

JET PROGRAM
10TH ANNIVERSARY
OCTOBER 7, 1996

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME THIS AFTERNOON. I AM PLEASED TO FOLLOW REMARKS BY HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER KURATA, PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTER OF EDUCATION KUSAKABE, VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAYASHI, AND MR. MORI, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF CLAIR.

I APPRECIATE THIS CHANCE TO CELEBRATE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE FINEST INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD, THE JAPAN EXCHANGE AND TEACHING PROGRAM, POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE "JET" PROGRAM.

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OVER THE LAST DECADE, THIS REMARKABLE PROGRAM HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE STRENGTHENING OF JAPAN'S INTERNATIONAL TIES, NOT ONLY WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT WITH THE 17 OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AS WELL. THAT CONTRIBUTION CENTERS ON PEOPLE SHARING THEMSELVES, THEIR LANGUAGE, THEIR OPINIONS AND THEIR CULTURES, WITH EACH OTHER.

THE JET PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH THE NEED TO CREATE A GENERATION OF YOUNG JAPANESE WHO WERE MORE AWARE OF OTHER CULTURES, LANGUAGES, AND MORE APPRECIATIVE OF THE OFTEN PROFOUND DIFFERENCES IN OUR SOCIETIES. IN OUR EVER-MORE INTERDEPENDENT WORLD, IN WHICH OUR ECONOMIES, OUR COMMUNICATIONS, OUR TRAVEL, OUR POLITICS AND THE EVER-GREATER TERROR OF WAR, REQUIRES GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCES, THE JET PROGRAM STANDS OUT AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE EFFORTS TO BRIDGE OUR DIFFERENCES TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

THE MODERN WORLD REQUIRES THAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE -- OUR FUTURE LEADERS -- MUST LEARN TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE EACH OTHER DESPITE OUR DIFFERENCES. BUT KNOWING ABOUT EACH OTHER IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. THEY ALSO HAVE TO LEARN -- AND PRACTICE -- HOW TO WORK TOGETHER TO FIND GLOBAL SOLUTIONS FOR OUR ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES.

ONE OF MY PREDECESSORS, EDWIN REISCHAUER, SAID THAT WE NEED A PROFOUND RESHAPING OF EDUCATION IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE IN A WORLD FACING DIFFICULTIES THAT CAN ONLY BE SOLVED ON A GLOBAL SCALE, INCLUDING SUCH PROBLEMS AS DISEASE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, THE LACK OF ACCESS TO GOOD EDUCATION, AND THE PERVASIVE THREAT OF TERRORISM. THESE HAVE COME TO BE KNOWN AS "GLOBAL ISSUES," AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF NATIONS MUST ADDRESS THEM TOGETHER.

THE U.S. AND JAPAN HAVE A PARTICULARLY STRONG INITIATIVE CALLED THE "COMMON AGENDA" THROUGH WHICH WE FOCUS ON THESE VERY REAL PROBLEMS. ADDRESSING THEM WILL BE MUCH EASIER AS WE ADD TO THE CADRE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CAN WORK TOGETHER EFFECTIVELY ACROSS NATIONAL AND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES TO ACHIEVE PRACTICAL RESULTS.

THE JET PROGRAM IS DOING JUST THAT -- THROUGH EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE. I HAVE FOUND THROUGHOUT MY PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER THAT EDUCATION IS THE ONE INVESTMENT THAT ALWAYS PAYS RICH DIVIDENDS. IT IS MAGIC -- THE RETURN ALWAYS SEEMS TO OUTPACE THE INVESTMENT.

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OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS OF THE JET PROGRAM, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF JAPANESE STUDENTS FROM HOKKAIDO TO OKINAWA HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND GERMAN. THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A BROADENED DIMENSION OF LEARNING -- THE MAGIC OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION.

THEY HAVE ALSO SEEN FIRST-HAND THE REWARDS AND THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, WHILE WATCHING THEIR JET INSTRUCTORS TEAM UP WITH JAPANESE TEACHERS. THE CLASSROOM HAS COME ALIVE WITH PRACTICAL BI-CULTURAL COOPERATION.

