

Jordan independence day/world

Building for a stable, prosperous and peaceful future

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF JORDAN

Today Jordanians celebrate the 63rd anniversary of independence and in two weeks they will celebrate the 10th anniversary of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein's accession to the throne of Jordan. I would



like to take advantage of these two special occasions to extend the sincerest of our wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko for their 50th wedding anniversary, and the auspicious occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Emperor's accession to the throne, and to the great and friendly people of Japan for continued peace, progress and prosperity.

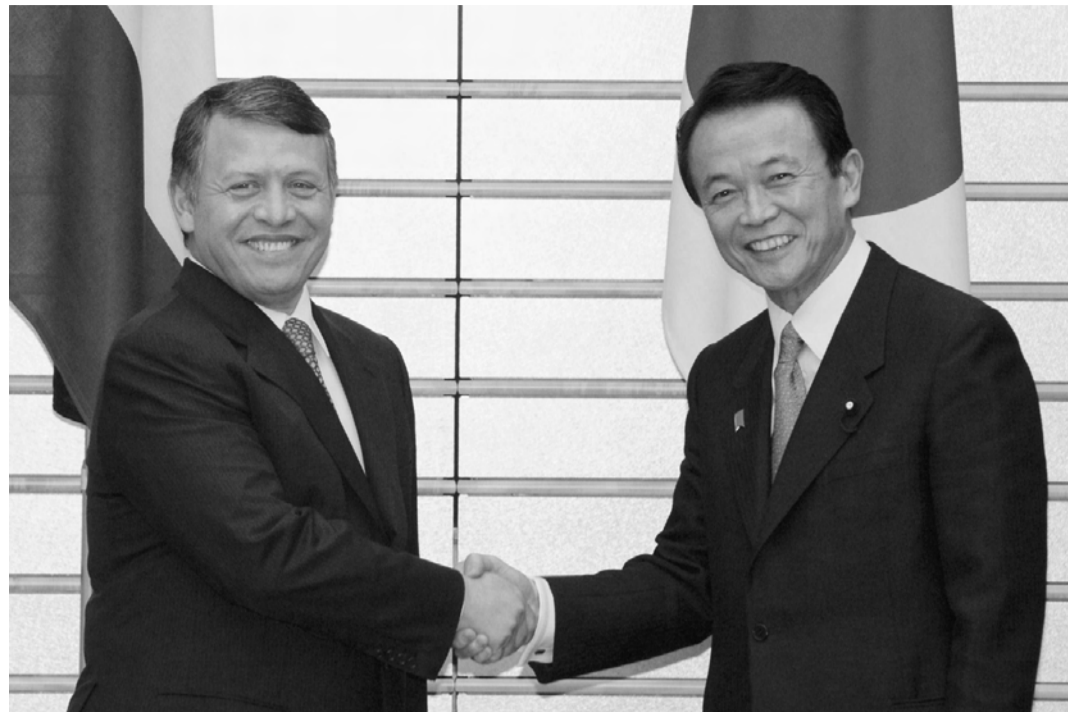
I am deeply grateful to The Japan Times for providing me with this opportunity to address its distinguished readers, whom I hope will allow me to say a few words about what makes Jordan-Japan relations so special.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two friendly countries in 1954, our ties have developed progressively and steadily. Covering wide spectrums of is-

sues of mutual interest, we now meet eye to eye on most if not all positions and viewpoints supporting many causes such as justice, peace, human rights and democracy.

The highlight of these ties has always been the frequent royal visits to Japan. This year's visit, which took place last month, was the sixth since King Abdullah assumed constitutional powers in 1999, and stood witness to the uniqueness, strength and importance we attach to our bilateral relations, and our determination to see them grow further in the future. We also appreciate how Japan assisted, and continues to assist the economic and social development policies of Jordan. Japan's assistance touched most Jordanians, and covered many fields such as economic and technical assistance, sending Japanese experts and volunteers, and inviting Jordanians to Japan for training and cultural exchange.

The royal visit last month laid the foundation for moving the relations to their next level, one that will significantly widen the participation of the Japanese private sector in the mega-projects Jordan is planning to carry out in the coming few years in areas such as clean and renewable energy, nuclear energy and water desalination. These projects are planned to



Royal greeting: Jordan's King Abdullah meets Prime Minister Taro Aso on April 14 during his visit to Japan. KYODO

benefit many countries in the Middle East, and will aid the efforts supporting stability and peace, and provide an additional basis for more sustainable development, one that will create jobs and increase hope for a better future.

During the past 10 years, since King Abdullah came to the throne, Jordan has achieved remarkable levels of advancement covering every aspect of life. These landmark achievements were possible through the wisdom, vision and tireless efforts of its leadership, along with the determination of its people to build a better future. To note a few: Personal income more than doubled compared to 1999; more universities were established; and innovation and intellectual production reached levels unmatched in Jordan's history. Higher education and health services are now among the most wide-ranging in the region, making Jordan a leading education and medical center in the Middle East.

