

Japan in the New World Order

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Mrs. Soma, Distinguished Guests.

I am deeply gratified to have been asked to give this Yukio Ozaki Memorial Lecture. This lecture series honours a man whose courageous life-long fight in the cause of democratic politics very rightfully earned him the title of "The Father of Parliamentary Politics" in Japan. He was a shining light -- over a life span of more than nine decades and 24 terms in the Diet -- in this nation's successful effort to move from a closed and feudalistic society to one of the world's leading international powers. Your father, Mrs. Soma, was committed to the proposition that a well-informed people are the only safe depositories of government -- and you are keeping his spirit very much alive in these lectures aimed at promoting better understanding among the Japanese people of the many perplexing and complicated issues that confront the modern world.

The theme of our discussions here today is the role that Japan might play in the emerging world order that is beginning to take shape around the globe today. Let me say at the outset that it would be highly presumptuous of me to attempt to prescribe what that role should be. It is a question that I cannot answer -- nor should I try to do so, and above all on an occasion marking the memory of Yukio Ozaki, for

Japan's future direction in world affairs is one that should be determined largely by her own people through their own elected representatives and leaders.

In this increasingly interdependent world, however, where decisions made on one side of the globe can ripple so swiftly over the lives of people on the other side, no nation can set a course in foreign affairs in a vacuum. All societies, the strong and the weak, are now exposed to many forces and processes beyond their control, and all national boundaries have become permeable to the transnational impact of economic and political decision taken somewhere outside one's own country.

The external behaviour of a nation today might be likened to what is known in Newtonian physics, as the resultant force -- where the ultimate direction and acceleration of a body is determined by numerous other forces. Similarly, a country's path in international affairs is the result of many forces, divergent views, varying domestic reactions to external events and decisions, and differing sectoral interests and perceptions.

By no means all of these forces are rational ones -- many are bred in fear, ancient hatreds, mistrust and lack of understanding. And, as with the laws of physics so too in international affairs, a veering off from one direction almost invariably leaves in its wake sets of new reactive forces. It is to an examination of these external factors, both the rational and irrational, which will affect the international behaviour of Japan and all nations that I would like to devote attention here today.

Virtually all of these factors are forces for change. The signs of deep and fundamental change are everywhere at hand, in all parts of

the world and in all levels of society. Together, they comprise a literal transformation of the global society. One of the most important things we all must learn, if we are to survive and progress in an increasingly insecure, perilous and fragile world, is the art of existing, at more than double population density, in a continuing state of rapid social change accompanied by great common vulnerability.

The slim and precarious measure of stability which characterized the post-war world and the period of detente -- built largely on an uneasy and frightening nuclear stalemate -- appears to have disappeared. That stability ignored basic issues of structural change and cultural diversity at both global and national levels. It is no longer possible to put off these issues.

Major shifts in the global configuration of power are under way, yet several of the major countries seem unwilling or unable to adjust to new political realities. As a result, the pathology of the arms race, feeding on fear and mistrust, continues to pose the ultimate threat of extinction of all life on this planet. There is great and obvious danger that when major centres of technological and military power perceive themselves unable to cope with new situations, they might strike out senselessly at alarming shadows -- and so unleash the nuclear genie.

Instabilities are evident in all parts of the globe. The industrialized nations are experiencing great problems in overcoming the structural inadequacies that impede their adjustment to the post-industrial era and to the advancing industrialization of the South. Many of them are saddled with political and social institutions that

were created to deal with other, older problems than those we face today.

Underlying these political and economic instabilities are profound cultural changes and value shifts -- seen, for example, in altered concepts of work or changing consumer expectations and savings habits, but also in the rise of a new religiosity, the search for new life-styles and the emergence of single-issue politics. What is at stake here really are changing conceptions about the meaning of life.

The Third World is equally caught up in serious and deep-rooted fragmentation and disorder. These countries, who share so much common suffering and dependency, have been unable to act in unity and are thus weakened in the North-South dialogue. Their situation is further complicated by the rapidity of economic development in certain of the newly-industrialized countries which has led to regional and social disparities of great magnitude.

There is also deep trouble internally within the developing societies -- as someone from the Third World, I believe this must be admitted and faced up to. Many of their first-generation political institutions have proved unable to cope with the needs of their societies and have collapsed. The second generation is now about to be tested by problems of succession. Too many of the Third World elites continue to be bewitched by outworn assumptions about economic planning, technology transfer and the modern technocratic state. Too many still view the problems in old power terms -- whereas the real issues are increasingly of a different order, involving social growth, equity, justice, freedom, and alternative industrial trajectories.

