APPENDIX 3

Address of Mr Tatsunosuke Takasaki, Principal Japanese Delegate, Before the Asian-African Conference

April 1955

Mr President, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is most gratifying that, thanks to the arduous labours on the part of the sponsor Governments, the representatives of many countries of Asia and Africa are able to enjoy this unique opportunity of meeting in a conference, historic in character, to exchange views on problems of mutual interests.

This conference is an event unparalleled in the annals of mankind. In fact, it is eminently symbolic of the spirit of Asian-African renaissance. The Japanese Government fully aware of the importance of this conference, our Prime Minister was anxious to attend. Unfortunately, owing to the Diet now in session, which requires his constant attendance, I have come to take his place. I bring to you all the cordial greetings of Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Ichiro Hatoyama, and his best wishes for the success of this conference.

It affords me a great pleasure to take part in this momentous conference and state the hopes and aspirations of the Japanese people as a member of the Asian-African region.

I understand the chief objective of this conference is to promote neighbourly amity and mutual understanding among the peoples of the Asian-African region and to study intimately their common problems of the day in order to explore the means of establishing an enduring peace. This objective tallies exactly with the aim of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, calculated to preserve peace, freedom and justice. It will, I trust, appeal to all men and women who have at their hearts the progress of mankind. Japan as one of the Asiatic nations whose destiny is identical with that of Asia cannot but attach the greatest importance to this conference.

It would be trite to say that the Asian-Africa region is the cradle of world civilization. The glorious traditions of our past constitute part and parcel of the contemporary civilization, and they form the life-blood that throbs within us. As such, these are the foundation of the sense of racial kinship among the Asian-African people. In spite, however, of the fact that these races are the pioneers of civilization, and they are possessed of abundant human and material resources, they have fallen behind in economic, scientific and technological development. We should, I think, recognize this fact and should achieve genuine independence and progress through self-help and mutual cooperation. I hope this conference will once again raise high the torch-light of our indigenous civilization.

To survey the world situation of today, international tensions still unfortunately continue, obstructing both political stabilization and economic advancement of nations. The world has seen, within the span of one generation, two calamitous wars; it is not yet assured of peace. If nations do not abolish war, war
will abolish nations. Prompted, therefore, by an earnest desire to save mankind from utter annihilation, we must examine coolly and carefully the factors of international tension that may lead to war, and cooperate most sincerely for the eradication of those factors.

In World War II, Japan, I regret to say, inflicted damages upon her neighbour nations, but ended by bringing untold miseries upon herself. She has re-established democracy, having learned her lesson at immense costs in lives and property. Chastened and free, she is today a nation completely dedicated to peace. As the only people who have experienced the horrors of atomic bomb, we have no illusion whatever about the enormity of an attempt to solve international dispute by force. Consequently, it has become our immutable policy to establish firmly peaceful democracy at home.

Indeed, the new Japan is founded on peace and democracy. Thus, to work in hand with other democratic nations and to cultivate friendly relations with all peaceful countries of the world, and thereby to contribute positively to the establishment of world peace is the guiding principle of Japan’s foreign policy. Needless to say, our fundamental policy is to uphold the principles and purposes of the United Nations, which we believe is the best system yet devised for the maintenance of international peace and security on a basis of mutual trust. I wish to avail myself of this occasion to declare afresh that Japan has renounced war as an instrument of national policy, and has foresworn force as a means of settling international disputes; and that she is a nation dedicated to the cause of peace and democracy.

The world’s most urgent need today is, I submit, to ban the use of force in any part of the globe and to establish the custom of settling by peaceful negotiation all manners on international disputes. And I believe the Asian-African countries should set an example in this respect.

The present conference, by promoting mutual understanding and neighbourly amity among the Asian-African countries, can contribute vastly to world peace and, at the same time, accelerate the economic progress of their entire region.

I have spoken of the scientific and technological lag of Asia and Africa. Introduction of modern science and technology is the indispensable condition for all Asian-African countries for achieving economic development as well as winning their rightful place in the society of nations.

I wish to pay my sincere respect for the Asian-African nations who are overcoming many and manifold difficulties and are endeavouring strenuously in building up their economies by inducting the need capital and technology through the United Nations and other organs of international cooperation, the potential resources within these countries will be better utilized with consequent rise in the living standards of the broad masses of the people. Japan is anxious to contribute her share to the promotion of economic cooperation for the common prosperity of the region.

Finally, I desire to stress the importance of cultural exchange. The countries participating in this conference possess splendid cultures of their own, and, at the same time, they all share in common spiritual heritages. Unfortunately, within this great circle of culture there has not been enough of cultural interchange. Channels for mutual edification and enlightenment are admittedly few and meagre. While adhering to the principles of respecting one another’s political system and way of living, the nations of the region should promote exchanges of knowledge and information, of scholars and artists, so as to exchange mutual understanding and to enrich our lives both materially and spiritually. That, I believe, will greatly conduce to general peace.