

President Ford's remarks in Japan

Introduction

In November 1974, Gerald Ford became the first sitting American president to visit Japan—the trip was also Ford's first abroad since replacing Nixon in August of that year. He used the trip to reinforce US-Japanese relations, and in this speech to the people of Japan, the new president admired Japanese ingenuity and industry and expressed the value of the alliance between the two nations. Ford touched on difficult historical moments between the countries, noting, "Together we removed the legacies of World War II." And he pointed to the two nations' past cooperation as a guideline for the future: "We worked together to solve the problems of the cold war. We succeeded because we worked together. Now we confront these new and even more complicated problems." Those problems, matters of the environment and global economy, belonged to both nations, Ford asserted. Inviting Japan to continue its close relationship with the United States, Ford pointed to the necessity of mutual cooperation: "America cannot solve those problems alone. Nations can only solve those problems by working together. Just as we worked together to maintain peace, we can work together to solve tomorrow's problems."

Excerpt

We believe that we are not just temporary allies; we are permanent friends. We share the same goals – – peace, development, stability, and prosperity. These are not only praiseworthy and essential goals but common goals.

The problems of peace and economic well-being are inextricably linked. We believe peace cannot exist without prosperity, prosperity cannot exist without peace, and neither can exist if the great states of the world do not work together to achieve them. We owe this to ourselves, to each other, and to all the Japanese and the American peoples.

America and Japan share the same national pastime – – baseball. In the game of baseball, two teams compete. But neither can play without the other, nor without common respect for each other and for the rules of the game.

Questions for Discussion

Read the document introduction, the excerpt and the images of the speech. Then apply your knowledge of American history in order to answer the questions that follow.

1. How did President Ford explain the importance of his visit to Japan?
2. Which areas did Ford identify as those with which the United States and Japan shared the most in common? How did he explain their importance?
3. Why did Ford use the analogy of baseball?

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Image

REMARKS IN JAPAN

November 20, 1974

AS THE first American President to visit Japan while in office, I greet you on this unprecedented occasion. I thank the Japanese Press Club for inviting me and the national television network of Japan for the opportunity to speak directly to the people of Japan.

I deeply appreciate the excellent coverage of my visit by the exceptional news media of Japan. I have always sought a good working relationship with the American journalists and have the same feeling toward their Japanese colleagues. It has been my objective at all times to treat journalists and all other people in the same manner that I would like to be treated.

I bring the warmest greetings of the American people. Our bipartisan political leadership in the American Congress sends its very best wishes. The distinguished leaders of both of America's national political parties have asked me to tell you of the very high value that all Americans attach to our partnership with Japan.

It is the American custom for the President to make a report every year to the Congress on our state of the Union. In the same spirit, I thought the people in Japan might welcome a report on the state of another union--the unity of American and Japanese mutual aspirations for friendship as Americans see that relationship.

In my hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, a Japanese company is now assembling musical instruments. Not only are the instruments harmonious in the melodies that they produce but the labor-management relationship followed by the Japanese created a model of harmony between workers and business.

In a nearby community, Edmore, another Japanese firm is manufacturing small electrical motors. This is yet another Japanese

Gerald Ford's Remarks in Japan, November 20, 1974 (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC01474)

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enterprise that has injected new energy, new good will in our industrial life. There are similar examples throughout America, and we welcome them.

The time has long passed when Americans speak only of what we contributed to your society. Today, traffic flows in both directions. We are both learning from each other.

To signify the value the United States attaches to partnership with Japan, I chose this to make my first overseas trip. I also met with your Ambassador to the United States on the first day that I assumed office, August 9.

I have long admired the richness and the diversity of Japan's culture, the products of your industry, the ingenuity, creativity, and the energy of your people, your courage as a fountain of resourcefulness in a very troubled world.

My only regret is the Mrs. Ford could not join me on this visit in response to your very kind invitation. We both hope that she can come at some later date.

Americans are very proud of the way that we and the Japanese have worked together during the postwar period. We have had some disagreements, but we have remained friends and we have remained partners. Together we created conditions under which both nations could prosper. Together we expanded our relations in trade and in travel.

The reality of America's economic, political, and strategic interdependence with Japan is very obvious. America is Japan's greatest customer and supplier. Japan is America's greatest overseas trading partner. Japan is the best foreign customer for America's agricultural products.

The total trade between our two nations has doubled since 1970. It will surpass \$20 billion in 1974. American investments in Japan are the largest of any foreign state. Japan's investment in America is growing rapidly and accounts for one-fifth of all Japanese investment abroad.

The flow of Japanese visitors to the United States has grown from some 50,000 in 1966 to over 700,000 in 1974. This is also a two-way street: Over 350,000 Americans visited Japan last year, accounting for nearly one-half of all foreign visitors.

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Together we removed the legacies of World War II. The reversion of Okinawa eliminated the last vestige of that war from our agenda. We have made independent but mutually compatible efforts to improve our relations with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. We have devised better channels for open consultation. I particularly want you to know that I understand the dangers of taking each other for granted.

As we talk to each other, we must ask each other what we regard as the central needs of our time.

First, of course, in peace. Americans and Japanese know the value of peace. We want to devote our resources and ourselves to building things, not tearing them down. We do not want to send our sons into battle again.

The alliance between Japan and the United States has helped to secure peace and can contribute to help secure it. That alliance is not directed against any other country. It does not prevent us from improving our relations with other countries.

