

***An Evolving Relationship:  
Japan and the U.S. in 2004***

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

I am very grateful for this opportunity today to address the American Enterprise Institute, a leading U.S. think tank. I am fully aware of the important role played by think tanks in American politics. In particular, I am keenly interested in the strong influence that AEI has had in the Bush Administration. Over the years, I have developed a deep respect for President DeMuth and Mr. Irving Kristol, as well as for all the other members of AEI who have worked to establish the fame and renown of this Institute. Therefore, I consider it a true honor to have been given the opportunity to speak before this distinguished gathering.

Before beginning my presentation today, I would like to pause to remember those who have given their lives in the fighting in Iraq. In particular, I express my deepest respect for the brave soldiers of the U.S. military with whom we are allied, and extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have made the supreme sacrifice.

War has a way of mercilessly confronting us with the most unpleasant realities. As a politician and as a human being I feel a tremendous heaviness in my heart at the sight of American soldiers and allies shedding their blood. However, this sorrow must no doubt be overcome, and democracy must be firmly established in Iraq. For this is, I believe, the only way in which their sacrifices can be redeemed. And this indeed is the outcome that Japan hopes to see as an ally of the United States.

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Peace and Amity. Though it had adamantly sequestered

itself for centuries prior to the Treaty, Japan finally flung open its doors to the world with the arrival of Commodore Perry. In reviewing the subsequent 150 years of history, it is no exaggeration to say that we are today enjoying what may be called the “golden age” of Japan-U.S. relations, an age when our bilateral relations stand at the strongest point they have ever been.

I very much recall the confident declaration of the late Ambassador Mansfield who served the longest number of years of any American ambassador to Japan. He said: “The U.S. and Japanese relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none.” I am just one of the many who were deeply impressed by this declaration. Furthermore, I shall never forget that when referring to the importance of Japan-U.S. relations, Ambassador Mansfield always appended the words “bar none” to drive home his point. Indeed, I firmly believe that Japan-U.S. relations are the most important bilateral relations “bar none” for not only Japan and the United States, but also for Asia and the entire world.

I find that the expression “bar none” reflects a great degree of prudence. Moreover, I firmly believe that this point is most fully understood and appreciated by President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi.

In February of last year, in commenting on the Iraqi problem, Prime Minister Koizumi referred to the importance of Japan-U.S. relations. He made the following statement to appeal to the public regarding the indispensable nature of the Japan-U.S. alliance for the peace of Japan. “The United States is the only country in the world that says that any attack on Japan will be understood to be an attack on itself. A great force of deterrence is at work in these words.” As you well know, the Prime Minister’s statement was welcomed and supported by a large portion of the Japanese population. Indeed, I believe that the Prime Minister’s statement symbolizes the “bar none” aspect of our bilateral relations. Certainly, it can be said that this constitutes the “essence of alliance.”

The seeds of the “golden age” in Japan-U.S. relations that we are enjoying today were sown by Prime Minister Yoshida. They were then nurtured by such leaders as Prime Minister Kishi and President Eisenhower, and by Prime Minister Nakasone and President Reagan. We can say that these seeds have finally borne their fruit under the present leadership of President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi. But we know that alliances must be maintained and strengthened through constant effort. History teaches us only too well that, in the absence of such efforts, alliances are prone to collapse.

The violent attacks of September 11, 2001, the subsequent war on terrorism, and the emergence of a “new form of war” have forced Japan to become involved in the “new form of war” as an active participant. The decision thus made by Prime Minister Koizumi to dispatch the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq truly represents a “historic decision,” I firmly believe this to be a most profound decision resulting from deep thought given to the long-term future of the nation.

An alliance bereft of solidarity and trust is no more than a piece of paper. Prime Minister Koizumi’s decision provides proof that the Japan-U.S. alliance is not a mere piece of paper and that it constitutes a powerful bond underscored by the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

My grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, believed very strongly that any hope that Japan had for achieving peace and prosperity in the postwar era was predicated on the establishment of a stable alliance between Japan and the United States, an alliance founded on a “partnership of equals.” It was my grandfather who, in the face of the raging storm of domestic opposition, put both his political and physical lives on the line to convince the American side to go forward on the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960. His resolution was based on the following credo and conviction. “The Japan-U.S. alliance cannot last long in its present state. It must be rendered more sustainable with the introduction of reciprocity, for

it is the achievement of a higher level of reciprocity that will allow Japan to assert its position vis-à-vis the United States.”

What specifically does it mean to render the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty more sustainable by raising the level of reciprocity? I believe the answer to this question is very closely related to the issue of the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. The “inherent right of individual and collective self-defense” is explicitly provided for under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Japan is of course a member of the United Nations, and furthermore, the preamble of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty contains the following wording: “recognizing that they have the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense.” Notwithstanding this, the government of Japan has continued to subscribe to the interpretation that, while Japan does possess the right of collective self-defense under international law, it is barred from the exercise of this right by its Constitution. This explanation for why Japan is “unable to exercise the right of collective self-defense” is for domestic consumption and cannot find acceptance in the world at large. It is clear that the interpretations adopted by the government of Japan have, in many respects, reached their practical limit.

