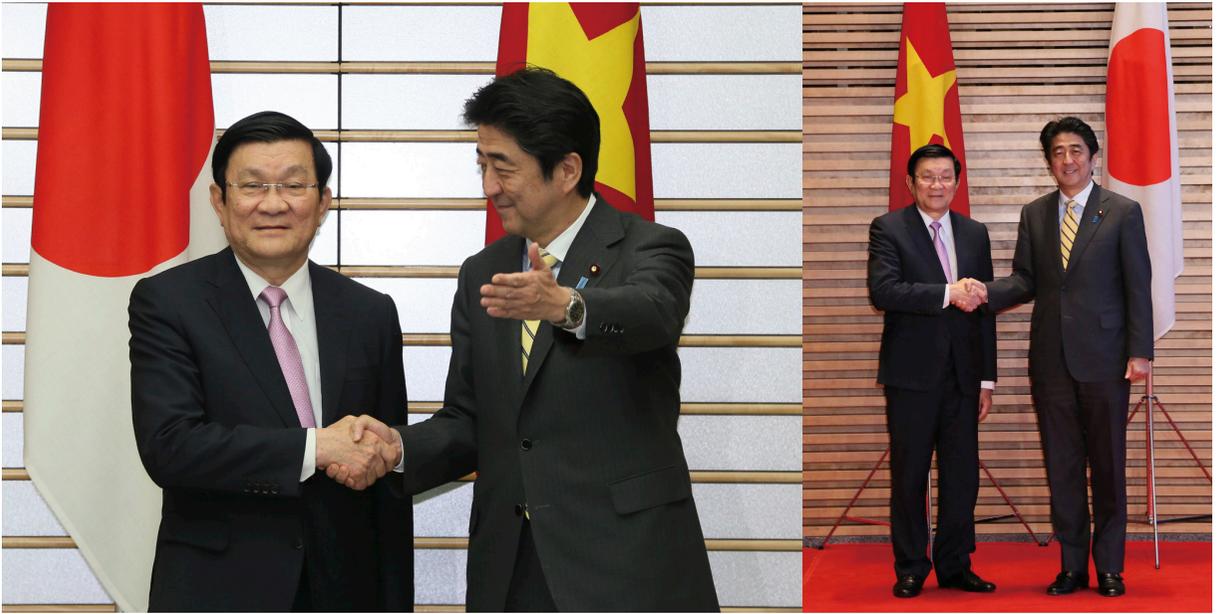


JAPAN-VIET NAM SUMMIT MEETING



Prime Minister Abe shaking hands with H.E. Mr. Truong Tan Sang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

ON March 18, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held talks with H.E. Mr. Truong Tan Sang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, at the Prime Minister's Office.

Following this, the Prime Minister hosted a banquet at the Prime Minister's Official Residence and said in his address,

"Today, we are seeing the strengthening of the Japan-Viet Nam relationship in a variety of areas. The people of Viet Nam are our friends as well as our important partners in Asia that we both call home.

It was not by chance that Viet Nam was chosen as the destination of my first overseas visit last year, just 20 days after I assumed the office of Prime Minister. In January of last year in Hanoi, His Excellency the President welcomed me by referring to the saying that the first visitor of the new year brings in happiness.

When I met His Excellency during APEC in October, we not only deepened our discussion on security and economics; His Excellency also extended kind words of congratulations on Tokyo's successful

bid to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

And during today's summit meeting, His Excellency and I affirmed that we would strengthen the Japan-Viet Nam relationship in a variety of spheres based on mutual trust and mature the relationship as a broad strategic partnership, as well as work closely on regional and international issues.

Last year, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries in the form of the Japan-Viet Nam Friendship Year, and many cultural events were held. At this banquet, we are joined by those who contributed to these events. Together with their efforts, let us elevate the Japan-Viet Nam relationship to even greater heights."

Photographs and text courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Cabinet Public Relations Office of the Government of Japan.