THE STUDENTS HAVE ACQUIRED SOME POWERFUL LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THIS PROCESS. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, JAPANESE STUDENTS HAVE BENEFITED FROM A GLIMPSE OF THE RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF THE WORLD BY MEETING PEOPLE WHO CHALLENGE THEIR STEREOTYPED IMAGES OF FOREIGNERS. THE

4,500 JET LANGUAGE TEACHERS CURRENTLY IN JAPAN PLAY A KEY ROLE AS CULTURAL INTERPRETERS -- OFFERING INSIGHT INTO OTHER WAYS OF THINKING AND DOING.

MOREOVER, TRUE EDUCATION IS NOT LIMITED TO THE CONFINES OF THE CLASSROOM. I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE AWARD-WINNING ESSAY IN LAST SUMMER'S JET JOURNAL BY ASSISTANT LANGUAGE TEACHER JEFFREY STRAIN. HIS EXPERIENCE SHOWED THAT STUDENTS' MOST LASTING IMPRESSIONS OF THEIR JET TEACHER STEM FROM EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.

ACTIVE IN SCHOOL CLUBS OR PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL EXCURSIONS, JET TEACHERS ARE TRANSMITTING AS MUCH OR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE CULTURES AS THEY ARE ABOUT THEIR NATIVE TONGUE IN LANGUAGE CLASS.

JET PARTICIPANTS ARE ALSO SHARING THEIR INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM IN VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE ACTIVE IN ORGANIZING AND PROMOTING EARTH DAY EVENTS. THEY WERE SOME OF THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS AT YMCA CENTERS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE GREAT HANSHIN EARTHQUAKE. THEIR EXAMPLE OF MODEL CITIZENSHIP IS NOT LOST ON THEIR JAPANESE FRIENDS, WITH WHOM THEY HAVE WORKED HAND-IN-HAND ON THESE PROJECTS.

I ALSO APPRECIATE THE PORTION OF THE JET PROGRAM DEDICATED TO PROMOTING "INTERNATIONALIZATION" AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL. I HAVE MET MANY "JETTERS" WORKING AT THE LOCAL AND PREFECTURAL LEVEL. THESE SO-CALLED COORDINATORS -- SOME 440 OF THEM -- AT PREFECTURE AND CITY OFFICES FROM 18 COUNTRIES, ARE LEARNING MUCH ABOUT JAPANESE SOCIETY AND AT THE SAME TIME TEACHING MUCH ABOUT THEIR CULTURES.

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THE POWER OF THIS EXCHANGE BENEFITS THE JET PARTICIPANTS AS MUCH AS IT DOES THE JAPANESE PEOPLE.

FOR MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS, THE JET EXPERIENCE IS NOT UNLIKE THE OFTEN LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING ABROAD. THIS WAS BROUGHT HOME TO ME AGAIN LAST YEAR WHEN I SPENT THANKSGIVING DINNER WITH A GROUP OF AMERICAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS AND JET PARTICIPANTS FROM AROUND JAPAN.

THOUGH THE NATURE OF THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES DIFFERED, THEY WERE ALL EXPERIENCING THE SAME BENEFITS OF BEING IMMERSED FOR A YEAR OR MORE IN A COUNTRY SO DIFFERENT FROM THEIR OWN.

SO WHO IN FACT IS TEACHING WHOM? THE JET PROGRAM HAS CERTAINLY FOSTERED INCREASED "INTERNATIONALIZATION" OF THE JAPANESE, BUT THE JET PARTICIPANTS ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF A SIMILAR TRANSFORMATION. IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE AMERICAN PEACE CORPS CREATED A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG AMERICANS INTERESTED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD, THE JET PROGRAM HAS CREATED A NEW GENERATION OF EXPERTS ON JAPAN. IT ENDOWS PARTICIPANTS WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND SYMPATHY FOR THEIR FELLOWMEN.

