



MC.DEL/66/04
7 December 2004



ENGLISH only

Speech by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi
(at the 12th Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security
and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Sofia, Bulgaria)

(Introduction)

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. Solomon Passy, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, for his efforts as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE during the past year. As a country which has supported the efforts of Bulgaria in establishing democracy and a functioning market economy, Japan highly values the constructive role Bulgaria has been playing within the OSCE. I also would like to address my heartfelt welcome to MONGOLIA, as a new partner of OSCE.

(Current security environment and the role of the OSCE)

Mr. Chairman,

The new security environment in the 21st century requires a comprehensive and globalized response. In this regard, Japan appreciates the efforts of the OSCE, based on the notion of comprehensive security which encompasses the politico-military factor, the human dimension, and economic and environmental issues.

We are also pleased that the OSCE has an increasing interest to cooperate with their Partners. In order to cope with the new environment, Japan is willing to share its experience with the OSCE, and is ready to identify adequate areas for further cooperation.

(Security environment around Japan and Japanese contribution in Asia)

Mr. Chairman,

The security environment in Asia, which significantly differs from that of Europe, still retains remnants of the Cold War era. In other words, in this part of the world, we are still faced with traditional threat. The situation in northeast Asia, especially in North Korea, is a major challenge. North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, for instance, are not just a direct threat to Japan's national security but a serious challenge to international non-proliferation efforts. In order to achieve a peaceful solution to those issues, we should not allow the Six-Party Talks process to lose its momentum. My government will continue to work on the North Korean side by telling that it is in their own interest to expeditiously agree to the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks without setting any preconditions, and to completely dismantle its nuclear programs including its uranium enrichment program.

As for the non-traditional threats, such as international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trafficking in persons and drugs, which are also major challenges for the OSCE, Japan is working proactively to address these threats in the Asian region.

Firstly, in the global fight against terrorism, Japan attaches a great importance to enhancing counter-terrorism capacity. In this connection, Japan has provided counter-terrorism capacity building assistance, mainly to Asia-Pacific countries, through holding training courses and seminars, dispatching experts, providing equipment and cooperating in other forms, while utilizing ODA.

Regarding non-proliferation of WMD, Japan has been promoting the understanding of Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) among non-participating countries including those in Asia. In this regard, we hosted a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) maritime interdiction exercise in October. We also held the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) in Tokyo last year and plans to convene the second ASTOP in February.

In order to combat the trafficking in persons and drugs, Japan is supporting relevant projects through the Trust Fund for Human Security and contributions to international organizations.

(Efforts for Afghanistan)

Mr Chairman,

2004 is the commemorative year for the OSCE because of the first dispatch of the OSCE election support mission outside the region.

Japan highly appreciates this historic mission to support the presidential election which will contribute to future stability of Afghanistan. Stability in Afghanistan is important for the peace and stability of the international community as a whole, since it is the source of threats including drugs and terrorism. Japan

hopes that the OSCE will also take a proactive role in the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan next spring.

Japan has also been actively involved in nation-building in Afghanistan including sending its own election observer team. Japan will continue its support to establish peace in such fields as political process, security, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction.

(Efforts for Central Asia)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me touch upon Central Asia. I highly appreciate OSCE policy toward Central Asia attaching great importance to this region. I myself visited Central Asian countries last August as Foreign Minister. I recognized there was growing recognition among those countries of the need for intensifying regional cooperation to resolve issues such as terrorism, drug, water, energy, environment, transportation. With a view to closer dialogue with this region and encouraging and assisting their intra-regional cooperation, we initiated a new dialogue of "Central Asia plus Japan". Utilizing its existing bilateral channel and this new framework, Japan intends to continue to engage with Central Asia to assist ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of this region, and, in this regard, Japan is ready to make further efforts to deal with those regional challenges together with the OSCE partners.

(Efforts for Ukraine)

With regard to the Presidential Election in Ukraine, We welcome the decision by the Supreme Court of Ukraine on 3rd December that ordered a revote, as an important step for a breakthrough. We find it important that the revote will be implemented in accordance with this decision and that a democratic election will be held impartially reflecting the will of the Ukraine people.

Japan is considering dispatching its election observers to be a part of the OSCE/ODIHR International Election Observation Mission.

(Efforts for the Balkan region)

Mr. Chairman,

Recognizing the importance of stability in the Western Balkans, Japan has been providing financial and human resources development assistance. Japan also

has provided assistance to the OSCE's activities in the region such as support for election including dispatching observers to the OSCE election monitoring missions, and dispatching experts to the OSCE field missions.

This April in Tokyo, Japan co-hosted the Ministerial Conference on Peace Consolidation and Economic Development of the Western Balkans. At that conference, Japan identified three key issues to be tackled: consolidation of peace, economic development, and regional cooperation. As a follow-up event of the ministerial meeting, Japan co-hosted a workshop on promotion of tourism in the Western Balkans last month, with the cooperation of the OSCE. Japan will continue to work for stability in the Balkans.

(Japan/OSCE)

Mr. Chairman,

Japan believes that we can learn best practices from the past development of the OSCE with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the security related forum in Asia, especially the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The ARF has been developing steadily as the forum for dialogue and cooperation on security in the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF continues to pursue dialogue and cooperation, and evolve in a gradual manner its approach in the three stages; the promotion of confidence building, development of preventive diplomacy, and elaboration of approaches to conflicts.

In this regard, I would like to recall the Japan/OSCE Conference in Tokyo last March, which was held back-to-back with the ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy. One of the important results of the conference was that it offered an opportunity of dialogue between the OSCE and the ARF members, and both participants deepened their understanding on the activities of the others. Japan will further cooperate with the OSCE in follow-up activities arising from the Conference.

(Acknowledgements)

In closing, let me express my sincere wish that the OSCE will achieve even further progress next year under the leadership of Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, Foreign Minister of Slovenia.

I thank you for your attention.