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Dear Mr. Secretary:

It was my great pleasure to have another frank exchange of views with you in Kuala Lumpur on July 12. Now I would like to brief you on my ^{to} ~~tour~~ ^{visit} of Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Following the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference with Dialogue Partners, I visited these three countries, for the purpose of strengthening ~~our~~ bilateral relations with them and exchanging views with their leaders on international affairs, such as the issue of peace in the Middle East and the Iran-Iraq conflict. I believe that my visit proved fruitful as I had ^{expected} ~~wished~~.

During the visit I had discussions with the leaders of the three countries and with PLO Chairman Arafat and Iraqi Foreign Minister ^(Tariq) ~~Aziz~~, spending much time especially on the issue of peace in the Middle East. Through these exchanges of views, I recognized once again how complicated this problem is and how difficult it is to find a solution to it. I wish to renew here my sincere respect for the efforts which you have exerted to achieve peace in the region.

~~The Honourable George P. Shultz
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520~~

- It gave me a particularly deep impression that the leaders of the three countries placed high expectations on the positive role to be played by the United States for peace in the region, and that they requested me to make a forceful approach to your Government about this state of affairs.

For example, Prime Minister Rifai of Jordan told me that he was afraid that he would miss the best chance to achieve peace unless the United States and Israel take more positive attitudes toward peace.

Chairman Arafat stated that it was the intention of the PLO to ^{continue} prosecute peace efforts at all cost within the framework of the Hussein-Arafat Agreement, but that this was the last chance for peace and, without a positive response from the United States to this agreement, another great confusion would occur in the Middle East.

Foreign Minister Saud of Saudi Arabia also stressed that the only aim of the Hussein-Arafat Agreement was to urge the United States to change its policy and that Syria would accept the peace process based on the Hussein-Arafat Agreement if the United States, as an honest mediator, recognized and started direct negotiations with the PLO.

I also noted with deep interest the idea of the Arabs toward the international conference formula and I, for one, keenly felt the necessity for some form of international framework to achieve peace in the region.

• On this point, Foreign Minister Masri of Jordan observed that, in the envisaged international conference, not only the United States, the United Kingdom and France, but also China to some extent, would support Jordan's idea, and the Soviet Union would therefore be isolated and would not be able to exercise effective influence, but that if the Soviet Union is excluded from the conference, it would be impossible to obtain cooperation from Syria, which is indispensable to a genuine solution to the problem, and the Soviet Union would obstruct the conference from ^{the} outside. In the meantime, the Syrian leaders, while indicating a negative evaluation of moves for peace based on the Hussein-Arafat Agreement, stated that an international conference was the only effective ^{way} ~~measure~~ to achieve peace in the Middle East.

With regard to the Iran-Iraq ^(c) Conflict, all the leaders appreciated Japan's recent efforts, but were pessimistic about an early and peaceful solution to the conflict.

In this respect, Foreign Minister ^{Tarig} Aziz of Iraq told me that Iraq, expecting a more positive posture of Iran toward peace, had suspended attacks against civilian targets since June 15 and was ready to negotiate with the Iranians, if they seriously studied Japan's package proposals.

* Finally, on the release of the American hostages held in Lebanon, I have already conveyed to you the details of the request I made to the Syrian Government together with their response through our Embassy in Washington. I may add here that I will urgently dispatch special messages, taking into ^{ly} account the earnest request from your Government, to the Foreign Ministers ^{ly} of both Iran and Syria urging them to exert their ^{ut} most efforts for the early release of the ~~American~~ hostages.

Sincerely yours,

Shintaro Abe
 Minister for Foreign Affairs
 Japan

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