

DOCUMENTATION

Japan and ASEAN: Seeking a Mature Partnership for the New Age Policy Speech by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu Singapore, 3 May 1991

1. Introduction

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like first to thank this distinguished cross-section of Singapore's finest for coming out today and the three authoritative host organizations — the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) — for arranging this opportunity for me to say a few words on Japanese foreign policy.

Riding into town yesterday from your new Changi Airport, I could not help but notice your very orderly and well-kept "clean and green" townscape and the comings and goings of your lively people. I have the feeling that I have come face to face with the essence of Singapore's modern prosperity. Likewise, when I talked with people here about the success they have had in achieving prosperity in only a quarter-century since independence and their vision for the future of ASEAN in the 21st Century, I had the undeniable feeling that I was witnessing what Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong has characterized as the new "Crescent of Prosperity" linking Northeast Asia, Indo-China, and ASEAN in the 21st Century.

And I am confident that Singapore and Japan should serve as the two indispensable tips of this crescent in a shining partnership that brings greater prosperity to this region.

2. The Lessons of the Gulf Crisis

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Even as the crumbling of the Berlin Wall told us that the East-West conflict was dissipating, the world was shocked to attention with the sudden outbreak of the Gulf Crisis last August. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait tore the international community's peace and stability asunder and was a direct rejection of the efforts being made to build a new world order. Had we been willing to accept Iraqi aggression as a *fait accompli*, had the international community not rallied together under United Nations auspices, there would have been more Iraqs down the line threatening the survival of this and future generations.

As you will recall, the Asian countries responded to this situation and contributed to its resolution, each in its own way. The ASEAN countries were firm in their support for and adherence to the United

Nations Security Council resolutions. Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea sent medical teams to the area, and Pakistan and Bangladesh sent personnel to take part in the multinational force. I pay my utmost respect to these countries for their efforts. Nor was Japan idle. Japan announced a comprehensive package of economic measures against Iraq even in advance of the United Nations Security Council resolution, and we extended various contributions amounting to well over \$10 billion to support the efforts of the other countries for the restoration of peace in the Gulf. I believe that these Asian contributions demonstrated how very important it is that the Asian countries, having achieved such dramatic development recently, take a vigorous part in the effort to construct a new world order. Another example of such Asian contributions can be found in the participation in the United Nations Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission by a number of Asian countries including Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia from ASEAN following the ceasefire.

This Gulf War has wreaked massive destruction and devastation. There is, of course, the tragedy of people caught up in the theatre of war, as well as the plight of the many evacuees generated and the vast economic dislocation that took place; and the impact of this conflict affected not only the neighbouring countries but even countries as far away as Asia. In addition to providing about \$2 billion in economic co-operation for the front line countries and \$60 million for evacuee relief, we extended emergency economic assistance to Syria, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka in consideration of the impact that the Gulf Crisis has had on them.

Further, we also did what we could to help repatriate evacuees to their homes in Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and elsewhere in Asia.

Although a cease-fire has gone into effect, the postwar situation is still grim, as seen in the vast exodus of Kurds fleeing civil war in Iraq and in the environmental degradation that has resulted from the spillage of crude oil and the firing of oil wells; and it will not be easy to resolve these problems and restore the situation to normality. In view of these circumstances, Japan recently decided to finance a total of US\$100 million for Kurdish and other Iraqi refugees and will continue to extend maximum possible co-operation in the area of environmental countermeasures among others.

3. Features Characterizing the International Order

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Why has this cruel situation occurred? While many explanations are possible, I suspect the basic reason is that the religious, ethnic, territorial, and other disputes and conflicts that had been eclipsed by the Cold War suddenly surfaced with the abatement of East-West tensions. In a way, this might be put down to the uncertainty and instability so typical of transitional periods. Having initiated a number of favourable developments in Europe, the Soviet Union is now beset with ethnic rivalries and economic disorder within its own borders, and this is in turn casting anxious shadows over the international outlook.

It is imperative that we correctly identify the nature of this transitional period and find ways to respond appropriately to the issues facing us. Accordingly, I would like to spend a few minutes outlining some of the factors that I think underlie the international situation.

For one thing, there are changes under way in the power relationships among the world's leading countries. With the dissolution of cold war structures, the world is clearly moving from bipolarity to multipolarity. Western Europe and Japan are becoming increasingly important as countries that should play major roles alongside the United States. The Asian newly industrializing economies (NIEs), ASEAN and other countries are also emerging as important players on the international stage.

