



*The Japan-America Society
of Washington DC
50th Anniversary Dinner
with the Honorable Walter F. Mondale*



*Held at the Four Seasons Hotel
in Georgetown*

Thursday, December 6, 2007

The Japan-America Society of Washington DC celebrated its 50th anniversary at a gala black tie dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown on Thursday evening, December 6, 2007.

The Guest of Honor for the evening was the Honorable Walter F. Mondale, the former Vice President of the United States and former American Ambassador to Japan.

In introducing Vice President , Norman Mineta, the Society's Honorary Chairman (*photo at right*), talked about the Japan-America Society's contribution over the past half-century:



“This is a government town, and there is no shortage of political leaders, think tanks, and Administration officials who know – or think they know – a lot about Japan and the US-Japan relationship.

“But what the Japan-America Society has done these past 50 years is to add a very personal and human dimension to the official ties between our two countries. It's what people today like to call “soft power.” I call it understanding.

“When the Society was created in 1957, President Eisenhower had just launched his “People-to-People” program. It was the idea that the government alone could not win the Cold War – and that the American people themselves would play a role, by increasing their knowledge and understanding and contacts with the outside world. When a number of State Department officers came together to start the Japan-America Society, I think that's what they had in mind.

“After my election to Congress, I served as one of the Trustees of the Society, and today I am very pleased to serve as the Society's Honorary Chairman. “

In introducing Vice President Mondale, Secretary Mineta said, "The United States has a tradition of sending some of its finest and most distinguished public servants to Japan to serve as our Ambassador. That includes Mike Mansfield, Howard Baker, and Tom Foley. And it includes one of our greatest leaders, the former Vice President of the United States and the nominee of his party to be the President and the leader of the Free World.

"Today the United States and the world are going through some real changes in our relationship with each other. And as we think about the future direction of American foreign policy and the role that the United States and Japan should play in the world, I can't think of anyone who can provide greater wisdom and insight than Fritz Mondale."

Vice President Mondale's remarks to the Society (as prepared) are at the end of this report.



Earlier in the evening, **Ambassador John R. Malott**, the Society's President, talked about the Society's founding in 1957:

"It was 51 years ago tonight when a group of State Department officers got together with friends from the Japanese Embassy. They met at what was probably the only Japanese restaurant in Washington in those days, and they talked about creating a friendship society that would complement the official relationship between the two countries. Today we call that "soft power." They filed the paperwork in 1957 — on Valentines Day — and the Japan-America Society was born.

"A lot of other things happened in 1957.

“*West Side Story* opened on Broadway, Dr Seuss wrote *The Cat in the Hat*, and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* won the Oscar for Best Picture.

“That year, Toyota exported its first car to the United States, and the Ford Motor Company introduced the Edsel. You know the rest of that story!

“Sony created the first ever personal radio, the TR-63. It was a small pocket device with six transistors — kind of the iPod of my generation --and Sony started exporting them to America. They were **the** hot item for the Christmas season. In those days gasoline only cost 24 cents a gallon, but the Sony pocket radio cost \$39.95 -- and of course, today it costs \$39.95 to fill your gas tank....”

Other special guests that evening were His Excellency Ryozo Kato, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, and Mrs. Kato.

Ambassador Kato proposed a toast to the Society—actually a *kampai*, as the beverage of choice was sake. (Photo at right)



Other speakers during the evening were the Society’s Chairman, William T. Breer, and the Society’s Vice Chairman, Dr Tamio Masuda. (See photos below.)



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for their generous support of the 50th Anniversary Dinner*



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The Japan-America Society's 50th Anniversary Dinner was organized by Deputy Director Marc Hitzig, with assistance from Program Director Miho Tsuru.

The Silent Auction was organized by Reiko Hirai of Happi Enterprises, with assistance from Sam Harrell and Jennifer Lovett

The Society thanks Mr Henry Sidel and Joto Sake L.L.C of New York for contributing the "Yuki no Boshu" Daiginjo sake for the kampai toast.

The Japan-America Society also thanks the following volunteers:

Gregg Adams, Rex Butler, Regina Dull, Yasuko Echigo, Craig Erdrich, Sam Harrell, Satomi Kato*, Jennifer Lovett, Ashley Neeley, Olga Samborska, Richard Spencer, Noritaka Takezawa, John Taylor, Norie Watanuki, and Yumi Watanuki (* Official Photographers)*





**Speech to the Japan-America Society of Washington DC
On the Occasion of Its 50th Anniversary**

by the Honorable Walter F. Mondale

December 6, 2007

(as prepared)

Introduction

Thanks, Norm (Mineta) for that kind introduction and for your leadership as Honorary Chairman of the Society. A special thanks, as well, to your Chairman, Bill Breer, to your President, John Malott, and to Vice Chairman Dr. Tamio Masuda. Of course, this room is packed with old friends. I rejoice in your presence.

It is a special pleasure to be with Ambassador and Hanayo Kato, again tonight. Anyone who believes in strong US-Japan relations must be grateful to the Ambassador, -- along with the efforts of so many others of you here tonight -- for his steadfast commitment to the strongest US-Japan relationship.

I'm delighted to join with you tonight to celebrate the Japan-America Society of Washington DC's 50th anniversary. Joan, who couldn't be here, asked me to pass her good word along as well.

