

Mr. Speers. Does the military issue concern you?

The President. It only concerns me if there's hostility. In other words, it only concerns me if the Government declares its hostility toward the world. I happen to believe that China's most important issue internally is for them to grow their economy to deal with—they've got to create, like, 25 million new jobs a year in order to stay even, in order to keep their economy growing. And so therefore, my view of China is that they're internally focused to the extent that they want economic growth and vitality; they're externally focused in order to get the raw materials they need. But if they ever turn hostile, I would be concerned about, you know, a military—

President's Upcoming Visit to Australia

Mr. Speers. Mr. President, just finally, a lot of Sydneysiders are complaining about the impost of APEC, in particular your security detail and how that will affect the city for a week while you're there, almost a week while you're there. Do you have any message for them?

The President. Well, first I'm looking forward to coming to the beautiful city, and to the extent that I inconvenience them, I apologize. I'm not exactly sure what you're talking about, in terms of—

Mr. Speers. The security lockdown in the city.

The President. It's the first—thank you for sharing that with me. I got a lot on my mind, and one of the things that's one [on] * my mind is I'm looking forward to coming to one of the most beautiful cities in the world. If I inconvenience people, that's not my intent. My intent is to represent my country in an important meeting in a country that I admire a lot and a country with whom we've got great relations. And it's important that we continue to have great relations.

I hope people—I hope people understand why it's done, and I just hope it doesn't disrupt their lives too much.

Mr. Speers. Mr. President, we do look forward to seeing you in Sydney. Thank you very much for your time.

The President. I'm looking forward to it. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Speers. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:39 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; and Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Kensuke Okoshi of NHK Japan

August 30, 2007

Japan-U.S. Relations/Japan's Antiterrorism Law

Mr. Okoshi. Thank you, Mr. President. My first question is on the U.S.-Japan alliance. It has been said that relationship between our two countries grew closer than ever before under your leadership. On the other hand, in Japan, the opposition party blocked the extension of the antiterrorism special law, which can be seen as a symbol of the U.S.-Japan alliance. How serious do you think this is?

The President. First of all, we do have a good relationship with Japan, and it's an important relationship. The relationship between the United States and Japan is good for the American people; I believe it's good for the Japanese people; and I believe it's good for stability in not only Southeast Asia but where we cooperate in other parts of the world. And so therefore, I would hope that the Government would keep this important law in place so that Japan and the United States and other nations can continue to work for peace and stability. And it's an important piece of legislation, as far as we're concerned.

President's Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan

Mr. Okoshi. Will you talk about this issue, about the extension of the antiterrorism special law with Prime Minister Abe at the next meeting in Sydney?

* White House correction.

The President. I'm not exactly sure what he wants to talk about. I'd be happy to talk about anything he wants. Of course I'll be wanting to make sure that our relationship remains as close as it is. Secondly, we'll be talking about economic issues. Thirdly, I know we'll be talking about North Korea, and I will once again make it clear that the abductee issue is an important issue for the United States of America. We want this issue resolved.

This battle against extremism and radicalism that is manifested in two theaters right now, which is Afghanistan and Iraq, is going to be a subject matter. And to the extent that we can work together, it's going to be helpful for peace. The Japanese presence helps peace, helps achieve peace. And that's what we want. We'll talk about every aspect of our relationship.

Six-Party Talks

Mr. Okoshi. On North Korea, in conjunction with six-party talks, there has been an effort regarding the U.S.-North Korea bilateral meeting. Do you regard this softer and more direct approach towards North Korea as a success?

The President. The discussion was as a part of the six-party talks. I am not for undermining the six-party talks. As a matter of fact, the six-party talks is the most successful forum, because I want to make it clear to the North Koreans that should they choose to ignore what they've agreed to do, that it's not just the United States that will be at the table, but China and, of course, Japan and South Korea and Russia. So in other words, there's got to be a sense of accountability if somebody says they're going to do one thing, like shut down their weapons programs, and they don't do it. And there's going to be better accountability when they have said that to five countries as opposed to one. And so it's important that we all stay at the table.

My approach hasn't changed. My approach is firm. They're making some progress now. Obviously, we want to make sure that this continues. But the reactor has been shut down. But they've got a lot more work to do.

Abduction of Japanese Citizens

Mr. Okoshi. How much will the abductee issue be taken into consideration in terms of removing North Korea from the State Sponsors of Terrorism?

