

NEW YEAR'S GREETING
Ambassador Walter F. Mondale

I would like to thank the editors of the **Japan Times** for this opportunity to address readers during the holiday season. I would like to share with you my thoughts and hopes as we look toward the new year. I believe we can take note of some encouraging trends both in the United States and internationally.

In America, President Clinton and the Congress are working together to address the challenges facing my country. These include efforts to reduce our budget deficit, improve the productivity of our workers and industries, and reform our health care system. We have also, at last, passed the "Brady Bill" to enforce tougher controls on the sale of handguns. For this last achievement, the American people are indebted to the parents of Yoshi Hattori, who -- through their dignified effort to bring meaning to their son's tragic death -- helped spur my country to act on the abuse of gun ownership.

Internationally, despite weakness in the global economy during 1993, there is reason to be optimistic about the prospects for future growth. In Geneva, the nations of the world agreed to cooperate in reducing trade barriers through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In Washington, Congress ratified the North American Free Trade Agreement. And at an unprecedented convocation in Seattle, the nations of the Asia Pacific agreed to work toward greater integration of this region's economy. Each of these developments will help expand trade, create jobs, and enhance international living standards in 1994 and beyond.

I am also hopeful about U.S.-Japan relations in the year ahead. Our two countries are allies, partners, and friends. We are working together very well in the security field; we are cooperating on a full range of international issues; and we are strengthening the opportunities for cultural, educational and scientific exchange. Last July, our two governments agreed on the "Framework for a New Economic Partnership" and, in 1994, we will be moving forward on the economic challenges identified in this agreement. I

want to make sure that our relationship is always based on dignity and mutual respect. If our two great nations can work together, as I know we can, then virtually every problem in the world will be easier to solve. It is in this spirit that I look forward to my duties as Ambassador in 1994.



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