
“Peace and prosperity in Asia, forevermore
Japan for the rule of law
Asia for the rule of law
And the rule of law for all of us”

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Introduction

Your Excellency Mr. Lee Hsien
Loong,

Director-General Dr. John
Chipman,

Ladies and gentlemen,

“Peace and prosperity in Asia,
forevermore.”

In order to make that a reality, what
should Japan do and how should
Japan contribute? That's what I am
standing here to speak about.

I think all of us in the room here
share a common mission.

The mission is one of pursuing
better living standards and
economic prosperity. It's a mission
of bringing into full bloom the
latent potential of this great growth
centre and the people living there,
stretching from Asia and the Pacific
to the Indian Ocean.

We must build and then hand over
to the next generation a stage on
which each and every individual can
prosper still more and certainly
benefit from the fruits of growth.

“Asia” is a synonym for “growth” and another name for “achievement.”

Take TPP. The Trans Pacific Partnership will surely bring an overwhelming economy of scale to the Asia Pacific economies.

Just as a rocket picks up even greater acceleration in its second and third stages, the RCEP and the FTAAP as it were, the momentum sparked by the TPP will expand our free and creative economic sphere, enabling us to soar even higher, and to propel the world economy forward.

And just for Japan to seek a win-win synergy with the growing Asia Pacific region, my economic policy is now advancing at full throttle.

If you imagine how vast the Pacific and Indian Oceans are, our potential is exactly like the oceans, i.e., limitless, isn't it?

In order to have the generations of our children and our children's children share in this bounty, it's absolutely imperative that we make peace and stability, something absolutely rock-solid.

To achieve this, all countries must observe international law.

Ladies and gentlemen, Japan will offer its utmost support for the efforts of the countries of ASEAN as they work to ensure the security of the seas and the skies, and thoroughly maintain freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight.

Japan intends to play an even greater and more proactive role than it has until now in making peace in Asia and the world something more certain.

As for Japan's new banner of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," Japan already enjoys the explicit and enthusiastic support of the

leaders of our allies and other friendly nations, including every leader of ASEAN member countries as well as the leaders of the United States, Australia, India, the U.K, France and others.

So let me just repeat. Japan for the rule of law. Asia for the rule of law. And the rule of law for all of us. Peace and prosperity in Asia, forevermore.

That's what I wish to state to you today.

My perception of the circumstances

May I now tell you firstly how I perceive the situation that surrounds us in the region.

This region has achieved tremendous growth in the span of a single generation. However, a large and relatively disproportionate

amount of the fruits of that growth is being allocated to military expansion and arms trading. To me, this is extremely regrettable. We also find ourselves facing the threat of weapons of mass destruction and attempts to change the status quo through force or coercion. Clearly there exist elements that spawn instability.

And yet nowhere do we find a need to be pessimistic. That's my approach.

Recently President Barack Obama of the United States and I mutually reaffirmed that the U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone for regional peace and security.

President Obama and I also mutually confirmed that the United States and Japan are strengthening trilateral cooperation with like-minded partners to promote peace and economic prosperity in Asia

and the Pacific and around the globe.

When Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott visited Japan at the beginning of April, we reaffirmed this exact stance, namely that in security affairs, we will further the trilateral cooperation among Japan, the U.S., and Australia. We clearly articulated to people both at home and abroad our intention to elevate the strategic partnership between Japan and Australia to a new special relationship.

In India, Mr. Narendra Modi has become Prime Minister through another free and fair election. I am absolutely certain that when I welcome Prime Minister Modi to Tokyo, we will successfully confirm that Japan-India cooperation, as well as trilateral cooperation including our two countries, will make the "confluence of the two seas," that is the Pacific and Indian

Oceans, peaceful and more prosperous.

Last year, I visited all ten ASEAN member countries, and my determination grew increasingly firm with each country I visited.

This is because these visits taught me that we share common groundwork regarding our commitment to valuing the rule of law, and that we enjoy a consensus in our respect for freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight.

Indeed, in most of the countries of the region, economic growth has steadily brought freedom of thought and religion and checks and balances to the political systems, even though the speed of these changes varies from country to country.

The sheer idea of the rule of law, which is one great pillar for human rights, has taken deeper root.

Freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, which undergirds these two, form the Asia-Pacific's rich basso continuo that supports the melody played in a bright and cheery key. I find myself newly gripped by that sound day after day.

