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Third Japan-United States Ocean Forum

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REMARKS BEFORE THE
THIRD JAPAN-UNITED STATES OCEAN FORUM

November 22, 1977

Honorable Chairman of the Third Japan-United States
Ocean Forum, Mr. Maeo, Honorable Chairman of the
Japanese Diet Maritime League, Mr. Mori, Distinguished

Guests and ladies and gentlemen.

First I wish to take this opportunity to formally
welcome the American delegation to Japan. I understand
you are finding your discussions here in Tokyo rewarding,
and I wish you the best in your visit to Japan.

The Japan-United States Ocean Forum fills an increasing
need for an exchange of views on what is rapidly becoming
a matter of vital concern to all of mankind - the oceans
of the world, and in particular, the waters of the Pacific
which lap upon both our shores.

Throughout history man has looked upon the sea with mixed
and powerful emotions - viewing it alternatively as a
symbol of eternity and as a barrier beyond which civilized
man dare not venture forth. The twin perils of typhoons,
and inadequate navigation and power sources kept seamen relatively close to shore.

Then, as the industrial revolution swept first Europe and then Japan and much of the rest of the world, the oceans of the world became immeasurably more accessible. The great Pacific, once a barrier between continents, soon became a highway of international trade and communication. But the very scientific and technological skill which enabled man to build, to navigate, and to power first steam, then turbine, and now nuclear powered ships across great waterways, also enabled man to overcome many problems of disease and famine and pestilence. The result has been a rapid population growth, which today is estimated at 4 billion world-wide, and predicted to reach 6 billion by the year 2000.

To meet the growing need for energy and food, mankind has turned increasingly to the sea. The world fisheries catch today exceeds 70 million metric tons, an increase of 250% over just 20 years ago. Offshore oil production has increased 1000% over the same period, and is expected to yield even greater amounts in the future.
What role, then, will our oceans play in the future? Will increasing competition for scarce world resources lead to a more turbulent setting for the conduct of our foreign policies? And will that competition lead to political or even military confrontation across the vast oceans which occupy over two thirds of the surface of our globe? Or will cooperation prevail between nations, leading to a sharing of both the immense wealth of our oceans, and the means of access to that wealth. Finally, what role will Japan and the United States take in shaping the answers to these questions?

I will not, at this time, proffer opinions on these issues, but submit them to you as vital to the future of our two nations and the world in which we live.

I am particularly gratified to see so many Diet and Congressional leaders here today. One point I have stressed continuously since assuming my present duties is the importance of legislative involvement in foreign affairs in recent years. As an exchange of parliamentary
views, the Japan-U. S. Ocean Forum is therefore more important than ever before. I am also delighted to note the presence of so many high-level scientific and economic experts.

I wish you all every success in addressing the important issues before you, and look forward to reviewing the results of your deliberations.