

OPENING REMARKS
"CREATING IMAGES" CONFERENCE
MARCH 5, 1994

THANK YOU CHAIRWOMAN JOHNSON AND PROFESSOR HOMMA.

I WISH TO THANK THE NHK BROADCASTING CULTURE RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND THE MANSFIELD CENTER FOR SPONSORING THIS CONFERENCE — AND INVITING ME TO JOIN YOU. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WILL HAVE A TERRIFIC CONFERENCE TODAY WITH A SUPERB GROUP OF PEOPLE.

IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF AMERICAN INTEREST AND AWARENESS OF JAPAN. WE ADMIRE YOUR ANCIENT CULTURE AS WELL AS YOUR MORE RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS.

- TODAY, THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS ARE STUDYING YOUR LANGUAGE IN OUR SCHOOLS. I WISH THERE WERE MILLIONS.

- EVERY YEAR, MORE AMERICANS ARE COMING TO STUDY IN JAPAN — I WISH THERE WERE MANY MORE.

- MANY AMERICAN ADULTS ARE NOW TAKING CLASSES IN JAPAN-RELATED SUBJECTS — EVERYTHING FROM YOUR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES TO ZEN MEDITATION. SOME ARE EVEN LEARNING THE JOYS OF "KARAOKE."

IN TURN, JAPANESE INTEREST IN AMERICA IS STRONG:

- EACH YEAR, THOUSANDS OF YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE COME TO STUDY AT OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES — AND WE WOULD WELCOME MANY MORE.

- EACH YEAR, SOME THREE MILLION JAPANESE VISIT AMERICA AS TOURISTS. THEY GO EVERYWHERE FROM HAWAII TO NEW YORK — AND EVEN SOMEPLACE CALLED MINNESOTA!

- AND, OF COURSE, MANY JAPANESE COME TO AMERICA TO DO BUSINESS — JUST AS MANY AMERICANS COME HERE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

THE EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND BUSINESS CONNECTIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE BECOMING STRONGER AND DEEPER WITH EACH YEAR.

YET THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS AND JAPANESE NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE OTHER COUNTRY. AS A RESULT, MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATING PEOPLE IN AMERICA AND JAPAN ABOUT THIS MOST IMPORTANT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP NECESSARILY DEPENDS ON NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISION.

BUT AS THE NEW STUDY BY THE MANSFIELD CENTER AND THE NHK RESEARCH INSTITUTE SHOWS, WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

I THOUGHT OUR TRADE IMBALANCE WAS BAD. BUT I WAS SHOCKED TO SEE THE IMBALANCE IN OUR TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE — WITH MORE THAN A THOUSAND JAPANESE TV REPORTS ABOUT AMERICA IN THE SEVEN-MONTH RESEARCH PERIOD, AND FEWER THAN ONE HUNDRED AMERICAN TV REPORTS ABOUT JAPAN IN THE SAME PERIOD.

THIS IMBALANCE IS ALL THE MORE SERIOUS BECAUSE TELEVISION IS NOW OUR DOMINANT SOURCE OF NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORLD.

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT TELEVISION IS A POWERFUL MEDIUM: IT HAS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL TO EDUCATE AND ENLIGHTEN US. IT CAN ENRICH THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BY BRINGING THE WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE CLOSER TO US.

BUT TELEVISION ALSO HAS THE POWER TO FOSTER (AND REINFORCE) MISUNDERSTANDING BY OVERSIMPLIFYING AND DISTORTING REALITY THROUGH DECEPTIVE IMAGES AND WHAT WE CALL "SOUND BITES."

THUS, WHAT MUST CONCERN US IS NOT ONLY THE NUMBER OF TV NEWS REPORTS ABOUT JAPAN AND AMERICA, BUT THE QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF THESE REPORTS.

IF THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP FOR EACH OF OUR NATIONS (AND IT IS), WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT OUR PEOPLE UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER BETTER — SO THAT WE DO NOT SEE EACH OTHER THROUGH CARICATURES, STEREOTYPES AND THE EXAGGERATION OF OUR DIFFERENCES.

WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATING AND ENLIGHTENING POWER OF TELEVISION PREVAILS. JOURNALISTS AND BROADCASTERS OBVIOUSLY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO GIVE US COMPLETE AND ACCURATE COVERAGE.

BUT EACH OF US, AS CONCERNED CITIZENS, HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE DISCERNING AND CRITICAL VIEWERS OF WHATEVER TELEVISION SHOWS US.

I HOPE THAT, IN THE FUTURE, WE WILL SEE AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF TELEVISION COVERAGE THAT AMERICA GIVES TO JAPAN. EVEN MORE, I HOPE THE TELEVISION NETWORKS IN BOTH OUR COUNTRIES CAN STRIVE TO USE THIS POWERFUL MEDIUM TO ENHANCE GENUINE COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE.

I APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THESE CHALLENGES. IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT BUSY PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES ARE TAKING THE TIME TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES. THANK YOU.



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