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TEXT OF ADDRESS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR MIKE MANSFIELD
AT THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF NIHON SHIMBUN KYOKAI
APRIL 9, 1981

Thank you for inviting me to meet with you today. I always feel awed speaking before leaders of what must be the largest, most modern and most aggressive journalistic corps in the world. But I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk about the relationship between the United States and Japan and some of the issues we are facing together.

Let me begin by repeating something I have said on many occasions because I am firmly convinced it is true -- there is no more important relationship in the world than that between the United States and Japan. For the United States, no single nation is more important as a friend, trading partner and ally than Japan. The United States-Japan relationship has been immensely beneficial to both sides throughout the postwar period. It is an indispensable relationship today when our two nations face in the world new challenges to the democratic values and interests that we share.

Reading the pages of your newspapers, and those in the United States, one often has the impression that the relationship between the United States and Japan is fraught with problems and frictions. Discussions between our leaders are often portrayed as dominated by pressures and differences. It is not surprising that journalists in both countries tend to concentrate on apparent problems and differences because, unfortunately, they seem to make news. Today, however, I plan to concentrate on what we have in common, even though what I have to say may not make news. If leaders and publics in both countries keep clearly in mind the values and interests that we hold in common, it should not be all that difficult to reconcile or eliminate those few differences that we have.

What do we have in common? First and foremost, the United States and Japan are fully functioning democracies in which governments are freely elected by the people and in which freedom of speech and other individual liberties are respected. Both nations are free market economies heavily dependent upon international trade. Exports represented about 9% of the United States' GNP last year and 11% of Japan's. Both nations have considerable investment overseas. And both depend heavily, Japan most especially, on imports of oil and raw materials. As highly developed industrial nations, we are faced with similar environmental and technological issues.

From our shared values flow a common interest in an international environment in which they can prosper and a common responsibility for maintaining it. Far from being dominated by differences, U.S.-Japan consultation on all levels has come to reflect our shared interest in the shaping and execution of policy in regard to almost every major world problem. Although there was much discussion of the bilateral automobile trade issue, Foreign Minister Ito's recent consultations in Washington covered every important issue on the interenational agenda. When Prime Minister Suzuki meets with President Reagan and other U.S. leaders later this spring, the agenda will likewise be global in scope.

There are, of course, some difficult issues before us. In an economic relationship as large, varied and interdependent as that between the United States and Japan, it is not surprising that frictions arise from time to time. We should focus more on the benefits our trade has brought to both countries and on the vast areas where we are in complete agreement. Yet there are trouble spots and the most visible at this time is the automobile trade issue. During Foreign Minister Ito's visit to Washington, President Reagan made it clear that he intends to defend the principle of free trade. The problems faced by the American auto industry clearly are not solely attributable to Japanese imports. Yet, we have a situation in the United

States in which a basic -- perhaps the most basic -- industry is facing a serious adjustment problem and in which more than a million workers in the auto and related industries are out of work. Clearly, American legislators and policy makers face a difficult dilemma. Should they respond to constituency pressure for temporary import limitations, or should they take their stance in defense of the principle of free trade? It seems to me that by its own actions and in its own interest Japan can and should affect that choice.

I am convinced that, based on mutual understanding and political good will, we will be as successful in resolving this problem as we have been in dealing with similar problems in the past. The history of postwar U.S.-Japan relations has been one of constant improvement in our capacity to deal with bilateral frictions. The key to resolving frictions like those that have arisen over autos is to recognize that we are facing common problems together. U.S.-Japan relations are not a zero sum game in which gains on one side are matched by corresponding losses on the other. Neither side will win, but, rather, both sides will lose if we do not work together in seeking solutions to the problems we face.

We are approaching our ongoing discussions of defense in the same spirit. We respect the accomplishments Japan has

already made in the defense area. I have no intention of suggesting to you how much Japan should spend on defense. We recognize Japan's constitutional constraints and do not expect you to go beyond that framework. On the other hand, we believe our common interest calls for Japan to do more in defense of its own territory and surrounding seas.

Recent international developments have, I think, brought home to us the extent of our shared responsibility for working together to defend our common values. In 1981, the world situation seems more complex and threatening than it has for some time. Amidst continued uncertainties in the energy field and difficulties in managing the global economy, we are faced with a more vigorous challenge by the Soviet Union and a highly precarious situation in the crucial Persian Gulf region.

