

Cypriot leadership to focus on the core issues of the Cyprus dispute and encouraged all parties to prepare for eventual comprehensive negotiations. My Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus, Richard C. Holbrooke, and the Special Cyprus Coordinator, Thomas J. Miller, underscored this message in a series of important meetings in September with Cypriot, Greek, and Turkish representatives attending the United Nations General Assembly.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Remarks in “A Conversation With President Clinton” With Tetsuya Chikushi in Tokyo

November 19, 1998

Opening Remarks

Tetsuya Chikushi. We have our special guest today who has the biggest influence and responsibility to the future of humankind. We have this most important bilateral relations, and he’s the most responsible person in all of the United States. We are very happy to have him, to greet him with a large number of audience. Mr. Bill Clinton, the President of the United States.

Mr. President, welcome to our program, and I appreciate your choice to join us. It’s really an honor. I will skip any more ceremonial remarks—[inaudible]. To begin with, you have something to say to the people.

The President. Yes. I will be very brief so that we can leave the most time possible for questions. But I would like to begin by thanking you and this station for making this program possible. I thank all of you for participating and also those in Osaka who are joining us.

I would like to open by just emphasizing some things I think we all know. First, the relationship between the United States and Japan is very, very important to both countries and to the world. We have a very broad

partnership in the security area, in the political area, in the economic area.

Over the years, there is sometimes greater emphasis on one issue than another. Over the years, sometimes America is having particular problems; sometimes Japan is. But the enduring nature of our democratic partnership across all the differences between our peoples is profoundly important. And on the edge of this new century and a new millennium, when there is so much change in the way people work and live and relate to each other, it will become more important.

That’s why I’m here and why I wanted to be a part of this townhall meeting. And I thank you very much.

Mr. Chikushi. Thank you very much. There are about 100 people here and 30 people in Osaka, the second largest city, and everybody wants to discuss with you, to make some questions. And also, we gathered questions nationwide through Internet and facsimile. To start with, I would like to ask some casual questions, and I would like to expect a brief answer. From now on, I’d like to speak in Japanese.

We have many questions from children, many of them with—[inaudible]. I will pick one from the fifth grader of the primary school. “Did you have good grades at school when you were a kid?” [Laughter]

The President. Mostly. [Laughter]

Mr. Chikushi. Next question.

Chelsea Clinton

Q. [Inaudible]—when Chelsea, your daughter, was born, how much were you involved in baby raising, child raising?

The President. I’m sorry, would you read—

Q. How much were you involved in raising her?

The President. When my daughter was born, how involved was I with her? I was very involved with her from the time she was a very small baby, and always going to her events, working with her on her homework until it became too difficult for me—[laughter]—and trying to be a big part of her life. So, my wife and I both tried to be very involved in her life, and we still try to be, although she has reached an age where I don’t

think she thinks it's always such a good idea. [Laughter]

Public Speaking

Q. I am very bad in speaking in front of large number of people. And also, the same question from the junior high school student, how can you speak so well in front of the large number of people? Could you give us some tip?

The President. My only advice is to imagine, no matter how many people are in your audience, that you're speaking to a few of your friends—because, look at the camera, the camera will take us to millions of people. I have been in crowds—the largest crowd I've been in was in Ghana in West Africa. We had maybe 400,000 or 500,000 people. But on the television, there are millions. And if you're in a big crowd, well, the microphone is your friend. You can speak normally because the sound will carry.

And I think many people have trouble speaking in public because they think they have to change. And you don't have to change. You just have to be yourself. Imagine you are at home, entertaining some friends, sharing something with your family, and speaking the way you would when your heart was engaged and your mind was engaged about something you cared about in your own life. That's my only advice.

Mr. Chikushi. Well, thank you. So, that being said, let's go into our Q&A session. So you spoke very well as President. Now talk about leadership and about your personality. I would like to welcome questions regarding leadership or his personality or the President as a person.

