

Closing Remarks

Mr. Chikushi. Finally, you must have something to say to Japanese people.

The President. Well, first of all, I hope you have enjoyed this evening as much as I have. And I thank you again for your questions. I thank the people in Osaka for their questions. I thank you for your interest in your country and in our relationships with your country.

I would just like to say in closing that the United States views Japan as our friend, our ally for the future. We regret that you have the present economic challenges you have, but we don't think you should be too pessimistic about the future.

These things run in waves over time. Keep in mind, 10 years ago a lot of people said America's best days were behind it. And we looked to you, and we learned a lot of things from you. And we borrowed some things from you, and they helped us. And so now we're in a period of time where what we're doing is working pretty well for us and helping the rest of the world. But in the last 50 years, no country has demonstrated the capacity to change more than Japan and to lead and to emerge and to sort of redefine, continually redefine the mission of the nation. So I would first of all say, do not be discouraged by the present economic difficulties. They can be overcome.

The second thing I would say is, we had a big financial crisis in America, and it cost us 5 times more than it would have to fix because we delayed dealing with it. So now you have the laws on the books. I would urge you to support your Government in aggressively dealing with the financial institutions, aggressively moving to support greater consumption, aggressively moving for structural changes that will create more jobs, because a strong Japan is good for you but also essential to the rest of Asia emerging from its present difficulties. So don't be discouraged, but do be determined. That would be the advice of a friend. I say that because we have been through our tough times; we have learned so much from you.

And the last point I want to make is, the best days of Japan and the best days of America lay before us in the 21st century if we determine to go there together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The townhall meeting broadcast began at 5:37 p.m. in Studio A at the Tokyo Broadcasting System's studios during "News 23." In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; President Jiang Zemin of China; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Mr. Chikushi and some of the other participants spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan in Tokyo

November 19, 1998

Prime Minister, Mrs. Obuchi, members of the Japanese delegation, and honored guests. First, let me say on behalf of the American delegation, I thank you for your warm hospitality.

It is a pleasure to look around this room tonight and see so many friendly faces from my previous trips to Japan: your distinguished predecessors, your Ambassador and former Ambassadors, distinguished business leaders. The relationship between our two countries has always been important, but never more important than now.

I, too, enjoyed our meeting in New York 2 months ago. Tonight I am delighted to be back

in the Akasaka Palace. I also—Prime Minister, I feel terrible about the schedule which we are on together, but since you mentioned it, perhaps we can make sure that we both stay awake at the dinner tonight. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, in all seriousness, too, I was deeply honored to be received by the Emperor and the Empress today, and very much appreciated the visit that we had and the good wishes they sent to my family.

Since my last visit here in the spring of 1996, strong winds have blown across the world, disrupting economies in every region. There have also been threats to peace and stability, from

acts of terrorism to weapons of mass destruction. Yet, the world has made progress in the face of adversity. It is more peaceful today than it was 2 years ago when I was here. Hope has come to Northern Ireland. Peru and Ecuador have resolved their longstanding dispute. Bosnia is building a self-sustaining peace. A humanitarian disaster has been averted in Kosovo, and the people there have, now, hope for regaining their autonomy. The Middle East is back on the long road to peace.

All of these areas of progress have one thing in common: They represent the triumph of a wide circle of nations working together, not only the nations directly affected but a community of nations that brings adversaries to the table to settle their differences.

Year-in and year-out, Japan's generous contributions to peacekeeping efforts and your eloquent defense of the idea of global harmony have gone far to make this a safer world. In Central America, you have provided disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Mitch. I should say, Mr. Prime Minister, that I wish my wife were with me tonight, but she is there, where they had the worst hurricane disaster in 200 years. And I thank you for helping people so far from your home.

In the Middle East, you have contributed substantial funds to aid the peace process. In recent months you have further advanced the cause of peace by taking your relations with Asian neighbors to a new and significantly higher level of cooperation. And despite economic difficulties at home, you have contributed to recovery efforts throughout Asia. That is true leadership.

Now, Mr. Prime Minister, you have made difficult decisions to overcome your own economic challenges. The path back to growth and stability will require your continued leadership, but we hope to work with you every step of the way.

In dealing with these difficulties, Japan can lead Asia into a remarkable new century, a cen-

tury of global cooperation for greater peace and freedom, greater democracy and prosperity, greater protection of our environment, greater scientific discovery and space exploration.

At the center of all our efforts is the strong bond between the people of the United States and the people of Japan. Our security alliance is the cornerstone of Asia's stability. Our friendship demonstrates to Asia and to the world that very different societies can work together in a harmony that benefits everyone.

Two fine examples of our recent cooperation are the new Asia growth and recovery initiative that you and I recently announced, Prime Minister, and, as you mentioned, the space shuttle *Discovery*, which included your remarkable astronaut Chiaki Mukai. I understand that when Dr. Mukai spoke with you from space, Prime Minister, she offered the first three lines of a five-line poem, a tanka poem, and she invited the people of Japan to provide the final two lines. I want to try my hand at this.

As I understand it, her lines were:

Spinning somersaults;
Without gravity's limits
In space flight with Glenn.

I would add:

All is possible on Earth and in the heavens
When our countries join hands.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Obuchi and to the people of Japan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. in the Kacho No Ma Banquet Hall at Akasaka Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Obuchi's wife, Chizuko; Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Kunihiko Saito; and Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Obuchi.

Remarks to American and Japanese Business Leaders in Tokyo *November 20, 1998*

Thank you very much. I have to practice saying "Mr. Ambassador" instead of "Mr. Speaker," but I want to say first to Tom Foley how very

grateful I am for his willingness to undertake this service in Japan.