Thus everywhere -- East and West, North and South -- there is

evidence of economic stagnation, social breakdown and political impotence. Everywhere powerful and wholly new processes and deep-seated emotional reactions to the status quo -- both rational and irrational -- seem to be emerging to challenge the capacity of traditional institutions to manage.

Perhaps nowhere are the inadequacies of conventional management systems so starkly reflected as in the heedless plunder of this planet's finite resources, often in the name of progress and the advance of science and technology. It is estimated in the Global 2000 Report that the world's forests are disappearing at the rate of 18 to 20 million hectares a year -- an area well over half the size of Japan, with most of the loss coming in the humid tropic forests of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In pursuit of modernization and industrialization, we have recklessly, and to our common peril, brushed aside the hard reality that we all must share the same thin layer of biosphere and the same thin crust of earth's surface. It is now ten years since the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Yet we are still seriously lacking in the capacity to even monitor the extent to which we have soiled the skies, fouled the seas, and laid waste the land -- much less the capacity to successfully manage the globe's precious resources on a sustainable basis.

Tragically, this widespread disintegration in human solidarity and environmental degradation is occurring at a time when other, equally compelling forces -- such as communications, world trade, and resource security considerations -- are rapidly knitting the world together in a web of interdependence. We seem to be experiencing the paradoxical and disorienting process of our globe both fusing society together and

splitting it apart.

Increasing interdependence, moreover, is in many respects actually helping to sharpen the sense of fragmentation. The miracle of membership in the "global village" -- fashioned out of modern telecommunications, electronics and transport -- can be exceedingly empty to those whose lives are characterized by grinding poverty, hunger and despair. Their aspirations are heightened while they become the more cruelly aware of just how vast and how rapidly growing the gap is between their daily existence and that of the members of the affluent societies.

How can we hope to bring a measure of stability and human dignity to this scene of spreading fragmentation and disarray in the world, with the growing awareness of hundreds of millions of the unacceptability of their present lot?

Such stability, it now seems clear, cannot be bought through attempts to achieve military balance by rearming or stockpiling ever more frightening and obscene weapons of destruction. We have learned too well -- or should have learned -- that military power does not automatically translate into political power.

Nor does economic power necessarily carry with it the capacity to bring about stability or the betterment of the quality of life for the global society. We have seen the dismal failure of the conventional development notions of the 1960s and 1970s -- the belief in economic growth and the "trickle down" theory -- in being unable to provide certain minimums of human survival to the world's poor and marginalized. In those parts of the world where there has been economic success, grave doubts are now emerging over the ultimate worth of such materialistic

pursuit.

Here in Japan -- clearly the outstanding economic success of the post-war era -- one detects a growing questioning of the high human and social costs of moving into the front ranks of international economic power. The environmental ravages, the increased alienation, and the drift away from cultural moorings are increasingly viewed as unacceptable side effects of modernization and industrialization.

It is becoming more and more apparent that there is one form of power, however, which might help lead us out of our present turmoil, drift and fragmentation and onto a road into a 21st century promising hope and the attainment of dignity and less resort to violence in settling our inevitable differences in this pluralistic world. That is the power of the mind -- the enhancement of our intellectual capacity to reason, to understand and relate to other cultures, to love our fellow members of the human race for the oneness we all share through all our diversities and clashing aspirations, the essential humanity in all of us. Unless we learn to love one another, we may all very well perish.

The attainment of this capacity is an urgent necessity in an interdependent world, where no one is in control and the means to maim and kill each other are so readily and frighteningly available. The process of fragmentation now under way may lead to a new more viable international order of greater equity, justice and harmony. But it could also lead to war and self-destruction, and it is thus incumbent on all of us to work to reduce the dangers of war and conflict.

