

OKINAWA DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE

JUNE 24, 1995

FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS, IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO PARTICIPATE IN CEREMONIES HONORING THE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO DIED ON OKINAWA 50 YEARS AGO. TODAY, WHEN WE LOOK AT THIS BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE THAT FIVE DECADES AGO, 234,000 HUMAN BEINGS PERISHED HERE. THE CEREMONIES I HAVE WITNESSED PAY FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE SACRIFICES MADE DURING THE BATTLE FOR THIS ISLAND. I HOPE THESE CEREMONIES ALSO REMIND US ALL OF THE HORRIBLE COSTS OF WAR AND SPUR US TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE THAT SUCH CALAMITIES NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.

I HAVE ALSO BEEN TAKEN WITH THE HOSPITALITY OF THE OKINAWAN PEOPLE. ALMOST 150 YEARS AGO, AMERICANS AND OKINAWANS MET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FRIENDSHIP. FOR THE PAST 50 YEARS, OKINAWANS HAVE BEEN GENEROUS HOSTS AND FRIENDS OF THE MANY U.S. SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE LIVED HERE. MANY AMERICANS HAVE SPECIAL PLACES IN THEIR HEARTS FOR THE OKINAWAN FRIENDS THEY HAVE MADE DURING TOURS OF DUTY HERE.

WHILE WE HAVE SPENT THESE PAST FEW DAYS HONORING THOSE WHO DIED IN THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE ALSO REFLECT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TODAY'S RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, WE STAND TOGETHER AS ALLIES; WE STAND TOGETHER AS FRIENDS; WE STAND TOGETHER IN OUR COMMITMENT TO WORLD GROWTH AND LASTING PEACE. AS PACIFIC NATIONS, THE U.S. AND JAPAN SHARE A DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THIS REGION CONTINUES. OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIP HAS HELPED TO CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FLOURISHES. WE MUST NOT LET OUR DIFFERENCES UNDERMINE OUR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN THAT SECURE ENVIRONMENT.

FIFTY YEARS AGO, EAST ASIA WAS IN RUINS. BY WORKING TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN STABILITY, WE HAVE HELPED CREATE A REGION WHICH HAS BECOME AN EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD. LET US RESOLVE ONCE AGAIN TO WORK TOGETHER SO THAT THE WORLD WILL NEVER AGAIN PAY THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID HERE 50 YEARS AGO.

I AM HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.



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