At the same time, the forces determining the flow of international relations are also changing. In the Gulf Crisis, of course, military force was the means of last resort for preserving order within the international community. But it is true that military force is today becoming less important as a

determining factor in international relations. What is of increasing importance is the sum total of economic strength, scientific and technological prowess, social stability and order and the whole range of other factors that constitute the influence of a country.

Compounding this, the rapid enhancement of interdependence has meant that there are more and more issues such as the environment, drugs, and terrorism that cannot be solved by any one country or even any one region acting alone and whose solution requires co-operation and solidarity among the entire international community.

If we are to secure the peace and to ensure that the benefits of prosperity can be enjoyed by the entire international community in this changing international situation, it is essential that each country not try to do everything by itself but join together with others to strengthen regional and international frameworks for international co-operation. Japan is resolved to make every possible effort to that end.

4. Outlook for the Asia-Pacific region and Japan's Role in the 1990s

Ladies and gentlemen:

I do not need to remind you that the world has already acknowledged the dynamic advances made by the Asian NIEs, the ASEAN countries and the other countries of the Asia-Pacific region, and the important place that these countries have come to occupy in the management of the world economy. Yet, I believe we need to further this trend. At the same time, we need to go beyond the economic realm and work in political, social, and foreign policy realms as well to become a major force for stability grounded in freedom and democracy. In that sense, I am glad to see that the situation in China seems to be in the process of settling after a period causing anxiety and that there is an unmistakable drive for freedom and democracy in Mongolia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and elsewhere. All of these developments give me renewed hope for the future. Now is the time to step up our co-operative efforts if we want to consolidate further Asia-Pacific peace and prosperity going into the new era that lies ahead. Now is the time for us to join our strengths and our wisdom together to build a regional community that we can be proud of before all the world.

Japan's Economic Role

Ladies and gentlemen:

Conditions for promoting peace and prosperity are very different in the Asia-Pacific region from what they are in Europe. It is therefore only natural that the paths to peace and stability and the road to development should be different in the Asia-Pacific region from what they are in Europe. It is thus up to us to find our own ways of doing things.

Accordingly, I would like, while touching upon the features characterizing the Asia-Pacific region, to explain some of my views on what Japan should do as a member of this Asia-Pacific region.

One of the main features characterizing the Asia-Pacific region is that many of the countries of the region are developing countries and that the primary interest of these countries is in economic development and social stability. As a consequence, it is most important for peace and stability that we work for economic development of the developing countries in the region and to dispel poverty and social unrest within their borders and that we strengthen our interdependence and enhance the region's resilience. I am fully aware of the need for Japan to play an even more active role in support of these efforts by the other countries of the region.

Japan will, for example, continue to seek to expand imports from the countries of the region and promote greater investment in and technology transfer to these countries, in line with the maturity of their trade structure and their stages of development. And as the necessary complement to this effort, I hope the host countries will make an even greater effort to create a climate receptive to Japanese investment and technology transfer.

I wish to state clearly that ASEAN and the rest of Asia will continue to be the priority focus for

Japanese official development assistance (ODA). In implementing its ODA, Japan is trying to advance comprehensive economic co-operation responsive to the diverse development needs of the recipient countries, fully mindful of the role played by trade, investment, and technology transfer, and giving all due consideration to the different countries' responses to environmental issues. I am delighted that a number of the countries of this region have successfully managed the difficult transition from aid-receiving countries to aid-giving countries.

The vitality of the Asia-Pacific region must play an important role in support of world economic growth and in the defence of the free and open trading arrangements. Given that our reliance on free and open trading arrangements is one fount of this region's vitality, the prompt and successful conclusion of the GATT Uruguay Round is not only of vital significance in the economic sphere but should be one of the top priority issues for this region. It is, after all, this region that will feel the brunt of the Uruguay Round's collapse if it should happen, and Japan is determined to make every possible effort for the Uruguay Round's success. In addition, I am pleased to see that APEC, initiated in November 1989, is already drawing upon Asia-Pacific potential and becoming an engine of stability and prosperity. Japan intends to promote such co-operation actively.

