

AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS
ZAMA HIGH SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT
(JUNE 10, 1995)

DR. CARDONE, TEACHERS OF ZAMA HIGH SCHOOL, GRADUATING SENIORS FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, IT IS A GREAT HONOR FOR ME TO JOIN YOU FOR THIS CELEBRATION. I KNOW THAT ALL OF YOU HAVE WORKED HARD AND LONG FOR THIS DAY. YOU ARE PROBABLY QUITE RELIEVED THAT GRADUATION DAY IS FINALLY HERE. I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND: HOW LONG WILL THIS CHARACTER TALK? I CAN'T REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE SPEAKER AT MY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND I CERTAINLY DONT REMEMBER WHAT HE SAID, BUT I DO REMEMBER THAT IT WAS THE LONGEST SPEECH I EVER HEARD IN MY LIFE. SO, IF YOU WILL PROMISE TO STAY AWAKE, I WILL PROMISE TO KEEP IT SHORT.

AS YOU GET READY TO GRADUATE, AS YOU THINK ABOUT LEAVING ZAMA AND YOURS FRIENDS, I KNOW YOU ARE WONDERING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE. SOME OF YOU ALREADY HAVE YOUR PLANS MADE AND SOME OF YOU ARE STILL TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO. ONE GOOD THING IS THAT YOU CAN MAKE YOUR PLANS WITHOUT THE FEAR THAT YOU WILL BE NEEDED TO FIGHT A WAR. THE REASON FOR THAT IS THAT

AMERICA HAS KEPT IT DEFENSES UP AND YOUR FAMILIES HAVE BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF AMERICA'S EFFORTS TO KEEP THE PEACE.

THANKS TO YOUR FAMILIES, THE SOVIET UNION HAS DISAPPEARED. THANKS TO YOUR FAMILIES, AMERICA IS PROVIDING STABILITY BY ASSURING JAPAN'S DEFENSE AND BY BEING READY TO DEPLOY FORCES TO PROTECT THE PEACE THROUGHOUT THIS HISTORICALLY UNSTABLE AREA.

ON BEHALF ON OUR NATION I WANT TO THANK YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES FOR ALL THAT YOU ARE DOING TO KEEP THE PEACE. ALL OF US, INCLUDING TODAY'S GRADUATES, MUST BE THANKED FOR THAT CRUCIAL HELP. I AM PROUD OF EVERYONE WHO SERVES IN OUR ARMED FORCES AND I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES BECAUSE YOU ARE PART OF THAT EFFORT AS WELL. I HAVE HELD MANY HIGH OFFICES, I HAVE SERVED IN THE WHITE HOUSE, BUT THE HIGHEST HONOR I HAVE EVER HAD IS TO BE AN AMERICAN, AND I AM SURE YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT IT.

EVEN WITH OUR GREATEST EFFORTS, THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN THIS REGION WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE THE ATTENTION OF FUTURE

GENERATIONS. IF WE WANT AMERICA'S RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONS OF THIS REGION TO BE BASED UPON FREEDOM, HARMONY, AND MUTUAL PROSPERITY, THEN WE WILL HAVE TO WORK AT IT. PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON ONCE SAID, "LIBERTY IS A THING OF SLOW CONSTRUCTION. LIBERTY IS A THING OF UNIVERSAL COOPERATION. LIBERTY IS A THING WHICH YOU MUST BUILD UP BY HABIT." THIS IS WHAT THE GENERATION WHO FOUGHT IN THE PACIFIC WAR DIED FOR. THIS IS WHAT YOUR PARENTS ARE HERE FOR, AND I CONGRATULATE AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR SACRIFICES FOR OUR COUNTRY.

