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Mansfield's Speech in Sapporo

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD'S SPEECH IN SAPPORO
NOVEMBER 21, 1978

Thank you Mr. Sato for your kind words of introduction. Thank you also for sharing with me some of your thoughts and concerns on the situation in Asia.

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to return to Hokkaido. It is doubly a pleasure to be here to help open our new Consulate and American Center building next to your beautiful Maruyama Park. We are all confident that the new facility will provide a focal point for strengthening the traditional ties between Hokkaido and America—ties that go back more than a hundred years.

Coming from the State of Montana I can't help but feel a certain affinity for your beautiful island. The wide open spaces, the deep blue sky, the crisp clean air, and above all, your vibrant frontier spirit remind me strongly of my home state.

You also seem to have accomplished a very rare feat: maintaining a high level of economic development while protecting the natural environment. I congratulate you on your wisdom and talent.

In my talks with Governor Dogakinai, Mayor Itagaki and others, I have also sensed a high degree of
cosmopolitanism in Hokkaido. Perhaps this is because you are so deeply involved in Japan's national and international life. I am told that the air link between Chitose and Tokyo is one of the most heavily traveled routes between any two cities in the world. Since Hokkaido lies closest of any Japanese territory to the continental United States, it seems to me that it would be entirely natural for an air route to open up between Hokkaido and my country, thus drawing us more closely together.

Of course Hokkaido directly feels the impact of many international issues such as the Northern Territories issue and the new era of 200-mile fishing zones.

The economic development of Hokkaido has been an international effort from the beginning. I am proud that an American, William Clark of Massachusetts, played an important role in the establishment of Hokkaido University and in pioneering large scale agriculture in this prefecture.

Ever since Clark's time, Americans have continued to be attracted to Hokkaido. Just two months ago an energetic group of American businessmen visited here
with the latest in food processing equipment to offer to your outstanding industrialists.

Our new Consulate and American Center building is testimony that the United States intends to maintain these strong ties with Hokkaido and has faith in her long term future.

In the years since the American Center was first established, the tradition of strong cultural ties between the people of Hokkaido and the United States has gained in both quality and quantity. The relationship between Sapporo and Portland, Oregon, its sister city in the United States, is now approaching its twentieth anniversary and is well supported by the citizens of both communities. I know, for example, that this summer a large delegation of Sapporo's youth leaders visited Portland for a very fruitful exchange experience with their American counterparts. Hokkaido, on the other hand, graciously hosted a visit from a group of folk dance enthusiasts from Oregon. These people-to-people activities have created new bonds of friendship between our two nations. The Consulate and the American Center will continue to offer encouragement to these cultural
exchanges and we solicit your cooperation in expanding them.

Perhaps at this point I could broaden the scope of my remarks and say a few words about the involvement of the United States in Asia, particularly with regard to our security role referred to by Mr. Sato.

One occasionally hears some concern expressed among the people of Japan as to what one might call the "staying power" of the United States in East Asia, and whether we intend to remain a Pacific power. I can assure you that we have the "staying power" and that we do intend to remain a Pacific power--permanently.

The Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the Asian anchor of America's defense and security structure in the Pacific, is as meaningful today as it ever was. It is a treaty and a commitment supported not only by our President and Congress but by the broad spectrum of the American people. What better evidence of this could I cite than the recent public opinion poll commissioned in the U.S. by the Japanese Foreign Ministry that showed that a resounding 85 percent of the American respondents indicated that it was their belief that the Treaty contributes to stability and peace in the region--and it does.
As a long time student of the United States in Asia, I am firmly convinced that the fate of my country is inextricably bound up with that of this dynamic region so rich in human and natural resources. If on occasion we seem to have a fixation on Europe, from which so much of our culture and so many of our ancestors came, we are gradually coming to realize that our future lies in the Pacific and along the rim of East Asia.

The political and economic sands of Asia are again shifting. This should not surprise us: nothing is so permanent in human affairs as is change. Furthermore, I find little cause for alarm and much to be encouraged about.

First, China has embarked on a new and healthy course in foreign policy. In broadening relations with nations of the West, including taking the forward-looking step of sending large numbers of students, scholars and technicians abroad to study, China gives indications of becoming a more constructive and understanding member of the international community. For this reason we welcomed the signing of a peace and friendship treaty between Japan and China. We believe that the treaty will contribute to peace,
stability and prosperity in Asia by nurturing a reciprocal set of interests including trade, economic development and cultural exchange. It also marks the end of an unhappy era and the start of a healthier and more fruitful relationship between China and Japan.

Second, the heady breezes of economic growth are blowing strongly in Southeast Asia and the ASEAN nations are seeking ways not only to consolidate their economic gains but to provide for their common security. We are pleased to see that Japan has become not only the region's largest trading partner but its largest source of economic assistance as well.