The President. I told the Prime Minister this is an important issue for me. Our Ambassador, Ambassador Schieffer, asked me to meet the mom of a young girl who had been abducted. And that's probably the most—one of the most profound meetings I've had in the Oval Office, to see her emotion, to feel her sense of hurt as a result of the callous actions of a state.

And so the abductee issue is an important issue. Of course the Japanese are concerned that what will happen is, is that we'll conclude the nuclear weapons issue and then forget about the abductee issue. And the answer is, I won't forget about the abductee issue.

War on Terror in Iraq

Mr. Okoshi. Moving on to Iraq. You made a decision to implement surge. And so far, what are some of the things that have met with your expectation, and on the other hand, what are the elements that have fallen short?

The President. First of all, the surge, from a military perspective, from a security perspective, is successful. There are still suicide bombers, and there are still these murderers who are killing people, but we're slowly but surely, along with the Iraqis, taking back neighborhoods and Provinces. Al Anbar Province used to be a safe haven—not a safe haven, used to be kind of the grounds where it looked like Al Qaida was going to be the predominant force, and now we've got them on the run. And so there's been success in the security.

That's not to say everything is perfect, but there's been good successes. At the grass-roots level, in other words at the local level, when people feel secure, they start asking questions about what does it take to create peace so their families can grow up peacefully. In other words, when the thugs get removed and people start saying, "I've got a different attitude," that's called reconciliation. They're beginning to say, "What do we need to do to build on this momentum, so we can live in peace?"

At the Government level, they're still struggling with—frankly, trying to recover from a dictatorship. And it takes awhile. And we've asked them to—hopefully they would pass some laws—some laws they haven't passed. But I believe, one, we can succeed; two, I know it's important that we do succeed. And I'm looking forward to our people on the ground coming back and charting a way forward so that we can continue to be in a position to succeed.

Environment

Mr. Okoshi. Moving on to your climate change. Are you really inviting the major emitters, including China, to Washington, DC, at the end of this month? What kind of initiatives or roadmaps do you have in mind for the post-Kyoto framework?

The President. Yes, look, I think we need to make sure that we get the major emitters, the big economies of the world that are emitting greenhouse gases to the table so that we can all be at the same table. And the first step toward coming up with a common accord is to recognize there's a problem and set a goal, a reduction goal, because I believe once you get people to sign up to a goal, it makes it easier to begin to get—ask them to sign up to a solution.

So that's the purpose. The purpose is to set up a process that includes everybody. Now, the United States, by the way, has reduced greenhouse gas emissions last year. We grew our economy at about 3 percent, and our greenhouse gases went down. So our strategy is beginning to work. But the truth of the matter is, if we really want to be serious about solving this problem, the question is, how fast can we get new technologies to the marketplace? And the countries that are going to be leading the way and developing new technologies will be the United States and Japan.

For example, I believe that the Japanese battery makers will be coming to the market, hopefully relatively soon, with a new battery that will enable us to drive a regular-size automobile for 40 miles on electricity. That will, of course, achieve a couple of objectives: one, less dependence on oil, which will help both our countries, and two, it will help us clean up the environment. And so technologies is going to really make an enormous difference. And to the extent that the United

States and Japan cooperates on technologies, it will help the world. We're wealthy nations, and these developing nations are going to look to us to help them develop technologies that will enable them to grow their economies and, at the same time, be better stewards of the environment.

So the way I see it is, post-Kyoto is going to be setting goals, helping countries with the technological developments they need so that each country could meet the goal it sets. And collectively we'll have done a better job on the environment.

Mr. Okoshi. Time is up. Thank you very much, Mr. President—

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Okoshi. —for spending time for Japanese people.

The President. Glad to do it. Proud to be a friend. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:50 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Sakie Yokata, mother of Megumi Yokata, who was abducted by North Korean authorities. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 31.

Proclamation 8171—National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, 2007

August 30, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, we recognize the vital contributions of the brave men and women who serve our great Nation, and we pay tribute to the employers who support them.

The courageous men and women of the National Guard and Reserve are fighting a new and unprecedented war, having answered the call to defend our freedom and way of life. At home, the National Guard is working to protect our borders, and provide vital aid and assistance in times of crisis and natural disasters. The dedicated service of those who wear the uniform reflects the best of America, and all Americans are proud to stand behind the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve.