

Afghanistan national day

Recent developments advance peace, bilateral relations

Dr. Bashir Mohabbat
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF AFGHANISTAN

On the occasion of Afghanistan's 91st National Day I would like to convey, on behalf of H.E. President Hamid Karzai and the government of Afghanistan, my deepest respects to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and the people and government of Japan.



Reflecting upon the year thus far and our hopes for the months that follow, we can accurately say that 2010 has been filled with positive progress in Afghanistan's continuing development. Moreover, this year will be remembered for reaffirming the strength and closeness of Afghan-Japanese relations and the strides made in our national peace plan.

Relations between our na-

tions are ancient and storied, dating back to at least the Silk Road. Evidence can be found in Afghan Buddhist and Zoroastrian influences within Japanese temples and ceremonies. As interactions evolved into people-to-people exchanges, our countries grew closer and friendlier. In 1930, representatives from our two nations met to sign a treaty of friendship. The importance of this relationship was emphasized again in June when President Karzai visited Japan to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Afghan-Japanese diplomatic relations and meet with His Majesty the Emperor and key officials.

Our intertwined histories have resulted in many shared legacies, including those of artistry, scholarship and tolerance. Furthermore, history has shown our mutual love for peace. Despite challenges in the last three decades, a disruption in our peaceful history caused by foreign elements, since 2001 we have been making

great progress in reclaiming and eclipsing past successes. Our citizens' lives are improving through numerous strides in all sectors made possible by our people's dedication and resilience and unprecedented support provided to us by a unified international community.

In 2010, one of our proudest advancements has been our progress in reclaiming total peace. This May, 1,600 representatives from all sectors in Afghanistan gathered at the

National Consultative Peace Jirga to formulate a consensus on our peace plan. This historic meeting laid the foundations for a framework allowing those whom are estranged, ready to lay down their arms, accept the constitution, and join in the peace process to do so with all assurances necessary. On July 20, the plan, along with National Priority Programs, was presented to over 70 representatives of states and international organizations at the Kabul In-

ternational Conference. The endorsement of the international community was formalized through a joint communique detailing shared efforts to facilitate greater Afghan leadership in security and development.

Japan has been a generous, selfless, and effective partner, deserving of our deepest gratitude. The second-largest contributor, Japan has pledged roughly \$7 billion for infrastructure, security, health and education. Furthermore, Japan is a leader in the support of Afghanistan's peace process. H.E. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada further displayed Japan's commitment at the Kabul International Conference, declaring Japan would, by the end of 2010, have made use of \$1.1 billion of the \$5 billion pledged

Close ties bring positive results

Kozo Watanabe
HON. CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-AFGHAN
PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE

On behalf of the Japanese people and the Japan-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to present my deepest congratulations on the occasion of Afghanistan's National Day.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between our nations, a testament to our close friendship. It is with this same spirit of friendship that the government of Japan has placed such great priority on

Afghanistan's development, as evident in our unique involvement in a variety of projects touching all sectors of society. I have witnessed with my own eyes during my visits to Afghanistan the many positive results of these productive Afghan-Japanese collaborations.

On this occasion, I am happy to once again voice the dedication of our nation toward further development and peace and am honored to personally play a role through the Japan-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship League.



Commemoration: President Hamid Karzai meets H.M. Emperor Akihito on June 17 at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

over five years in 2009, and be a leading donor to an international fund for reintegration.

Lasting security in Afghanistan is dependent upon creating legitimate opportunities for those who wish to return to peace to provide for their families. Japan's contribution will

help create conditions toward this end. The future of international contributions toward security, however, may lie in the exploitation of our vast natural resources, thereby creating a great number of jobs. President Karzai extended an invitation to Japan to take part, saying:

"Morally, Afghanistan should give access as a priority to those countries that have helped Afghanistan massively. . . . What we have to reciprocate with is this opportunity of mineral resources."

Through proper investment, Afghanistan will continue its current progress and re-emerge as a supplier of energy and minerals, and as the "Asian Roundabout" connecting the fast-expanding Asian economy.

On this day, as international attention once again focuses on Afghanistan, it is our honor to recognize Japan's role in helping to develop our nation, foster the return of peace, and improve the lives of Afghans. Considering our nation truly fortunate to have a strong and deep friendship with Japan, it is my sincerest desire that this relationship will span into the next millenniums and beyond



Leaders: The Kabul International Conference on July 20

Congratulations on the 91st Anniversary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Day

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