Pressures of the Presidency

Q. I'm involved in welfare. I am sure you feel a lot of pressure being President. Have you ever felt that you wanted to get away from these pressures? And also, how are you coping with these tremendous pressures as President?

The President. Well, of course, sometimes you want to get away from it. But I think the important thing is not to be overwhelmed by the work, that only people have these jobs and you have to take some time for family and some time for recreation. I

spend a lot of time reading. I probably read more than I did before I became President. I exercise every day. I play a lot of golf, not as much as I wish but some, and certainly not as well as I wish. [Laughter] And I try to stay in touch with my family members beyond our home and also my friends around the country. And all these things help to keep balance in my life. I try to make sure on the weekends I spend time with my family. I take time to attend my church services. I do the things that remind me that I'm a normal person and I need a balanced life. And I think that's important.

History's View of President's Accomplishments

Q. I work for Kirin Beer Company. Thank you very much for this great opportunity. I really appreciate it. And I would like to congratulate you on the result of the midterm elections back in the United States. Now, my question: You're the 42d President of the United States. What would you like people in the future to remember you for?

The President. I would like to be remembered for having restored American confidence and opportunity, prepared America for the 21st century, and deepened America's partnership with people around the world to create a world more full of opportunities for ordinary citizens, more committed to preserving the environment, and more committed to working together for peace and prosperity.

I believe we're moving into a world where our interdependence with one another will be critical to maintaining our independence, as nations and as individuals. And I would like to be remembered as a President who prepared my country and the world for the 21st century. And I like your beer. [Laughter]

Japan's Leadership

Q. I'm—[inaudible]—from Sony Corporation—[inaudible]—in Japan the leadership is not as good as we would like it to be. What do you think—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, first of all, I think that, to be fair to the present leadership, Prime Minister Obuchi and his team, they have not had enough time for people to make

a firm judgment. They just recently took office. That's the first point I would make, because the difficulties, the challenges Japan has today will not be solved overnight.

For example, when I became President in 1993, I had to make some very difficult decisions. And in the midterm elections in 1994, like the ones we just had, between the Presidential elections, my party suffered great losses. And people who voted for the tough decisions that I advocated, many of them were defeated because the people had not yet felt the benefits of the things which were done. So the first thing I would say is, do not judge too harshly too quickly.

The second thing I would say is I think that the big things that have been done here are essentially moving in the right direction, the banking reform, stimulating the economy. The third point I would make is that for leadership you need, first, to know what is going on. You have to have a clear analysis of the present situation. Then you have to have a vision of the future you're trying to create. Without a vision, the rest of this doesn't matter. Then you have to have an action plan to achieve the vision. And then, finally, in the world we're living in, where we do things like this, you must be able to have all kinds of ordinary citizens be able to buy into it, to support it, to say "Yes, this will be good for me, good for my family, good for my future; I wish to be a part of this." And that, I think, is the great challenge of modern leadership: how to mobilize large numbers of people, even if unpopular things have to be done.

Monetary Rewards and Political Life

[A participant commented that many business leaders had amassed great wealth over the past 6 years, but that the President could not, given his income as President. He asked what kept the President motivated since he could not seek a third term.]

The President. Well, first of all, you're right; I can't run for a third term under our laws. It's a good thing, because if I could, I would, I think. [Laughter] I like the work very much. But I think, first of all, people who get into public service must have a decision that they are not going to make as much money as they could make if they were doing

something else. However, it is important that we pay them enough money so they can at least support their families, raise their children, pay their bills. Beyond that, I think that most people who are in public service should just be content, if they can raise their children and pay their bills, to think that when they get out of public service, they can do a little better.

And that's the way I've always looked at it. It never bothered me that I didn't make much money. That's not what was important to me in life. And I think that as long as there are rewards to public service in terms of being able to achieve what you wish to do—that is, help other people, help your country move forward—I think good people will wish to do it. I don't think that money will ever be able to attract quality people to public service. But if you expect people to starve, you can drive good people away.

