

Tenth Japan-Singapore Symposium  
Keynote Speech  
by Mr Minoru Kiuchi  
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Senior Minister Josephine Teo,  
Professor Tommy Koh,  
Ambassador Yoshiji Nogami,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very much honored to be given this opportunity to deliver a keynote speech on the occasion of this commemorative 10th Japan-Singapore Symposium.

It was precisely twenty years ago that the then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama of Japan and the then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore agreed, during the Summit Meeting, to convene this symposium. Since then, as a pillar of the intellectual exchange between the two countries, the Japan-Singapore symposium has been held continuously and the leading scholars, journalists, business people as well as government officials of the two countries have discussed topical important issues of the region.

In fact, Singapore is the only country in Southeast Asia with which Japan holds this kind of intellectual forum periodically.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has visited Singapore twice in the past one year or more, disseminating the administration's important policies to the world. The first visit was in July 2013. During

the renowned “Singapore Lecture”, Prime Minister Abe spoke about Japan’s efforts to revitalize its economy, which has come to be known as “Abenomics”. The second visit was in May this year. At the world-famous “Shangri-La Dialogue”, Prime Minister Abe delivered the keynote speech titled “Peace and prosperity in Asia, forevermore”, in which he stated his intention to promote the efforts based on the policy of “proactive contribution to peace” and to contribute even further to the peace and stability of the region and of the international community.

These demonstrate how much importance Japan attaches to Singapore with its rich pool of experts and influential international media as a trusted intellectual partner and as a hub to disseminate information to Asia and to the international community as a whole. This time, I am very happy to be able to participate in such a forum of intellectual exchange.

As you are all aware, ever since Singapore and Japan established the diplomatic relationship 48 years ago, the two countries have been steadily deepening cooperation in a variety of areas. The two countries share the basic positions concerning the peace and stability of the region and the international community. And, the cooperative relationship between Singapore and Japan is uniquely characterized by the two countries’ working together not only on issues of interest for the two countries but also for the region and the international community.

Currently, the international community is faced with so many challenges, such as the ISIL, the situation in Ukraine and the Ebola outbreak, for example. Turning our eyes to this region, the security environment is changing with, for example, North Korea’s abductions and nuclear and missile development, the rapid growth in defence spending by many countries in the region, and attempts to unilaterally change the status

quo by force . Today, in view of such circumstances, I would like to discuss how cooperation between Singapore and Japan can contribute to the prosperity of the region and that of the international community from three perspectives.

As the regional security environment is increasingly becoming severer, the two countries have been working together to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the region. Examples of cooperation in this area include combating piracy in the Malacca Strait including the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), and the on-going cooperation within the framework of ADMM-Plus.

Currently, to contribute even further to the peace and stability of the region and the international community, Japan is promoting the policy of “proactive contribution to peace” based on the principle of international cooperation. So far, we have implemented certain measures including the establishment of the National Security Council, adoption of National Security Strategy and the new National Defense Program Guidelines, and the cabinet decision on the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. More recently, in July, we made a cabinet decision on the basic policies on development of seamless security legislation. Through these efforts, Japan will be able to make further contributions to the peace and stability of the region and the international community with broadened possibilities for its contribution to the UN Peace Keeping Operations as well as logistical support. We will move forward with the development of necessary domestic legislation. These efforts are built on the foundation of Japan’s consistent efforts as a peaceful nation over the past 69 years after the end of the Second World War and Japan’s stance as a peaceful nation will remain unchanged. Japan has

explained to countries concerned about its stance as well as its efforts as thoroughly as possible and Prime Minister Lee Hsieng Loong expressed his support to Japan's efforts at the Singapore-Japan Summit meeting in May 2014.

Furthermore, as Prime Minister Abe announced at the East Asia Summit meeting last week, Japan is prepared to contribute, more so than ever, to the peace building, national reconciliation and democratization in Asia as part of "Proactive Contribution to Peace".

