

AMBASSADOR MONDALE'S SPEECH TO THE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE STUDIES
(MARCH 17, 1995)

Thank you so much, General Muromoto, for that kind introduction. I am delighted to have this opportunity to address such a distinguished class from the National Institute for Defense Studies, and I appreciate your coming over to the Embassy so that we can have this translated simultaneously. You know, before I came to Japan, I was wondering how much Japanese I should study and so I asked former Ambassador Mansfield how much of the Japanese language he had learned. "not one word," said Mansfield, and I have tried to live up to that high standard ever since.

This year marks the 50th year anniversary of the end of World War Two in the Pacific. As many of you know, earlier this week I participated in the commemorative events on Iwo Jima, where some of the bloodiest fighting of the Pacific war took place. 7,000 Americans lost their lives on Iwo Jima and 26,000 were wounded. On the Japanese side, about 20,000 young soldiers went to Iwo Jima and most of these never made it home again.

A few days before going to Iwo Jima, on March 10, I also participated in the commemoration of the wartime firebombing of Tokyo. I attended that event on behalf of the American people because, in this 50th anniversary year, I wanted to express our sadness for those who lost their lives and suffered during the terrible air raids over Tokyo.

As I said at the Tokyo firebombing commemoration, "there is no joy in hurting people or in losing lives or bloodshed." This anniversary year is a time for us all to express sorrow for the loss and destruction of the Pacific war, and to remind us of what happens when we fail to keep the peace. Yet it is also a time for us to celebrate the remarkable bilateral alliance that we have built,

together, over the past fifty years, and to reaffirm our commitment to this partnership and to the continuing peace and prosperity of this region and of the world.

No one has better captured the sentiment that I know is shared by Americans and Japanese alike in this year of reflection than has Mrs. Kuribayashi, the wife of the commanding general of the Japanese forces at the battle of Iwo Jima. This frail, 91 year old woman, who last saw her husband 50 years and three months ago as he went off to fight the battle of Iwo Jima, spoke to the hundreds of veterans, American and Japanese, gathered at Iwo Jima to commemorate the fallen. In her moving remarks, Mrs. Kuribayashi reminded us -- and I use her words -- that "both Japanese and Americans bravely fought for their nations and their fellow soldiers at the expense of their own lives.... I believe that the peace that we enjoy today is built upon the lives of those heroic soldiers."

You who are in this room -- and I see officers here not only from Japan and America but also from Europe and Asia -- are now entrusted with safeguarding the peace that Mrs. Kuribayashi so eloquently spoke of. Today, I would like to talk about these fifty years of peace, and the continuing need for a U.S. - Japan security alliance to maintain peace for generations to come.

No one can doubt that we owe the last fifty years of peace and stability in this region to the remarkable security alliance that the U.S. and Japan share. When World War II came to a close, our two nations, with great courage, chose to turn away from our strife-torn past and instead, look to the future to build a better world. Today, our partnership is one of the great success stories of the 20th century, or for that matter, of any century.

There are those who say that the end of the cold war means that our two nations no longer need to maintain a strong security relationship and that somehow our stake in working together around the world is dwindling.

But I do not believe that any of these concerns are true or can be true. Both the U.S. and Japan have a vital stake in the Asia-Pacific region and a tremendous shared interest in its stability. America's active presence in this region and Japan's cooperation in providing stability are essential to Asian-Pacific peace and prosperity now and for the foreseeable future.

We live in one of those rare periods in history when it is possible to know that we are at an important juncture even without the benefit of hindsight. We have closed the book on one international order, the cold war, and have opened another, the chapters of which we can read only dimly. Many unknowns remain. We have witnessed a transformation of unprecedented proportions, marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union, an uncertain Russia, a stronger China, a continued stand-off on the Korean peninsula, and a much more politically integrated and economically developing Southeast Asia. How the remaining communist powers on the continent -- China, North Korea, and Vietnam -- handle political succession problems will provide an important counterpoint. Each of these changes would be momentous in itself, together they will form the basis of a new east Asian international order.

All of these changes are unfolding as the East Asian region grows immensely in importance to global peace and prosperity. Global economic interdependence is one of the singular facts of our age and we all have a stake in the continued prosperity of this region.

