

STATEMENT OF WALTER F. MONDALE

Confirmation Hearing for U.S. Ambassador to Japan
Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 1993

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Committee members, I am honored to be here with you today.

I was pleased to accept President Clinton's offer to be nominated as our nation's Ambassador to Tokyo for three basic reasons:

First, there is the fundamental importance of America's relationship with Japan.

As the President has said, "there is no more important bilateral relationship in the world than that which exists between the United States and Japan." The transformation of once-bitter enemies into close allies and friends is one of the great diplomatic success stories of the latter half of this century. It is an historic achievement, and we owe a great deal to the people and government of Japan for the tremendous success of our relationship. Our two nations now share a fundamental interdependence, and our destinies have become inseparable.

Second, there is the key role which the American Ambassador plays in our relationship with Japan.

Such distinguished predecessors as Edwin O. Reischauer, Mike Mansfield and Mike Armacost have demonstrated that our Ambassador in Tokyo can "make a difference" — in terms of conveying our message to the Japanese leadership and people, representing American interests and ensuring that American policies toward Japan are based on an accurate understanding of Japanese realities. I hope to continue this important diplomatic legacy.

Third, there is the great interest that Joan and I have in Japanese culture,

history and society.

I have been interested in the U.S.-Japan relationship literally from the beginning of my public career. I was concerned about these matters as a Senator. I was actively involved in our relationship as Vice President. Since then, I have traveled there on several occasions in my private life. Joan has long-standing interests in Japanese art and culture, and she will bring considerable talent and experience to this dimension of our relationship. I should add that Ambassador Reischauer was a relative of Joan's. He was also a friend of mine, as are Ambassadors Mansfield and Armacost. Both Joan and I are enthusiastic about this opportunity to live and work in Japan, to explore the many facets of this very impressive society and its wonderful people.

For all of these reasons, I am pleased to be nominated by the President and to be with you here today.

In my statement today, I would like to outline how I view our nation's relationship with Japan and my major responsibilities as Ambassador.

I believe it is important for us to understand our bilateral relationship with Japan, not just on its own terms, but also in global and regional contexts. We are at a moment of change in the world and, therefore, in our relationship with Japan.

For the latter half of this century, the post-war international structure has reflected the power realities of 1945 and the bipolar division of the Cold War. This structure needs to be adjusted to reflect new realities. We need to rethink traditional foreign policy priorities, many of which were based on a Soviet threat that no longer exists. We must now turn our attention to new challenges, including the health of the global economy, regional stability, ethnic and nationalist conflict, environmental protection, arms proliferation and democracy and human rights.

The many changes which are now reshaping the international environment pose challenges for our nation's relationship with Japan.

Earlier this year, President Clinton acknowledged that "the Cold War partnership between our two countries is outdated." Strengthening our partnership

with Japan will require long-term vision, mutual respect and mutual responsibilities.

There are three main elements in the bilateral relationship between the United States and Japan: our security alliance, our economic relationship and our cooperative efforts on regional and global problems. Each of these elements is essential to our relationship, and each must serve the interests of both nations.

First, our most pressing need at this time is to correct the imbalance in our economic relationship. This is important in its own right. It is also important because constant trade friction weakens public support in both the United States and Japan for our alliance and it threatens our ability to cooperate on the broader agenda. Because our two nations account for one-third of global GNP, we have an obligation to the world to take care of our economic problems. Thus, President Clinton has made the economic relationship the most urgent item on our agenda with Japan.

We in the United States are now beginning to take the difficult and long-needed steps to solve our own economic problems, by reducing the deficit and making investments which will improve the competitiveness of our workers and industries. We look to Japan to address its own economic agenda with equal vigor, including help with promoting global economic growth and removing both formal and informal barriers to the flow of goods, services and investment.

At the G-7 summit held earlier this month in Tokyo, all of the participants agreed on the need for Japan to significantly reduce its external imbalances. Thanks to the efforts of President Clinton, Prime Minister Miyazawa and negotiators in both countries, we now have a framework for negotiations in which Japan has pledged to "highly significant" reductions in its global current account surplus. Japan has also agreed to address specific sectoral and structural issues.