According to my grandfather’s memoirs, it was his ardent hope that the 1960 revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty would encourage the Japanese public to take a greater interest in the nation’s security. The result, however, has unfortunately been that public opinion has been split in two. The Ikeda Administration which followed the Kishi Administration avoided the discussion of security and placed its emphasis on economic growth. This pattern has continued until the present day. Japan has become, for the most part, allergic to any discussion of security. It is not logical; it is an allergy like a physical response. Afraid of bringing on this allergic reaction, each administration has avoided discussing matters which they were actually required to address. The Nakasone Administration has been the sole exception.

“What form should the State take?”, “What form should security take?”, “What form should the Constitution take?” Today Japan must face these matters straight on whether it wants to or not. Moreover, the majority of parliamentarians believe that the Diet must engage in constructive discussions regarding security. This is the source of great relief and joy.

The general election held in November last year was notable in that groups advocating protection of the current Constitution suffered considerable losses. Thanks to this development, constitutional revision is now being discussed as a real and present issue for the first time. Perhaps it was because of the trauma of defeat that postwar Japan looked upon its Constitution as an immutable code of laws. In this climate, the dominant sentiment was one that claimed that the Constitution should not be touched or changed in any way. In a sense, the whole nation was victim to a form of mind control. I believe that these tendencies must definitely be abolished.

The Constitution of the United States is renowned as the world’s oldest written constitution, but this certainly has not stopped Americans from repeatedly amending it to meet the needs of the times. As opposed to this, the Constitution of Japan was adopted in 1947, but has never once been revised in the 57 years of its existence. Thus, the Constitution of Japan has come to be ranked as the world’s oldest written, unaltered constitution.

Throughout my entire career, I have always stood in favor of constitutional revision. The reasons that prompt me to take this position can be divided into three broad categories.

The first is that I believe the process of enactment of the present Constitution was flawed.

As you know, the present Constitution of Japan was drafted during the Occupation under the authority of the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers. Its drafters, called New Dealers, hurriedly drew up the document in the space of only a few days. This is an historical

fact. There are some who argue that “all is well if the contents are satisfactory.” But the basic law of the land must be fully endowed with historical justification. It is for this reason that I feel we must persistently dwell on the process of enactment.

The second reason pertains to the various points in the Constitution, which after the passage of more than 50 years are no longer consistent with contemporary conditions. The classic example of such an anachronism is to be found in the provisions of Article 9. It has now become clear that the safety and security of the country cannot be preserved under the present Constitution. In addition to Article 9, there are many other provisions that need to be reviewed and revised in light of the changing times.

The third reason is rooted in the budding awareness of people that, with the start of a new century, the time has now arrived to “create a new constitution by our own hands.” It is my conviction that it is this spirit that will open the path to a new age for Japan. Under the leadership of the Koizumi Administration, Japan is moving forward today on a program of reform, and I believe that the determination and spirit expressed by the people for effecting a fundamental transformation in the nation’s basic law must be respected. By revising the Constitution, Japan must firmly re-establish the framework of the nation and create new structures and values in the Japanese political system. It is my belief that once these basic problems are resolved, Japan will be able to make tremendous progress toward resolving the many economic and social challenges that it faces today.

The Japan-U.S. relations that we are enjoying today are the result of the untiring efforts of many people that have gone before us. The generation of my grandfather carried out their responsibilities as they faced many challenges. At the same time, they left for us the “homework” of having to figure out how our alliance can be sustained in the next age and how the level of reciprocity can be effectively raised.

Irving Kristol's expression, "mugged by reality," so aptly captures the state that Japan finds itself in today. Quite literally, Japan was "mugged" into accepting the "new post-9/11 reality."

I see that I am running out of time.

I would like to emphasize that, under the present conditions; Japanese political leaders are facing some very heavy responsibilities. What must we do in the context of these responsibilities? One thing that we must certainly do is to give serious thought to a favorite expression of President Reagan and many other American conservatives. In the words of Richard Weaver, "Ideas have consequences."

We must not flinch, but rather must go forward armed with conviction and ideas to fulfill our responsibilities.

Japan-U.S. relations have gone through a number of stages, including the postwar stage and then the Cold War. We now stand on the threshold of a new stage in Japan-U.S. relations. Our relations in this new period must be characterized by sturdiness and creativity. Having taken the past history of our bilateral relations into full account, we must now concentrate our minds and our energies on transforming the Japan-U.S. relations into a "partnership of equals."

Thank you very much.