Mr. Chikushi. Then we'll switch to Osaka. I guess they are waiting—[inaudible]—which is known for the shrine of the merchants—we have 30 people here; they are very vigorous Osakans. And 15 involved in retail business and 15 ladies that are present here, waiting for the opportunity to ask questions. We will start from a man.

First Family

Q. I'm involved in the metal business. Mr. President, out of the dishes that your wife cooks, what do you like best, and how much do you eat with your family a month? How many times do you eat with your family a month?

The President. Well, of course, our daughter has now gone to university, but my wife and I have dinner together every night when we're both home. That is, unless she has to go out to an engagement or I do, we always have dinner together. I would say probably 4 times a week we have dinner together, and maybe 3 times a week one of the two of us is out at night or out of town.

Over the last 20 years, of course, it's fairly well known in America that I like all different kinds of food. A lot of people make fun of me because of that. But I suppose my favorite dish is a Mexican dish, chicken enchiladas. That's what I really like the best, although I like sushi, too. [Laughter]

Q. Very nice to meet you. I have two children. I am a housewife. So nice to meet you, or talk to you. I have a question regarding Miss Monica Lewinsky. How did you apologize to Mrs. Clinton and Chelsea? And I'm sure I would never be able to forgive my husband for doing that, but did they really forgive you, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I did it in a direct and straightforward manner, and I believe they did, yes. [*Laughter*] But that's really a question you could ask them better than me.

Okinawa

Mr. Chikushi. Thank you very much. We'll go back to you, our viewers in Osaka. Let's change the topic now. Now our bilateral relationship is the most important of all. Bilateral relationships—let's talk about U.S.-Japan relationship. We collected about 4,000 questions from all over Japan and the most popular questions were regarding Okinawa, American base issue of Okinawa.

There are two independent countries, allies, but one country has the military presence in another country for a long time in such a large scale. Is it good for our relationship? Isn't it going to be a thorn of one side, so to speak? How do you feel about that, Mr. President?

The President. Well, first of all, I think there have been, obviously, some difficulties in the relationship in our military presence in Okinawa. Some of them I think are inevitable, and I'm very respectful of the challenges that our presence has caused the Government and the people on Okinawa.

On the other hand, both the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States agree that our security partnership is a good one and that we cannot say with confidence that there are no circumstances under which American forces would ever be called upon to defend Japan or our common allies. And if we were to move our forces back to Guam or to Hawaii, it would take them much, much longer to come anywhere in the northeast Asia area if there were difficulties.

So the question is, if we do need to be here for some period of years, how can we do it in the way that is least burdensome to the people of Okinawa? That has been my

concern. I have worked now with Prime Minister Obuchi's government and with predecessor governments to try to be responsive to that. And I hope we can do that. I hope we can continue to ease the burden on the people of Okinawa but stay as long as both Japan and the United States agree that is wise for us to stay.

Military Conflicts

Q. Related to the previous question, the new guidelines have been developed, and Japan, of course, is not supposed to go into war. But once the United States gets into the war situation, I'm afraid that Japan might be sort of pulled into that, also, and I've been concerned. Can you comment on that?

The President. Yes. Of course, our strategy is to maintain a presence in the world so that there will be no war, so that there is a strong disincentive for anyone to drag anyone back into a war. There have been so many wars in Asia in this century, but in the last two to three decades, there has been an increased emphasis in the Asian countries on working on the economy, working on the society, working on the education of children, working on trade and other relations with people instead of military relations.

And my hope is that America's military strength will be used to deter any further military action so that we will have more peace, and in the decades ahead, war will become more and more unthinkable for everyone. That is what the whole defensive military strategy of our country is designed to do.

Japan-U.S. Trade

Q. I will ask about trade. Now, we are asked by the U.S. Government to further open our market. Do you have any Japanese-made product which you daily use, Mr. President?

