



## **“Japan and East Asia —Aiming for a World of Resonance, Co-creation, and Mutual Prosperity—”**

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Under the turbulent international situation in these days, I have large expectations for local and regional governments in East Asia. The Chinese people often say “We change central government officials and politicians with the power of people.” I think our challenge today is “to change countries by the power of regions.” In 1972, one of the driving forces of the normalization of the Japan-China diplomatic relations was, I surmise, the power of people including the economic world, who encouraged and sometimes urged the central government to change, and the power of local and regional governments aligned with them. Amongst the confusing global circumstances, I strongly expect all of you from local and regional governments to breathe a tender spring breeze to untangle them.

The United States is promoting the America First policy, and in the U.S.-China relationship, takes everything from intolerant perspectives of trade and investment. They seem to treat international relations based on profits and losses between the two countries. The United States is leaving international organizations, as shown in the official notice of withdrawal from the Climate Change Convention. Further, looking at the situation of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and also Europe, the rise of populism in both left and right groups has resulted in the decline of valuable middle-of-the-road forces. A serious decoupling is progressing in these countries.

However on the other side, for example, the State of California in the United States takes global warming as an important problem and expresses they will take positive measures. It is a strength of the United States that a regional government responds like this, regardless of the intention of the White House.

As to the Japan-China relations, a large number of tourists are visiting Japan from China. Their behavior is shifting from going on “shopping sprees” for tons of Japanese products to bring home, to experiencing Japan and its culture. Also, their destinations appear to be changing from big cities like Tokyo and Osaka to rural tourist spots. I am very sorry that tourists from Korea are significantly decreasing due to the current situation. On the other hand, however, exchange events commemorating the Korea communication envoy

were held as planned, and musical interaction represented by the popularity of K-POP is also still active among young people. Given the current circumstances, some universities are keen on international exchanges among students of Japan, China and Korea, and I hope young people experiencing such exchanges will build bridges among the East Asian countries in the future.

When it came to economic conditions of East Asia, it used to be said that Japan was at the forefront, then followed by Singapore, Korea, and so on, and behind them was China, the ASEAN countries, and India, in the form of the so-called “economic development of flying geese.” (The leading countries provide funds and techniques for the following countries.) However, today we see each of the countries has achieved development and is winging its way into the wide blue yonder. I think that what will be commonly needed in the future of East Asia are the following factors: resonance — stimulating each other and learning each other’s advantages; co-creation — working hard together to create better products including soft powers; and mutual prosperity — to be sought through the above two factors.

There are a lot of issues the East Asian countries should cope with, including environmental problems, aging, and WTO and United Nations reforms. Germany and France concluded the Elysee Treaty after the war, advancing on a way to conciliation and building the foundation of the postwar Europe. I have a dream. Someday, an East Asian version of the Elysee Treaty will be made in a historical city that experienced abundant interaction amongst the East Asian countries, for example, Nara in Japan, Xi'an in China, Gyeongju or Paekche in Korea.

Governor Arai stated, “The future is not something to be predicted but to be co-created.” I strongly encourage all of you on the front line of regional administration to devote every effort to create a more positive and wealthier future.

