

“Common challenges: US and Japan, current Japanese view”

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be here at CSIS and to speak before such a distinguished gathering. Thank you for inviting me.

I have a unique record as a Japanese Foreign Minister. I don't think any foreign minister of any country ever had American parents and an American-born son. When I was sixteen, I spent one year at Swarthmore High School in Pennsylvania. I lived with an American family that truly accepted me as one of them. Even after I returned to Japan, “Mother” and “Dad” continued to be my parents until they passed away. My son, who goes to a graduate school in the U.S., has a birth certificate signed by Mayor Washington of Washington D.C. So, America, to me, is my second home.

I came back to study economics at Yale in the early '70s. In the late '70s, I came to Washington D.C. to work for the World Bank. In the early '90s, I returned here as Commercial Minister at our Embassy. Indeed, I have made many trips here over the years. And two days before September 11th, I was visiting the U.S. as Minister of Environment.

One year has passed since then. I have been impressed by the courage of the American people. And it was American leadership that united the international community to fight against terrorism.

Often, this and that are said about the approaches of the United States. Naturally, leaders have to pay such prices. However, as a long-time friend and observer of the United States, I am one of those who believe the U.S. always takes initiatives and responsibility required of a leader in crisis situations. This is why I truly respect your country.

(Shared vision, common challenges)

Japan and the U.S. share a vision for the future. We share the belief in such fundamental values as freedom, democracy and a free market economy. We recognize the essential importance of diversity of culture and tradition. We long for a world free of threats from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We strive for the eradication of poverty and believe in harmony with nature. We are allies in all these aspects.

Based on our shared vision, Japan and the U.S. are tackling common challenges:

counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and conflict prevention, world economy and peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

How can we deal with these enormous challenges? Let me spell out three features of Japanese foreign policy. First, we believe in the fundamental importance of dialogue. Dialogue can be an effective means of persuasion and consensus building. Second, we believe in engagement. By taking this approach, we can encourage positive elements. Third, we value international co-operation. We thus attach great importance to multilateral frameworks and conventions, including the UN framework.

Today, I would like to give an overview of current Japanese foreign policy. In doing so, I hope I can give you an idea of how we see the way forward for the Japan-U.S. partnership.

(Counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, conflict-prevention)

The ensuing fight against terrorism after 9.11 has without doubt been a success. The U.S. played a remarkable leadership role in this fight. From the very beginning, Japan has been part of this endeavor. Japan immediately passed a law, enabling our Self Defense Force vessels and aircraft to be dispatched.

The next challenge is to make this success story a “never-ending-success-story”. Afghanistan should not be allowed to become a “failed state” or a “terrorists’ haven” ever again. Recent violent events are reminders of how vulnerable peace and security in Afghanistan still are. Peace should be consolidated. Achieving peace is a start, not an end. The international community will continue to support the efforts by the Afghans and their legitimate government to rebuild their own nation. This was the message that I conveyed to the Afghan leadership and people when I visited the country in May. We are working together with the U.S. and others to see to it that the pledges made at the January Tokyo Conference on the Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan are swiftly implemented. Last Thursday, Japan, US and Saudi Arabia agreed to reconstruct the road from Kabul to Herat. Japan is also trying hard to revitalize communities where refugees and demobilized soldiers can be reintegrated.

Regarding weapons of mass-destruction, our current focus is, of course, on Iraq. Iraq must comply with all the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. Iraq’s refusal of U.N. inspections is totally unacceptable. As was reaffirmed by Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush last Thursday, international cooperation is crucially important to deal with this challenge. We welcome President Bush’s U.N. speech last week that the U.S. will work with the U.N. to meet this challenge, pursuing the adoption of necessary U.N. Security Council resolutions. We must continue to urge Iraq to accept immediate and unconditional U.N. inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction. I made this point clear to the Iraqi Foreign Minister, when I met with him in New York two days ago.

Strengthening international frameworks, including the NPT (Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) is essential in order to suppress the global proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this context, Japan continues to believe that the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) can provide the international community with a practical and concrete way of ensuring nuclear non-proliferation.

Stability of the Middle East as a whole is also a shared priority for Japan and the US. I conveyed directly to Mr. Sharon and Mr. Arafat Japan's determination to remain actively engaged in the peace process when I visited the region this June. We have been the second largest donor country to the Palestinians after the U.S. and have provided as much as \$ 1.7 billion dollars of development assistance to Jordan over the years. Our recent focus has been to support reform of the Palestinian Authority, which we see as vital for the long-term "consolidation of peace" and conflict prevention.

Let me also touch upon Iran, a very important country in the region. Our policy is to encourage Iran to advance the reform process and to play a constructive role through continued dialogue and engagement. I made this point clear to the Iranian leadership when I visited the country in May. I also conveyed to them concerns on such issues as weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and human rights.

