

The New Era of the Asia-Pacific and Japan-ASEAN Cooperation Policy Speech by Prime Minister Miyazawa Bangkok, 16 January 1993

Chairperson Tan Lian Choo,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Introduction

I feel very privileged by this opportunity to address you, hosted by the tradition-honored Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, in association with the Confederation of Thai Journalists.

With the collapse of the Cold War structure, the international situation is undergoing historic changes. It has been my desire, through this trip to four ASEAN countries, to think anew about how we should shape the cooperation between Japan and the ASEAN countries with the future of the Asia-Pacific region in mind, and about the role Japan should play in this regard.

2. The New Role of the Asia-Pacific Region

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the Asia-Pacific region where we live, political and social conditions are generally stable, despite some ongoing disputes and conflicts. Economically, the region continues to enjoy dynamic growth, turning to its advantage its characteristically rich diversity and high level of openness. This wave of dynamism is now reaching China's coastal regions and Indochina. This economic development is creating more mature political and social conditions in each country and area, and is thereby contributing to the stability of international relations in the area. So much so that this Asia-Pacific region may indeed be acquiring a great potential to contribute politically and economically to the peace and prosperity of the world.

In my conversations with the ASEAN leaders thus far in this trip, I have sensed their confident and strong will to speak and act in the interest of the international community. To fulfill this ASEAN

aspiration and make the Asia-Pacific a more resilient and richer region which will contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world — this certainly is a most worthy goal for Japan-ASEAN cooperation.

Today, I should thus like to focus on the following three areas concerning the new cooperation between Japan and the ASEAN countries.

3. Japan-ASEAN Cooperation

(1) Cooperation for Peace and Stability

The first area of cooperation is to secure peace and stability in this region.

The most salient characteristic of this region, which is sweepingly called the Asia-Pacific, is its diversity. With respect to security, the sources of threat vary from country to country, and the modalities of meeting the threat are also varied.

Thus, to ensure its security, each country of this region adopts the path it deems most appropriate in light of its own historical, political, economic and geopolitical circumstances. Bilateral security arrangements are one of the important paths chosen. Many countries give their highest priority, for their internal and external security, to promoting economic development and thereby enhancing the resilience of their societies.

This diversity should continue to be regarded as an inherent factor in the consideration of security in this region. Each local conflict in this region, such as in the Korean Peninsula, Cambodia and the South China Sea, has its own unique background. The resolution of these conflicts should be sought most effectively through such frameworks as are best suited to the individual circumstances.

At the same time, it is clear that the collapse of the Cold War structure and the resultant fluidity in international relations are bound to affect the security landscape of this region as a whole. This awareness on the part of the countries of the region has, of late, sharpened their interest in the peace and stability of the region as a whole. It is important for the Asia-Pacific countries to share this interest and to enhance the transparency of their respective policies as well as their sense of mutual reassurance. Highly significant in this regard is the political and security dialogue which has been actively under way in the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference since last year.

In this period of transition for the international community, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region need to develop a long-term vision regarding the future order of peace and security for their region. For this, various ideas should be threshed out through political and security dialogue among the countries of the region. I hope that some picture of the future of this region's security will be gradually distilled through such a process, based on shared perceptions and concerns. Japan will actively take part in such discussions.

Japan will do so with the belief that the presence and engagement of the United States, which has underpinned the region's peace and prosperity, will continue to play an important role in the future as a stabilizing factor for the region. Thus, Japan intends to maintain steadfastly the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and continue to provide host-nation support actively. I believe that our doing this will contribute to the peace and stability of the region as a whole.

(2) Cooperation for an Open Economy and Dynamic Development

Secondly, Japan and the ASEAN countries need to cooperate in order to enable the economy of the Asia-Pacific region to continue to develop in an open and dynamic manner.

(i) *Enhancing Openness*

The development of the Asia-Pacific economy has been achieved through the market mechanism and the free and open multilateral trading system. I believe that for the economy of this region to remain open both within and to the outside world will provide an impetus for further development not only of the region itself, but also for the revitalization of the global economy. A scenario we must avoid at all costs is a replay of the 1930s, in which the vicious spiral of mutual distrust and egoism led to narrow-sighted protectionism and the formulation of trade blocs. The most urgent task today is for all negotiating partners to make mutual concessions from a long-term perspective so as to bring the Uruguay Round to an early and successful conclusion.

It is clear that there is a need to expand further the activities of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) whose basic goal is open cooperation and which now has its own secretariat and budget.

