

want to do what we can to be supportive to help do whatever we can to create the climate which would permit a quick restoration of economic growth in Japan and therefore in Asia. That's what our objective is, is to understand that they have unique challenges but enormous strengths and to help find a way to get this done.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about the prospects of getting reforms passed through your parliament?

Prime Minister Obuchi. I'm neither optimistic or pessimistic on this, but I think, as much as I do realize, many in Japan would realize,

that this is not only an issue for Japan but something that has major implications on economies of Asia as well as the whole world.

I think steps we take in Japan to address the issue of financial system has very large implications worldwide. So I think with this understanding, I intend to make my very best effort at addressing this issue. I am convinced that we will be able to do something.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks During Discussions With Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City September 22, 1998

President Clinton. Thank you. I'd like to say to the members of the Japanese press, I'm sorry that you had to go all the way to Tarrytown and then come back. But at least you have seen it—we didn't even get to see it. [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome Prime Minister Obuchi and his team here. We have had very good meetings already today. The United States has no more important relationship in the world than our relationship with Japan. We are very interested in deepening our partnership in the security area, in the political area, and in doing what we can economically together to restore growth in the world and to stabilize the world financial situation. All these matters we have discussed today in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

I just wanted to say one other thing. I invited Prime Minister Obuchi to come back to Washington early next year for an official visit, and he accepted, and I thank him for that.

Prime Minister Obuchi. All the strong and solid partnership between Japan and the United States could not lift this fog, and it is unfortunate that some of you had to go to Tarrytown

and come back, and I'm sorry about that. But as the President said just now, I've been invited, and I've accepted his invitation to visit the United States in the early part of next year. And I look forward to meeting him again in Washington.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, you've said how busy you are, but I just wonder if you haven't found some time to check with Congress about how things are going?

President Clinton. Well, we're just a few days away from the new budget year, and I'd say things need to go a little faster. We need an education bill; we need a health bill. We desperately need the IMF funding. They need to pass a good Patients' Bill of Rights. There's a lot left to be done. Things are not going fast enough to suit me on the people's business.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.