

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING
EFFORTS OF JAPAN IN THE RE-
CONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND
THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN
AGAINST TERRORISM

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express deep appreciation for the support and cooperation received by the United States from our close ally Japan. The United States and Japan have maintained a strong relationship over the past half century, successfully overcoming challenges created by the Cold War, globalization, and now the international campaign against terrorism. Our alliance has been the key to insuring stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region for decades. Today, I stand to recognize Japan's recent outstanding contributions in support of ongoing reconstruction efforts in Iraq and the international campaign against terrorism.

Last week, Japan dispatched an advance unit of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to the Iraqi city of Samawah to assist the coalition in its efforts to stabilize and rebuild the nation of Iraq. This unit will eventually be joined by up to a thousand additional troops and support personnel. The Japanese will provide much-needed medical services, increase Iraq's water supply, rebuild schools, and repair infrastructure. Their mission will result in greater security and prosperity for the Iraqi people and welcome support for American forces in the region.

The arrival of Japanese forces in the Middle East signifies a milestone in Japan's history. For many decades, Japan has provided generous financial support for efforts to promote international security, but the country's post-war constitution has precluded the overseas deployment of Japanese Self-Defense Forces, SDF. This past summer, the Japanese Diet made an historic decision to support coalition efforts in Iraq. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, the Diet created a legal framework to allow the deployment of Japanese SDF troops to assist in reconstruction efforts. I would like to echo the words of

my good friend, Howard Baker, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, by saying that this unprecedented decision has "enormous symbolic significance."

With this action, Japan has demonstrated recognition of the reality that oceans and geography alone cannot protect free nations from murderous fanaticism. Japan has recently experienced the pains of terrorism. I wrote to Ambassador Ryozo Kato, Japan's ambassador to the United States, to express my condolences to the families of Mr. Katsuhiko Oku and Mr. Masamori Inoue, who fell victim to a terrorist attack in Iraq on November 29. As President Abraham Lincoln noted in the Gettysburg Address, Mr. Oku and Mr. Inoue "gave their lives that that nation might live." Shortly before his death, Mr. Oku wrote a particularly meaningful entry in his diary after visiting the site of a suicide bombing in Nassiriya. He wrote: ". . . what we should learn from this tragedy is to have stronger determination not to yield to terrorists. Terrorists attacks could happen anywhere in the world. The elimination of terrorism is therefore a goal to be sought by all of us." These brave and determined words should strengthen our resolve to carry on with efforts to stabilize and secure post-war Iraq.

Japan's contribution to the rebuilding of Iraq includes significant financial support. After the United States, Japan is the largest donor to Iraqi reconstruction. In October, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi announced a \$5 billion aid package for the rebuilding of Iraq, including an outright grant of \$1.5 billion for next year and loans in the amount of \$3.5 billion to be given under generous terms through 2007. Five billion dollars is a significant contribution by any measure, however, in the context of Japan's current economic challenges it is a particularly generous pledge. Japanese assistance will go toward power generation, education, water and sanitation, and infrastructure—improvements in these areas will lay the critical foundation for future Iraqi development. Last month, Prime Minister Koizumi also announced to U.S. envoy James Baker III that Japan would provide extensive debt forgiveness to Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, not only has Japan stood by the United States during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but it has also actively cooperated with

our country in combating terror around the globe. As the United States began to take steps against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Japanese government provided logistical support to Operation Enduring Freedom. Despite the tight controls placed on Japan's armed services by its Constitution, Japan found ways to aid the U.S.-led coalition in freeing the Afghani people from a ruthless regime and rooting out destructive Al-Qaeda cells. The Japanese Diet passed legislation allowing for the deployment of supply ships and destroyers to the Indian Ocean to act as rear military support and provide the U.S. fleet with fuel, food, and water. The Japanese also provided medical assistance to coalition troops, assisted Afghan refugees, and contributed to American intelligence-gathering. This rear support has continued through Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Japan has taken an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Tokyo hosted the international donors conference for the reconstruction of Afghanistan in January 2002. The two-day conference, co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the Prime Minister's special representative for Afghanistan, succeeded in gaining pledges of \$1.8 billion in assistance for 2002 as part of a total of \$4.5 billion for a 5-year period. Japan pledged a generous \$500 million to be given over a 30-month period. While many of the pledges have not been fulfilled, Japan has remained true to its word and has already disbursed most of the promised funding.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 2 years, the alliance between the United States and Japan has grown stronger as we have worked to improve our mutual security as part of the international campaign against terrorism and to address the critical issues posed by North Korean nuclear proliferation. However, our relationship is based on more than common security interests. It is a reflection of our mutual commitment to democracy and freedom. Today, I rise to thank the people of Japan for their outstanding support of the United States in the international campaign against terrorism. Japan has proven itself a good friend to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a true, loyal ally of the United States.