Our alliance does not signify that both nations subscribe fully to identical attitudes or identical styles. It does signify, however, that we clearly share a common resolve to maintain stability in East Asia, to help in the development of other countries that need our help, and to work together to encourage diplomatic and political rather than military solutions to world problems.

Our alliance was forged by people who saw their national interest in friendship and in cooperation. I am confident that our relations will remain solid and very substantial. I pledge that we shall work to make it so.

Peace, however, cannot be our sole concern. We have learned that there are many international threats and dangers that can affect the lives of our citizens. We face dwindling supplies of raw materials and food. We face international economic problems of great complexity. We must be more stringent in conservation than ever before.

We worked together to solve the problems of the cold war. We succeeded because we worked together. Now we confront these new and even more complicated problems.

The Japanese reformer, Sakuma Shozan, wrote some lines in 1854 that provide an insight for 1974. Sakuma said, and I quote: When I was 20 I knew that men were linked together in one province; when I was 30 I knew that they were linked together in one nation;

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when I was 40 I knew that they were linked together in one world of five continents.

Now, 120 years later, the links between nations are closer than ever. Modern technology has made the world one. What each man or each nation does or fails to do affects every other.

Some Americans wondered why I decided to accept your invitation to come to Japan at a time when we have unsolved problems at home. I replied to those Americans that many of the problems we have at home are not just American problems but the problems of the world as a whole. Like others, we suffer from inflation. Like others, we face recession. Like others, we have to deal with rising prices and potential shortages of fuels and raw materials.

America cannot solve those problems alone. Nations can only solve those problems by working together. Just as we worked together to maintain peace, we can work together to solve tomorrow's problems.

Our two nations provide the world with a model of what can be achieved by international cooperation. We can also provide a model for dealing with the new difficulties. We both have great technological skills and human resources, great energy and great imagination. We both acknowledge the responsibility to developing states. We envisage the orderly and peaceful sharing of essential natural resources. We can work together to meet the global economic issues.

We believe that we are not just temporary allies; we are permanent friends. We share the same goals--peace, development, stability, and prosperity. These are not only praiseworthy and essential goals but common goals.

The problems of peace and economic well-being are inextricably linked. We believe peace cannot exist without prosperity, prosperity cannot exist without peace, and neither can exist if the great states of the world do not work together to achieve them. We owe this to ourselves, to each other, and to all the Japanese and the American peoples.

America and Japan share the same national pastime--baseball. In the game of baseball, two teams compete. But neither can play without the other, nor without common respect for each other and for the rules of the game.

I have taken the liberty of giving you my views on the world we live in. Now, let me tell you, the Japanese people, a little bit

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about the American people. The American people have faced some difficult times in our history. They know they will face others in the future. Their burdens are enormous, both at home and abroad. Some observers, including American observers, say that Americans have lost their confidence, their sense of responsibility, and their creativity. It is not true.

I have traveled over much of my country during the past year. Each time I return to Washington refreshed. Our people are determined and realistic; our people are vigorous. They are solving their problems in countless towns and cities across the country. They continue to understand that history has placed great responsibilities on American shoulders. Americans are ready and willing to play their part with the same strength and the same will that they have always shown in the past.

Americans also know that no nation, however strong, can hope to dictate the course of history by itself. But the ability to understand the basic issue, to define our national interest, and to make common cause with others to achieve common purposes makes it possible to influence events. And Americans are determined to do that for the constructive purposes and in the true spirit of interdependence.

In that spirit, let me make a pledge to you today. As we face the problems of the future, the United States will remain faithful in our commitments and firm in the pursuit of our common goals. We intend not only to remain a trustworthy ally but a reliable trading partner.

We will continue to be suppliers of the goods you need. If shortages occur, we will take special account of the needs of our traditional trading partners. We will not compete with our friends for their markets or for their resources. We want to work with them.

The basic concepts of our foreign policy remain unchanged. Those concepts have a solid bipartisan and popular support. The American people remain strong, confident, and faithful. We may sometimes falter, but we will not fail.

Let me, if I might, end on a personal note. It is a privilege to be the first American President to visit Japan while in office. It is also a very great pleasure. I look forward to seeing Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan.

Japan has preserved her cultural integrity in the face of rapid modernization. I have never believed all change is necessarily

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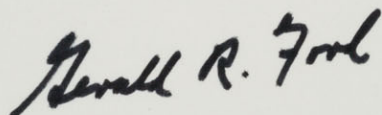
good. We must try to apply the enduring values of the past to the challenges and to the pressures of our times. Americans can learn from Japan to respect traditions even as we, like you, plunge ahead in the last quarter of the 20th century.

I also look forward to another deep privilege. Yesterday, during my call upon His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, I renewed our invitation for the Emperor to visit the United States. It would be a great pleasure to be the first American President to welcome the Emperor of Japan to Washington and to show His Imperial Majesty our national shrines and treasures, including the graceful Japanese cherry trees whose blossoms provide a setting for the monuments to the great heroes of our own past.

I hope that my visit shall be the first of many by American Presidents. I hope that the leaders of our two countries will follow the example that our peoples have already set, to visit each other frequently and freely as our nations move together to deal with the many common problems and concerns that will affect the lives of all our citizens and all humanity.

I said in my first Presidential address to the Congress that my Administration was based on communication, conciliation, compromise, and cooperation. This concept also guides my view of American policy toward Japan. We both have much work to do. Let us do it together. Let us also continue the quest for peace. I would rather walk a thousand miles for peace than take a single step toward war.

I thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald R. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.