stability.

There are also areas where China's approach to the rules-based international system (RBIS) concern us, including its failure to respect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. We believe that the right approach is to engage with China on these issues. Whilst we should defend the RBIS vigorously, this does not mean resisting reform or resisting China's involvement in its reform.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Young', written in a cursive style.

**LORD YOUNG OF COOKHAM CH**