An essential first step in this direction will be learning to live with our vulnerabilities. Since nuclear weapons make all humankind

unacceptably vulnerable, we will need to develop new concepts of security at lower levels of armaments. One important act could be the adoption of a regional security arrangement -- free of the strategic security considerations of the superpowers -- which cut across ideological and other divisions in various regions of the world. Such a concept would be fully consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, under Article 52. It would in no way duplicate or weaken the United Nations, but, to the contrary, could give the UN new vitality by allowing various regions to deal more effectively and germanely with their own particular problems and sources of conflict. Such arrangements could include the possibility of regional peacekeeping forces. They could also be the basis for collaborative works for peace -- as, for example, in the establishment on a regional basis of river basin management systems for hydropower and irrigation. If the world were not spending US\$700 billion annually on armaments, such co-operative efforts at sharing natural resources could become feasible.

Violence and the potential for conflict are also bred in anger about human misery and deprivation and thus works for peace must also apply themselves to the alleviation of the root causes of hunger, suffering and poverty. Population pressures over the next several decades are bound to sorely strain the capacity of institutions to feed, clothe and house many additional millions. Here in Asia, there will be one billion more people by the year 2000 -- all wanting more material goods, more just and humane treatment, more education, more of everything.

Population growth also raises the question of the impact of this

growth on an already disturbingly high rate of youth unemployment in many countries, both industrialized and developing. In the ASEAN nations alone, there are now some 110 million young people under the age of 15 whose expectations for a more decent existence than their parents knew cannot be ignored. Creating employment opportunities for them in the decades ahead is one of the most perplexing challenges that we face -- but it is crucial that we come to terms with it, for it threatens the very viability of our societies.

Finding answers to such problems will almost certainly turn on our ability to make science and technology serve more consistently humanity's moral and ethical purposes -- by unlocking human creativities and the potential for self-fulfilment and not, as so often in the past, increasing dependencies and widening disparities. If science and technology are to help reshape the social structures in which hunger, poverty and injustice are embedded, they will have to advance social and ethical goals, not merely technological ones. They will therefore need to be firmly rooted in the social values and cultural perspectives of the societies they are to serve.

In the task that lies ahead for the global community -- in lessening the potential for violence, uplifting the hopes and aspirations of vast segments of humanity, and thereby laying the groundwork for a truly just, secure and equitable international order -- I believe that Japan has a major role to play.

There is here in Japan a very real, deep-seated and fundamental commitment to peace -- to heiwa -- born out of the singular and searing horror of atomic attack. The Diet Association for International

educate and develop? It has been clearly demonstrated in the West that such educational opportunities can be important foundations on which to build close linkages with the emerging leadership of the Third World. It would significantly improve Japan's capacity to relate to other countries of the world. That capacity now, in the view of many thoughtful people in this country, is far too thin.

The third step would be increased support to the peace-keeping capabilities of the United Nations in various regions of the world. I am not talking about soldiers, sailors, or airmen. Within Constitutional limits, non-military hardware and technology, including, say, satellite, aerial and other surveillance systems, from Japan could make a substantial contribution to the globe's collective ability to reduce violence and lessen conflict. By offering its superb technological expertise and rich scientific resources to such works for peace -- which I am confident would win the gratitude and admiration of peoples all over the world -- Japan would both stimulate its own industry and at the same time take a good deal of the sting out of the accusation that Japan is getting a "free ride" on defence.

By moving in these directions in works for peace, Japan could become the model to which the world turns in seeking to enhance its capacity to settle its differences and solve its problems through reason, respect for others, a willingness to share, and mutual understanding.

Beyond that, there are the intangibles which this nation has to contribute to the cause of world harmony and stability. One cannot live very long in this ancient land, so rich in cultural tradition, without realizing how much the global community might find here to help it live

with itself and all its imperfections a bit better. I refer here to such things as the sense of beauty in small corners of one's life, the importance of inner space in high population densities, and the need on a very small island -- which is what the whole globe has become today -- to avoid abrasiveness and discourtesy and live in harmony and peace with one's neighbours. These are no small concerns in this increasingly crowded, competitive and perilous world.

We at the United Nations University are very happy to be living and working here in Japan -- for we believe that qualities such as I have mentioned, and other potential achievements in Japan's search for a role in the new world order, are very much consonant with our basic vision: a pluralistic world of many diversities with an essential underlying commitment to peace, justice and dignity for all humanity. To the achievement of that vision, we are seeking to generate new knowledge, new insights and new global perspectives through the input of the wisdom and experience of scholars and scientists from all parts of the world. We believe that the fresh understandings thus given birth will contribute to the growth of a better informed world citizenry more capable of managing its own destinies. It is a vision, Mrs. Soma, that I believe your father would have shared. Thank you very much.

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