Japan will continue to work closely with Singapore to address issues of common concern for the region, such as ensuring "rule of law" at sea.

The second is the cooperation in the area of economy.

Japan and Singapore have grown together through promoting trade, investment and economic partnership, and thereby contributed to the development of the region as a whole. Singapore is the first country with which Japan has concluded EPA in 2002. Singapore, with its scarcity of land and natural resources like Japan, has continued to create added values and to grow as a hub of the regional economy. It can be said that Singapore is a model for Japan to emulate.

Under the Abe administration, Japan has been working towards wiping out deflation and reviving Japanese economy. Under the administration's third arrow "growth strategy", Japan has been promoting strategic economic diplomacy, particularly overseas business expansion of Japanese companies as well as the promotion of economic partnerships.

Aiming to embrace Asia's growth, Japan has also been promoting infrastructure exports in partnership with the corporate circle. As a part of

that effort, we look forward to contributing to the Singapore-Kuala Lumpur high-speed railway project by introducing Japan's Shinkansen bullet train.

Furthermore, Japan has also been working towards creating a society where women shine, unleashing the growth potential of women. In September this year, we hosted "the World Assembly for Women in Tokyo: WAW! Tokyo 2014". The conference was attended by approximately 100 successful women from Japan and abroad and we had the participation of Minister Grace Fu from Singapore. The conference successfully ended with its proposal issued to the world.

The third area is strengthening the regional frameworks. In Asia where security frameworks are not systematized like Europe, it goes without saying that strengthening multi-layered regional frameworks continue to be an essential challenge in the years ahead. In this regard, Japan will work with Singapore, who has a variety of wisdom and abundant ideas. There is no doubt that ASEAN will remain in the driver's seat of the regional framework. ASEAN and Japan celebrated together the 40th Anniversary of friendship and cooperation last year, and we are deepening our cooperation based on the vision statement issued then. Japan will continue to support ASEAN's centrality and unity, and will promote its assistance including strengthening connectivity.

Also, next year, the EAS will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Japan attaches importance on strengthening the EAS as a premier forum of the region. Towards next year, we are making proposals such as strengthening the Secretariat, and Japan will support the efforts of ASEAN including Malaysia as incoming ASEAN chair. At the EAS meeting held just a week ago, Prime Minister Abe spoke on this point and was well received by the leaders of the participating States.

The stability and prosperity of the region, as has been pointed out by Prime Minister Lee and other people of Singapore, can only be achieved under order created through the constructive engagement of the major countries concerned. In this sense, the U.S. rebalancing is becoming increasingly important as it contributes to the peace and stability of the region. To strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance, which is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign and security policy, and to contribute more broadly to the international peace and security in tandem, Japan has been undertaking greater cooperation with the United States in a variety of areas such as security and economy, including the revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation.

As for China, it is important to request its constructive engagement in a free and open regional and international order based on the rule of law. Japan and China held a summit meeting on the side of the APEC meeting held in Beijing the other day. Returning to the origins of the "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests", it is important to steadily promote dialogue and cooperation in various areas, including an early implementation of a maritime communication mechanism between the defense authorities of the two countries.

At this Symposium, I look forward to active discussions among participating experts on how the major countries should be engaged towards the regional stability and prosperity.

Now, as I have outlined from the three perspectives, opportunities are open for Singapore and Japan to continue to work together on the issues facing the region and the international community.

Next year, Singapore will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence. And the following year, 2016, is an important year for Singapore and Japan, marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This symposium which is being held in alternate years, would be held in Japan in 2016. I look forward to further developing the cooperative relationship between the two countries and so that the peoples of the two countries will be able to have a big celebration of this important occasion.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to wish you all the fruitful discussion throughout this two-day symposium. I also look forward to that this symposium developing even further as a forum to make intellectual contributions to the future of the region.

Thank you very much for your attention.

-end-