The President. Yes, we have some Japanese televisions. We also have at least one European television, I think, in the White House complex. And I have, over time, owned a number of them. When I was a Governor of my home State, we had a Sanyo plant in my home State that put together televisions that were mostly manufactured in Japan and the component parts sent there.

So I'm quite well familiar with that, and I think it's very important.

Actually, we've worked hard on trying to keep our markets open during this period of economic difficulty, not only for Japan but for all of Asia. And you may know that our trade deficit has gone way up with Japan, with China, with others. Because of the Asian economic crisis, we're buying more exports, but no country can afford to keep buying imports from us if the economy is down.

And on the whole, the American people have supported this. It's our contribution to trying to stabilize Asia and bring it back. I have to say in all candor there are some problems. Japanese imports into America of hot-rolled steel, for example, are up 500 percent in one year, and no one quite believes that that's just because of the economic problems. But by and large, there's a commitment in America to keeping open markets and purchasing Japanese products.

Let me also say, I believe that in addition to the financial reforms, which I think are very important to carry out aggressively, and the economic stimulus, domestically, I think Japan could get a lot of economic benefit in terms of new jobs, from greater openness. I'll just give you two examples.

In our country there was great controversy about deregulating and opening investment to international investors in airlines and in telecommunications. We did it. It was quite controversial. But we have created, as a result, far more jobs in both sectors because of the greater competition.

Just since 1993, when we've been aggressive in telecommunications, and a lot of international firms have been a part of this, we have seen hundreds of thousands of jobs created in America because of the increased competition. So I think it would be good for the Japanese economy.

Let me say, I never consciously asked Japan or any other country to do something that is good only for the United States. My belief is that our country is strengthened if Japan is very strong, because if Japan is very strong, that brings back Asia. If Asia is strong, that's good for the American economy. It also means it's good for stability, which means more prosperity and less likelihood of the

military conflicts that I was asked about by the lady there.

Japanese Economic Policy

Q. This is relating to our economic relationship. In Japan, the certificate or consumption coupons will be issued to children and old people. Now, including this—and there are other measures to boost our economy—what do you think of what Japan is doing?

The President. Well, I know of no history with these coupons. It's a new idea. And so, obviously, I can't have an informed opinion. But I do believe that anything that can be done to increase consumption is a good thing, because I know the Japanese people are great savers, and that is also a good thing. And I know you worry about the population getting older and having to save more for retirement. But you need a balance between saving for your own retirement and growing the economy today, because as the population gets older, one of the things that will lift up the elderly population is a very strong economy. And so I think that anything that can be done to boost confidence of consumers and to boost consumption is a good thing.

Agricultural Trade

[A participant explained that farming in Japan was a family-based operation which maintained cultural and social values, while farming in the United States was more efficient and enterprise-oriented. He stated that U.S. demands for agricultural trade liberalization were therefore unfair and then requested the President's views.]

The President. Well, first of all, let me say, this is a subject about which I think I know something. Before I became President, I was the Governor of my home State, which produces 40 percent of all the rice grown in the United States. And in our State, most of the farms are still family farms.

But we see all over the world today family farmers having more trouble. For example, to show you the other side of this, in the northern part of the United States, in North Dakota, there was a huge drop in the number of family farmers this year because the Asian countries, not Japan, other Asian countries which had been buying their wheat could no

longer afford to buy it. And a lot of them were threatened with going out of business.

In fairness, one of the reasons I believe we need this WTO process is so we can have a regular way of deciding how to open the markets that should be opened in agriculture and then give countries enough notice so they can figure how they're going to help the farmers if they have a policy of wanting family farmers to survive.

I can tell you, in my country we have tried to push for more open markets and a policy to keep family farmers in business by—and I can only say what the situation is in America. In America, the family farmers are as productive as the big enterprise farms, but the family farmers don't have a lot of money in the bank. And we all know that because of bad weather or bad prices or whatever, some years are good in farming; some years are bad in farming. The fundamental problem in the U.S. is that the family farmers need a system to help them through the bad years. The big enterprises have so much money, they take the bad years and wait for the good years.