Third, South Korea has made remarkable strides in its economic and social development. It is in recognition of these gains and its new strength that the United States believes it is possible gradually to reduce the level of our ground forces in the ROK. We are phasing the withdrawal of the U.S. Second Division very carefully, while at the same time increasing our air forces and maintaining a strong contingent of ground support troops with no time limit involved. Consequently, we are confident that the program will not create a soft spot in our cooperative defense effort in this part of the world.
Lastly, Japan has fully emerged as an economic leader in the world and is confidently assuming the mantle of political leadership as well. Whether at an economic summit addressing global issues, or at any number of regional forums, we are pleased to see the creative energies of Japan brought to bear on the multitude of problems confronting the world.

I don't mean to suggest that there are not some profoundly disquieting aspects to the current scene in Asia. The conflicts between Vietnam and its neighbors, large and small, have caused deep anxiety among the ASEAN countries. They are of concern to our two countries as well. The growth in Soviet military strength in the Pacific is a matter which we cannot ignore. Further, the fact that the two communist giants of the region are bitterly opposed to each other does not diminish the potentially tragic consequences should it get out of hand. As was pointed out by Mr. Sato in his introduction, the situation on the Korean peninsula remains one which we must watch carefully despite the improvement in South Korean economic and defense standards. And finally, while the economic growth in the region remains uneven it is on the up swing. The dynamic economies of South Korea,
Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore are recording spectacular growths, and elsewhere, while the pattern is not as apparent, it is growing at a satisfactory rate.

Overall, however, I am encouraged by the picture I see in Asia. All problems are susceptible to solution, and there is increasing confidence on the part of our friends and allies in their ability to control their destinies.

Indeed, we are living in an exciting era during which a new and we hope mutually beneficial international system is coming into being. The United States and Japan share an overriding interest in helping the nations of the area to realize their full potential for growth and prosperity.

The essential element of such an Asian environment must obviously continue to be the U.S.-Japan relationship. Our combined GNP dwarfs that of all the rest of Asia put together. We are the primary though not the sole source of advanced technology for the region. And of course we share a deep commitment to democracy and the peaceful resolution of difficulties between nations.

This paramount strategic need for each other has impelled our respective political and economic leaders
to go to extraordinary lengths to resolve a variety of serious economic frictions. We are, of course, not out of the woods yet—and as the world's two largest industrial democracies, we will probably always be wrestling with one economic problem or another.

I know, for example, that the beef issue and the question of fish catches in the north Pacific are of particular concern to you here in Hokkaido. Although we may view the problems from different perspectives, I am certain that we will find mutually satisfactory solutions.

I have been deeply impressed by how closely our two nations are able to work together despite wide gulfs in language, culture and history. It is a tribute to the maturity of our relationship that we can accommodate each other in spite of the occasional clash of sectoral interests.

Fortunately we have entrusted our affairs to several extremely talented negotiators in Ambassador Robert Strauss, Ambassador Ushiba and Minister Nakagawa, three extraordinarily capable men. I am confident that these gentlemen, working together, will lead the difficult Tokyo Round of trade negotiations to a successful conclusion. The way will then be opened,
not to self-defeating protectionism, but to a period of unprecedented world trade and prosperity.

The United States and Japan are moving in a similarly convergent direction in the security field. I am extremely heartened by the measured steps we are taking in improving our channels of communication and coordination. As you know, our respective defense specialists have been meeting regularly to define more clearly how we may best contribute to our joint objectives. Earlier this month, Secretary of Defense Brown held a very successful series of consultations with South Korean and Japanese government officials. The results were widely reported and they were encouraging.

The enhanced coordination and communication between the U.S. and Japan is not taking place as a result of a decline in American strength or loss of political will to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies. What we are witnessing rather is an entirely normal evolution in our security relationship in response to the gradually changing circumstances I have mentioned.

The position of the United States and its allies in Asia remains as strong as ever, and in many respects is stronger:
--The United States is deploying new and more effective weapons systems throughout the region, especially with regard to the Seventh Fleet and our Pacific air forces.

--The Republic of Korea is on the verge of taking over a larger share of its own defense burden. We have activated a joint command structure that will enable us to be even more effective in coordinating our efforts on the Korean peninsula.

--Japan, on its own responsibility, has begun a procurement program to qualitatively upgrade its defense equipment, to enable it to more effectively discharge its responsibilities within an established and recognized framework.

Our shared objective is to maintain a stable international environment wherein sources of conflict and chances of conflict by miscalculation are reduced as much as possible.

The need for stability also dictates that we move in the security area with circumspection. The United States has no intention of asking any of our friends to take on defense burdens beyond their political or economic capabilities. To do so would simply invite misunderstanding and anxiety. It could result in less, rather than more security.
In this respect, we welcome the greater openness with which defense matters are now being discussed in Japan. It is only on the basis of a fully informed national consensus that all the elements of an effective security policy—political, economic, diplomatic, as well as military—can be combined.

The United States will continue to be a strong and reliable partner in addressing challenges we jointly face. Our friendship is strong, and the web of mutual interests and common objectives between us is broad. The U.S. and Japan will contribute even more significantly in the future than we have in the past to peace and progress in the Pacific, East Asia and the world. Our new consulate building symbolizes the durability of our ties, and the important role of the people of Hokkaido in our relationship.

11/16/78