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Positive Pacifism and the Future of the Japan-Egypt Cooperation

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It is my great honor to attend the "Egypt-Japan Forum" and to address on the future of the Japan-Egypt cooperation. Both Japan and Egypt assume a leading role in their respective region of East Asia and Middle East. And both of the two countries are responsible not only for peace and prosperity of the region in which they are located but peace and prosperity of the entire world. With this background in mind, I would like to make a few remarks on how Japan -Egypt relations should be developed in the future.

In my personal history, I have once visited Egypt. That was in 1966, if I remember correctly. In those days I was yet in my 20's and working for the Research and Analysis Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. In that capacity I attended a conference of "Political Officers on African Affairs," which was held in Nairobi, Kenya. On my way back to Japan, I stopped by in Egypt. From Cairo, I flew southward along the Nile to Aswan by way of Luxor. In Aswan, the Aswan High Dam was being constructed with assistance from the Soviet Union. Egypt was allied with the Soviet Union in those years, and not a few Soviet engineers were dispatched there. As I had been posted as a diplomat in the Soviet Union for three years until those moments, I already had my own perceptions and ideas about the state and the people of the Soviet Union. But without telling them about this fact, I posed questions to several Egyptians whom I came to know about their impressions about the Soviet people. Their answers were quite surprising to me, because they all said, "We don't like them." It seemed to me that there was something very deep in what was implied by the word "don't like." I presumed that they might have been awkward with the obtrusive and rather arrogant attitudes of the Soviet people. Then, I had a hunch that the Egypt-Soviet relations were not so friendly as then generally believed and that their relations might be disrupted sooner or later.

Within less than a decade, my hunch turned out to be a reality. Seven years later, in 1973, the Fourth Arab-Israeli War or the Yom Kippur War broke out. This War marked a significant turn in the history of Egypt, as it thereafter renounced such an ideology as "Arab Socialism" and started to keep distance from the Soviet Union. And then Egypt converted to a pro-U.S. line. The Camp David Agreement of 1978 and the Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Israel in

particular were the decisive turning point. From then on, Egypt has become a stabilizing factor in the region and has assumed a role of a "mediator" between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East peace process. At least, we can say that there has been no war in the Middle East for the last 36 years, which can be referred to as the Fifth Arab-Israeli War.

At the time of the Gulf War, which stemmed from the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the U.S. called upon the international community to join the multinational forces on a voluntary basis. Egypt formed a joint "Arab Forces" with Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region to join the multinational forces. Besides, Egypt made its support clear for the U.S. attack on Afghanistan which began in the following month of September 11 terrorist attacks. Since then, Egypt has unsteadfastly made its position of "anti-terrorism" known to the world. Even further, Egypt advocates that "anti-terrorism" is a consensus of the Arab and the Islam world and continues its diplomatic efforts to deny the realization of the "Clash of Civilizations." Behind the background of these moves of Egypt, I see a clear and unwavering "national will" or "national strategy" of Egypt. That is to say, I recognize herein a fundamental policy of Egypt. That is to say, based on an accurate understanding of its standing in the region and the world, Egypt is striving to contribute to peace and stability of the region as well as the world.

Now, let me turn my attention to the case of Japan. How has Japan responded to its changing international environment in the past? Having regained its independence by signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, Japan has since run the country under the guideline called the "Yoshida Doctrine." This Doctrine has it that Japan should concentrate its national resources on economic development under the "Peace Constitution," leaving the task of national defense entirely in the hand of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Consequently, Japan has become the second largest economic power in the world and, as such, showed a successful example of post-war reconstruction and development. On the other hand, however, to such a stance of Japan as sometimes referred to as "an economic animal," many doubts and criticisms have been raised from both inside and outside of Japan particularly after the end of the Cold War.