MANY OF YOU HERE TODAY MAY FEEL THAT YOUR EXPERIENCE LIVING IN JAPAN IS PRETTY AVERAGE, BUT IT IS NOT. FEW YOUNG AMERICANS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE OVERSEAS AND TO EXPERIENCE FOR THEMSELVES ANOTHER NATION'S CULTURE. IT IS NOT ONLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN CLASS THAT IS SPECIAL, IT IS ALSO WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING ABOUT JAPAN AND THE WORLD THAT GIVES YOU SPECIAL UNDERSTANDING. YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE WORLD YOU WILL LIVE IN FAR BETTER THAN MOST AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL SEE THAT THIS WILL BE VALUABLE TO YOU IN LIFE.

AS I LEARNED MORE ABOUT ZAMA'S SENIOR CLASS, I ALSO FOUND OUT THAT YOU ARE UNIQUE IN MORE THAN JUST NUMBERS. THE VARIETY OF YOUR JAPAN EXPERIENCE IS IMPRESSIVE. MALISA WERKHEISER, WHO DID SUCH A FINE JOB THIS MORNING, WAS BORN ON YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE AND HAS LIVED IN JAPAN LONGER THAN IN THE U.S., RACKING UP ACADEMIC AND SPORTS AWARDS IN MORE PLACES THAN I CAN NAME. JASMIN CHO, CLASS VALEDICTORIAN, HAS THROWN HERSELF INTO UNDERSTANDING JAPAN IN AN IMPRESSIVE WAY. JASMIN HAS WORKED IN THE JAPANESE DIET AND SHE WILL BE GOING ON TO GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY TO STUDY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT OLIVIA RYU'S TIES TO JAPAN ALSO RUN DEEP. IN FACT, SHE HAS NEVER LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES. OLIVIA WILL BE GOING TO BERKELEY TO STUDY THE SCIENCES AND SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE HOPES ONE DAY TO BECOME AN ASTRONAUT.

I ALSO WANT TO GIVE A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MAY NOT BE AT THE TOP OF THE CLASS AND IT IS THIS: NOT TO WORRY. AFTER ALL, SOMEBODY HAS TO BRING UP THE REAR. AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I DID IN HIGH SCHOOL. I WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN SPORTS; I COULDN'T SEE THE POINT IN ALL OF THAT STUDYING.

IF I COULD MAKE IT, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE AT ALL.

TODAY, MORE THAN EVER, THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP NEEDS PEOPLE LIKE YOU. NO RELATIONSHIP IN THE WORLD IS AS IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICA AS IS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN. OUR SECURITY ALLIANCE WITH JAPAN IS THE CORNERSTONE OF AMERICA'S SECURITY STRATEGY IN EAST ASIA. OUR TRADE WITH JAPAN EXCEEDS OUR TRADE WITH ANY OTHER NATION OVERSEAS. U.S.-JAPAN COOPERATION IN MEETING GLOBAL CHALLENGES IS UNSURPASSED -- TOGETHER, WE ARE FIGHTING AIDS AND OTHER DISEASES; WE ARE BRINGING HOPE TO THE POOR; WE ARE SUPPORTING PROGRAMS IN GIRLS' EDUCATION AND FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT; AND WE ARE STAVING OFF ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AROUND THE WORLD.

IF, AS WE SAY, THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE ON EARTH, SURELY WE NEED TO UNDERPIN IT WITH THE DEEPENING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW FROM EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND OTHER EXPERIENCES THAT LEAD TO A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR TWO VERY DIFFERENT CULTURES.

THIS IS WHY WE NEED PEOPLE LIKE YOU, WHO HAVE LIVED IN JAPAN, TO BRING GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO PEOPLE. I BELIEVE THAT THE MORE DIRECT EXPERIENCE WE HAVE OF EACH OTHER'S CULTURE, THE BETTER THE U.S. AND JAPAN CAN WORK TOGETHER TOWARD OUR COMMON GOALS.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT YOU ALL NEED TO BECOME JAPAN SCHOLARS OR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS EXPERTS. WHAT IT DOES MEAN IS THAT YOUR BROAD JAPAN EXPERIENCE IS PRECIOUS. WHETHER YOU BECOME TEACHERS, SOLDIERS, JOURNALISTS, ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS, BUSINESS LEADERS, ARTISTS, OR WHATEVER, YOUR INSIGHTS ABOUT JAPAN WILL ENRICH THOSE AROUND YOU. YOU EACH HAVE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT TO OFFER YOUR COUNTRY.

