

REMARKS AT
CEREMONY IN HONOR OF HENRY HEUSKEN

THANK YOU, AMBASSADOR VAN DEN BERG, FOR INVITING ME TO JOIN YOU FOR THIS SPECIAL CEREMONY. IT IS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO HONOR A REMARKABLE YOUNG MAN WHO MADE SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE IMPACT DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF DIPLOMACY IN JAPAN.

HENRY HEUSKEN'S LIFE AND DEATH MAKE A FASCINATING STORY. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO PROFESSOR HESSELINK'S PRESENTATION THIS EVENING.

ALL I WISH TO SAY THIS AFTERNOON, ON THIS OCCASION, IS THAT — ACROSS THE DISTANCE OF TIME — HENRY HEUSKEN AND HIS LIFE'S WORK HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO TEACH US ABOUT WHAT INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY IS ALL ABOUT.

OBVIOUSLY, TOKYO — AND JAPAN — HAVE CHANGED A GREAT DEAL IN THE MANY YEARS SINCE HEUSKEN'S TRAGIC DEATH.

TODAY, OF COURSE, TOKYO IS ONE OF THE MOST INTERNATIONAL AND COSMOPOLITAN CITIES IN THE WORLD — AND ONE OF THE SAFEST. MILLIONS OF JAPANESE NOW TRAVEL OVERSEAS EVERY YEAR. MORE THAN A MILLION FOREIGNERS RESIDE IN THIS COUNTRY — ALMOST A QUARTER OF A MILLION IN TOKYO ALONE.

BUT WHEN HENRY HEUSKEN AND TOWNSEND HARRIS ARRIVED IN SHIMODA IN 1856, THEY WERE AMONG ONLY A HANDFUL OF FOREIGNERS WHO LIVED IN JAPAN — AND WHO WERE OCCASIONALLY SUBJECTED TO ANTI-FOREIGN HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE. EXCEPT FOR THE TINY ISLAND OF DESHIMA NEAR NAGASAKI, JAPAN HAS SECLUDED ITSELF FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD FOR MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES — UNTIL COMMODORE PERRY'S ARRIVAL IN 1853.

IN THE 1850'S, JAPAN MUST HAVE BEEN THE VERY DEFINITION OF AN "EXOTIC" COUNTRY. AND HENRY HEUSKEN WAS CLEARLY SOMEONE WHO LOVED THE ADVENTURE OF BEING IN SUCH EXOTIC TERRITORY. A YOUNG IMMIGRANT TO THE UNITED STATES, HE WAS ASKED BY TOWNSEND HARRIS TO SERVE AS HIS SECRETARY AND INTERPRETER WHEN HE BECAME AMERICA'S FIRST CONSUL GENERAL TO JAPAN.

AS OLIVER STATLER SAYS IN HIS WONDERFUL BOOK, SHIMODA STORY: "THEY DID NOT SEEM A WELL-MATCHED PAIR. ... HARRIS WAS FIFTY-ONE AND SEEMED OLDER. HENRY HEUSKEN WAS TWENTY-THREE AND SEEMED EXACTLY THAT: SLENDER AND LITHE, SPIRITED AND ROMANTIC — TWENTY-THREE IS AN AGE AT WHICH EVERYTHING SEEMS POSSIBLE."

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HEUSKEN WAS FRIENDS WITH EVERYONE — FOREIGNERS AND JAPANESE ALIKE. AND HE QUICKLY BECAME INDISPENSABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN TOKYO. (AT THE TIME, DUTCH WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE LANGUAGE OF DIPLOMACY IN JAPAN.)

HEUSKEN WAS FREQUENTLY LOANED OUT TO OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS IN JAPAN — AND, AT THE TIME OF HIS MURDER, HE WAS ON HIS WAY HOME FROM ASSISTING THE PRUSSIAN MISSION IN ITS TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN.