But this prosperity depends upon a stable and secure environment to support it. This is why it is so very important for the U.S. and Japan to continue to work, through our long-standing security alliance, to assure regional stability.

My government recently issued a strategy report, the Nye report, that outlines America's security strategy in the East Asia-Pacific region. The Nye report underscores the central role that Japan plays

in our Asian-Pacific strategy and should make it apparent to everyone that the U.S. is in this region to stay.

While the political dynamics in this region that give meaning to our mutual security alliance are changing, the alliance itself remains as critical to the U.S. and Japan as ever. It provides the basis for our bilateral security; for maintaining regional stability; and for a vibrant worldwide political partnership.

The U.S. - Japan security partnership endures because it is in both our interests. As Joe Nye recently said, "security is like oxygen; you don't tend to notice it until you begin to lose it." We both have a vital stake in continued regional peace and stability, open trade, access to raw materials, and secure sea lines of communication. We both wish to see a stable, democratic, and reforming Russia participate more fully in this region. We both want to see a China that can overcome the complications of the succession, continue economic reform, and move toward democracy while engaging constructively in the region and the world. We both want a Korean peninsula free from the threat of north Korean nuclear proliferation and conventional war. And we both look forward to the integration of the nations of Indochina into international society.

Nearly all countries of this region welcome America as a force for peace and stability. They understand that the presence of U.S. forces helps increase predictability and reduces the chances of destabilizing conflicts or arms races. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the Korean peninsula, where despite our recent nuclear agreement with Pyongyang we continue to face a formidable conventional threat across the DMZ.

As the Nye report so clearly states, the U.S.-Japan mutual security treaty will remain the linchpin of America's security strategy in Asia. At the same time, we recognize that the vitality of our partnership depends on our capacity to adapt it to a changing world.

On the strategic front, my government firmly supports broadening multilateral consultations on security issues through institutions like the ASEAN regional forum and sub-regional North East Asian security dialogues. This is a significant new element of America's Asian security policy. It stems from our belief that the end of the cold war has opened up new possibilities for dialogue. We believe that regional security dialogues in Asia can supplement our alliances and forward military presence, without supplanting them. And they can play a useful role in easing tensions in the region, in curbing arms races, and in building confidence.

In terms of our bilateral security alliance, we are examining new opportunities for cooperation in such areas as theater missile defense, in the development and production of military systems, and in the exchange of military and dual use technologies. We are also working to make our base presence here less burdensome to those who live near our bases, particularly on Okinawa, where most of our forces are located.

Finally, we believe that Japan's international role will continue to grow in the decades ahead. We welcome this and we strongly support Japan's quest for permanent membership in the U.N. Security Council.

If I can digress for a moment, I know that there is a lot of talk in the press these days on whether the U.S. is "bypassing" Japan -- I think they call it "Japan passing." I believe it is high time that we put this speculation to rest. No one who understands the depth of U.S.-Japan cooperation, across the board, can consider this seriously. And no one is more aware of how fully the U.S. and Japan cooperate and depend on each other than you who are so deeply involved with maintaining peace in this region.

Fifty years ago, our nations closed the saddest chapter in our history, and opened what was to become the most remarkable,

prosperous partnerships in modern times. Today, we are partners in defending the peace and security of the region; we are partners in stimulating global growth; we are partners in supporting democracy and respect for human rights around the world; we are partners in stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; we are partners in preserving the global environment; we are partners in improving the health of our citizens; and we are partners in advancing the frontiers of science.

I look around this room, at the cream of Japan's Self Defense Forces sitting side by side with your counterparts from America and other countries around the world, and I can't help but feel that today, in this auditorium, I am seeing the living proof of the success of the U.S.-Japan bilateral partnership.

This great partnership came about because, fifty years ago at the end of a cruel and bitter war, our brave leaders, soldiers, and citizens had the vision to join together to build a stronger U.S. - Japan partnership and to secure a lasting peace. This vision is as relevant to us today as it was then. Let us make this the lesson of that horrible war, and let us work together, once again, guided by a common vision of partnership and peace for generations to come.

Thank you.



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