

## Speeches

### Reconstruction and Peacebuilding

Tsuneo NISHIDA

Special Assistant to the President (Peace)

Honorary Director, Institute for Peace Science, Hiroshima University

Hello, everyone. I am Nishikawa. It is very difficult to speak after Professor Abe's excellent keynote speech, and I hope you can put up with me for about twenty minutes.

The themes of today's symposium are "reconstruction" and "peacebuilding." Professor Abe argued for "the community before peacebuilding," and his talk was full of suggestions that were grounded in reality and that were full of empirical insight.

When I first heard the news of the Earthquake, I was Japan's ambassador to the United Nations. I was in New York. Early that morning, the then UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, phoned me and said, "Ambassador Nishida, I would first like to convey my deep condolences. There was a catastrophic disaster." Of course, I had learned by then that something had happened via e-mails, but I did not have a clear picture. Since there are

200 or 300 Japanese embassies around the world, the foreign minister of Japan cannot contact them all by the phone. In this case, the UN Secretary-General was the first person to phone me to send his condolences.

His message was that he sent his deepest condolences to the government and people of Japan, and that he wanted to get in touch with Mr. Kan. At that time, Mr. Naoto Kan was Prime Minister of Japan. Mr. Ban wanted to visit the areas affected by the disaster as soon as possible. Of course, we needed to do a lot of preparation in order to receive him. A few months later, I accompanied him on a visit to the affected areas which we had at that point only seen in photos, and talked to people who were affected by the disaster.

At that time, there was a long line for the book of condolences, including my colleagues, the Mayor of New York, and the UN staff and ambassadors from many countries. Signing a book of condolences is,

in a way, part of a diplomat's job. When a head of state or a former head passes away, a book of condolences is opened and ambassadors and diplomats sign the book. Usually, it is "business as usual;" they come, sign, and leave. You may think this is rather indiscreet.

However, in the case of the Great East Japan Earthquake, something was different. There was a long line of ambassadors and the UN Secretary-General. Normally, people would just write down their name and a line or two in the book of condolences, but some were writing one to two pages. They wrote while shedding tears. I was standing behind the ambassadors and the Secretary-General to observe, and people would start shaking, and some even started to cry.

This was the most impressive and, in a sense, most moving experience I have had in my long diplomatic career. It was, regrettably, such a misfortune to Japan and the world, but at that moment, I felt the world was one. When faced with people who are placed in an extreme situation, a person directly shares things with others beyond their normal business duties. Having witnessed not only the sharing of happiness, but sadness as well, I thought that this was what diplomacy was all about.

In a way, reconstruction and peacebuilding are somehow connected to this kind of story and when I am asked

about it, I always say that human compassion is the root of it all. Compassion is a difficult concept to describe in Japanese; it is slightly stronger than empathy, and everything starts and ends with compassion.

As Professor Abe also mentioned, in today's globalized world, the distinction between man-made disasters, conflicts, wars and terrorism, and natural disasters is becoming blurred. For example, the case of Fukushima in the Great East Japan Earthquake is not 100% about natural disasters. What happened in Fukushima, in my view, is largely man-made.

Again, as mentioned by the previous speaker, in New York at the time, people were asking, "Why are Japanese people so disciplined and why can they respond so properly? It is unbelievable that nothing criminal takes place, when there is effectively no government." This is what everyone said.

However, as reconstruction picked up speed, people started to say that the government's response was inadequate. This is a rather strange comparison, but the idea is that Japanese people behaved so much better at the beginning when there was no functioning central or local government. People therefore said "Japanese people are great" and "I feel sorry for the Japanese people." What connects these two in the middle was the

statement, “Japanese politics are not good.” This was often said in New York at that time. It is rather awkward that I, as part of that political system and government, heard about it and that I am now telling you all about it.

Therefore, what matters is compassion, institutions, criteria, regulations, the distinction between the public and the private, and co-operation. We have to have both in order to know the details of “how to build the institution” and an overall view of the whole enterprise. Even if the one side is very heroic, the extreme situation has to be normalized. This is not a Hollywood film.

What is important here is sustainability, a very popular concept these days. What is important is to continue. A one-off event is meaningless. This is very important, and I dare say that Japanese people are not very good at this.

Now let me turn to reconstruction and peacebuilding. I think you have some idea about reconstruction, because it is a word that is used frequently, but you probably do not know much about peacebuilding. It is likely that the first compound word you learned in school in connection with “peace” is “peacekeeping.” I would imagine, for most of you, this is a word you may have heard, but in all honesty, that you do not know much about. This is because it is jargon, a special shared language among

researchers, UN staff, or artisans. Peacebuilding and peacekeeping are frequently used, but no one really knows what peace is. However, because there are so many people whose livelihoods depend on this, this carries on.

There is a joke about peacekeeping which you hear often. Peacekeeping is to keep peace. But if there is peace, why do you have to do it in the first place? Because peacebuilding is to build peace, the order should be peacebuilding first and then peacekeeping. However, in the UN jargon, the order is reversed.

Peacekeeping takes place when the parties involved in a conflict somehow come to a truce. There is no peace treaty, but at least there is a truce. Still, their relationship is tense, and they do not like each other to start with. In this situation, people from the UN come in to maintain the truce or to guard a certain line to separate the parties involved. Then, an election is arranged. When the election takes place, it is monitored. Peacekeeping is asking the international community to give guidance to those involved in a conflict to construct a more peaceful and more democratic society.