SOME OF YOU MAY BE SKEPTICAL. ZAMA HIGH SCHOOL MAY SEEM SO SMALL COMPARED TO THE SCHOOLS YOU HAVE ATTENDED ELSEWHERE OR THAT YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT IN THE U.S., THAT YOU WONDER WHETHER YOU COULD POSSIBLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BUT I KNOW THAT YOU CAN. I CAME FROM A TOWN -- ELMORE, MINNESOTA -- EVEN SMALLER THAN CAMP ZAMA. MY GRADUATION CLASS

HAD ONLY 20 STUDENTS. ON MY GRADUATION DAY, I HAD ALL KINDS OF DREAMS. I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE, IF I WORKED HARD, I MIGHT SOME DAY BECOME A COUNTY COMMISSIONER. SO I WENT TO LAW SCHOOL AND LATER I ENTERED LOCAL MINNESOTA POLITICS. I HELD ON TO MY DREAM OF FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE WHEN I BECAME VICE PRESIDENT, AND EVEN THOUGH I LOST ANOTHER, BIGGER ELECTION, I NEVER LOST THE DREAMS I FORMED IN HIGH SCHOOL. TODAY, I AM PRIVILEGED TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES IN JAPAN. BACK IN ELMORE, IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD ME THAT THIS IS WHERE MY DREAMS WOULD TAKE ME, I NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT. BUT TAKE ME THEY DID, AND I AM HONORED TO BE HERE.

MY POINT IS THIS: FOLLOW YOUR HEART AND YOUR DREAMS. DON'T UNDERSHOOT. HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF AND WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU REALLY TRY. MY WIFE LIKES TO TELL THE STORY OF A YOUNG BOY WATCHING A SCULPTOR TAKE A BLOCK OF GRANITE AND MAKE A LION OUT OF IT. WHEN HE WAS DONE, THE BOY ASKED THE SCULPTOR, "HOW DID YOU KNOW THERE WAS A LION IN THERE?" YOUR LIFE IS LIKE THAT BLOCK OF GRANITE: SOLID, STRONG, BUT YET TO BE SHAPED. THERE MAY BE A LION IN YOU TOO. IT'S UP TO YOU. THAT'S THE GREAT THING ABOUT AMERICA. A YOUNG BOY, BORN INTO AN

IMPOVERISHED AND BROKEN FAMILY WITH AN ALCOHOLIC FATHER IS NOW PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. IN AMERICA, THE SKY IS THE LIMIT. NOBODY CAN HOLD YOU BACK EXCEPT YOURSELF.

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT AMERICA IS THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON EARTH. NO COUNTRY IN THE WORLD COMPARES TO AMERICA IN THE VALUE THAT WE PLACE UPON THE INDIVIDUAL. WE CHERISH THE DREAMS, THE DETERMINATION, AND THE HONEST AMBITION OF EACH AMERICAN. OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT CHAMPIONS THE FREE FLOW OF IDEAS, ENCOURAGES THE INDEPENDENT AND CREATIVE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE, AND PRIZES THE INDIVIDUAL GENIUS AND DRIVE OF OUR CITIZENS. TODAY, LET US HONOR THIS AMERICAN IDEAL. YOU HAVE DONE THAT BY WORKING HARD AND GRADUATING TODAY. I KNOW YOUR PARENTS AND FRIENDS ARE PROUD OF YOU AND PROBABLY A LITTLE SURPRISED BY HOW WELL YOU HAVE DONE. I ENVY YOU FOR THE LIFE THAT LIES AHEAD OF YOU.. GO FOR IT.

CONGRATULATIONS.



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