The importance of international law

I have now shared with you how I perceive the circumstances that surround us.

Now, my first central point for today, that is that we must observe international law.

International law prescribes the order governing the seas. Its history is long indeed, stretching back to the days of ancient Greece, we are told. By Roman times, the seas were already kept open to all, with personal possession and partitioning of the sea prohibited.

Ever since what is known as the Age of Exploration, large numbers of people have come together by crossing the seas, and marine-based commerce has connected the globe. The principle of freedom on the high seas came to be established, and the seas became the foundation for human prosperity.

As history moved on, the wisdom and the practical experiences of a great many people involved with the sea, who were at times literally caught up in rough and raging waves, accumulated into common rules. This is what we now know as the international law of the seas.

This law was not created by any particular country or countries, nor was it the product of some sort of group. Instead, it is the product of our own wisdom, cultivated over a great many years for the well-being and the prosperity of all humankind.

Today, the benefits for each of us lie in the seas from the Pacific to the Indian Oceans being made thoroughly open, as a place of freedom and peace.

All of us should find one common benefit in keeping our oceans and skies as global commons, where the rule of law is respected throughout, to the merit of the world and humankind.

The rule of law at sea: Three principles

Now, when we say “the rule of law at sea” -- what exactly do we mean in concrete terms? If we take the fundamental spirit that we have infused into international law over the ages and reformulate it into three principles, we find the rule of law at sea is actually a matter of common sense.

The first principle is that states shall make and clarify their claims based on international law.

The second is that states shall not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims.

The third principle is that states shall seek to settle disputes by peaceful means.

So to reiterate this, it means making claims that are faithful in light of international law, not resorting to force or coercion, and resolving all disputes through peaceful means.

So that is all about common sense, pure and simple. And yet these very natural things must be emphasized. I urge all of us who live in Asia and the Pacific to each individually uphold these three principles exhaustively.

Take a look at Indonesia and the Philippines. They have peacefully

reached agreement of late on the delimitation of their overlapping EEZs. I welcome this as an excellent case in point that truly embodies the rule of law.

Ladies and gentlemen, my government strongly supports the efforts by the Philippines calling for a resolution to the dispute in the South China Sea that is truly consistent with these three principles. We likewise support Viet Nam in its efforts to resolve issues through dialogue.

Movement to consolidate changes to the status quo by aggregating one fait accompli after another can only be strongly condemned as something that contravenes the spirit of these three principles.

Would you not agree that now is the time to make a firm pledge to return to the spirit and the provisions of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the

South China Sea that all concerned countries in the Sea agreed to, and not to undertake unilateral actions associated with a permanent physical change?

The time to devote our wisdom to restoring peaceful seas is now.

Preventing unexpected situations

What the world eagerly awaits is for our seas and our skies to be places governed by rules, laws, and established dispute resolution procedures.

The least desirable state of affairs is having to fear that coercion and threats will take the place of rules and laws and that unexpected situations will arise at arbitrary times and places.

I strongly hope that a truly effective Code of Conduct can be established

in the South China Sea between ASEAN and China and that it can be achieved swiftly.

Japan and China have an agreement concluded in 2007 between then-Premier Wen Jiabao and myself, when I was serving as Prime Minister. That was a commitment we made to create a maritime and air communication mechanism in order to prevent unexpected situations between Japan and China.

Unfortunately, this has not led to the actual operation of such a mechanism.

We do not welcome dangerous encounters by fighter aircraft and vessels at sea. What we must exchange are words. Should we not meet at the table, first exchanging smiles as we sit down to have discussions?

It is my firm belief that commencing the operation of this

agreement between our two countries will lead to peace and stability of the region as a whole.

Strengthening the East Asia Summit and making military budgets transparent

Be that as it may, in my view, the time has come to place emphasis on the East Asia Summit.

The ARF is a meeting held at the Foreign Minister level, while the ADMM+ is, as the name describes, a meeting at the Defence Minister level.

There is no stage that outshines the East Asia Summit as a venue for heads of state and government to come together and discuss the order that is desirable.

Keeping military expansion in check and making military budgets

transparent, as well as enlarging the number of countries that conclude the Arms Trade Treaty and improving mutual understanding between authorities in charge of national defence -- there is no lack of issues those of us national leaders ought to take up, applying peer pressure on each other.

