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Sankei Shimbun Interview with Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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INTERVIEW WITH U.S. AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN MIKE MANSFIELD

Theme: "Japan-U.S. Relations in the 1980s"

The Sankei Shimbun will be represented by:

Noriyoshi Miyamoto, Feature Editor
Jun Kusano, Deputy Foreign News Editor
Yoshihiro Kaneko, Photographer

The interview will appear in the paper in four or five installments starting on January 3, 1980.
SECURITY MATTERS

1. What do you think is the purpose of the Soviet military buildup in Asia? Do you see it as a threat to Japan?

2. Is the U.S. response (to it) adequate?

3. We hear that your government was not enthusiastic about your recommendation or suggestion that the U.S. increase its military forces in Asia. Why do you think the U.S. Government reacted the way it did to your recommendation?

4. The "Swing Strategy" became a subject of interest in Japan. We understand that the swing strategy works both ways, but do you see any change in the U.S. emphasis on Europe?

5. You have advocated that higher priority be given to Asia. Why is it that the ROK does not seem to be included in the defense line?

6. How do you assess the new developments in the Korean Peninsula? Would greater stability in the ROK lead to a resumption of U.S. troop withdrawals from the ROK?

7. While there are those who say that Japan is not contributing enough to its own defense, there still exists in the U.S. strong concern about Japan becoming equipped with strong armaments. What specific picture do you have in mind for "stable U.S.-Japan military relationship in the 1980s?"
JAPAN U.S. ECONOMIC RELATIONS

1. We hear that you have stated in your recent meeting with American reporters and on other occasions that Japan-U.S. trade imbalance had begun to change for the better. Do you think the prospects for Japan-U.S. trade and economic relations in 1980 are bright? Has the mood of American and Japanese people, with whom you have recently talked, become optimistic with respect to the question of Japan-U.S. trade imbalance?

2. There exists an atmosphere which might lead to the recurrence of a "trade war", particularly in such fields as automobiles, steel and electronics. How do you think things will develop? In this connection, have you heard any voices portending serious problem in the future? It seems that the government procurement issue and other similar issues are stalled for the present.

3. The issue of Japan-U.S. trade friction has never been discussed without the U.S. side pointing out that the Japanese market is closed in the American eyes, because of non-tariff barriers and multi-layered distribution system peculiar to Japan. How do you view this issue? Living in Japan, have you keenly felt that problems actually exist in this area?
4. The Japanese economic system is characterized by government-private (business) cooperation described as "Japan, Inc."—something that cannot be found in the U.S. Do you think it is an impediment to fair competition in trade between Japan and the U.S.?

In your Ambassadorial life in Japan, have you ever had any bitter experience because of such special strengths that are part of the Japanese economic structure?

5. It seems that the U.S. also has within itself seeds for Japan-U.S. trade conflict, such as extremely low productivity. What is your view on this?
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

1. How can we best eliminate friction in Japan-U.S. trade and economic relations? We would like to have your straightforward, candid view and suggestions on this, drawing from your own experience and observations as Ambassador.

2. Would you please elaborate on the "work-study grants" program which you proposed in your (September) speech at the Foreign and Domestic Issues Council? What would it do and what goals would it attempt to achieve?

3. Has there been any specific reaction to the proposed "work-study grants" program from the U.S. and Japan? Does the proposed program have good prospects of becoming a reality?

4. "Communication gap" is a persistent problem between Japan and the U.S. How deep is this gap? How can the gap be bridged? Would you speak to this problem from your observations in Japan as Ambassador?

5. On this question of "communication", we have heard it said that Japan should do more in public relations to the American public at the mass level and that it is simply not sufficient to have "elite communication" such as contact and exchange at the level of government/business leaders, and ads by Sony in the New York Times. What is your own view on this?
How can we actually achieve "mass-level communication" between Japanese and American people?

6. In the area of "communication," isn't it that the U.S. is not trying hard enough to understand Japan?

7. Mr. Armacost, a well-known Japanologist, has recently become Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, and a lot of expectations are placed upon him. It is said that generally the Carter Administration does not have much interest in Japan and that the State Department does not have a strong staff for Japanese affairs. As a person knowledgeable about Japan and an advocate of attaching more importance to Asia, how do you view all this?

8. Haven't inadequate communication been a major factor contributing to trade friction in some cases?
JAPAN-U.S. RELATIONS IN WORLD POLITICS

1. On the matter of American hostages held in Iran, Japanese and American interests have not always been the same. Have you been dissatisfied with the Japanese response, the primary concern of which has been the securing of oil?

2. On the matter of scheme for peace in the Middle East, too, there is a gap between Japan and the U.S. What role does the U.S. expect Japan to play in the Middle East issue? (Economic assistance to Egypt, for example.)

3. Japan and the PRC are expected to continue to develop closer relations with each other in the 1980s. Do you foresee more conflicts between Japan and the U.S. over the vast Chinese market?

4. Many people in the U.S. have traditionally felt affinities with China. In the event of a major conflict of interests between Japan and the PRC, wouldn't the U.S. perhaps choose to support the PRC?

5. Criticism is often heard in the U.S. and elsewhere that Japan has not fully met its responsibilities as a major economic power. How do you assess the role Japan has played in such areas as aid to developing countries and admission of refugees.
What view of Japan and the Japanese have you developed during the more than two years that you have stayed in Japan as Ambassador? How and in what respects is your current view different from what it was before you came to Japan as Ambassador?