More recently we have been witnessing movements in our region to step up regional co-operation yet more building on the spectacular economic advances achieved by East Asia [sic]. It was in this context that Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia explained to me the other day his initiative for an East Asian Economic Group (EAEG). It goes without saying that any regional economic co-operation in our region should, beyond anything, aim at forestalling any move towards trade protectionism and promoting co-operation open to the outside world. Bearing this in mind as the fundamentals for our co-operation we will consider appropriate ways for our regional economic co-operation.

International effort to deal with global environmental issues is becoming increasingly important. Japan, fully aware of its potential role in the creation of international frameworks and in support of the developing countries' own efforts, is determined to continue to contribute vigorously on both the financial and the technological sides. In this regard, sustainable development reconciling the dual objectives of the economy and the environment is of particular importance for Asia-Pacific development, and Japan is resolved to deal with the environmental issues in an effort to pursue these two objectives in parallel.

Japan's Political Role

Ladies and gentlemen:

Amidst these changing times in the international order, I acutely feel that Japan is expected to make even greater contributions in the Asian-Pacific region not only in the economic sphere but in the political sphere as well. As Japan goes on to play a more active political role, we should remind ourselves of how we perceive our past history.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Pacific War. At this juncture, looking back upon the first half of this century, I express our sincere contrition at Japanese past actions which inflicted unbearable suffering and sorrow upon a great many people of the Asia-Pacific region. The Japanese people are firmly resolved never again to repeat those actions which had tragic consequences, and we have made strong efforts in the last 45 years to translate the philosophy and the resolve of living as a nation of peace into actual policies. In response to rising expectations for Japan's international contribution today, it is imperative that each Japanese think about what he or she can do to contribute to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and all the world. A prerequisite for this is that all Japanese be deeply conscious of what Japan did in the past and have a full and accurate grasp of history. To that end I am determined to step up our effort to ensure that today's young people — tomorrow's leaders — gain a full and accurate understanding of modern and contemporary Japanese history through their education in schools and in society at large.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Building upon our determination not to let history repeat itself, Japan hopes to play an appropriate role in the political sphere as a nation of peace.

Another of the outstanding features that characterizes the political climate in the Asia-Pacific region in comparison with Europe is that there are still a number of unresolved conflicts, disputes and problems, including the issue of Cambodia, the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, and the Northern Territories issue between Japan and the Soviet Union. True peace and stability cannot come to this region until these problems are resolved. Realizing this, Japan has made a positive effort to contribute to the resolution of regional conflicts and disputes, and I assure you we are determined to do even more in the future.

The Cambodian issue, which is the main outstanding issue on Indo-China, has now entered the final stage of the peace process. Peace hinges upon whether or not all of the Cambodian parties will accept the comprehensive peace proposal now before them. Japan is concerned that the momentum for peace seems to have slowed this year.

One encouraging sign in all this is that the conflicting Cambodian parties accepted at the end of April the appeal for a voluntary ceasefire. Japan highly appreciates the dedicated efforts of Mr Ali Alatas, Foreign Minister of Indonesia and co-chairman of the Paris Conference, who issued the appeal with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, and places high hopes on the role of the co-chairmen.

Japan has taken a number of initiatives *vis-à-vis* the parties to the Cambodian conflict so as to further the peace process. We have, of late, taken every opportunity to further contacts with the various Cambodian parties. Just the day before yesterday, when the voluntary ceasefire came into effect, I personally met the leaders of the National Government of Cambodia in Bangkok and urged them to observe the ceasefire. It is vitally important, more than ever before, that the Cambodian principals themselves strike a genuine attitude of reconciliation. Japan will spare no effort to help foster a common outlook towards a political settlement between the warring parties.

Indo-China has historically long been a stage for dynamic exchanges among the peoples of the region. I am convinced that only when peace and prosperity are restored to Indo-China and the region engages in expanded exchanges with ASEAN will it be possible for lasting peace and prosperity to come to the whole of Southeast Asia. Japan intends to co-operate in every way possible so that ASEAN and Indo-China can some day develop together as good partners for each other. As a first step, I am pleased to report that Japan is prepared to host an international conference on Cambodian reconstruction at an appropriate time for the purpose of future reconstruction in Cambodia and all of Indo-China.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The Japanese people are also fervent in their desire to see peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula. I positively appreciate the normalization of relations between the Republic of Korea and the Soviet Union and the continuing exchanges between North and South as contributing to peace and stability on the Peninsula, and I hope that the suspended North-South dialogue will be resumed and will see substantive progress to consolidate this trend further. This January, Japan entered into negotiations to normalize relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and I assure you that, acting on the premise of preserving and furthering our friendly relations with the Republic of Korea as a country sharing the fundamental values of freedom and democracy, we intend to advance these negotiations in such a way as contributes to peace and stability on the Peninsula.

