

Ambassador's Message -- Japan Times Supplement

Reinforcing our global partnership

Much has been said about the global scope of the U.S.-Japan partnership. It has been my sense while serving as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, that our relations are indeed wide-ranging, deep, rich, and abiding. We work together on major issues around the globe. The state visit of President Clinton offers us a new opportunity to consider how broad-ranging our common interests really are.

I have often said that we can make progress on almost any issue of global concern when the U.S. and Japan work together. By the same token, our failure to cooperate on a given issue is an almost certain sign that things will get worse. So the world, along with the people of our two nations, is the beneficiary of good relations between the United States and Japan.

One particularly practical embodiment of the strong cooperative spirit that underpins our ties is the vibrant yet relatively unknown "Common Agenda," set in motion by President Clinton and Prime Minister Miyazawa in 1993. Under the Common Agenda our two nations are, in cooperation with others, trying to wipe out polio worldwide, working to save valuable rain forests and to prevent coral reef degeneration, taking a hard look at how to stem the flow of harmful narcotics around the world, and actively applying our resources to basic health care and technology issues in the developing world.

In short, we are pooling our efforts to improve on the most important quality-of-life issues which face mankind. President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto will reaffirm and build upon this vital element of bilateral cooperation during their Tokyo meetings.

Still higher on our leaders' agenda in Tokyo will be security and economic issues, both key elements of the U.S.-Japan relationship. In reaffirming their commitment to a strong alliance, the President and Prime Minister will stress their mutual intention to strengthen bilateral cooperation, which underpins East Asian peace and prosperity.

Economic progress relies upon regional stability, and the nations of Asia have engineered some of the world's most impressive economic growth rates upon the foundation of stability which a forward-deployed American presence has offered. The U.S.-Japan alliance is essential to sustaining this growth, and the world's extensive economic stake in this region is expanding rapidly as a consequence.

My country's interest in the health of Japan's economy is an important reason for our keen interest in access to this nation's markets. We see the great mutual benefits made possible by a more vigorous exchange of goods, services, and investments between us. Consumers, companies, and working people in Japan and the U.S. have much to gain from our continued bilateral cooperation, and the U.S. will, for its part, continue to press for a more open and vigorous Japanese economy. In this context, the President and Prime Minister will seek progress on an array of bilateral trade and economic issues.

The President and Prime Minister will also discuss key political cooperation issues, such as our joint efforts regarding North Korea, which depend heavily on our strategic cooperation. They will mark progress on our joint effort to alleviate some of the irritants of military bases, particularly in Okinawa, within the context of our mutual obligations under the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. They will make it clear that this is not a time for reducing our vigilance, but a time for reinforcing the cooperative elements of our common security.

I take a personal interest in another element of U.S.-Japan cooperation which our leaders will discuss: the exchange of students between our countries. I have seen what cultural understanding, language capacity, and personal friendships can do to facilitate stronger bilateral ties, and I am convinced that exchanges among our youth are one key to ensuring a healthy future. All of the cooperative efforts that will be discussed by our leaders will be more meaningful, broad-ranging, and long-lasting if more of our citizens, and especially our youth, can come to a common understanding with their counterparts across the Pacific.

This is a diverse relationship. It involves all sectors of our two societies. All of us, the people of Japan and America, play a vital role in ensuring the enduring health of a bilateral

relationship that offers the world so much. I hope each of us will view the President's state visit in the context of what we can do to strengthen this cooperation. The generations to come will not take our efforts for granted.



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