In my view, none of America's allies has risen to this complex challenge more effectively than Japan. Japan's cooperation and support in responding to the Iranian hostage situation and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have been warmly appreciated. We in the United States are also encouraged by the development of what appears to be a more activist and committed Japanese diplomacy in general. Japan has assumed a key role in the United Nations and in the annual summit meetings of the major industrialized democracies. Your

major role in financing Indochinese refugee relief, your commitment to the development of ASEAN solidarity and your increased economic assistance to such critical countries as Pakistan, Turkey, Thailand, Jamaica and Egypt are but examples of a new and highly positive thrust in Japanese foreign policy.

Partly for this reason, respect for Japan among the American public appears to be at an all-time high. A recent public opinion survey taken by an American consulting firm, Potomac Associates, found that 84% of Americans considered Japan important to the United States -- a higher percentage than for any other nation listed in the survey, which included all Asian countries and such European allies as West Germany. Sixty-eight percent considered Japan so important to the U.S. that the U.S. should come to its aid if attacked. In an elite sampling of those who are interested in and have influence on foreign affairs, 89% thought the U.S. should come to Japan's defense. The poll also found a very high level of admiration with regard to the Japanese people -- the attributes most commonly ascribed to Japan were "stable," "hard-working," "high-quality products," etc. This in spite of the fact that 76% of those polled saw Japan's industrial competition as a threat to American workers. This, too, was higher than for any other country; only 28%, for example, saw West Germany as a trade threat. To me, the interesting point about this poll is

that at a time of very widespread public attention to the automobile problem and other trade frictions, those problems did not seem to affect overall attitudes toward Japan. Japan's place as a friend, partner and strategic ally seems more clearly recognized by the American public than ever before.

President Reagan and other leaders of the new U.S. administration, therefore, have strong backing from the American people when they stress the importance of close consultation and cooperation with Japan. The Reagan administration has committed itself to developing a more consistent foreign policy, and Japan is one of the constants in such a policy. Administration leaders have made it clear during Foreign Minister Ito's visit and on many other occasions that they have very high expectations of working closely with Japan in dealing with both global and bilateral issues.

As I see it, the Reagan administration came to office with two fundamental goals.

- To strengthen our ability to counter a more aggressive Soviet posture around the globe; and
- To rebuild the American economy; that is, to restore non-inflationary growth as a basis for exercising the kind of leadership with regard to world affairs that our friends and allies seem to want.

These goals are closely interrelated, since only on the basis of a sound domestic economy can the United States take the lead in defending the interests of the industrialized democracies against the strategic challenges they face. At the same time, in this age of interdependence, the United States can neither restore its own economy nor cope with current challenges to our common interests in world stability and prosperity without the understanding and cooperation of its allies. We recognize that world stability requires a strong American posture, but the day when America could be "strong" without the cooperation of its allies has passed.

The administration has thus put great stress on relations of mutual confidence and cooperation with Japan and our other major allies. In the consultations with Foreign Minister Ito as well as during the similar visits by European leaders that have taken place since President Reagan took office, administration leaders have made clear their view that the current world situation requires a greater effort by all of us to cope with the Soviet challenge in regions of the world vital to our political and economic security. Despite important cutbacks in our overall national budget, the United States will pursue significant increases in its defense capability. We have undertaken new commitments in the Persian Gulf region, a part of the world with enormous impact on Japan's well-being.

I have the impression that Japan has become a crossroad of international diplomacy, with the Presidents of Burma and Tanzania, the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and the United Kingdom, and the Vice Foreign Minister of Oman all visiting within the space of a few days. This is also an extraordinarily active period of U.S.-Japan consultation. Not only are we in the midst of a series of exchanges at the highest level of government, but more technical discussions and negotiations are taking place at all levels. Negotiations are taking place in Tokyo this week aimed at establishing a civil aviation relationship more satisfactory to both sides. At the same time, a team of U.S. Government officials is here to explain the situation surrounding the U.S. auto industry and the domestic measures we plan to take to deal with it. These discussions are in addition to our ongoing and increasingly frequent consultations on every bilateral or global issue.

These consultations reflect an important new stage in the relationship between our two countries. In every issue that we deal with -- be it energy, trade, monetary policy, development, science -- we find that the degree of Japanese involvement has become as great as our own. Our perceptions and approaches are not always identical. However, the important point is that we both recognize that we are in a world where we face the same problems and have an equal stake in resolving them. Only by

sharing our perceptions and pooling our efforts can we achieve any kind of success.

The United States and Japan have developed an immensely important relationship transcending differences in history and cultural background. While continuing to maintain our bilateral ties, we have cooperated closely on more global issues of mutual concern. Our foreign policies rest on a solid base of common values, interests and objectives in the world. I am satisfied that we have a productive partnership in the truest sense of the word. I am convinced that our cooperation will continue to increase -- to the benefit not only of Japan and the United States but of the world.

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