John Malott told me that your Society was founded by State Department and Japanese Embassy employees who shared a common "nostalgia" for Japan. Many had served in the occupation and in the years afterward, and they had come to truly express their love for Japan, its culture and its people.

So, here we are tonight, fifty years later. I am told most of your members are young, most of you are not in government, and over half of the American members speak Japanese. Like your counterparts of 50 years ago, you have a personal connection with Japan which, through the society, allows you to "stay in touch with Japan all year long."

Strong Alliance

Tonight, we certainly can celebrate the strength of the US-Japan relationship. Bilateral strategic thinking now occurs in a regional and global context in response to various challenges including the rise of China; North Korean nuclear threats; terrorism; the energy crises and the growing and serious risks of global warming; not

to mention the increasing risk of global economic instability. Addressing these issues together, as we do, signifies our dedication to a better future for our own citizens and others around the world. Working together, as allies, as democracies, as the world's two largest economies, nations with a shared, deeply rich history of cooperation is a blessing to be nurtured by all of us.

The other day, Ambassador Kato was quoted as saying our relationship is under stress. We've certainly have many challenges, including coordinating our approaches to North Korea, implementing the far-reaching program to restructure American bases in Okinawa and mainland Japan, and, finding common ground on our arrangements for burden sharing and host nation support.

Dealing with these challenges is further complicated by divided government in both of our countries and the prospect of upcoming elections. America, for example, finds itself divided over the Iraq war. In Japan, we see differences over Japan's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean.

Occasionally, divided government and periodic elections are the healthy price we both pay for the democratic process, and this is something we should celebrate and not bemoan. At the same, during periods of unsettled politics, a special responsibility falls on the professionals and experts in both governments, as well as private organizations like this Society, to maintain relations on an even keel.

In this respect, one of the largely unappreciated assets in our relationship is the community of gifted, experienced, often language proficient, career officers who have spent their careers in Japan and in the United States, supporting the crucial dialogue between us. Ambassador Kato is a good example. There are many others of you in this room. E.g., Bill and Judy Clark, Bill and Peggy Breer, Rust and Kris Deming, and the best diplomat of all, Jean Pearce.

Both governments need to continue to ensure that we select and train the best officers. When American officials look to Japan, they continue to expect to see superb counterparts, dedicated to our relationship. And when Japanese officials look to America, at State, Defense, the NSC, Treasury, and elsewhere, they expect to see their equivalent in important positions.

This need may be more important than ever. With all of these profound changes and challenges in the world, we must be prepared to adjust and adapt almost as never before.

Because of the election cycle the US is already engaged in and Japan is likely to face, there may well be something like a 15 month hiatus, a distraction, away from the complete attention to the needs of our alliance from the political leadership in both nations. No matter what happens in January 2009, we will inaugurate a new president who must then assemble a new government with wholesale changes across the board. We all know what that can mean.

Both governments must measure up to this challenge. I also hope that in this campaign, both political parties will be heard addressing the American people about

the deep value to America of our relationship with Japan. There is so much at stake.

The other day, Strobe Talbott spoke in Minneapolis about dealing with what he called the “mega threats” that threaten the whole human enterprise - real, looming, cataclysmic disasters that could devastate life within the lifetimes of our grandchildren. He mentioned two: the spread of nuclear weapons to perhaps 20 more nations within the next 10 years or so and the very real prospect of a mega threat tipping point producing catastrophic climate change.

Our nations are uniquely equipped to move together against these threats by providing world leadership to turn humankind away from these looming civilization-threatening disasters. With the Kyoto treaty expiring in 2012, what better way to deal with this frightening risk of green house disasters, than to resume our negotiations at Kyoto to update and strengthen that treaty?

Recently, a CSIS commission on smart power, co-chaired by Rich Armitage and Joe Nye issued a valuable study highlighting the broad range of challenges and opportunities we face together. It would be a good place to start as we shape a shared agenda to build a safer and more prosperous world.

We may be at a juncture in world affairs where our renewed global leadership may be more openly received. The other day, our Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates, made an appeal for greater exercise of “soft power” which I took to mean doing more real things that change people’s lives for the better. No two nations on earth acting together could better lead our world in this more positive and hopeful direction than could Japan and the United States.

Like any human relationship, our alliance will naturally ebb and flow. But, what we have learned is that when we are focused, when we set clear strategies and objectives and let each side decide freely how best to implement them, that is when we are at our best, and when there is bipartisan support for this on both sides of the Pacific. We have the foundation of an alliance held together by strategic rationale, trust between our publics, and leaders working together and sharing objectives and values, with each side stepping up without being dictated to by the other. I am sure that this is the path we are on. Because of this, I see a future for the alliance as impressive as its history.

Your website reads as follows: “the relationship between the United States and Japan has undergone many changes in the past fifty years, but the Japan-America society’s mission has not changed. We will continue to reach out at the people-to-people level to promote greater understanding of Japan and its culture, society and economy and to strengthen the relationship between the Japanese and American peoples.”

Times may change but the mission will not. Let us always take stock of the realities we face, but never lose sight of the ideals that will continue to unite our two nations for years to come.

Thank you and congratulations.