So we have tried to design a system that would address the needs of both, and we seem to be having some success there. So I think there is a proper compromise here where you can open markets more gradually, open them to farming, particularly if there are different products. There are some products that Japan buys that can't be grown in Japan. And if you can open these markets, but do it in a way that preserves to the maximum extent possible the family farms, that I think is the best way to do it. And that is what we are trying to achieve in the U.S. I don't know if we'll succeed, but I think we're doing a pretty good job now.

Mr. Chikushi. Osaka is very interested in economic issues, so let's switch over to Osaka. Questions?

Financing for Small Business

Q. I'm in housing equipment and material. Osaka has a lot of small- to medium-size businesses, and I boast ourselves for having supported the Japanese economy. But we are suffering right now. It's hard to get loans these days. And the first blow comes to us first. But in the United States, how are you

helping these small- to medium-size companies?

The President. We have I think three things that I would like to mention. First of all, for small businesses that are just getting started, we have a Small Business Administration in the Federal Government which can provide guarantees of the first loans. Now we have a pretty healthy banking system, quite healthy, that is pretty aggressive in making loans to businesses. In addition to that, we have something that many countries don't have. We have a very active system of venture capital, high-risk capital, higher-risk capital, people who will invest money in new areas or in small- and medium-size businesses that are just trying to expand.

And having looked at the Japanese situation, I think it would be very helpful if, in addition to this bank reform, where the banks can get public money to protect depositors, and then they have to declare the bad loans and work through them—I think that will help because then the banks can start loaning money again, with the depositors protected. So it's very important to implement that.

But I would like to see some effort made at providing more of this venture capital, this risk capital, in Japan. And it may be that there is something we can do to encourage Japanese business people to set up these kind of ventures, because they have created millions of jobs in America, the venture capitalists have. And even though they lose money on ventures, on balance they make money over a period of years.

Japan-China-U.S. Relations

Q. I am also a merchant, selling kitchen material. Looking at the recent American diplomacy, you tend to go over the head of Japanese. You're interested in strengthening diplomatic relations with China. What we are afraid of is that in 2008, we would like to invite the Olympic Games to Osaka, and a very strong rival is Beijing of China, for the Olympics in 2008. So I would like to have your personal, private opinion about this. If Beijing and Osaka compete to get the Olympics, I am sure that you will support Osaka. I'd like to make sure of that. Or would you rather support Beijing? I certainly appreciate your support.

The President. Thank goodness I will no longer be President. I don't have to make that decision. Let me make two points. First of all, I did not intentionally go over the heads of the Japanese people in establishing better relations with China. I think it is good for Japan if America has better relations with China. I think it is good for America if Japan has better relations with China. The Chinese President is coming here, I think, on a state visit in just the next couple of days. And it has now been quite a long time since the last World War, and I think whatever remaining misunderstandings there are should be resolved and that your two great countries should have a better relation. And I'm going to do my best to see a partnership involving all of us going into the future.

I'm not going to take a position on the Olympics. But let me say, before I became President, I spent a lot of time in Osaka, because we had two companies in my State who were headquartered in Osaka. I even remember the last restaurant I ate at in Osaka, Steakhouse Ron, R-O-N. So if it's still there, maybe I got them some business tonight. [Laughter]

Balancing Work and Family in Japan

Q. I teach social studies in junior high school. We've been talking about expanding consumption. The Japanese junior high students spend so little time with their fathers at home. They have to go to—[inaudible]—school and fathers don't get home until very late. Talking about consumption, I think if they get fathers back, I think we will get a more stable society. Because if they get more free time, then they have more leisure time; they will spend more money that way. But in the male-oriented society of Japan, there is very little discussion regarding more holidays. What do you think about that?