(ii) *Promoting Economic Development*

As the state of the world economy does not yet warrant bright prospects, it is essential that the economy of the Asia-Pacific region, in particular that of the ASEAN countries, continue its dynamic development.

Between Japan and the ASEAN countries, trade has been expanding, for the past few years, at an annual rate of approximately 20 percent. In particular, exports of manufactured products from the ASEAN countries to Japan have grown remarkably, about 4.6 times from 1986 to 1991. Japanese direct investment to the ASEAN countries since the Plaza Accord in 1985 amounts to roughly 20 billion dollars. It is evident that these factors have contributed greatly to the economic development of the ASEAN countries.

A matter of major interest to the ASEAN countries is the future flow of investment and technology transfer. Japan will continue to further promote these flows by such means as using official credit facilities. We would also like to move forward with the ASEAN countries by exchanging new ideas on, for example, how best to provide a better investment climate in a broad sense, including the development of infrastructure and supporting industries, human resources development, and institutional improvements.

Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance) to the ASEAN countries since 1969 has amounted to approximately 20 billion dollars. For the past ten years, ASEAN has accounted for about one-quarter to one-third of Japanese bilateral ODA every year. Japan will continue to expand its ODA steadily in accordance with its ODA Charter announced last year. It is gratifying to note that the ASEAN countries are moving ahead towards economic take-off, and Japan will continue to regard Asia, including the ASEAN countries, as a priority region for its ODA.

What is also noteworthy is the growing interest among the ASEAN countries in enhancing the kind of cooperation where developing countries help one another; for example, some developing countries may disseminate to other developing countries the experience and know-how they have acquired in the process of their own development. Japan would like to extend its cooperation to this kind of initiative.

For the Japan-ASEAN cooperation to evolve in all these areas, it is essential to further mutual understanding between the Japanese people and the peoples of the ASEAN countries. The "Friendship Program for the 21st Century," started in 1984, plays a significant role in this regard. More than seven thousand young people from the ASEAN countries have been invited to Japan under this program. I intend to extend this program for another five years after its present phase ends in March 1994.

Naturally, a sound expansion of the Japanese economy is important for Japan to carry out these forms of cooperation. The Japanese Government recently adopted a comprehensive package of economic measures amounting to about 90 billion dollars, and is working hard to implement it smoothly. Japan is also making its best efforts to manage its economy in an appropriate and timely manner, so as to achieve

non-inflationary and domestic-demand-led growth; the budget proposal for the next fiscal year, for example, takes full account of the current economic condition in Japan.

(iii) Tackling Tasks Common to Humankind

Thirdly, Japan and the ASEAN countries need to tackle together tasks common to humankind.

I firmly believe in the great potential of the Asia-Pacific region for building a safe, prosperous and fair society towards the 21st century. For this potential to be realized, the political and social foundations are necessary which would enable the people of this region to fully exert their capacity. To promote democratization and advance fundamental human rights is a universal task for humankind. The recent developments of democracy in Thailand are indeed encouraging. Japan intends to take the approach it deems to be most pragmatic and effective in light of each circumstance to see that the region will benefit from these values.

While economic development will continue to be important for this region, it needs to be pursued in tandem with environmental conservation. I announced at the UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) last year that Japan would substantially expand its environment-related ODA, with a view to providing this type of ODA amounting to around 900 billion to one trillion yen (approximately 7 to 7.7 billion U.S. dollars) during the five-year period from fiscal year 1992. It would in effect mean that the annual average of this type of ODA would be close to 1.5 times that of the preceding three years. Within this, a similar degree of increase is contemplated with respect to the ASEAN countries. For this kind of environmental aid to be effective, partnership between donors and recipients is indispensable. I would therefore welcome positive and concrete ideas and advice from the ASEAN side.

The rapid economic and social changes should not alienate us from culture of our own. It is our duty to pass our culture on to posterity, and it will in fact be our contribution to preserving the richness of world culture. Japan has been cooperating in the restoration and preservation of Sukhothai in Thailand, Angkor monuments in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia and other historic cultural monuments. This region is also a repository of many other important cultural assets and diverse traditional arts. I should like to propose an international conference of experts to discuss the means to preserve this region's invaluable traditional culture and to elicit the cooperation of the countries concerned to that end.

4. Cooperation to Indochina

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should now like to touch on cooperation to Indochina.