THOSE BENEFITS ARE THE SAME ESPOUSED BY THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM, WHICH CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR. THE FULBRIGHT PHILOSOPHY IS TO GIVE PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND LONG ENOUGH IN ANOTHER COUNTRY TO ARRIVE AT AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CITIZENS OF THAT NATION VALUE AND HOW THEY THINK.

SENATOR FULBRIGHT SAID THAT "THE ESSENCE OF INTER-CULTURAL EDUCATION IS THE ACQUISITION OF EMPATHY -- THE ABILITY TO SEE THE WORLD AS OTHERS SEE IT, AND TO ALLOW FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT OTHERS MAY SEE SOMETHING WE HAVE FAILED TO SEE, OR MAY SEE IT MORE ACCURATELY. THE SIMPLE PURPOSE OF THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM . . . IS TO ERODE THE CULTURALLY ROOTED MISTRUST THAT SETS NATIONS AGAINST EACH OTHER."

THE WORLD IS IN NEED OF MORE SUCH GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS.

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PROFESSOR GERALD CURTIS OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY VENTURES TO SAY THAT THIS NEW GROUP OF YOUNG JAPAN SPECIALISTS IS CERTAIN TO BE KNOWN AS THE "JET GENERATION" WHEN THEY BEGIN TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE NEXT CENTURY. THEY ARE A VITAL NATIONAL RESOURCE FOR ALL NATIONS CONCERNED.

IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS, SO JET ALUMNI ARE ALREADY MAKING THEIR MARK IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. MANY ARE DOING WELL IN BUSINESS ENDEAVORS INVOLVING JAPAN, FOR EXAMPLE. THERE WERE JET ALUMNI ON THE ADVANCE TEAM FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON'S STATE VISIT TO JAPAN LAST APRIL. THERE ARE JET ALUMNI IN VIRTUALLY EVERY U.S. GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAM IN JAPANESE STUDIES. THERE ARE JETS WORKING IN A MULTITUDE OF EXCHANGE ORGANIZATIONS.

THOUGH THE AMERICAN JET ALUMNI REPRESENT THE LARGEST GROUP, THE EFFECT OF THE JET PROGRAM IN OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES IS NO LESS DRAMATIC. JET ALUMNI ARE SUCCESSFUL IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, ACADEMICS, JOURNALISM, PUBLIC SERVICE, AND AS PUBLISHED AUTHORS. JET ALUMNI CURRENTLY SERVE IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND, AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT HAS ONLY BEEN TEN YEARS, AND THE PROGRAM IS YOUNG. WITH SUCH A FANTASTIC BEGINNING, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE FUTURE CONTRIBUTION OF THE JET PROGRAM TO WORLD UNDERSTANDING WILL OUTPACE OUR IMAGINATION. I UNDERSTAND, FOR STARTERS, THAT JAPAN MAY EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE EXCHANGES IN ART AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES. I WELCOME THIS DEVELOPMENT, AS THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM WILL EXPAND ACCORDINGLY.

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NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT. I FEEL PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO THE MINISTRIES OF HOME AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO THE JET CONCEPT.

JAPAN UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG FOREIGNERS BECOMING KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT JAPAN. THIS YEAR JAPAN, UNDER AN IMPRESSIVE NEW "COMPREHENSIVE EXCHANGE INITIATIVE," HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO BRINGING HUNDREDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS, AND RESEARCHERS TO JAPAN. THESE PROGRAMS ARE HELPING CREATE AN EVEN LARGER GROUP OF FOREIGN YOUTH WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH JAPAN.

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PRESIDENTS AND PRIME MINISTERS MEET PERIODICALLY TO CONFIRM AND SET THE COURSE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS. BUT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ARE MUCH BROADER THAN THE GUEST LIST AT A SUMMIT MEETING. THE VERY ESSENCE OF OUR RELATIONS, IN FACT, IS HUMAN COMMUNICATION IN A DIVERSE WORLD. IMPROVING THIS COMMUNICATION IS A GOAL THAT THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM CONTINUES TO PURSUE WITH GREAT VIGOR. I GIVE MY PERSONAL THANKS TO ALL WHO ARE A PART OF IT.

THANK YOU.



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