

**ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR WALTER F. MONDALE
AT THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF
THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA
MARCH 14, 1995**

I am grateful to be with you today to honor those who sacrificed their lives on this island and to thank the veterans from both sides who have come from so far to be here with us on this historic day.

It may be that the bloodiest fighting in the history of war took place on this bleak and isolated island. Although it was fifty long years ago when the carnage ended, I am sure that for those of you who survived, the memories of those dreadful days, and of your comrades and friends who lost their lives, are as fresh to you today as on the day you left here. It is a remarkable irony of the world's greatest war--a struggle that spanned the globe--that for the citizens of my nation, it is the picture of the American flag being raised on Mt. Surabachi, on this minuscule and tragic spit of land, that remains above all in our nations memory.

But the other story that we must commemorate today is the partnership and friendship that the United States and Japan have built out of the tragedy of the Second World War. I am sure that those of you who stood on this spot fifty years ago could not have imagined that our two countries would build the kind of partnership that exists between us. It is one of the great success stories of the 20th century, or for that matter, of any century.

The fact that we stand here together today is testimony to our success. The ocean we see around us has been transformed from a vast ocean of blood and carnage to the world's most important avenue of commerce. By working together, our two nations have made the Asia-Pacific region the most prosperous and one of the most stable areas on earth.

We moved from conflict to cooperation because the citizens of our countries, including the survivors with us here today, overcame our rancor and focused on the future, not the past. In Lincoln's magnificent Gettysburg Address he stood on soil freshly soaked in

blood and prayed that those who gave their last full measure of devotion should not have died in vain. Although he spoke of a different war at a different time, thank God that we can meet today and say that from this tragedy our two nations have found common ground and we are now joined together to build a prosperous, peaceful and democratic world.

Indeed, our alliance contributed importantly to the successful end of yet another great struggle -- the cold war -- in which, again, liberty and democracy prevailed. Our unshakable alliance, our economic success together, and our security treaty that deterred aggression helped bring about the collapse of communism and an end to the threat of global nuclear war.

As we commemorate the events of a half century ago today, we must also remember that the success of our alliance over these years has not made it any less necessary for the future. The peace and prosperity of our two nations and of the Asia-Pacific region continue to depend on cooperation between us.

We must not let the occasional differences between us obscure the fact that the United States and Japan are committed to an enduring alliance. The legacy of friendship, common interests, and mutual benefit which you, the survivors, have created forms the foundation of our unshakable cross-Pacific relationship.

The veterans here today, and those of my generation, know that time moves on. We know that when we leave this island today, most of us will never see this island again. But I am confident that fifty years from now, when our American and Japanese descendants again visit Iwo Jima to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the sacrifices made here, they will be able to look back on yet another fifty years of world peace. If I see the future accurately, it will be because together we had the vision and courage to convert the tragedy we remember today into the remarkable harmony that we also celebrate today.



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