

AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS
MOFA EARTHQUAKE AWARDS CEREMONY
(April 14, 1995, 5:00 PM)

THANK YOU, MR. MINISTER, FOR TAKING THE TIME TO HONOR THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SO WILLINGLY WORKED LONG HOURS TO PROVIDE SOME RELIEF TO THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED IN THE KOBE EARTHQUAKE.

I VISITED THE KOBE AREA SHORTLY AFTER THE DISASTER STRUCK, AND I WAS APPALLED BY THE MAGNITUDE OF DESTRUCTION AND THE SENSELESS LOSS OF LIFE. I KNOW THAT I AM SPEAKING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHEN I SAY THAT OUR HEARTS WERE FILLED WITH SADNESS FOR THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN WHEN WE LEARNED OF THIS TRAGEDY.

AS YOU KNOW, ONLY HOURS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE HIT, AND AS THE EXTENT OF THE DEVASTATION BECAME APPARENT, OUR PRESIDENT CALLED ME AND AFFIRMED MY GOVERNMENT'S READINESS TO DO ALL THAT WE COULD TO ASSIST. I THEN SPOKE DIRECTLY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KONO, AND WE QUICKLY BEGAN TO COORDINATE OUR EFFORTS.

AT YOUR GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST, OUR FORCES IN JAPAN PROVIDED A HOST OF GOODS AND SERVICES INCLUDING BLANKETS, WATER, TENTS, AND PLASTIC SHEETING. AS GENERAL MYERS WILL ATTEST, OUR MILITARY FORCES STATIONED HERE WERE PLEASED TO HELP OUT -- IN SETTING UP TENTS AND IN TRANSPORTING EQUIPMENT. ALL OF THIS MADE ME VERY PROUD OF MY COUNTRY AND OUR ARMED FORCES.

I ALSO AM DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH THE SPONTANEITY WITH WHICH OUR COUNTRIES RUSH TO HELP EACH OTHER OUT. THIS IS TRUE NOT ONLY AT THE GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT LEVEL, BUT IN THIS RECENT CRISIS WE ALSO RECEIVED THOUSANDS OF CALLS FROM PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZENS WANTING TO VOLUNTEER OR TO SEND MONEY, FOOD, OR CLOTHING. THE JAPANESE PUBLIC REACTS IN THE SAME WAY. AMERICANS WILL REMEMBER JAPAN'S GENEROUS OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE DURING LAST YEAR'S NORTHRIDGE EARTHQUAKE IN THE U.S. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IN TIMES OF GREAT URGENCY, LIKE THIS ONE, THE AMERICAN AND JAPANESE PEOPLE KNOW, ALMOST BY INSTINCT, THAT WE ARE THERE FOR EACH OTHER.

THERE IS A LESSON HERE FOR US ALL. AS MARK TWAIN WOULD HAVE SAID, "REPORTS OF THE DEATH OF THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED." I KNOW THAT THERE IS A TENDENCY TO PREDICT THE WORST IN THE U.S. -JAPAN RELATIONSHIP THESE DAYS: THERE IS TALK IN THE PRESS ABOUT "JAPAN-PASSING" AND IT SEEMS THAT EVERY OTHER WEEK ANOTHER BOOK IS PUBLISHED PREDICTING A COMING CRISIS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

BUT IN FACT, IT IS AT TIMES LIKE THE KOBE EARTHQUAKE THAT WE SEE HOW SILLY SUCH DIRE PREDICTIONS ARE. THE RESPONSE OF AMERICA'S MILITARY FORCES AND OF ALL AMERICANS TO THE EARTHQUAKE REMINDS US THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP IS AS VIBRANT AS EVER. WHEN I SEE HOW SUCCESSFULLY AMERICANS AND JAPANESE WORKED TOGETHER TO RESPOND TO THIS RECENT EARTHQUAKE, I HAVE GREAT HOPE THAT OUR PARTNERSHIP WILL CONTINUE IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.



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