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Topic: “Japanese-American cooperation in supporting democratic transitions”

Looking back from a future vantage point, one will likely be able to discern a major wave of democratic transitions sweeping over today's world. This wave started in a small country in Africa, but it has now built up into a huge swell worldwide. Efforts by Japan and the US to further rally these democratic transitions are of great import for the entire world. While we cannot mutually compel struggles demanding new democracies, we can and should support them. This is the role of the Community of Democracies, or CD.

Firstly, the democratic transitions taking place in every part of the world are to our own benefit and that of humanity. Democratic countries maintain the rule of law and have greater credibility as trading partners. They are unlikely to become failed states or to suffer famine and starvation. They also cooperate in addressing security threats, terrorism and non-proliferation issues. All people have a natural desire to enjoy freedom, and we should closely track this ambition.

Secondly, while democracy cannot be imposed from outside, it is wrong to think that the East and other non-Western civilizations or religions such as Islam cannot co-exist with democracy. The Middle East Spring shows that democracy is a global and universal desire. Turkey, Indonesia, India, Mali, Tunisia and other countries have demonstrated that Islam and democracy can co-exist.

Japan, the US and other states that have already achieved the status of democratic nations should support the struggles for democracy arising in these countries and should assist them to ensure the viability of the new democracies. Also effective would be to have countries such as Indonesia, which achieved a democratic transition in recent years, convey their lessons and experiences to countries currently on the path of democratic transition. For instance, ODA should be provided in a priority fashion to new democracies similar to the approach of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) recently established by the US. Following the example of the OAS, it would also prove more effective if Japan could cooperate with Mongolia, the chair country of the Community of Democracies, and with South Korea and other democratic countries in Asia.

Here let me briefly outline the history of the Community of Democracy. In 2000, Poland, the US, India, South Korea, Mali, and Chile, all signers to the Warsaw Declaration, gathered in Warsaw to shape the establishment of this Community of Democracies. The Japanese government sent Amb. Tatsuo Arima as its envoy and provided financial assistance. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan also participated, stating that, while he would hope that the

UN would at some point take on the role itself, he provisionally welcomed the efforts of the Community of Democracies to lead the world in a democratic direction. The Community of Democracies has since held a ministerial conference every two years.

Restructuring will be required to further the activities of the Community of Democracies. As one facet of this restructuring, the Governing Council (GC) was established to support the Community of Democracies. I was quite pleased to hear the happy news that Japan had joined this Governing Council alongside Sweden, the Netherlands, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Nigeria.

Recent years have also seen new efforts such as democratic partnerships. Democratic countries and NGOs will cooperate in supporting countries undergoing democratic transitions based on the latter's needs. Examples include the support given to Tunisia via cooperation between the Netherlands and Slovenia, and the support given to Moldova via cooperation between the US and Poland. Also conspicuous are the democratization education efforts of Mongolia's president and democratic gatherings in Geneva and New York. We look forward to Japan taking on an active role in the Governing Council, supporting the Mongolian president and enhancing its cooperation in the United Nations.