

THE MARINE CORPS BALL

NOVEMBER 18, 1994

[YOU ARE INTRODUCED BY GUNNERY SERGEANT LARRY GATHRIGHT, COMMANDER OF THE EMBASSY MARINE DETACHMENT.]

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THAT VERY KIND INTRODUCTION.

JOAN AND I ARE DELIGHTED TO JOIN ALL OF YOU HERE THIS EVENING FOR THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS -- NOW CELEBRATING ITS 219TH BIRTHDAY.

BEFORE I BEGIN, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY DEEP SORROW UPON HEARING OF THE FATAL HELICOPTER ACCIDENT AT CAMP SCHWAB YESTERDAY. I UNDERSTAND THAT WE LOST ONE OF OUR MARINES, MARINE SGT. MILLER, IN THAT TRAGEDY AND THAT FOUR MORE ARE IN THE HOSPITAL, TWO IN CRITICAL CONDITION. TO THE FAMILIES OF THESE BRAVE MEN, AND TO SGT. MILLER'S WIFE IN PARTICULAR, MY PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU TONIGHT.

BEFORE COMING HERE THIS EVENING I ASKED AROUND TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO HEAR FROM ME. ONE MARINE ASKED THAT I TALK ABOUT MY IMPRESSION THE FIRST TIME I SAW A MARINE. WELL, THAT WAS QUITE A WHILE BACK, BUT I DO REMEMBER THINKING "I'M GLAD YOU'RE ON OUR SIDE."

MORE SERIOUSLY, I AM DELIGHTED THAT WE ARE HAVING THIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. SOME OF THE MARINES WHO ARE HERE TONIGHT, I SEE EVERY DAY AT THE EMBASSY. YOU ARE A REASSURING PRESENCE. THE JOY FOR ME IN BEING HERE TONIGHT IS THAT THOUGH I SEE MANY OF YOU EVERY DAY, THIS IS THE ONLY DAY OF THE YEAR THAT I GET TO STAND IN FRONT OF A PODIUM AND LET THE WORLD KNOW HOW GREAT YOU ARE. THIS IS MY CHANCE TO BOAST ABOUT OUR MARINE CORPS AND TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR THE OUTSTANDING JOB YOU ARE DOING THROUGHOUT JAPAN AND PARTICULARLY AT THE EMBASSY. WE ARE PROUD OF YOU.

YOU KNOW, BEING A MARINE IN JAPAN IS DIFFICULT, AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE COST OF A NIGHT OUT ON THE TOWN OR THE COST OF A MOVIE. IN MANY WAYS, I THINK THOSE OF YOU STATIONED IN JAPAN HAVE THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT

IN THE WORLD BECAUSE YOUR JOB TODAY IS TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE, NOT TO FIGHT THE WAR. MAINTAINING THE PEACE MEANS THAT YOU RARELY GET THE NOTICE, THE APPRECIATION, OR THE RIP-ROARING SALUTE THAT YOU RICHLY DESERVE.

(COME TO THINK OF IT, IT REMINDS ME A BIT OF WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE VICE-PRESIDENT. AND IT'S PROBABLY WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE MY DEPUTY, RUST DEMING. WHEN RUST IS DOING HIS JOB RIGHT, LIKE HE DOES EVERY DAY, PEOPLE COME UP TO ME AND TELL ME WHAT A GREAT JOB I AM DOING AS AMBASSADOR.)

BUT IN FACT, MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THE HISTORIC CHANGES GOING ON IN THE REGION TODAY GOES TO OUR MARINES IN JAPAN. YOU HAVE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART, PERHAPS A DEFINITIVE ROLE, IN THE HISTORY OF THIS REGION. YOU HAVE FOUGHT THE WARS AND NOW YOU ARE DEFENDING THE PEACE. YOUR VIGILANCE HAS BEEN THE BACKBONE OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY IN THIS REGION.

AND LOOK AT THE RESULTS. YOU KNOW, I JUST CAME BACK EARLIER THIS WEEK FROM JAKARTA, WHERE I ATTENDED A MEETING OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORUM. AT THIS MEETING, ONLY THE SECOND OF ITS KIND, 18 LEADERS OF ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES GATHERED TO MAP OUT A STRATEGY TO ENSURE REGIONAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY INTO THE NEXT CENTURY. THIS MEETING WAS A GREAT SUCCESS. WE WERE ALL WORKING TOGETHER IN JAKARTA, IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION, TO SHAPE OUR COMMON FUTURE. THERE WAS A GOOD FEELING -- A SENSE OF COMMUNITY -- THAT WE ALL ARE AIMING TOWARD A COMMON GOAL.

THIS IS A REMARKABLE THING. FIFTY YEARS AGO, THESE VERY SAME COUNTRIES WERE IN THE THROES OF WORLD WAR TWO. THE PEOPLE OF EVERY ONE OF THESE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCED UNIMAGINABLE SUFFERING IN THAT WAR. WHAT I LEARNED FROM THIS MEETING IN JAKARTA IS THAT INDEED THE WOUNDS INFLICTED IN WORLD WAR TWO ARE GRADUALLY HEALING.

IT IS THANKS TO THE PRESENCE OF THE U.S. MARINES THAT WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN TURNING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN FROM ONE OF WAR-TIME HOSTILITY TO ONE OF PARTNERSHIP; AND THE ATMOSPHERE IN THIS REGION FROM ONE OF DEEP SUSPICION, TO ONE OF PROFOUND HOPE.

AS MARINES, THIS IS YOUR GREAT GIFT TO US AND TO GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS AND JAPANESE TO COME. ONLY WITH YOUR CONTINUED STABILIZING PRESENCE IN THIS REGION WILL AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE AND REGIONAL PEACE ASSURED.

YOU BRING HONOR TO OUR COUNTRY AND YOU BRING HONOR TO OUR EMBASSY. I AM PROUD OF YOU AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW VERY DEEPLY WE AT THE EMBASSY APPRECIATE YOUR PRESENCE IN JAPAN.

THANK YOU.



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