Miles to Go:

My vision for Japan's Future

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

I am very grateful for this opportunity today to address the Brookings Institution, one of America's oldest and foremost think tanks. I feel very honored to have been given the opportunity to speak here at such a venerable institution. I wish to thank Vice President, James Steinberg, also all of you who have taken the time to come here today. In addition, my friend Richard Bush, senior fellow of this institution, kindly put a great deal of effort into making this speech a reality, and for that I also thank him most warmly. And of course, my sincere thanks also to the staff of the Brookings Institution.

I am well aware of the considerable impact that the Brookings Institution has long exerted on the policy-decision process in U.S. politics. In fact, the Brookings Institution often makes me think of President Kennedy. When Kennedy was elected president in 1960, he differed from his predecessors in wanting to bring a large number of policy staff into the White House, and the Brookings Institution provided working space for staff due to join the administration in the transition period before the Kennedy administration was established. That much is well-known. Subsequently, legislation was passed to ensure that the federal government provided funds for the transition periods for new administrations, and I understand that resulted from the contribution made by the Brookings Institution during the Kennedy administration's transition period.

Before beginning my presentation today, I would like to pause to remember those who have given their lives in the fighting in Iraq. In particular, I express my deepest respect for the brave soldiers of the U.S. military with whom we are allied, and extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have made the supreme sacrifice.

I am truly delighted that the parliamentary elections in Iraq on January 30th were held without major incident and with an unexpectedly high turnout. The people of Iraq have earned my great respect for having gone to the polling booths in spite of the terrorist threat, in quest of freedom and democracy, and I hope very much for the success of the political process in Iraq.

This year marks the 60th year of the postwar era. If we take an overview of the history of Japan-U.S. relations during these six decades, up to today's "golden age," their course has been anything but smooth. Cooperation with the United States was the basis of Japan's foreign policy after the war, but it was not a relationship of equals. Without doubt the conclusion by Japan of the San Francisco Peace Treaty brought the occupation period to an end and the recovery of its sovereignty, but it did not put Japan and the U.S. on an equal footing. In my view, the true recovery of Japan's independence came with the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, which enabled Japan to set out at last on the path towards an equal partnership with the U.S. For this reason, I believe that 1960 was the watershed year for Japan in the postwar era.

The revision of the security treaty in 1960, and the restoration of independence, made it possible for Japan to concentrate its energies on domestic issues. I think it is fair to say that the subsequent period of very high economic growth was fruit of such an approach.

However, it is certainly no exaggeration to say that, today, Japan is facing an even greater turning-point than it did in 1960, the issue at stake here being that of how to address deepening globalization. I think this can be summed up by looking at two core elements.

The first element being how sustainable growth can be achieved. For that, it is essential to ensure the coexistence of economic growth and the conservation of the Earth’s environment, and we are sparing no effort as we strive to achieve that. Meanwhile, the massive consumption of energy by China, that is accompanying the growth of its population and its economy, is a problem that the entire world must confront. How to use energy efficiently and how to make it possible to achieve economic growth in an environmentally conscious manner, is a matter that concerns us all and demands us to keep a close watch.

Given these circumstances, an issue that Japan must address is the promotion of free trade agreements (or perhaps, in a broader sense, economic partnership agreements). On the one hand, what is called for in Japan today are policies to concentrate the input of our limited resources

into competitive industries and cutting-edge fields focused on the next generation, and I believe that the progressive liberalization of trade and investment by means of FTAs will invigorate the economy and will spur the efficient use of resources, making new economic growth possible. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the advance of FTAs will be resisted by domestic industries that are less competitive internationally, such as agriculture. This presents a major political risk, in view of which Japan finds itself in the position of not being particularly positive towards promoting FTAs.

In the meantime, for Japan there is a close interrelationship between globalization and the problem of its aging society, and its declining birthrate and population. Needless to say, we must formulate measures of all kinds to address this problem. For a Japan in which a rapidly falling birthrate and aging population mean that it cannot expect quantitative expansion in such spheres as labor, political risk must be overridden, and strategic political decisions taken.

The key to addressing the rapid deepening of globalization, I believe, is to determine how to allocate resources efficiently and quickly. By promoting the international division of labor under the impetus of FTAs, not only Japan but also other Asian countries will open the way to achieving stable and sustainable growth. Also, for the sake of the balanced development of the Asian region we should approach collaboration with ASEAN in a strategic and flexible manner. That is also the direction of the Japan-US Economic Partnership for Growth as it was confirmed mutually by Japan and the U.S. in 2001.

The second element is how Japan can make an international contribution, an issue that is linked closely with the problem of Japan's constitution and national security. Under the Koizumi administration, Japan has been moving ahead with efforts to revise its constitution, and amid this process we have begun to hear calls from the public to draw up a new constitution that is entirely of our own making. There is the old saying that "The voice of the people is the voice of God"—or *vox populi, vox dei*, in Latin—, and indeed it is becoming impossible even for the stubborn protectors of the constitution to ignore the spirit and determination of the people to change it. When, after a national debate, we write a constitution with our own hands, that will truly mark the completion of Japan's independence. And as a result of that, it will become possible for Japan to make an even greater contribution to the international community.

The problem of national security, which is arousing considerable debate in relation to the revision of the constitution, can be left for the question-and-answer session afterwards, but for the moment I would just like to share with you my basic thoughts on the right of collective self-defense.

Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations refers explicitly to "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense" of members of the United Nations, and the preamble to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty also includes the words "Recognizing that they have the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense." In addition, the Japanese government has the right of collective self-defense under international law, but has interpreted the Japanese constitution as prohibiting that right from being exercised. This kind of narrow interpretation that Japan is not able to exercise the right of collective self-defense is not applicable in today's international world. It need hardly be pointed out again here that the interpretations offered by the Japanese government hitherto have reached their limits in a number of respects.

One of the duties of our generation is to change this government's interpretation so as to enable Japan to exercise that right. That will result in an increase in Japan's deterrent capability and a reduction in the likelihood of exercising military force.

I see that I am running out of time.

Before I finish I would like to mention briefly that in his book *Miles to Go*, the late Senator Daniel Patric Moynihan wrote that "Politics is almost always in some measure an argument about the future."

I interpret his reference as meaning that politicians should listen in a discerning way to voices that tell of the future, and have the courage to put into practice ideas that create the future. That, I think, is the nature and character that is demanded of politicians of our generation.

Thank you very much.

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