I urge the further enhancement of the East Asia Summit, as the premier forum taking up regional politics and security.

Next year marks the tenth anniversary of the launch of the EAS.

I propose that we first create a permanent committee comprised of permanent representatives to ASEAN from the member countries and then prepare a roadmap to bring renewed vitality to the Summit itself while also making the Summit along with the ARF and the

ADMM+ function in a multi-layered fashion.

The first thing we should discuss is the principle of disclosure.

We have all heard the saying that “sunshine is the best disinfectant.”

From now, Asia will continue to play the leading role in pulling the prosperity of the world forward.

Military expansion is not merely ill-matched but also inherently unworthy of such a place as this.

The fruits of prosperity should instead be reinvested into even greater prosperity and improving people’s lives.

I believe that a framework under which we publicly disclose our military budgets step by step that enables us to cross-check each other is a system that we should seek to establish as we extend the scope of the East Asia Summit.

Support for ASEAN

Ladies and gentlemen, Japan will offer its utmost support for efforts by ASEAN member countries to ensure the security of the seas and skies and rigorously maintain freedom of navigation and overflight. Then what will Japan actually support, and how?

We have decided to provide ten new patrol vessels to the Philippine Coast Guard. We have already provided three brand-new patrol vessels to Indonesia through grant aid cooperation. And we are moving forward with the necessary survey to enable us to provide such vessels to Viet Nam as well.

No less important, when hard assets are sent out from Japan, experts also follow, together with instruction in the relevant technical

skills. By doing so, the bonds between the people on the Japan side and the recipient side invariably become stronger.

We also convey to the partners our sense of pride in committing ourselves to our duties.

By cultivating a high degree of morale and proficiency and sharing our stringent training, buds of lasting friendship emerge.

Even if we look only at the three countries of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the number of people easily surpasses 250, who have learned from Japan about how coast guard operations should be conducted.

In 2012, when we invited to Japan higher-ranking officials within the agencies enforcing maritime law in each of the five major ASEAN countries, all throughout the month-long training period, three members of the Japan Coast Guard

were assigned to each person receiving training, with all of them living eating and sleeping together under the same roof.

I understand that one participant from Malaysia said that, “In Japan, the technical aspects of course, but also the high level of morale of each individual is superb. What I wish to take back home with me is this spirit.” I feel that this trainee really understood what we were actually trying to convey.

Here in Singapore representatives of the ReCAAP member nations are on high alert twenty four hours a day spotting piracy. Heading the ReCAAP Information Centre at present is a Japanese.

Recently, Japan has formulated new principles governing the cases in which defence equipment and technology can be transferred to other countries.

We are now able to send out Japan’s superb defence equipment, such as for rescue, transportation, vigilance, surveillance, and minesweeping, in cases in which appropriate control can be ensured, on the basis of a strict examination.

Japan and the recipient country are first to forge a written agreement, and to make the whole process forward.

Japan will combine various options within its assistance menu, including ODA, capacity building by the Self-defence Forces, and defence equipment and technology cooperation, to support seamlessly the capacity of ASEAN countries in safeguarding the seas.

I have stated all that as a pledge to you.

“Proactive Contribution to Peace” and reconstruction of the legal basis for security

I will now talk about my final topic for today, and that is about the new banner Japan has chosen to raise.

We are in an era in which it is no longer possible for any one nation to secure its own peace only by itself.

This is a view shared throughout the world. That is exactly why it is incumbent upon us in Japan to reconstruct the legal basis pertinent to the right of collective self-defence and to international cooperation, including the United Nations peacekeeping operations. On my watch, discussion is underway in Japan.

Japan’s Self-Defence Forces are at this very moment working hard to foster peace in South Sudan, only

recently independent, under the flag of the United Nations Mission there.

Units from such countries as Cambodia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, and China are participating in this same Mission.

There are also a great many civilian UN staffers as well as members of NGOs from various countries. They are all partners with us in the sense that they are all assisting in South Sudan’s nation-building.

Imagine now that civilians or NGO workers there, powerless to defend themselves, came under sudden attack by armed elements.

Under the approach that the Japanese government has taken to date, Japan’s Self-Defence Forces are unable to go rescue these civilians enduring the attack.

Is this an appropriate response into the future?

My government is thinking hard about it, and a close consultation is underway within the ruling coalition parties.