Jordan has also become a center for many international conventions and forums. Just last week the international conference halls on the shores of the famous Dead Sea witnessed another meeting of the World Economic Forum, where over 1,000 builders and shakers of global politics, business and culture met to discuss and exchange views on major economic, political, social and cultural issues, and explore new ideas and solutions for the challenges facing the Middle East.

In the ancient city of Petra — internationally voted second of the new seven world wonders — the annual Forum for Nobel

Prize Laureates convenes as another prestigious international gathering dedicated to pooling the thoughts and ideas of those renowned thinkers on how to build a better world, one that we can all participate in making.

Jordan also was chosen by the international community as the gateway for the reconstruction of Iraq, and is the base for many international organizations and companies working there.

Jordan plays a vital role in

the stability and prosperity of the Middle East. King Abdullah's continuous efforts aim at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track, where a two-state solution is the key to reaching that goal. When rights are returned according to international legitimacy, hope and optimism will spread throughout the region, easing tensions, defusing extremists of their arguments, and supporting the sound of reason and modera-

tion, an outcome that will benefit the whole world.

Japan continues to show great interest in the stability and security of the Middle East; it works closely with Jordan to support the efforts of reaching peaceful solutions for all its conflicts. Japan designed its initiative (the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity) to address the basic needs of the Palestinians living in the West Bank. While aiming to create jobs and enhance the welfare of the people, it also aims at promoting confidence building, and mutual cooperation between the Palestinians and Israelis through a setting that will benefit all sides.

Japan views Jordan's role as essential toward reaching the aspired peace and stability in the region. Both countries work closely for the success of the Japanese initiative as one of many contributions Japan presented for the cause of peace in the region.

I would like to conclude by quoting one paragraph King Abdullah said 10 years ago on the occasion of his first visit to Jordan after assuming constitutional powers in 1999: "Although Japan and Jordan are far from each other geographically, we feel very close to Japan in our basic policies and values. Japan has been a good friend and supporter of Jordan in difficult times. Japan stood by and helped Jordan, for which we are most appreciative and thankful."



Set in stone: Petra, built by the Nabateans as their capital city around 100 BCE, was named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in July 2007. JORDAN EMBASSY



Sightseeing: The city of Amman is built on a series of hills affording spectacular vistas at every turn. JORDAN TOURISM BOARD

Amman: a tale of two cities

Amman, the capital of Jordan, is a fascinating city of contrasts — a unique blend of old and new, ideally situated on a hilly area between the desert and the fertile Jordan Valley.

In the commercial heart of the city, ultramodern buildings, hotels, smart restaurants, art galleries and boutiques rub shoulders comfortably with traditional coffee shops and tiny artisan workshops. Everywhere there is evidence of the city's much older past.

Due to the city's modern-day prosperity and temperate climate, almost half of Jordan's population is concentrat-

ed in the Amman area. The residential suburbs consist of mainly tree-lined streets and avenues flanked by elegant, almost uniformly white houses, in accordance with a municipal law that states all buildings must be faced with local stone.

The downtown area is much older and more traditional, with smaller businesses producing and selling everything from fabulous jewelry to everyday household items. The people of Amman are multicultural, multidominational, well educated and extremely hospitable. They welcome visitors, and take pride in showing them around their

fascinating and vibrant city.

The Amman City Tour is a great way for tourists visiting Amman to explore the city. The tour consists of a circular bus route that encompasses a variety of locations, including some of the best sights in Amman, such as the Roman Theater, shopping malls, downtown (or "Balad" as it is called), museums, parks and the Wakalat Street shopping district, among others. Passengers can enjoy the convenience of 45 stops in one bus ride, with a unique "hop-on, hop-off" service on comfortable, air-conditioned buses, operating between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. every day of the year (until 6 p.m. during winter months).

You can visit the fascinating Roman Theater and Nymphaeum, which reflect the historic legacy of the city, and the enchanting Citadel, which has stood since the ancient times of the Ammonites. Or enjoy a leisurely stroll through King Hussein Park and visit the Automobile Museum, which contains the late King Hussein's car collection, or the Children's Museum.

So be sure to contact your travel agent or tour operator and get your Amman City Tour bus pass today!

The Jabal Amman First Circle Walking Trail is also interesting, with its coffee shops and grand traditional villas. If it's shopping you're after, then the pedestrian Wakalat shopping district offers a wide selection of international brand names to choose from.

For a more exotic and traditional experience you can visit the old downtown, also known as the souk, and take in the traditional sights and smells of the spice market, and shop for authentic souvenirs. The Amman City Tour is simply a great way to visit and get around Jordan's capital.

**Congratulations
to the People of
the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
on the 63rd Anniversary
of Their National Day**

JAPAN-JORDAN ASSOCIATION

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