

Statement by Ambassador Walter F. Mondale
News Conference at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo
March 28, 1994

Thank you for joining me here this morning. This is the saddest day in my time here as Ambassador.

I wish to personally extend my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Takuma Ito and Go Matsuura, the two young people who were shot so tragically this weekend in Los Angeles. The President and the American people join me in expressing our sadness.

As a father, my heart especially goes out to the parents of these two young men.

They were in America attending a college that makes a special point of offering opportunities for international students. They had come to my country to study, to make friends, to learn about America, to explore their interest in movies — to enjoy the freedom, enthusiasm and hope of being young in this world.

The American people deplore this senseless act of criminal violence, and we share in the sorrow of the Japanese people.

I hope we will not permit the actions of a criminal to harm the opportunities for continued friendship between the people of our two countries. From this tragedy, let us try to honor these two young men by doing what they were doing — strengthening the personal bonds between our two nations.

This morning, I happened to meet with the principal, two teachers, and six students from the school in Louisiana which Yoshi Hattori attended (the Japanese exchange student so tragically killed in October 1992). Among them are Webb Haymaker, Yoshi's "brother" from his host family there.

They are here to demonstrate their love for the Japanese people and their wish that we find hope from Yoshi's death so that it might draw us closer together rather than divide us.

My hope is that this same spirit might guide our own response to this latest tragedy.



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