

F-2 HAND-OVER
MARCH 22, 1996
NAGOYA

IT IS WONDERFUL TO SEE GREAT NATIONS COME TOGETHER FOR PRAISEWORTHY PURPOSES. TODAY WE MARK A MILESTONE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT NATIONS OF AMERICA AND JAPAN, AND THE PURPOSE BEHIND OUR EFFORTS IS INDEED THE LOFTY GOAL OF SECURITY -- ENSURING A STABLE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF PEACE.

THE F-2, AS WE CAN SEE, IS AN AMAZING AIRCRAFT. IT IS ALSO VERY COMPLEX. THE NOTION THAT TWO NATIONS COULD CO-DEVELOP SUCH AN AIRCRAFT IS A TESTIMONY TO OUR ABILITY TO COOPERATE. THIS COOPERATION IS NOT ALL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT. WHAT HAS BEEN LARGELY A CIVILIAN ENDEAVOR ONLY NOW MAKES THE TRANSITION TO A JAPANESE SELF DEFENSE FORCE FLIGHT TESTING PROGRAM. MY HAT IS OFF TO THE ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS, AND MANAGERS AT MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES, LOCKHEED MARTIN, AND GENERAL ELECTRIC WHO HAVE COLLABORATED ON THIS PLANE.

I REALIZE THAT IN THE EARLY STAGES OF DISCUSSION, THIS PROJECT SEEMED TO REPRESENT THE DIFFICULTY OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS -- IT HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUSLY COMPLICATED ENTERPRISE. BUT NOW THE F-2 STANDS AS A GRAPHIC REMINDER OF A SOLID ALLIANCE BETWEEN TWO NATIONS WHO SHARE AN INTEREST IN PEACE, STABILITY, PROSPERITY, AND DEMOCRATIC IDEALS.

THE F-2 WILL ALSO INCREASE OUR CAPACITY FOR COOPERATION IN THE AIR BY ENHANCING THE INTER-OPERABILITY OF THE U.S. AND JAPANESE AIR FORCES, MAKING IT EASIER FOR US TO WORK TOGETHER WHEN OUR MUTUAL SECURITY REQUIRES CONCRETE ACTION. IT INCREASES JAPAN'S ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEFENSE FAR INTO THE NEW CENTURY.

AS WITH ALL AREAS OF THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP, WE CAN DO MUCH MORE WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER THAN WE CAN DO INDIVIDUALLY. I WISH GODSPEED TO ALL OF THE PILOTS WHO WILL PUT THIS PLANE THROUGH ITS PACES. ONCE FULLY OPERATIONAL IN A FLEET OF MANY SIMILAR CRAFT, I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT THE F-2 WILL SERVE THIS VITAL ALLIANCE WELL INTO THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU.



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