

REMARKS BY H.E. MASAHIKO HORIE
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
AT RECEPTION HOSTED BY JAPAN
23rd ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE
SHERATON IMPERIAL KUALA LUMPUR HOTEL
2 JUNE 2009

Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan,

Chairman and CEO, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS),
Malaysia

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening to all of you present here. I wish to extend my congratulations on the opening of the 23rd Roundtable this morning graced by the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Tan Sri Muhyiddin Bin Yassin. It is my great pleasure to host the reception for the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, and please allow me to say a few words on this occasion.

Over the past two decades since its inception in 1987, the Asia-Pacific Roundtable has been offering invaluable opportunity for the leading opinion leaders, researchers, policy makers and advisers to network together and engage in candid exchanges concerning major security challenges we face in the region. In this regard, I welcome all the participants, and wish to pay my respect to Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan of ISIS Malaysia and his staff as

well as the people from ASEAN ISIS for their hard work for making this meeting possible.

More than one year and a half has passed since I arrived in Kuala Lumpur as the Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia. Through my everyday's experience here in Malaysia, I became increasingly aware of Malaysia's values and merits standing in the international community. Malaysia has achieved remarkable economic and social development; I think this is attributable to the tremendous success in turning its ethnic and cultural diversity into its core strength. In the context of international relations, Malaysia has projected its role, and has been working to serve as a bridge connecting Islamic countries and non-Islamic countries, also developing countries and developed countries. Moreover, Malaysia has been very active in participating in the international efforts for peace keeping and peace building operations as well as in the so-called South-South cooperation, extending its assistance not only to the developing countries in Asia and Africa, but also to the countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan.

Nowadays, while we see declining probability of war between the superpowers, we are under various security issues such as increasing cases of regional instability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism and extremism. Furthermore, we are facing the other global issues deeply related to security, including piracy, refugees, drugs, infectious diseases, natural disasters and climate change, and energy and food.

In these regards, Japan is striving for a promotion of peace and stability in this region and in the international community, and we find

tremendous opportunities for working with countries of the participants in this Roundtable meeting. Since I was posted in Kuala Lumpur, I have come across many opportunities of working together with Malaysia with such merits and strength. Let me briefly introduce some of them.

Maritime security, particularly, the rapid increase and proliferation of acts of piracy in the sea lanes such as in the Straits of Malacca, off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden is an issue of great international concern. The Straits of Malacca is one of the most important shipping lanes in the world, where 200 vessels pass through per day, carrying about one-third of the world's sea traded goods. Although efforts by coastal and user countries brought down the numbers of incidents in the Straits of Malacca in the past few years, we still have to be vigilant in view of its importance as lifeline.

In March this year, Japan and Malaysia have agreed to implement two projects. (1)The first project is to enhance the capacity of the Marine Operation Force of the Royal Malaysia Police for night time surveillance and regulation of crimes at sea using speed boats in the Malaysian territorial water including the Straits of Malacca. (2)The other project is to enhance the capacity of the Royal Malaysian Customs for prevention and regulation of smuggling activities and unlawful immigration in the Malaysian territorial water. (3)We have also cooperated Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency for its improvement of Malaysian Sea Surveillance System as well as its capacity building.

Malaysia is also very actively participating in international efforts for peace building, and in 1996 established the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre. The Japanese government is now starting a capacity

building support project at the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre in cooperation with the Malaysian government and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Under this project, participants from African and Asian nations will receive training for PKO. Japanese experts are also expected to contribute to the project as lecturers.

When talking about Malaysia's aspiration for regional peace and stability, we highly appreciate the central role of the Malaysian government in the Mindanao Peace Process. We express our sincere intention to support to Malaysian mediation efforts and in that sense also we have been contributing to reconstructions and economic developments. We encourage, in collaboration with the Malaysian government, the Philippine government and MILF to resume Mindanao peace process at an earliest possible date.

We also have collaborated with the University of Malaya and other Malaysian institutions for providing training programs for peace consolidation. Civil servants, government officials from post-conflict countries including Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan will learn in these training programs Malaysia's experiences in successfully making economic achievements in this multi-cultural and ethnic society. I would also like to add that the South-South cooperation in Malaysia was promoted by the Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training (CIAST) established in 1983 by Japanese assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are now facing various challenges such as global financial and economic crisis as well as the global spread of new strain of influenza. These problems affect peace and stability of the region negatively as well, rendering it more important for all countries in this region to join hands together in efforts to overcome these difficult problems.

In this context, I think it quite timely that this year's program of the Roundtable highlights the new US administration as one of the topics in considering the main theme "Strengthening Comprehensive and Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific".

I would like to conclude my remarks with expressing my sincere hope that the Asia Pacific Roundtable will help us, through candid discussion among participants, to identify various ways and opportunities for working together to better address those regional and global challenges.

Thank you.