

**Richard Holbrooke, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and
Pakistan**

**Sadako Ogata, President, Japan International Cooperation Agency
“Afghanistan and Pakistan: An Agenda for Partnership”**

<Mr. Holbrooke>

The Pakistan Donors Conference was held today in Tokyo, and this extremely important conference was realized through the leadership of Japan. The World Bank is presently adding up the pledged assistance, which it estimates will total around US\$5.2 billion. As I have said on numerous occasions, Japan's place at the forefront of these efforts by the international community is evidence that Japan is a world leader and that Japan deserves to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Today's conference takes place against a backdrop of growing awareness within the international community of Pakistan's importance. Pakistan has not previously been regarded as a priority country, but it has become increasingly clear of late that improvements in the situation in western Pakistan are essential to stabilize neighboring Afghanistan. The Obama administration, too, has positioned Pakistan as a key country. Taliban forces are gaining strength in western Pakistan and they continue to expand steadily into the surrounding area. Hiding in the territory controlled by the Taliban are international terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda that have been involved in recent terrorist incidents around the world. No country can count itself free of the danger they pose, and this has thus become an issue common to the international community.

Japan has made extremely significant contributions to Afghanistan in terms of economic and developmental assistance; indeed, these Japanese efforts have now become essential. The war in Afghanistan is already in its eighth year. While this war will not end quickly or simply, the US and its allies do recognize its importance. Some have compared this war to the Vietnam War, but the two differ greatly due to the 9-11 attacks. No multinational coalition would likely have come together had the 9-11 attacks not occurred. The countries sending troops to Afghanistan undoubtedly realize the difficulties of this war, but failure by the multinational forces would invite a return of the Taliban and the terrorists and thus cannot be allowed.

In addition to the Taliban and the terrorists in its western areas, Pakistan faces a variety of other difficulties and problems arising from economic problems, internal strife, disputes with India, and its possession of nuclear weapons. Given Pakistan's importance, Japan's leadership role in this donors conference is of extraordinary significance.

<Mrs. Sadako Ogata>

I am extremely pleased by Mr. Holbrooke's appointment as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, as he is someone to whom I can speak about Japan's approaches. He shows a good understanding of Japan's efforts in diplomacy and development, and I was able to discuss with him those areas in which Japan should cooperate in future.

I have been involved with Afghanistan for many years. As UN High Commissioner for Refugees, I endeavored to get assistance to 6 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Japanese government also participated in reconstruction efforts soon after the collapse of the Taliban regime, and I believe it was able to make considerable contributions between 2002 and 2005. From 2006 onward, however, the Taliban reasserted their influence and became an intractable security threat. This security problem arose in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Accordingly I would like to express my high regard for the new US initiative that considers Pakistan and Afghanistan together. There have been few occasions heretofore on which these two countries have been examined in association. However, it is crucial to improve public safety and pursue reconstruction not only in Afghanistan but throughout the wider region. This point of view is strongly reflected in this Pakistan Donors Conference. Pakistan is facing a major security threat in its western regions, and we in the international community will undoubtedly have to focus on these issues confronting Pakistan. Bolstering Pakistan's own ability to maintain public safety is another important issue.

Assistance within a broader regional context is one area in which Japan can make further contributions. It is important to consider Afghanistan in its regional context. Afghanistan is a land with an ancient history, and it has long interacted with neighboring countries, including Iran and other countries in Central Asia. Japan has been planning, for example, roadway construction in Central Asia that would be important for strengthening commercial ties between Central Asia and Afghanistan. Iran, too, is a key player with regard to Afghanistan. Iran has accepted 2 million Afghan refugees and has close commercial ties with Afghanistan. The international community should highlight this regional approach and further develop it. The US is deserving of praise for its efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan that have contributed to the development not only of those two countries but also of the surrounding region.

<Discussion>

Mr. Holbrooke:

I would like to discuss agriculture for a moment. The US is presently endeavoring to provide Afghanistan with agricultural assistance, and the US and Japan have both increased the amounts of their agricultural assistance. Afghanistan was a prosperous agricultural nation until the Soviet invasion of 1979, but its agricultural sector is in a state of collapse.

The US has invested over \$800 million annually in counter-narcotic measures but these have proven fruitless. Among its many problems, Afghanistan is struggling with rampant drug production and corruption fueled by drug money. The US has now decided to shift its focus to agricultural development to improve this situation, and Japan has coincidentally arrived at the same conclusion. Prison conditions in Afghanistan are another important issue alongside agriculture. Prisons have become recruiting stations for the Taliban and hotbeds for radical militants, and we must combat the brainwashing taking place in prisons.

Ms. Ogata:

Japan is also committed to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, and it has been consistently involved in improving social infrastructure such as roads, hospitals, schools, and clinics. With regard to agriculture, Japan has several experimental farms in Afghanistan where research is being conducted on rice and wheat cultivation; the research in Jalalabad has been particularly effective. There are plans to move these research sites to the northern provinces in which development is somewhat lagging and in which the Taliban have not made many inroads. We hope to complete this experimental farming before public security worsens. In addition, bountiful harvests will likely help forestall poppy cultivation.

Assistance is needed in other areas as well. One such area might be comprehensively improving and developing the urban infrastructure in the capital city of Kabul. Japan finished construction of a new terminal for Kabul Airport last autumn and, working now on water and sewage systems for the 4 million residents of Kabul, it has received requests from the Afghan government on new urban development projects. Basic surveys and studies for new urban development in northern Kabul have been completed, and a ten-year project for new urban development with improved infrastructure is being formulated. Japan is thus undertaking urban development at the same time as agricultural development. Improvements to public security in Afghanistan will also be necessary. If Afghanistan continues in this positive direction, Pakistan and other neighboring countries will likely follow in the same direction.