



Remarks at the Japan Society

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State
New York City
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Thank you for your kind introduction, Brian. Mr. Wood, President of the Japan Society, thank you for the invitation to be with you today. Consul General Sakurai, I am delighted that you could join us as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Let me say at the outset what an honor it is to recognize the fine work that the Japan Society has done for over a century. Japan and the United States share a unique bond, and this organization has done a great deal to make it stronger. Through New York's position as a cultural, media, and financial capital, the Japan Society of New York has enhanced people-to-people exchanges and influenced American interaction with Japan in business and in the realms of policy and culture. Congratulations for strengthening the human ties of our two cultures during the first 100 years of the Japan Society's existence.

I have been keenly aware of the critical nature of the United States-Japan alliance ever since I joined the Foreign Service in October 1960 and was posted to Hong Kong shortly thereafter, in January 1961. That was my first exposure to Asia, where the United States and Japan are fundamental partners for stability and prosperity. More than forty years later, I continue to pay close attention to United States' engagement with Asia. My first official trip abroad as Deputy Secretary was to Japan, and I returned to Japan last August. In Washington, I regularly meet with Ambassador Kato. The Ambassador has done an outstanding job representing Japanese interests in the United States.

For the past 60 years, the U.S.-Japan relationship has been the cornerstone of U.S. policy in Asia. Ours is an alliance of values and an enduring force for security and stability in a dynamic region. For over a century, in fact, Japan has been the first stop for Americans doing business in Asia. Together, we enjoy the largest overseas trade of any two nations in the world. Our economic partnership represents almost 40% of global GDP. Inevitably this major relationship has yielded substantial benefits to the Asia Pacific region as a whole. And yet our alliance encompasses much more than just economic activity and commercial interaction.

For the United States, Japan is a partner of the first order. Whether combating terror, curtailing North Korean and Iranian nuclear ambitions, or addressing developmental and governance challenges, Japan has played an indispensable and irreplaceable role as a responsible world leader and steward of the global order.

Today, I would like to discuss five of the major global challenges that will require U.S.-Japanese cooperation now and in the years ahead. From fighting terror, to nonproliferation, to ensuring continued global prosperity, Japan and the United States have stood shoulder-to-shoulder. I am sure we will continue to do so. In the coming decades, we also want to work with Japan to shape Asia's regional order and address global climate change.

First, we must continue to cooperate in meeting the challenge of combating violent extremism and terrorism. Our record should give us confidence. We appreciate the fact Japan has pledged \$5 billion to Iraqi reconstruction, the second largest amount after the United States. All of the aid is available to the Iraqi government, and we and the Japanese are continuing to work to expedite its delivery. This aid has provided clean water, electricity, and sewage to areas long neglected by Saddam Hussein. Japanese Air Self-Defense Forces also have provided ongoing logistical support to coalition efforts in Iraq, flying more than 600 missions and carrying more than half a million tons of cargo from many nations.

As the first United States Ambassador to Iraq following Operation Iraqi Freedom, I greatly valued our historic bilateral cooperation in southern Iraq. And as Deputy Secretary of State, I have been pleased to note that Samawah, where Japanese Self Defense Forces and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were based from 2004 to 2006, is now one of the most stable areas in Iraq. Security in Samawah is under control of the Iraqi forces, exactly as it should be. Thousands of Iraqi men, women, and children of the province have a better life because of the essential services Japan brought to the area. As a Japanese official said of his work in Iraq, "[It] made me proud to be Japanese." All Japanese should be proud of Japan's contribution to creating a democratic and stable Iraq.

Japan has also contributed significant assistance to Afghanistan. As the third largest donor to coalition reconstruction efforts, Japan has supported rebuilding Afghanistan's transnational highway, the Ring Road. Further, Japanese Maritime Self Defense forces have provided critical logistical support to Operation Enduring Freedom, with Japanese vessels refueling ships from 11 coalition nations nearly 800 times. We applaud the Diet's recent approval to restart this refueling mission. These ships contribute to a multilateral effort to stop weapons smuggling into Afghanistan. This has been a vital contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom and to the international community's broader efforts to combat terrorism.

On non-proliferation the United States and Japan have common interests and goals in protecting the world from weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Japan's leadership on this issue is evidenced by its hosting of the G8 Summit this year. Prime Minister Fukuda has made clear that a nuclear Iran cannot be tolerated. Our nations are united in our efforts to use diplomatic pressure against the regime in Teheran because we know that international pressure must continue if Iran refuses to suspend enrichment.

With respect to North Korea, Japan is a vital partner in the Six-Party Talks. We all know how important it is that North Korea make a "complete and correct" declaration of all nuclear programs. But even as we focus on the goal of verifiable denuclearization in the Six-Party Talks, the United States will continue to urge North Korea to address the abduction issue directly with Japan. We do understand the significance of the abduction issue to the Japanese people. Japan can be confident that we will not forget the abductees or their families.

As the world's two largest economies, our third challenge is to ensure continued global economic prosperity conducive to sustainable development. We are confident that in the coming years Japan's government will make the right choices to ensure Japan's own economic prosperity, and thereby contribute to global prosperity. Internal economic reforms and openness will be critical, especially in the financial sector because Tokyo should be a global financial center.