AS ONE OBSERVER COMMENTED SHORTLY AFTER HEUSKEN'S DEATH: "NO ONE MAN HAS HAD SO MUCH TO DO WITH THE MAKING OF THE FOREIGN TREATIES. EACH AND ALL OF THE TREATY POWERS ARE INDEBTED TO HIM FOR VALUABLE SERVICES — ENGLISH, FRENCH, RUSSIANS, DUTCH AND THE PRUSSIANS."

LIKEWISE, IN HIS DIPLOMATIC MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON FOLLOWING HEUSKEN'S ASSASSINATION, TOWNSEND HARRIS WROTE:

"I AM AT A LOSS TO ASSIGN ANY SPECIAL MOTIVE THAT COULD HAVE INFLUENCED THE ASSASSINS OF MR. HEUSKEN. HE WAS KIND AND AMIABLE IN HIS TEMPER; HE NEVER USED ANY VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE JAPANESE, AND FROM SPEAKING THEIR LANGUAGE, HE APPEARED TO BE A UNIVERSAL FAVORITE."

"I AM SUFFERING DEEPLY FROM THIS SUDDEN AND AWFUL CATASTROPHE. MR. HEUSKEN WAS ASSOCIATED WITH ME OVER FIVE YEARS, AND HE WAS THE COMPANION OF MY LONG SOLITUDE AT SHIMODA. OUR RELATIONS WERE RATHER THOSE OF FATHER AND SON, THAN *CHIEF* AND *EMPLOYEE*."

THE STORY OF HENRY HEUSKEN REMINDS US OF THE ADVENTURES — AND THE RISKS — OF DIPLOMACY DURING A VERY DIFFERENT TIME IN JAPAN. IT WAS ALSO A TIME WHEN THERE WAS A SPECIAL CLOSENESS AND COLLEGIALLY AMONG THE

MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THEY WERE ON THE FRONTIERS OF DIPLOMACY — WITH BOTH THE ENORMOUS CULTURAL BARRIERS AND VERY REAL PHYSICAL DANGERS THAT ARE TO BE FOUND ON ANY FRONTIER.

WHILE SO MUCH HAS OBVIOUSLY CHANGED SINCE THEN, WE CONTINUE TO BE THE BENEFICIARIES OF HENRY HEUSKEN'S EFFORTS. WE INHERIT HIS LEGACY OF SEEKING POSITIVE DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS — AND, EVEN MORE, REAL FRIENDSHIP — BETWEEN THE JAPANESE PEOPLE AND PEOPLE FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD.

DURING HIS SHORT LIFE AND BRIEF TIME IN JAPAN, HENRY HEUSKEN ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH. WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW MUCH MORE HE COULD HAVE ACHIEVED, HAD HE LIVED LONGER.

IN MANY WAYS, WE CAN LOOK TO HEUSKEN FOR THE VERY BEST OF WHAT DIPLOMACY SHOULD BE ABOUT:

- HE WAS EXCEPTIONALLY OPEN TO LEARNING ABOUT JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE PEOPLE, WITH THEIR DISTINGUISHED HISTORY AND CULTURE.

- HE WAS EAGER TO PROMOTE GENUINE CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.

- HE WOULD GENEROUSLY OFFER HIS ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE TO FELLOW DIPLOMATS IN THE FULL SPIRIT OF COLLEGIALLY.

- ABOVE ALL, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BORDERS BETWEEN NATIONS SHOULD NOT — AND MUST NOT — BE ALLOWED TO DIVIDE US FROM OUR COMMON HUMANITY.

WE DO WELL TO REMEMBER HENRY HEUSKENS AND ALL THAT HE ACCOMPLISHED FOR JAPAN AND THE WORLD. AND I HOPE THAT EACH OF US CAN HELP TO CARRY ON HIS SPECIAL LEGACY — TO PRACTICE THE SAME SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING BY WHICH THIS REMARKABLE YOUNG MAN LIVED HIS OWN LIFE.



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