The overriding task is to move our economic relations away from continued tension and toward greater shared benefits. The huge and persistent trade imbalance has not just hurt American workers and businesses. It has also hurt the Japanese people. It has deprived them, as consumers, of the full benefits of a more open and competitive market. The economic framework agreed upon earlier this month should bring more openness, more trade, more growth and more jobs — not

only in the United States and Japan, but around the globe.

A second challenge is to maintain understanding and support in both countries for our security relationship. This is as critical to both our interests as it was during the Cold War. The threats may be less apparent, but the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty remains the foundation of stability in East Asia. Our military presence in Japan and throughout the region is the single most important element in East Asia's security equation. We must ensure that our presence remains strong both to deter military threats and to provide reassurance against national rivalries which could undermine the region's hard-earned stability.

Because of the 3.8 billion dollars which Japan provides each year in host nation support, it is now less expensive for us to maintain the 47,000 U.S. service men and women in Japan than anywhere else in the world, including right here at home. Our bases are not there simply to protect Japan. They enable us to meet our other security obligations in the region and to project power more broadly. Thus, our alliance with Japan is a mainstay of our regional security posture and of our political and economic influence in this most dynamic region of the world.

I believe our alliance with Japan is healthy and growing. In the years ahead, I am confident that we will further strengthen our military-to-military ties, including closer defense industrial cooperation. This cooperation — in technology sharing, aerospace and other areas — will help ensure that our defense industrial base remains strong.

A third challenge is to build our cooperation on global issues, including protecting the environment, controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations system with a focus on peacekeeping, assisting developing countries, building democracy and respect for human rights and securing a stable transition in the former Soviet Union. No two nations have more to offer in this regard because of our financial and technological resources, our human talent and our commitment to creating a better world.

The precise features of Japan's global role are, of course, for the Japanese people and government to decide. But we should welcome their more active international engagement. In fact, Japan is already assuming new responsibilities.

Although it was unable to dispatch personnel during the Persian Gulf war, Japan did contribute 13 billion dollars to the coalition effort (the largest from any non-Gulf country). It also sent four minesweepers and a support ship to assist in mine-clearing after hostilities had ceased — the first operational dispatch of Japanese forces since World War II.

Last year, the Japanese Diet passed legislation allowing Self Defense Forces personnel to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. More than 600 Japanese peacekeepers are on duty in Cambodia, and the head of the UN Transitional Authority is a Japanese national. The Japanese have also sent a contingent to Mozambique.

Japan's foreign aid program now rivals our own as the world's largest, and Japan recently announced a new five-year target which will make it the largest donor in the world. We should welcome its leadership in this area, because Japanese and American objectives in the developing world are much the same. And at a time of fiscal restraint here at home, we can make more efficient use of our own limited resources by working closely with Japan and other international donors.

It is in our interests to encourage and assist Japan in its global leadership role. That is why our government has stated its firm support of a permanent seat for Japan in the UN Security Council. During my tenure as Ambassador, I would like to see our global partnership become even more of a reality than it is today.

A fourth challenge we face is to have a better understanding of our relationship with Japan in the context of the Asia-Pacific region, which has emerged as the center of world economic growth. The United States has traditionally looked more toward Europe than Asia. We now find our trade and investment shifting toward the Pacific. This trend is likely to accelerate.

In his speech earlier this month at Tokyo's Waseda University, President Clinton said that the time has come for the United States and Japan, along with others in the region, to create "a new Pacific community" based on economic growth, democracy and regional security. The President emphasized our

relationship with Japan as "the centerpiece of our policy toward the Pacific community." I agree. We are the region's two wealthiest and most influential powers; no region-wide effort can flourish without our close cooperation and friendship.

Thus, Japan and the United States will increasingly need to work together on a regional basis to help build the institutions which will permit the many different nations of the Asia-Pacific region to keep pace with economic changes, outgrow their past antagonisms and work together more effectively. This new Pacific community will also require a continuing commitment by the United States to its security alliances and military presence in Japan and elsewhere in the region.