So we will continue to work closely with Japan on sharpening the cutting edge performance of our economies in the 21st century even as we jointly promote bilateral cooperation in the developing world. Agricultural liberalization, for example, is necessary to push forward on the Doha Development Round. We have a bilateral U.S.-Japan sub-cabinet dialogue to discuss these issues in depth because we count on Japan to join us as we push Doha to successful conclusion. Indeed, a successful Doha Round will complement Japan's outstanding efforts as one of the world's top three donors of foreign assistance. In Africa, Japan has been an active contributor to key development projects. In May of this year, Japan will host the fourth meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The U.S. looks forward to participating in this important meeting.

Through coordinated and complementary development activities, we can help responsible leaders deliver the benefits of democracy to their people. Our continued partnership is important to promoting strong governance and democracy in troubled regions. We – the American and Japanese people – know that the promise of democracy is not limited to any one region, and we must answer the call of those who still suffer under tyranny. This is especially true in Burma, whose people look to Japan as a great democracy for moral leadership and practical assistance in their own struggle for political freedom.

Today, as for the past six decades, the U.S.-Japan alliance forms the backbone of our security arrangements in Asia. Indeed, our bilateral alliance has expanded in scope to enable closer cooperation with NATO, India, Australia, and other partners. We have welcomed Japan's efforts to promote security in Asia and beyond since the end of the Cold War. This is a major contribution, but the work of ensuring the future stability and security of Asia is not yet complete. The formal institutions for peace and security in Asia, particularly Northeast Asia, are not as developed as they are in other regions. A new multilateral architecture that adds value to diplomacy and security cooperation among the powers of the Asia-Pacific, including the United States, could be of great benefit to the region. Such a multilateral arrangement could take different forms, but one idea is the potential to use the Six-Party Talks as the beginning of a more lasting multilateral structure for peace and security in Northeast Asia. We hope to explore this in earnest once we achieve denuclearization on the Korean peninsula. America and Japan could also work with partners to create new frameworks for cooperation among regional democracies.

International institutions conceived a generation ago must also adapt to Asia's rise. That is why, for example, the United States supports Japan as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. We also want to see the most inclusive economic organization in the region – APEC – develop into the region's preeminent economic organization. Japan will host APEC in 2010, and the U.S. looks forward to hosting in 2011, providing us with a two-year period in which we can collaborate in strengthening APEC.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, the United States and Japan—the world's two largest economies, must face the serious challenge of climate change, and the more we can do together, the more we can accomplish for the world at large. At the UN Climate Conference in Bali last month, we were pleased to shape a global consensus on the "Bali Action Plan," a two-year roadmap for developing a post-2012 approach to climate change when the Kyoto Protocol expires. Our goal is clear—we seek an international solution to climate change that is environmentally effective and economically sustainable, one that involves strong participation from all major economies, including our own and, of course, Japan's.

Japan's recognized leadership role is reflected by its hosting of the G8 this year, where climate change will be a key focus. Japan's beautiful Lake Toya is a fitting locale for these discussions, and we look forward to participating actively in this process. In addition, we welcome Japan's ongoing support for the Major Economies initiative that President Bush announced before last year's G-8 Summit in Germany. Today, in fact, representatives from 17 countries – representing 80% of the world's economy, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions – are gathered in Honolulu for the second Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change. This meeting, a follow-on to the first meeting hosted by President Bush and Secretary Rice last September, will assess the Bali Roadmap and examine how the world's major economies can contribute to the UN negotiations.

We are particularly grateful that Japan has joined the United States as a core donor to the clean technology fund President Bush announced at the September conference. Over the next five years, Japan's pledge of 30 billion dollars for technology research and development will help make reducing greenhouse gases an accessible goal for all countries, both industrialized and developing.

We will continue to work with Japan on all of these global issues in a spirit of trust and confidence. At the same time, we will look to Japan to further develop its role as a strong and trusted regional leader. Japan's standing in Asia is high, but lingering historical issues remain. We hope that Japan will continue to work with its neighbors to cultivate relationships that allow East Asia to fulfill its immense potential.

In particular I would note that Japan's relationship with China has historically been contentious, and yet it is gratifying to see that this relationship is improving. We do not fear Japan-China understanding and cooperation, nor should Japan fear U.S-China understanding and cooperation. These are not zero-sum relationships, where one of the three parties must lose if the other two gain. In the context of a strong, enduring, proven U.S.-Japan alliance—the United States can have good relations with both China and with Japan, and these positive relations should be good for all sides.

Ladies and Gentlemen: we owe a debt of gratitude to the founders of the Japan Society for their foresight in encouraging an alliance that emerged from the ravages of war and has come to stand for the values and institutions that surely will define the course of the 21st century—those values being the many facets of freedom, and those institutions being the dynamic emblems of democracy. We in the United States look forward to continuing a strong partnership with Japan. This is vital to the peace, security, and prosperity of our two countries, to Asia, and to the world.

Now I am happy to answer a few questions. Thank you very much.

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