The President. I think, first of all, the whole world admires both the excellent education system and the hard work ethic of the Japanese people, and admires the fact that you have been able to keep the family structure as strong as you have under the enormous pressures of work and education for the children, especially during this hard economic time. But I think that in all societies which are very busy and very competitive,

the number one social question quickly becomes, how do you balance work and family?

I personally believe that the most important work of any society is raising children well. And if you have to sacrifice that to have a strong economy, then sooner or later your economy and your society won't be very strong. On the other hand, you don't want to sacrifice your economy in the service of raising children. There has to be a balance.

We are having that kind of debate in America. I don't have the answer for Japan; it would be wrong for me to suggest it. But I think you have asked the right question, and I hope maybe your being on this program tonight will spark a sort of national debate about it. It's worth asking that question, whether you could actually help the economy by providing people more free time with their children and their families. I never thought of it in this term before until you said it tonight. Thank you.

Disabled Americans

[A participant asked the President what he plans to do for the disadvantaged people in the United States.]

The President. Thank you very much. First of all, you made a very important point. In 1992, we passed the Americans With Disabilities Act, which guarantees all Americans access to certain public facilities and other opportunities in our society. Previous to that we had tried to do the same thing with our schools, in educational facilities.

And all of you know, I'm sure, about all the fights we have in America between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and you see all that in the press here. But you should know that one of the things that we've had almost complete agreement on in the last 6 years since I've been President, is every year putting more money into education for Americans with disabilities.

In the last session of Congress, we came very close to passing a bill which would have dramatically expanded job opportunities to Americans with disabilities, over and above where we are now. So I think it's fair to say—and our administration has been very involved in this—our position is every person

should be looked at as a resource. Every person should have all the opportunities necessary to live up to the fullest of his or her capabilities. And our policy is to do whatever we can to advance that goal. We believe it makes us a stronger country.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

American Visitors to Japan

Q. Every year many Japanese youth go to the United States for sightseeing or to study. But compared with that, not too many Americans visit Japan. That's how I feel. I think it's important that the young generation understand each other, the American youth and the Japanese youth. Why do you think it's fewer American youth visit Japan?

The President. I think, first of all, it's because it's a long way away in the minds of most Americans. And secondly, because we have in America, as you know, people of every conceivable different racial and ethnic backgrounds, but relatively small number of Japanese-Americans—a significant number—we have several Japanese-Americans in our United States Congress, for example. But I think that the Americans, when they travel abroad, tend to go to places where either their own people came from or they know someone in the school who is from there or something like that.

But there is an enormous interest in Japan in the United States, an enormous interest among the young people, wanting to understand the society, know more about it. And I think what we have to do is to try to facilitate more travel among older people who have the means to travel but more study groups among the younger people.

Most young Americans could not afford to come here to study on their own. They would have to come as part of some scholarship program. And in the years since I've been President, we tried to find ways to increase the number of young Americans who could come here to study.

Our Ambassador here now, Tom Foley, who was formerly the Speaker of the House of Representatives, has been very active in this whole area of trying to build greater communications and travel for a long time. And I hope we can do a better job now, because I don't think we've done as much as

we should have to bring Americans to Japan, to give them a chance to get to know the Japanese people, understand the Japanese system, and build long-term friendships for the future.

Mr. Chikushi. A very tough question to the President. [*Laughter*]

Landmines

Q. I work for a nongovernment organization. I'm a housewife. Mr. President, there is a book, "Give Us Not Land Mines, But Flowers." You autographed this. Do you remember it? Thank you. We have been engaged in the campaign to get rid of landmines, and we have signed the treaty to completely get rid of landmines. You have not signed that. Why is that? What is your policy on landmines?

The President. First of all, my policy is to support getting rid of them, and there is a reason that we have not signed the treaty. I would like to explain why.

Number one, the way the treaty is written, the mines that countries use to protect their soldiers against tanks, so-called antitank mines, not antipersonnel mines, are protected, except ours, because of the way the wording of the treaty is. And we pleaded with the people in Oslo not to do this, but they did. They basically wrote out—and they knew exactly what they were doing. Why they did it, I don't know. But they basically said that other countries, the way they designed their antitank mines was protected; the way we do it isn't.

