Japan Supplement

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
memorandum

DATE: August 1, 1984
REPLY TO: PAO - Jack Shellenberger
ATTN: Your Message for the Japan Supplement to the New York Times
SUBJECT: To: The Ambassador
Thru: DCM - Minister Clark

We have received word from Frances Koltun that Ambassador Okawara has agreed to do a message for the JAPAN supplement. His message, however, will be about 500 words long. Ms. Koltun assures us that Ambassador Okawara has said he doesn't mind if your message has a higher word-count, but in the interest of symmetry, we have pared down our original 1200-word draft for your message to about 850 words.

If this draft meets your approval, we will forward the final text via Ms. Koltun's associates in Tokyo to her office in New York.

Approve

Make Indicated Changes X

Clearance: IO:CLudwig
DPAO:JInman

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The Japanese.

Do we know them because we drive Toyotas and Hondas; because we eat at sushi bars; because we attend Japanese film festivals? Do we know them because we listen to their stereos and Walkmen; because we have heard that they are economic giants who are offering many challenges to their U.S. competitors?

Yes and no.

True, these are the thoughts and images that probably come to mind when many Americans hear the words "Japan" or "the Japanese". But there is much more.

The U.S.-Japan relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world. Bar none. To a large extent, the peace and stability of the international order depend on the ties between the U.S. and Japan.

I do not say this frivolously; nor do I say this to the detriment of our European friends and allies. What I am emphasizing is that it is time Japan and the Pacific region were accorded the same amount of attention and consideration the U.S. has traditionally given Western Europe.

The next century will be the "Century of the Pacific". Over half the world's population lives on the rim of the Pacific Ocean: four South American nations, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific islands, all of East Asia, Central America, and North America. The kinds of relationships we will build, nurture, and maintain with the peoples of the Pacific should be on every thinking American's mind.

In the trade area, while it is true that this year the U.S. will have another record-breaking trade deficit with Japan, let us also remember that the Japanese -- at our urging and after considerable domestic debate -- agreed to "voluntarily" restrain their car exports to the U.S. An original three-year agreement is now in its fourth year -- its purpose being to give the U.S. auto industry a chance to recuperate and retool.

Japan and the U.S. have also agreed on a recent package of measures to liberalize capital and financial markets in Japan, giving American businesses and banks a more equal chance to compete. Bilateral discussions on trade and related issues cover such topics as semiconductors, wood products, beef, oranges, telecommunications equipment, standards and certifications, and so forth. In each case, I believe that through negotiations we will be able to reach agreements that will benefit both countries.
In the areas of defense and security the Japanese have also taken some major steps.

If I had to give one concrete example, I would choose as a comparison the fact that the Japanese provide in excess of a billion dollars in host-nation support toward the upkeep of 49,000 American troops stationed there, including the rent-free use of U.S. bases in Japan. In contrast, the Federal Republic of Germany contributes about 1.3 billion dollars for the upkeep of approximately 245,000 American military personnel assigned there.

In terms of foreign policy, the Japanese have taken measures to increase their economic aid to developing nations. In addition, I would like to point out that the Japanese -- among all our allies and friends -- were the most supportive of the U.S. stand on the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and the American hostage situation in Iran. The Japanese were the ones who, in the process of taking our side, were willing to -- and actually did -- pay a price. Because the Japanese imposed sanctions, postponed meetings, and cancelled contracts with the Soviet Union, they lost out on a 600-700 million dollar Soviet steel and aluminum contract that other Allies went ahead and bid on. Because the Japanese refused to pay the extra $2.50/barrel that the Iranians demanded at the time of the hostage incident, they found their imports from Iran cut off. Those shipments amounted to 13 percent of Japan's imports.

In the areas of cultural and educational exchange, I would certainly like to see more of it. There are around 12,000 Japanese students studying in the U.S. There are four English-language daily newspapers in Japan, as well as "special editions" for high school students. English conversation schools abound. The Japanese have an interest in us; they are eager to learn about us. And I hope we feel the same way about them in the States.

My first exposure to the Orient was back in 1922, when I was a marine on board a ship that docked in Nagasaki. Ever since then I have had a deep, abiding interest in this part of the world. I would like to urge you to share it with me, as you read through this "Salute to Japan" supplement.

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Mike Mansfield
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES TO JAPAN