(World economy, caring partnership)

Now, on economy. As the two largest economies in the world, our economies have to be strong. Prime Minister Koizumi is vigorously pursuing structural reforms, aimed at a greater role for our private sector. We have no illusions. There can't be a quick fix. It's a hard, painful and enduring process.

The Koizumi government has nevertheless managed to make concrete and significant progress. We are transferring postal services to a public corporation next April, and will prepare for its future privatization. We also need to adapt our systems to the changing social structure, which is rapidly aging. Concrete steps have been taken, including the rise in the copayment of medical insurance from 20% to 30%.

We still have a long way to go. We need to vigorously promote economic revitalization, financial system reform including the disposal of non-performing loans, tax reform, and public expenditure reform. There is no other way. These are absolutely necessary to achieve private-sector-led economic growth in Japan, which will eventually contribute to the health of world economy.

At the same time, Japan and the U.S. should continue to lead the way to the success of the Doha New Round. In this connection, I welcome the recent enactment of the Trade Promotion Authority legislation here.

I believe that Japan and the U.S. should also develop a caring partnership to ease the

suffering and hardship all over the world. Poverty still persists. Disparity has enlarged. In Africa, almost half of the population subsists on less than one dollar per day. Environmental degradation worsens. Experts foresee a serious water shortage in the not-so-distant future. Secretary Powell and I announced the "Clean Water for People" initiative in Johannesburg.

Having visited such places as Afghanistan, ASEAN and African countries, I recognize how significant Japanese assistance has been and will be to the development of so many countries and to the lives of so many people. Development assistance is also the key to consolidating peace and preventing conflicts. Emphasis on "ownership" and "governance" in developing countries has guided Japanese ODA policy for years, especially in East Asia. We are convinced that our approaches have been effective, and can be effective elsewhere, including in Africa.

Japan believes that a multilateral approach could be effective in dealing with global issues. Japan has become a party to the Kyoto protocol. I hope that the U.S. will work towards establishing a common rule in which all countries participate. President Bush's announcement in his speech at the U.N. on the return of the U.S. to UNESCO is most welcome in this regard.

(Peace and stability in East Asia)

Now, let me turn to East Asia.

I welcome China's accession to the WTO as a step towards an open market economy. We do hope that it will benefit the development of China as well as the rest of the world. A week ago, in Beijing, I had discussions with President Jiang Zemin and other Chinese leaders. I really felt the dynamic energy of the country during my stay. Still, for China to become a fully rule-based, open market economy, it must overcome various challenges: internal disparities, environmental degradation and other structural problems.

Now, on the Korean Peninsula. At the end of July, I myself met with the North Korean Foreign Minister. Now, Prime Minister Koizumi will be visiting Pyongyang shortly. He is to meet with Chairman Kim Jong Il. This is the first time for a Japanese Prime Minister to visit North Korea. We highly appreciate the strong support that we received from President Bush and Secretary Powell. We are calling on North Korea to respond positively to international concerns over security, non-proliferation and humanitarian issues, including the abductions of Japanese citizens. Cooperation and coordination among the U.S., the Republic of Korea and Japan remain crucial in this regard.

Having attended the ASEAN meetings in Brunei, I could feel the strong expectation of our ASEAN neighbors, for Japan, as an Asian country, to play an even greater role for the region's robust growth and dynamism. As Prime Minister Koizumi said in his January speech in Singapore, Japan will act together and advance together with our neighbors in this region. In Myanmar, I met with leaders of the government as well as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Engagement through dialogue and appropriate assistance will be key for the success and democratization of such countries as Myanmar. Our approach requires patience and persistence.

(Conclusion)

As President Bush said in his remarks to the Japanese Diet this February, Japan and the U.S. share a vision of the region “as a fellowship of free Pacific nations.” Our alliance has been the linchpin of stability in this region. In my view, the Japan-U.S. relationship has never been as close and solid as it is today. Of course, we should not be complacent. Constant efforts to enhance the credibility of Japan-U.S. security arrangements are required. As our leaders agreed at Camp David last year, it is also necessary for our two countries to further engage in strategic dialogue at all levels.

It so happens that next year will be the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Commodore Perry in Japan. The year 2004 is the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Amity between the U.S. and Japan. Let’s work together to make our partnership and friendship stronger and more broad-based. Grass-root exchanges should be encouraged. Intellectual dialogues should be promoted. I am sure that CSIS and the Japan Society will continue to be among the most important players in this regard.

I keep coming back to America with a different title: first as a high school student, then Yale student, World Bank official, Commercial Minister at the Embassy, Environment Minister and now as Foreign Minister. I should say that this symbolizes already broad-based interaction between our two countries. I don’t know what sort of hat I will wear for my next visit but definitely I shall return to my second home.

Thank you very much.