However, because there are so many problems in the world, the international community cannot support peacekeeping indefinitely. One of the major characteristics is the election. It is good

that the election has taken place, and now that a President or Prime Minister has been elected, our job is complete. We say goodbye and the international community tries to withdraw. But then a few months later, riots take place and the killing resumes. This is not the idea of sustainability mentioned earlier. This suggests that it is not enough to keep the peace. What we need to do is build sustainable peace which is more meaningful. This leads to peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a very broad concept, and it is, in essence, about what we can do to realize a society in which peace has been kept and is sustainable and open to the outside world. To put it very simply, instead of the military, the police are sent in. You may wonder why the police. The military intervenes between opposing forces and they are heavily armed, although PKO is not heavily armed. However the police—the civil police in English—deal with security. They do not deal with wars or conflicts, but they deal with security. The police are sent in to protect your safety, namely, the safety of civilian life.

Next, for example, judges are sent in. Why judges? In such a society where there is likely a lot of confusion, the judicial system is not properly developed. The easiest thing to do is, for example, to form a government by electing a President. However, the President alone cannot make

a democratic state. You need two more elements. The first is the parliament. Usually both the government and parliament can be formed at the same time through elections. The other is the judiciary, the court system.

Why is the judiciary so important? As well as being the mechanism through which law is enforced, it is also very important for the protection of individual citizens. The newly established government and parliament are, in fact, a form of power. If power unnecessarily intervenes in your life to the point of oppression, then your human rights have to be protected.

In this regard, the judiciary has two roles: first, it keeps order in the state, and second, it protects the human rights and interests of each citizen. However, this is not widely understood in developing countries or countries with frequent conflict, and there is usually no police (in the truest sense of the word) in many developing countries. In other words, their police are made up of ex-military men doing policing as a side business. In these situations, it is very difficult to get people to understand what the civil police means.

When taking on the task of institution building, of building something vast, such as the government, perhaps an education system or universities are necessary, and of course we have to have compulsory education. And come to think of it, we also

need hospitals and so on. So what peace refers to is a sustainable society for citizens, and peacebuilding refers to the process that builds this.

As you have figured out, it takes a long time. When there are a variety of problems in the world, and when the UN is one of the representatives, can the international community deal with all the problems? As Professor Abe mentioned, when one tries to respond to disasters happening all over the world, you may have a manual of sorts, but there are also conditions that are specific to each country. For example, the Korean Peninsula and the case of Ireland. There are many examples, but often knowledge about the local situation is lacking.

This is also the case with how well known the people are. Why are the Japanese people not successful in mediation? This is a similar question to how many Japanese have ever lived in Africa. In other words, the strength of Japanese society is that it is a monolithic society, which becomes a weakness when Japan wants to do something in the international community.

If someone says, "I am the offspring of an African and a French citizen. I have lived in Africa for more than ten years. I have many African friends," and he/she, as a UN representative or a representative of Japan, asks "can I help?" the other side

would say, "Oh, yes. This person is Japanese and lived in Africa for more than ten years, and his/her father is an African." Then African people would at least be interested in talking to that person.

On the other hand, if a 100% Japanese person offers to help, although this is a wonderful and admirable person, the other side would not be sure if that person understands their specific situation. "How many times have you been to Africa?" "Err, about four times." "I would rather not have this person deal with our issues." This would be the response. What this means is that while it is important to build institutions, it is also important to develop such human resources.

In reference to the North Korean issue, in Japan, the discussion starts with whether the Self-Defense Force should be sent out to the PKO or not, and this is where the discussion ends. However, when the international community engages with peacebuilding, you may be sent out as a professional or as a student. You may be sent out as part of an NGO. So peacebuilding is not simply about war and peace, but it is about a variety of things from hospitals to the judiciary. In other words, there is a significant demand for civilians, and therefore, you have many opportunities to get involved.

Japan is well-liked and well-respected around the world. I don't have

time to discuss this in detail, so let me simplify it. There are many leaders who want to model their countries on Japan. However, when asked to send out good people from Japan, there are some problems. First, not many are fluent in English, and while scientists can communicate because they use a common language, in the field of humanities it is more difficult. To quote Soseki Natsume, the response could be “well, we do not know much about Soseki Natsume.”

Let’s look at the law. How useful is it for a person’s career to learn about the Japanese legal system and laws? When Japan is creating miracles for the world, it would make sense for people from Africa or Asia to learn Japanese and the Japanese legal system because that knowledge could add enormously to their future career paths.

What is happening now is that Mandarin is at the forefront. Learning Mandarin expands your career choices. I think Japanese society, which has been monolithic by nature, has been losing vitality in this regard. We have come to a turning point and we have to think about what we are going to do next.

Because time is running out, I am going to hit the brakes on my speech. What is important is to learn what is required and if Japan is a good fit for it or not. Unfortunately, there is a growing gap between what the people of the world

expect from Japan, and what Japanese people can realistically offer in terms of capacities, knowledge, and skills.

However, this has not been properly addressed by the media, or, and I am very sorry to say this, universities. Because there is little awareness of this, people do not realize that they are drifting away from the needs of the world. What they know is “we have been taken over by China” or “South Korea is conceited:” that is what they think it is all about. However, focusing on that here does not have much impact.

Of course, because we are all human and belong to one country, we have to see ourselves relative to one another. But I also think it is inappropriate not to make efforts to look at ourselves more objectively, by using an absolute and more global scale to see where Japan is situated, what it can offer, and what it can learn from the international community.

This is a very inconclusive idea and I would like to repeat this talk and message five more times. But my time is up, and I have to stop talking now. I would be happy to discuss this further at the panel discussion later. Thank you very much for listening.