In these times of growing cross border interdependency among nations in the world, peace and stability of the international community is no longer a question to be addressed individually by a single country but one to be addressed jointly by countries on global and regional levels. As the international community has come to manifest more clearly its intention to establish and maintain a "no war community," joint actions of the international community for that purpose is increasingly demanded. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the U.S. appealed to the international community to join the multinational forces, and Egypt acceded to that appeal. That was an example of such joint actions. Here, I would like to review how Japan responded to such a

demand of the international community. Here is how Japan responded when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill, which was intended to enable Japan to provide logistical support to the multinational forces, was presented to the Diet in October the same year. I attended public hearings sponsored by the Budget Committee of both House of Representatives and House of Councilors, and made clear my position in favor of the bill. Also, I appeared on a debate program aired by NHK, Japan's public TV network, on Oct. 21 that year, and stressed the need for Japan to dispatch the Self-Defense Forces on overseas missions. However, all of four other participants in that program were "one-country pacifists," who in one voice tried to dissuade Japan from embarking on such "risky" missions. An opinion poll at that time showed that 67 percent of the Japanese were against dispatching the Self-Defense Forces on overseas missions, while only 13 percent of them were in favor of it. Therefore, it came as no surprise that the bill was promptly repealed in November, just one month after it was presented to the Diet. Eventually, Japan made it through the situation by providing as much as 13 billion U.S. dollars to the U.S. After the Gulf War was over, the Kuwaiti government ran an advertisement in the Washington Post thanking the countries that had helped to restore its independence. But the name of Japan was not found in the advertisement. Bearing this bitter experience in mind, Japan has since strived to evolve from an "abnormal country" to a "normal country." Then it has been realized at last that the personnel of Japan's Self Defense Force have set foot on Iraqi soil and Japanese naval vessels have continued a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.

The Japan Forum on International Relations, which is a policy-oriented thinktank on foreign policy and international affairs, recently came up with a set of policy recommendations, titled "Positive Pacifism and the Future of the Japan-U.S. Alliance," and submitted it to Prime Minister HATOYAMA Yukio on October 22 and ran a full-page opinion ad of the text of the recommendations in the October 23 issues of five national newspapers in Japan. Although, judging from its title, this set of policy recommendations appears to be focused on Japan's foreign policy towards the U.S., it essentially presents a worldwide perspective or a doctrine upon which Japan's foreign and security policy should be fundamentally premised. The doctrine is called "Positive Pacifism," which can be applied to the discussions of bilateral relations of Japan with any country, including Egypt. Here, for this reason, let me take some time to explain to you what the "Positive Pacifism" means. It is the exact opposite of "Passive Pacifism," which is the very kind of pacifism of Japan that killed the United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill in 1990. The position of this pacifism is that there is no problem in the world as long as peace is secured for Japan and that Japan should stay away from any international efforts by repeating, "no, no, no." Then what must be done to embody a philosophy or doctrine underlying "Positive Pacifism"? In this regard we have made several specific proposals in the

policy recommendations. Let me here summarize the contents of our proposals in nine points.

1. Review the "Basic Principles of National Defense," Including the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles"
2. Cooperate with the U.S. Military Transformation Process and Approve the Exercise of the Right to Collective Self-Defense
3. Thoroughly Review "the Three Principles on Arms Exports"
4. Improve and Strengthen the National System of Intelligence Gathering and Analysis
5. Take the Initiative in Promoting Dialogues and Cooperation in East Asia
6. Strengthen and Develop Japan-U.S. Strategic Concert toward China
7. Confront the Existing Cases of Infringement upon Japan's National Sovereignty
8. Establish a "General Law for International Peace Cooperation" and Contribute to the Global "Collective Security"
9. Simultaneously Pursue Nuclear Nonproliferation, Disarmament and Strict Control of Peaceful Use

I think Japan should from now contribute positively and proactively, not only by words but by actions, to peace and stability of the various parts of the world as a responsible member of the international community. In this context, I think Japan should also make its utmost efforts for the development of Middle East peace process. Historically, Japan is untainted by such negative heritage as colonial rule in the Middle East. And Japan has gained trust from both the Arab world and Israel. In that sense, I think that Japan could play a unique role in promoting political dialogues in the region. Egypt, on the other hand, should have its own role to be achieved only by Egypt as a major power in the region. I think it is possible as well as important for Japan and Egypt to strengthen their cooperative ties as strategic partners to contribute to peace and stability of this region

Besides, there are many more issues and challenges in Middle East and also in Africa that Japan and Egypt can jointly address, including those of stabilizing Iraq, defusing the situation in Sudan, counter-piracy operations off Somalia, etc. Positive Pacifism is not a unique value that has significance only to Japan, but a universal value that has significance to any country in the world. The idea and spirit of it is to be readily shared between Japan and Egypt, with which both two countries could cooperate in tackling issues not only in Middle East and Africa but in the international community as a whole. [END]