

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:10 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

**Remarks During Discussions With Prime Minister 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 exchange began at 1:02 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

**Common Agenda: Illustration of the New U.S.-Japan Cooperation**

*September 22, 1998*

Five years after the creation of the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda for Cooperation in Global Perspective, President Clinton and Prime Minister Obuchi recognized the valuable work accomplished by dedicated Japanese and American scientists, researchers and aid workers to fight diseases, preserve natural resources and exchange scientific data on various natural disasters and global climate change.

The participation of U.S. and Japanese private citizens, foundations and other non-governmental organizations in projects of the Common Agenda will enhance the impacts of these projects. Their participation is also expected to generate grass-roots public support. On September 23, 1998, U.S. and Japanese representatives of private-sector organizations (in Japan, the Common Agenda Roundtable) that support the Common Agenda will meet in Honolulu to discuss how they can assist in promoting the objectives of the Common Agenda.

The President and the Prime Minister welcome the first meeting of private sector representatives and made special mention of three projects:

1) The United States and Japan will work with the Government of Panama and non-governmental partners to preserve the Panama Canal watershed by developing a program to focus on environmental education and the training of local nongovernmental organizations.

2) In light of the recent forest fires which affected Southeast Asia, The United States and Japan will support efforts to address the underlying causes of the fires and assist local