At the same time, we recognize that it is extremely important for regional stability and prosperity that China maintain its policy of reform and openness in all areas and develop in a stable climate. As such, Japan intends to co-operate as much as possible with China's efforts for modernization based upon the policy of reform and openness, and I myself hope to visit China as soon as possible this year.

Likewise, all of the countries of this region are very much interested in Soviet policy toward the region. Japan, as you know, still has the dispute on the four Northern Islands with the Soviet Union that prevents us from concluding the Peace Treaty. Nevertheless, I trust that the Joint Communiqué which came out of the intense discussions that I held with President Gorbachev when he visited Japan recently as the first Soviet leader ever to visit Japan — a document that for the very first time clearly identified the Habomais, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu as the object of the territorial issue to be resolved in the Peace Treaty — will provide new momentum for new progress in Japanese-Soviet relations. A fundamental improvement of Japanese-Soviet relations is not only important to our two countries, it is also significant in the broader and long-term context of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan intends to continue working to achieve true normalization and dramatic progress in Japanese-Soviet relations at the earliest date. I welcome the fact that the Soviet Union is playing a role in international efforts on Cambodia and to improve the situation on the Korean Peninsula in line with its “new thinking” diplomacy, and I believe it is precisely through its constructive efforts for the resolution of such specific regional issues that the Soviet Union can come to be accepted as a responsible partner in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The recent Gulf Crisis was a time of reflection and a time for all Japanese to consider seriously through what specific means Japan, as a nation of peace, can and should take part in the efforts to maintain world peace. Televised into our living rooms, the scenes of fighting in the Gulf were a vivid demonstration of what can happen when a country imports far more arms than it legitimately needs to defend itself and when there is an excessive arms export race.

As a nation of peace, Japan has consistently adhered to the three non-nuclear principles since the end of World War II and to a rigorous stance of refraining from arms exports for more than two decades in accordance with the three principles on the non-export of arms. Japan thus intends to make its own contributions to helping the world learn from the lessons of the Gulf Crisis and to make whatever progress is possible toward disarmament and arms control.

Accordingly, Japan has recently called upon the international community to co-ordinate and strengthen the international framework for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, to enhance transparency and openness through, for example, establishing a system of reporting arms transfers to the United Nations, and to consider co-ordinating and strengthening the arrangements regarding voluntary export restraints by the arms-exporting countries. This May, a United Nations conference on disarmament issues will be convened in Kyoto at Japanese initiative, and I believe it is of no small significance that Japan — an economic and technological power — should continue to make such efforts as a nation of peace. In a similar vein, I also recently announced in the Diet that military expenditures, weapons exports and imports, and other factors would be adequately taken into consideration in our ODA to the developing countries.

While the Japanese contribution in the wake of the Gulf Crisis has been mainly in financial terms, the question posed to us is whether or not we can truly fulfil our responsibilities with financial co-operation alone to ensure the maintenance of peace and stability in the international community as a whole. Japan thus is determined to make personnel contributions an important part of our co-operation for peace. With emphasis on personnel co-operation in our contribution to the post Gulf War situation, we have dispatched experts to help with restoring the environment damaged by the war in the region. We are also actively proceeding with the preparation to provide a political officer to the United Nations Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission and to provide expert participation in the work of the United Nations Special Commission on the Destruction of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missiles. A large number of mines that remain in the northern Persian Gulf are another issue, and we recognize the urgency of ensuring safe navigation in these waters. Under these circumstances,

Japan has very recently decided to send minesweepers to the region. This action does not mean that Japan is assuming a military role in the international community and does not represent any change in Japan's basic defence policy. Rather, this decision was made after the most serious study of what Japan could do within the context of concerted international efforts for peace, and we very much intend to continue to fulfil actively our responsibilities to the international community through such co-operation for peace.

Ladies and gentlemen:

I am well aware that the course which Japanese policy might take could well spark concerns among some of our Asian neighbours that Japan might once more be embarking on a path to a military power. Yet I would remind you that the vast majority of Japanese are peace-loving people who detest the thought of war. I note further that civilian control is firmly established within the Japanese system.