The second issue is, the United States has, as all of you know very well, a United Nations responsibility in Korea. The border, the DMZ, is 18 miles from Seoul. So there is one place in the world where we have lots of landmines, because it's the only way to protect Seoul from all the North Korean Army should they mass along the border. It is heavily marked. As far as we know, no civilian's ever been hurt there. All we asked for was the opportunity to find a substitute for the protection the landmines give the people of South Korea, and we would sign it.

Let me assure you all, I was the first world leader to call for a ban on landmines. We have destroyed almost 2 million landmines. We spend over half of the money the world

spends helping other countries dig up their mines. So I strongly support the goals of the treaty, and I will continue to do so. I hope if we can resolve these two problems, we can sign the treaty, because I have spent a lot of my personal time on this landmine issue, and it's very important. And I thank you for what you're doing.

Thank you.

Nagasaki and Hiroshima

Mr. Chikushi. Time is running short, so we turn our attention to the future. Something that is difficult for the people in the audience to ask, so I will do it. You have the button to destroy mankind 5 times over with your nuclear weapons. How much do you know about what really happened in Nagasaki and Hiroshima? Have you had any personal experience of getting in touch with the victims? And on that basis, you still continue to own, possess nuclear weapons.

The President. No, I have never had any personal contact with victims, but I have read a great deal about it. After I decided to run for President, I began to think about it much more than I ever had before.

Since I have been President, I have worked hard to reduce the number of weapons in our nuclear arsenal, along with the Russians, to extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We were the first country to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We are hoping that our friends in Russia will ratify the START II Convention so we can immediately start on the next round of nuclear weapons reductions.

So I have done everything I could do to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war. I have implored the people of India and Pakistan not to start a nuclear buildup with each other, because I never want to see another weapon dropped.

On the other hand, if you look at the last 50 years, nuclear weapons have not been used a second time, I think, because of the deterrent theory. And what I want to do is to reduce our weapons but always do it in a way that at least provides some disincentive from someone else using nuclear weapons, as well.

Mr. Chikushi. Well, unfortunately, I think the time is up. Or?

The President. I'll take a couple more.

Mr. Chikushi. There's two more questions regarding our future. How about a young person, how about over here?

Teenage Crime

Q. I want to ask you—I'm very sad these days that teenagers' crime is increasing—[inaudible]—what do you hope we can leave to our children?

The President. Let me ask you something. I have something to say about that, but why do you think the teenage crime is going up?

Q. Well, I think it is a little related to what the other guy asked you about, that no communication in the family, no father, and many times the mother does not work in the home. And this kind of no communication in the family—and also the area—we don't know other people, what they are doing.

The President. Well, I can tell you that in our country, one of the things that happened is that so many of our children were being let out of school, but they couldn't go home to their parents because there was no parent in the home. And so a lot of this crime was happening between the time school was over and the time the parents got home from work.

So what we have tried to do is to turn our schools into more community institutions. And so the children can stay there for longer hours, and they can do their homework, or they can get tutoring or they can do other things. In some of our big cities, even they're feeding the children there, if necessary. And what we're trying to do is to create as much as we can, opportunities to overcome the fact that many of these children don't even have two parents in the homes in the U.S.

But I think the most important thing is children have to believe that they are the most important people in the world to someone. They have to be—when you're young, you must know that you are the most important person in the world to someone. It gives you a root, an anchor in life. Of course, then all the work and the study and all that makes more sense. But in the beginning you have to be valued just because you're alive and because you're in a family and because you're

in a community and you matter, no matter what.

I think that is important. And I worry that in all of our societies we're working so hard, we're getting so busy, we're doing so many things that that sense of the innate, inherent worth of people can be lost. We can never afford to define ourselves solely in terms of how hard we work or how much money we have or what our grades are or anything else. Children have to believe that they matter just because they're alive. And I think that, all of our societies, if we're not careful, we lose that.

