

SYMPOSIUM ON NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

MAY 16, 1996

GOOD MORNING. I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE A GROUP OF MANY NATIONALITIES GATHERED TO SHARE VIEWS ON THE SECURITY OF A REGION WHICH WE'RE ALL A PART OF. I WELCOME YOU TO THE U.S. EMBASSY FOR WHAT I HOPE WILL BE THE BEGINNING OF A USEFUL TWO DAY SYMPOSIUM. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WHAT WILL MAKE IT USEFUL. (PARTICIPANTS ARE FROM CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA, MONGOLIA, RUSSIA, U.S.)

IT IS PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE THAT WE ARE MEETING LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER THE SUMMIT BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER HASHIMOTO AND PRESIDENT CLINTON, AS SECURITY WAS AN IMPORTANT FOCUS OF THAT MEETING.

THE NATIONS REPRESENTED HERE SHARE A VITAL INTEREST IN A PEACEFUL, STABLE, AND PROSPEROUS ASIA-PACIFIC REGION. THE THREATS TO THESE SHARED INTERESTS HAVE EVOLVED OVER TIME, AND WITH THE END OF THE COLD WAR, THEY ARE NOW LESS APPARENT.

ASIA IS A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS REGION, AND THE FUTURE LOOKS VERY BRIGHT. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT TAKE STABILITY FOR GRANTED. THE FACT IS THAT MANY UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN. THE KOREAN PENINSULA REMAINS DIVIDED AND DANGEROUS. THERE ARE A RANGE OF UNRESOLVED TERRITORIAL ISSUES. FURTHERMORE, WE SEE INCREASING MILITARY SPENDING BY MANY COUNTRIES. IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN A SECURITY STRUCTURE IN EAST ASIA THAT PRESERVES PEACE AND STABILITY.

THIS IS WHY SECURITY WAS HIGH ON THE AGENDA WHEN PRESIDENT CLINTON CAME TO TOKYO. AT THE SUMMIT, PRIME MINISTER HASHIMOTO AND THE PRESIDENT SIGNED A JOINT DECLARATION WHICH REAFFIRMED AND INVIGORATED OUR MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO SECURITY COOPERATION, AND UNDERScoreD OUR COMMON INTEREST IN REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY. WE ALSO AGREED TO REVIEW THE SECURITY GUIDELINES UPON WHICH U.S. - JAPAN MILITARY COOPERATION IS BASED.

THIS NEW INITIATIVE TO REVIEW THE GUIDELINES HAS RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION IN BOTH JAPAN AND THE REGION. THE CURRENT GUIDELINES WERE PUT TOGETHER IN 1978, AND IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT BOTH COUNTRIES REVIEW THEM,

BUILDING UPON THE FOUNDATION LAID BY JAPAN'S NEW NATIONAL DEFENSE PROGRAM OUTLINE, RELEASED LAST NOVEMBER.

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THIS WILL BE A MUTUAL EFFORT, CONDUCTED AT A PACE COMFORTABLE FOR BOTH SIDES. IT IS NOT AIMED AT ANY COUNTRY, AND WE ARE NOT PRESSING JAPAN IN ANY WAY. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WITHIN JAPAN'S EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS, WE WILL FIND MANY WAYS TO STREAMLINE AND ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF OUR JOINT SECURITY EFFORTS.

THE U.S. AND JAPAN ARE ALSO ENGAGED IN A SIGNIFICANT EFFORT TO REDUCE THE INTRUSION OF U.S. MILITARY BASES IN JAPAN. GIVEN THE REQUIREMENT THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR CURRENT FORCE STRENGTH, THIS WILL BE NO EASY TASK. HOWEVER, THROUGH CLOSE COOPERATION, WE HAVE ALREADY PASSED SOME SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES INVOLVING NOISE ABATEMENT, BASE CONSOLIDATIONS, AND LIMITING INTRUSIVE MILITARY DRILLS.

LET ME QUICKLY COMMENT ON TWO OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH SYMBOLIZE THE PRIORITY THAT THE U.S. AND JAPAN PLACE ON SECURITY COOPERATION. ONE IS THE GENEROUS HOST NATION SUPPORT THAT JAPAN SUPPLIES TO U.S. FORCES, RENEWED IN THE SPECIAL MEASURES AGREEMENT REACHED LAST YEAR.

THE OTHER IS THE ACQUISITION AND CROSS SERVICING AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND MYSELF JUST PRIOR TO THE PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL IN JAPAN. THIS AGREEMENT WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR FURTHER OPERATIONAL COOPERATION DURING JOINT PEACEKEEPING AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS, AS WELL AS DURING PEACETIME TRAINING MISSIONS.

CONCLUSION

WHILE I HAVE DISCUSSED SECURITY COOPERATION PRIMARILY IN A BILATERAL CONTEXT, I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY MENTION REGIONAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS SUCH AS THOSE OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF). THE ARF MEETINGS JUST CONCLUDED ARE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF HOW THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR SHARED STABILITY.

THIS KIND OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IS CERTAINLY VERY IMPORTANT. BUT WE CAN EFFECTIVELY PURSUE A MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE ONLY WITHIN A STABLE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT, AND WE MUST RELY ON BILATERAL SECURITY COMMITMENTS, SUCH AS THOSE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND JAPAN AND THE U.S. AND SOUTH KOREA, TO UNDERWRITE THIS STABILITY. OUR ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL DIALOGUE THEREFORE COMPLEMENTS, NOT SUPPLEMENTS, OUR STRONG BILATERAL TIES.

THIS IS A CHALLENGING TIME FOR ALL NATIONS IN THIS REGION. THERE ARE MANY ISSUES WHICH REQUIRE DISCUSSION, AND FORTUNATELY, THE SECURITY DEBATE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY OPEN AND PUBLIC. I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT THE MANY IDEAS GENERATED BY THIS DEBATE WILL MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND STABILITY FOR YOUR COUNTRIES AND MINE.

THANK YOU. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING A REPORT OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS.

((ADMIRAL PRUEHER THEN GIVES REMARKS OVER VIDEO LINK, AFTER WHICH HE SIGNS OFF AND YOU WILL FIELD QUESTIONS FROM THE GROUP.))



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