It is precisely because Japan is a country that depends a great deal on the peace and stability of the international community that Japan wishes to work even more proactively for world peace, and wishes to raise the banner of “Proactive Contributor to Peace.”

Who are “new Japanese” about?

Ladies and gentlemen, Japan has for multiple generations walked a single path, loving freedom and human rights, valuing law and order, abhorring war, and earnestly and determinedly pursuing peace, never wavering in the least. We will

continue to walk this same path, unchanged, for generations upon generations to come.

I would like all of you gathered here today to understand that point in a way that is absolutely crystal clear.

Over what is almost now a year and a half, I have worked to the very best of my ability to remake the Japanese economy into an economy that once more grows robustly, abundant with innovations.

People call this “Abenomics” and classify it as a type of economic policy.

But for me, it is a mission that goes far beyond economic policy. It is nothing less than an undertaking to foster “new Japanese” who will shoulder the responsibilities of the coming years.

And who are these “new Japanese” about?

They are Japanese who have lost none of the good qualities of the Japanese of days gone by.

Japanese who loathe poverty and believe that universal values are found in the joy of hard work have, since the days when Asia was still said to be synonymous with being impoverished, have continued to contribute untiringly to the construction of Asia's economies, in the belief that there is no reason why other Asian countries would be unable to accomplish what the Japanese themselves achieved.

The "new Japanese" are not different in the least from their fathers and grandfathers in the sense of rejoicing at each and every one of these selfless and unselfish contributions.

If anything has changed, it is that women will be both the target recipients of, and the people responsible for, Japan's support

and cooperation with increasing frequency.

Bear in mind that all three of the Japanese who helped create the civil code and the code of civil procedure in Cambodia were young female judges and public prosecutors.

It was in August 2011 that President Benigno Aquino III of the Philippines and Chairman Murad Ebrahim of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front held their top-level meeting in Narita, Japan. It was March of this year that a comprehensive peace agreement was finally reached between the two sides.

Two years from now, the Bansamoro local government will finally let out its first cry as a newborn. Now, to help support the locals, in what areas is the Japanese assistance team concentrating their investment?

One area is having women gain enough ability to make a living. In Mindanao, Japan built a vocational training centre for women. What now echoes through Mindanao, where the sounds of gunshots and angry cries have disappeared, is the light whir of sewing machines women are operating.

Given the fact that at the end of the day, the growth engine continues to be human beings and are likely to be women placed in an unfair and disadvantaged position, as has been the case until now, the “new Japanese” are people who spare no effort to improve the abilities of these people.

The “new Japanese” are Japanese who are delighted at the prosperity of Asia and the Pacific as their own personal source of joy and who discover values and a reason for living in making Japan a place of hopes and dreams for aspiring young people in the region. They

are Japanese that could go beyond their national borders and have a broad-minded sense of self identity.

From China to Japan, dozens of high school students come each year. They spread out all over the Japanese archipelago, spanning the nation north to south, and share their daily lives and their studies with Japanese high school students for a full year.

Without exception, these young men and women are moved by the friendships they have made with their Japanese schoolmates, and go back to their home country shedding tears at the affection they have received from their host families. They head back calling Japan their second home.

I want the “new Japanese” to place even greater importance on that spirit of welcoming non-Japanese with such deep affection.

These “new Japanese” are Japanese who are determined ultimately to take on the peace, order, and stability of this region as their own responsibility.

They are people who possess the drive to shoulder the responsibilities of peace and order in the Asia-Pacific region, working together with our regional partners with whom we share the values of human rights and freedom.

“Proactive Contribution to Peace” -- the new banner for such “new Japanese” -- is nothing other than an expression of Japan’s determination to spare no effort or trouble for the sake of the peace, security, and prosperity of Asia and the Pacific, at even greater levels than before.

We will do this together with our regional colleagues, our partners with whom we share our ambitions and our values.

Taking our alliance with the United States as the foundation and respecting our partnership with ASEAN, Japan will spare no effort to make regional stability, peace, and prosperity into something rock-solid.

In our future, the highway to peace and prosperity rolls out wide before us. Our responsibility to the next generation is to bring this region’s potential for growth into full bloom.

So once again, Japan for the rule of law. Asia for the rule of law. And the rule of law for all of us. Peace and prosperity in Asia, forevermore.

Thank you.