Mr. Chikushi. The last question, I can only accept one question. Would you like to point to somebody, Mr. President?

The President. If I'm late, the Prime Minister will stop speaking to me, and this whole thing will be—[laughter]—go ahead.

Situation in Iraq

Q. I have a question about—you decided not to attack Iraq—estimate by the Pentagon that more than 10,000 people would die—[inaudible].

The President. Well, first of all, the Pentagon estimate was not that high, but it's obvious that if we had conducted a comprehensive attack directed at their weapons of mass destruction program, the production capacity, the laboratories, all the supporting sites and the military infrastructure that supports it, that unless everyone knew in advance and left the premises, large numbers of people would be killed. And I believe the United States has a special responsibility, because of the unique position of our military might, at this moment in history, to be very careful in that.

Now, that's why I always said if Saddam Hussein would comply with the United Nations resolutions, we would not attack. Shortly before the attack was about to begin, we received word that they were going to send a letter committing to compliance. Then we worked all day to try to clarify it, and I think it was a good thing to try to solve this peacefully. Peace is always better than war if you can do it consistent with the long-term security and freedom of the people. So I feel good about that.

Secondly, I think that the inspection system offers us the best protection over the long run. But don't forget, you have suffered in Japan from the sarin gas attack. This is not an academic issue to you; this is a real issue to you. And Iraq is a nation that has actually used chemical weapons on its own people, on the Iranians, on others, had a biological weapons program of some significance, was attempting to develop a nuclear weapons program.

So this is a very important issue for the world, and I would hope that all the countries of the world would continue to support an aggressive stance. I hope it will not lead to military action, but we have to be prepared, I believe, to take military action because the issue is so great.

I think that young people like you—Japan lived in the shadow of the awful legacy of the atomic weapons, but the likelihood is that in your lifetime, your adult lifetime, and your children's lifetime, you will have to worry more about chemical and biological weapons put in the hands of terrorists as well as rogue states. You have seen this in Japan; you know this. But I think if we can do something to stop it now, we should do it even if it requires military action.

The gentleman behind you there.

International Finance in the 21st Century

Q. I'm a private banker for a European bank. In a few years, in many ways, we've come through a lot. We have increased investment in the United States. However, things are changing a little bit. Now you will be the first President of the 21st century, but what do you think you have to be most worried about as we go into the 21st century in terms of economics?

The President. I think the biggest challenge, long-term, is to adapt the international economic systems to the realities of the 21st century. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, all these institutions set up at the end of the Second World War have facilitated great trade and investment. But they weren't prepared for the fact that once you had trade and investment, you had to have money crossing national lines, and then that money would become a commodity traded in itself, and then it would be traded at

great margins through the derivatives and the other mechanisms. Sometimes the money is traded, and you only put up 10 percent of the money you have at risk.

Today, \$1.5 trillion crosses national borders every day in currency trading. And we don't have a system to avoid boom and bust to keep recession from going to depression in the global financial markets. So, long-term, I think that's our big challenge. We are all working on it, and I think we'll have over the course of the coming year some very important things to do.

Meanwhile, we've come up with some short-term solutions, Japan and the U.S., with the Asia growth fund we announced—the Prime Minister and I announced a couple of days ago—a precautionary finance facility to keep the financial problems from reaching countries that are doing a good job, strengthening the IMF.

But over the long run, every country after the Great Depression that preceded World War II devised ways to stop those depressions from happening in their own countries. That's what you're doing here. You're just a question of whether you're doing enough to restore growth, right? But you've been able to stop things that happened all over the world in the 1920's and '30's.

Now what we have to do is to develop an international system that will achieve that goal, that will allow growth, free flow of money but won't have these radical swings of boom and bust that devastated the world in the 1930's. That, I think, is the biggest long-term economic challenge that we face.

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 think 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 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 century 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.