Since the war, Japan has dedicated itself to a purely defensive posture under our peace constitution and vowed never again to become a military power such as might pose a threat to other countries. We have been striving to ensure our own security through firmly maintaining the security arrangements with the United States, and through acquiring a moderate self-defence capability. Building on the lessons of history Japan will adhere firmly to the philosophy befitting a nation of peace.

I would like to emphasize here that the issues of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be realistically discussed without a U.S. role. The recent Gulf Crisis has shown how important it is that the United States continue to have the capability and the will to maintain peace and order globally. We recognize that the U.S. presence is also crucial in the Asia-Pacific region; it is an important stabilizing factor not only in the military sense but in the political sense as well. Realizing this, I strongly hope that the United States will continue to play a positive role as an active Pacific power for peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. The security arrangements which we maintain with the United States provide an important framework for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. I am convinced that the maintenance and development of the solid Japan-U.S. co-operation based on this vital security relationship will be of even greater importance than today to the Asia-Pacific community as it continues its dynamic development.

5. A Mature Japan-ASEAN Partnership

Ladies and gentlemen:

Noting that the Asia-Pacific region is characterized first by many of the countries of the region having a strong interest in economic development and social stability, and second, unlike Europe, by the existence of such yet unresolved conflicts and disputes as the North-South conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the problem of Cambodia, and the territorial issue between Japan and the Soviet Union, I have tried thus far to outline the positive contribution that Japan intends to make both politically and economically for long-term stability in the region.

Yet there is one more feature that characterizes the Asia-Pacific region — that of diversity. Whereas there is major momentum toward political and economic integration in Europe as epitomized by the European Community, the Asia-Pacific region is moving in pursuit of economic interdependence based upon recognition of the political, social, cultural, and economic differences among the countries in the region.

Within this, ASEAN has achieved great success it rightly should be proud of in its ambitious and courageous effort to forge co-operation among countries with different systems, different religions, and different cultural heritages. Indeed, the ASEAN countries have provided a model of economic development by their blossoming nation-building efforts, and the creative entrepreneurship and hard work in the free-market system.

Japan has long made ASEAN a central focus of its foreign policy and worked for closer co-operative relations with your countries in all fields. Thus we share in your pride at ASEAN's development.

And with the changes in the international situation, I believe that ASEAN, having grown far stronger than ever before, is ready to set new and loftier goals for itself and to move for still-closer and more diversified co-operation. I believe that Japan and ASEAN are becoming mature partners able to look seriously at what we can do for Asia-Pacific peace and prosperity and to think and act together for our shared goals.

Building upon the long years of dialogue between Japan and ASEAN, we are now able to speak frankly to each other in both the economic and political spheres. Along with continuing to work to create a climate conducive to candid dialogue in all areas, I intend to make a concerted effort for greater co-operation in all fields.

It is the firm mutual trust between Japan and the ASEAN countries at all levels that underlies and supports this mature partnership between Japan and ASEAN. It is now more than 10 years since the importance of heart-to-heart contacts was noted, and there have been many exchange programmes between us achieving considerable success in promoting mutual understanding and mutual trust between the Japanese and ASEAN peoples. Yet I know that it is impossible to eliminate the residual misunderstanding and prejudice on both sides all at once, and that is why I believe it is so important that each and every person involved in the greatly expanded opportunities for interaction between our peoples make every effort to create relations of personal contacts among individuals and relations based upon good-faith efforts by all of us as human beings. Never before has it been so important that we do everything we can to ensure that the trust between Japan and the ASEAN countries is truly unshakable.

6. Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen:

The tide of international affairs toward co-operation and concert is gaining new strength throughout the Asia-Pacific region. And it is essential that we continue to work to ensure that this tide is irreversible. We are working for an Asia-Pacific world of creativity with each learning from the others' political, economic, cultural, and other diversity. We are seeking to be open to the rest of the international community and to have our own dynamism impart new vitality to the rest of the world. Let us go forth; let those vows of Japan-ASEAN co-operation made over the past two decades come into their own; and let us work together to create such a regional community. In short, let us dedicate ourselves anew to the goal of creating better and deserving lives for all of our people in an Asia-Pacific region rich in peace and prosperity. It is, I believe, through such co-operation that we will delineate one path to the new world order that we and all the international community so earnestly desire.

Thank you.