

9/17/93

RECEPTION REMARKS

Bill & Peggy

THANKS SO MUCH FOR JOINING US HERE THIS AFTERNOON. JOAN AND I
WANT TO WELCOME YOU.

Joan & Russ

WE ARE HONORED BY THE WARMTH AND AFFECTION THAT HAS GREETED US
IN OUR FIRST DAYS HERE IN TOKYO. IN PARTICULAR, BILL AND PEGGY
BREER HAVE BEEN HELPING US GET SETTLED AND RECOVER FROM JET
LAG.

IN THE PAST TWO DAYS, JOAN AND I HAVE ALREADY HAD A CHANCE TO
MEET MANY OF YOU PERSONALLY. AND WE HOPE TO MEET EVERYONE ELSE
AS WE CONTINUE OUR WALK THROUGH THE EMBASSY EARLY NEXT WEEK.

I READ THE REPORTS ON OUR EMBASSY BEFORE COMING OUT HERE. YOU
WILL LIKE WHAT THEY SAY. THEY ARE GLOWING IN THEIR PRAISE OF

Minnesotan man should adapt easily to Japan

By WILLIAM MAY
Kyodo News Service

The appointment this summer of Walter Mondale as Washington's envoy to Japan touched off a wave of anxious speculation among Tokyo pundits that the Democratic war horse would be point man for a get-tough Clinton administration.

Japanese fears were eased last month when Mondale toned down his presidential campaign rhetoric of 1984 and said only that there is a need to "correct the imbalance in our economic relationship."

Far from surprising anyone, this should be seen as an example of the empathetic and indirect nature of Minnesota communication.

The inherent "Japaneseness" of Minnesota culture should be a source of optimism in Tokyo, since in Mondale the Japanese are getting their first U.S. envoy in 25 years with an innate understanding of the Japanese mind.

Yes. Implausible as it might seem to outsiders, we Minnesotans share with the Japanese a view of the world that is likely to enhance communication between the new ambassador and the Japanese.

In an article for a local paper, Minnesota Public Radio reporter John Biewen noted with prescience that Minnesotans are the "Japanese" of the U.S.

For example, says Biewen, we Minnesotans, like the Japanese, consider ourselves a unique, exceptional race united by mystical bonds. This is somehow connected to our respective appreciation for the seasons, of which the Japanese explain they have four.

Minnesotans also grew up believing it is our long, severe winters that make us an understated and introspective people.

Long winter evenings spent with family and friends have developed in Minnesotans an intuitive form of communication, since there is no need to talk when there is nothing to say.

Mondale's experience with



Walter Mondale

this intuitive form of communication, like the Japanese "haragei," will certainly untangle some of the bilateral trade problems as the ambassador speaks quietly to Japanese negotiators across the table.

Biewen also noted that Minnesotans, like the Japanese, have "an unrelenting need to measure ourselves against the Outside World."

Imagine the subdued sense of pride we Minnesotans felt when Rochester was recently listed by Money magazine as the most livable city in the United States and Minneapolis-St. Paul was ranked third.

Despite growing up in a "livability superpower," Minnesotans are resigned to being No. 2 in many things, especially after being runner-up in four Super Bowls, two Stanley Cups in ice hockey and a pair of presidential elections.

Although Mondale finished second in the 1984 election, Minnesotans today take pride, but understated pride, in being the only state of the 50, in retrospect, to have voted "correctly."

There are other reasons why our cultural systems are so compatible, such as our quiet arrogance (unlike Texans or Australians) and our homogeneity.

Is it any accident, then, that so many Minnesotans make the easy transition from life in Little Falls to the urban crunch of Tokyo, or that "Little House on the Prairie" is the all-time favorite imported

television program in Japan?

There is also our mutual affinity for carp, although Japanese like theirs in a garden pond and we like ours smoked.

In addition to all of the cross-cultural connections, Mondale's appointment is also an illustration of "en," the Japanese notion of fate or destiny, at work.

Mondale's wife, Joan, after all, was a cousin of the late Edwin Reischauer, the much loved envoy to Japan in the 1960s, and there was also daughter Eleanor's brief trans-Pacific fling with a young Japanese actor in the mid-1980s.

As U.S., not Minnesota, ambassador, Mondale may revert to a sharper-edged Washington style, but Japanese should understand that he will be most comfortable operating in his native Minnesota mode.

As Howard Mohr noted in his book "How to Talk Minnesotan," we Minnesotans are less direct than other Americans in our speech. This hopefully will not catch the Japanese by surprise.

For example, Mondale is not likely to badger the Japanese with his now famous "Where's the beef?" remark — the best-remembered line from the 1984 presidential campaign — since it is much too direct for a Minnesotan.

In his native tongue, Mondale might use the "So . . . then" construction to soften his question to the agricultural pooh-bahs.

"So, when do you think we might see this all-you-can-eat

'shabu-shabu' (boiled beef) thing take off, then?" the ambassador might ask.

On another issue, he might observe in a roundabout way, "A lot of guys would have bought those Cray computers already," thus employing another Minnesota linguistic strategy to avoid saying, "Hey, dummy! Buy our supercomputers, now."

Yes, Minnesotans and the Japanese are very much alike, and Mondale should be able to ease into his post.

U.S. and Japan set security talks for November

Japan and the United States have begun preparations for a Cabinet-level meeting on security in November, government sources said Thursday.

The "two plus two" talks, to be attended by the foreign minister, the director general of the Defense Agency and the U.S. secretaries of state and defense, may be held in Washington or Tokyo.

Since Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata will be in the U.S. in mid-November to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Seattle, the meeting will probably be held in Washington, they said.

But the meeting could be held in Tokyo on Nov. 3 and 4 because U.S. Defense Secretary Les Aspin is scheduled to visit South Korea around that time for security talks, they said.



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