Finally, I would add that we face a challenge of building greater human and institutional connections between our two societies. In the last half century, the bonds between our two countries have expanded substantially. At the grassroots level, Americans and Japanese now have a broad base of successful relationships — not only academic and cultural, but scientific, political and economic. Nonetheless, the reality of our interdependence has outpaced our mutual understanding as people. Language, distance, cultural differences and some insularity in each of our countries interfere with communication. We need to do better. Specifically, we need to correct the imbalance in the number of exchange students. With more than 40,000 Japanese in American universities and fewer than 1,300 Americans studying in Japan, that means there are 32 Japanese students here for every American student there.

To the extent that it is within my power, I hope to encourage more student exchanges with Japan. Both of our nations share an interest in this goal, and I believe that both of us have a responsibility to make it happen. I agree with Senator Fulbright, who has said: "Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations."

This is a brief sketch of the agenda I see before our two countries. I plan to be active in all of these areas. I hope I can make a contribution to strengthen these various aspects of our relationship. Specifically, here is how I see my responsibilities:

First, I hope to convey to the Japanese people and leadership as accurately and persuasively as I can the views and positions of our government on the full range of bilateral, regional and global issues where the United States and Japan share interests.

Second, I plan to devote much attention to help correct the economic imbalances which pose the most immediate challenge to our relationship. I intend to work with the American business community, U.S. economic agencies, the Japanese government and the Japanese business community to help American firms in the Japanese market. Where impediments exist for American products, services and investment, I will seek ways to overcome them.

Third, I will try to encourage and participate in a broad-ranging defense and security policy dialogue with Japan. I look forward to talking often and at length with Japanese leaders about our common political, economic and military objectives within the context of our security alliance.

Fourth, I intend to see that the Embassy is fully engaged with the Japanese political, business, bureaucratic, academic and arts worlds so that we can report accurately on Japanese views, help analyze emerging trends in Japanese society, convey the American perspective on issues and build bridges of understanding between our two nations. On a personal level, this means that Joan and I look forward to learning much more about Japan — its history and culture, its politics and economics. We intend to travel widely throughout the country, and we look forward to expanding our friendships with the Japanese people.

Fifth, from time to time, I hope to convey to the President and the Secretary of State my suggestions on how we might enhance our relationship with Japan for our mutual benefit. I also expect to stay in close contact with other key officials in the executive branch of our government, as well as with members of Congress, in order to ensure the success of our relationship with Japan.

Finally, I hope to show, by my own example, that our two nations can discuss our differences with civility and without mutual "bashing" of each other. Too much is at stake in our relationship to allow emotion to interfere with

communication. Inevitably, our two nations will have some differences. We are sovereign nations; each of us has our own national interests. These will sometimes diverge to create frictions, and we do no good by ignoring them. Unfortunately, we have seen the growth of new attitudes in both our countries which do not help. But we cannot afford to allow our relationship to drift toward alienation and antagonism. We must be civilized and work to manage our conflicts — and to rise above them when our common interests take priority, as they most often will.

There are abundant opportunities for the United States and Japan to work together:

Each of us has a vital stake in the health of the other's economy. And, together, we can work to ensure the strength of both our economies.

Each of us has a stake in a free and open international economic system. And, together, we can work to ensure the success of this system.

Each of us has a stake in an Asia-Pacific region that is secure and prosperous. And, together, we can work to ensure the stability and wealth of this region.

Finally, each of us has a stake in a world that is a safer, freer, healthier place for the people of all nations. And if the United States and Japan can work together, then practically every problem in the world will get better or, at least, become much easier to handle. But if our relationship deteriorates, then every one of these problems will get worse or become that much harder, even impossible, to solve.

The United States and Japan have a responsibility not only to ourselves, but to the world, to make sure that our special relationship continues to thrive.

I am optimistic about the future of our two countries. We have a relationship that, over time, has become more equal and, as a result, more mature. I believe we know enough not to let our legitimate differences and disagreements distract us from our fundamental, shared interests and values. Our two nations have already accomplished so much through our active cooperation. If we continue to work together, we will be able to accomplish even more.

As our nation's Ambassador to Japan, I intend to help see that this happens. I look forward to working with the members of this Committee, as well as with all the members of Congress, as we seek to advance American interests through a strengthened relationship with Japan.



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