The Paris Peace Agreements on Cambodia, concluded in October 1991, represent a historic first step towards achieving peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

I earnestly hope that a durable peace will be achieved in Cambodia, and that in the near future a day will come when all Cambodians will unite at heart and devote themselves to the reconstruction and development of their country. The peace process is, however, still fragile despite immense efforts by those involved. I urge, once again, all the Cambodian parties, Democratic Kampuchea in particular, to cooperate fully with UNTAC. Japan has sent approximately 700 personnel to Cambodia on the basis of the International Peace Cooperation Law enacted last year. We will continue such personnel contribution and also continue to work in other ways for the smooth implementation of the peace process.

I express my deep respect to the ASEAN countries for their untiring diplomatic efforts for the Cambodian peace process and their contribution in personnel. Praise is especially due to Thailand, Cambodia's neighbor, for having made large sacrifices in accepting a large number of refugees as well

as taking measures which impose domestic burdens in order to implement the recent United Nations Security Council resolution.

The conclusion of the Cambodian Peace Accords opens the way not only to Cambodian reconstruction but also to the promotion of the policy of openness by Vietnam and Laos. It thus makes it possible for Southeast Asia, which consists of the countries of ASEAN and Indochina, to develop as an integral whole. Such development has consistently been the goal of Japan's Indochina policy since 1977, when Prime Minister Fukuda articulated in Manila Japan's policy of contributing to the building of peace and stability in the whole of Southeast Asia by expanding the scope of mutual cooperation and understanding throughout the region. Although subsequent developments concerning the Cambodian problem regrettably made it difficult to achieve this goal, it has finally become possible for the countries of Southeast Asia to share peace and prosperity. It is welcome that the countries of ASEAN and Indochina have begun to develop ties as good neighbors and good partners.

Japan considers it important that these countries of Southeast Asia strengthen their organic cohesion and pursue the development of the region as a whole. With this in mind, Japan intends to extend its cooperation to the improvement of infrastructures, human resources development and other areas to assist in particular the socio-economic development of Indochina. To this end, I should like to propose establishing a "Forum for Comprehensive Development of Indochina." This forum would be designed to formulate strategies for harmonious development of the entire region of Indochina, by bringing together the experience and wisdom of the experts from interested countries and international organizations and other qualified personalities encompassing both the government and private sectors. They are expected to hold free and constructive discussions and exchanges of views on the way with which trans-border cooperation and regional development of the entire Indochina should be conducted. Japan would like to host an international meeting in Tokyo around autumn this year to make preparations for this forum.

5. Japan's Basic Stance

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me summarize the four points that I consider particularly important as Japan and the countries of ASEAN jointly seek to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and of the world.

Firstly, the promotion of political and security dialogue among the countries of the region to strengthen Asia-Pacific peace and stability, and to think seriously about the future vision of the region's security.

Secondly, continued efforts to enhance the openness of the Asia-Pacific economy and to promote dynamic economic development in this region.

Thirdly, active efforts to tackle such tasks common to humankind as promoting democratization and pursuing development and environmental conservation in tandem.

Fourthly, collaborative cooperation between Japan and the ASEAN countries to build peace and prosperity in Indochina.

In contemplating such cooperation between Japan and ASEAN, I believe there are two premises.

The first is that Japan shall never again become a military power. For the past half-century, Japan has consistently followed the path of a nation dedicated to peace under its peace constitution. This is the strong will of the Japanese people based on their remorse over Japanese past actions, and we shall never stray from this path. I intend to take further care to improve education in Japan so that the lessons of history will be reflected in the daily conduct of the Japanese people.

The other point is that Japan will attach particular importance to the very process of talking with the ASEAN countries. This means that Japan will think and act together with ASEAN.

The “ASEAN way” is indeed an apt word; our experiences show that respecting and following the process of dialogue is frequently conducive to producing good ideas.

6. Conclusion

Ladies and Gentleman,

The Asia-Pacific region has begun a vigorous advance towards a promising future. ASEAN, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year, is a major driving force of this advance. As Chairman at the Economic Summit to be held in Tokyo in July, I intend to take care so that the importance of the dynamism of the Asia-Pacific countries, including ASEAN, be fully taken into account in the Summit process. I am quite confident that the wisdom and vigor of the ASEAN countries will become an important pillar which supports the future of the international community, at a time when the world is searching for a new international order.

Thank you.

SOURCE: This provisional translation was provided by the Embassy of Japan, Singapore.