



Title	Speech by the Honorable Howard H. Baker, U. S. Ambassador to Japan, and Comments by the Ambassador and Mrs. Nancy Kassebaum Baker during a Roundtable Discussion on U. S.-Japan Relations with Graduate Students at OSIPP
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Speech by the Honorable Howard H. Baker,
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November 5, 2001

Transcribed and Edited by Robert D. ELDRIDGE*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a distinct pleasure to be here. The Consul General (Robert Ludan) advised me that there would be this opportunity and I greatly looked forward to it. I am particularly pleased that Sharon (Mrs. Robert Ludan) is here with us today. We shared this trip (to Kansai) with the Consul General and his wife, and it has been a real pleasure. It is particularly a pleasure for me to introduce my wife Nancy, who is sitting here by my left. Nancy has had a distinguished public career and comes from a distinguished political family. Together we have many enthusiastic conversations. As you said earlier, Bob, we may not all agree among the students and ourselves, and perhaps Nancy and I do not always agree on public policy issues. Nonetheless, we have great conversations about that, and are delighted to have this chance today to share our thoughts with you.

Mr. President (Dr. Kishimoto Tadamitsu), Dean (Dr. Tsuji Masatsugu), Professor (Kurosawa Mitsuru), those others of you here who have come, we are glad that you are here as well, but it is really with the young leadership of this country and the world that we especially wish to have the opportunity to interact with today.

Dean Tsuji's characterization (*ed.—in his opening comments*) of the world today is

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accurate, that is, things are not the same after September 11. To say that is almost a cliché these days because it is said so often, but nonetheless it is true. I will not try to innumerate all of the ways that it has changed, but I would call your attention to one, and perhaps you share this insight and view.

Since that terrible day when so many lives were lost, it seems to me that the constellation of issues between countries has changed. There are almost 190 nations now who expressed their support in the war against terrorism. In the course of that, many other issues, at least for the time being, have been subordinated in importance, relatively speaking, and diminished. Although surely that will not be a permanent situation, it is an interesting situation—to see countries like Russia, China, the United States, India, and Pakistan, and so many others, who have traditional and historic disagreements on major issues, come together in their expression of indignation for international terrorism and to express their support for the fight against it. Obviously, Japan is in the vanguard of those who have done so.

As a matter of extraordinary satisfaction to me, and great satisfaction to our government, the Japanese Diet proceeded to enact legislation which will permit Japanese forces to be involved in our common struggle against terrorism. As Nancy and I both come from political backgrounds, indeed legislative backgrounds, it was particularly noteworthy that your Diet acted so swiftly. We know firsthand how long it takes sometimes to enact important legislative initiatives. So it was truly extraordinary that the Japanese government and the Japanese Diet was able to consider these issues, to debate them extensively and to act very promptly. I find that to be a testimony to the friendship between the United States and Japan, among other things, and to be a sure sign that Japan is a part of the worldwide effort to declare that international terrorism is not to be permitted and it enlists in the struggle against it.

It would not be realistic of me to expect or to say that we can eliminate terrorism. We can not. It is a function of the human spirit. But what we can do in our combined effort is to express our indignation, our outrage, our determination to restrict and diminish the prospects of terrorism, and to make sure that terrorists world-wide know that their terrible acts would not go unchallenged. That really is the issue here. No one that I am aware of seriously thinks that they could eliminate terrorism completely. But it would be irresponsible in the extreme I think for nation states or for individuals to countenance what happened on September 11—the vast loss of innocent life in one great

terrorist incident.

So the world is different. It has changed, and therefore while it is often repeated to the point of being a cliché, it is also an accurate description.

How does Japan relate to this? It is, I suppose, as it should be, of particular interest to our friends here around this horseshoe-shaped table. Japan is a great sovereign nation state. It has reached the point in its development since the conflict between the United States and Japan where it has begun to assert its sovereignty and independence, and only properly as it should. I am often asked, "Well what does the United States want Japan to supply?" or "What do we want Japan to do in this war on terrorism?" My reply consistently has been, and will be to you, that it is not for us to tell you what to do. You are a great independent nation. But you are our ally and our friend. We expect and intend to take very seriously what you are willing to do and what resources you wish to bring to bear on this fight. You are a great sovereign nation and you have taken your place among the other great nation states of the world. So throughout my short tenure I made sure that the Japanese government does not expect Americans tell them how to act but rather we welcome your decisions on how to join together in this fight against terrorism. The action of the Japanese Diet has been very rewarding indeed to see it taking these steps. I do not know even now how the final configuration will be arranged. I do not know what forces Japan will bring to bear—naval forces, land forces or otherwise. I do know that you will do it within the confines of your judgment, and according to your culture, your laws, and your constitution. But you will do it. You have already expressed your desire and willingness. I do know as well that the U.S. government will be grateful and cooperative in conversations ongoing or about to begin between our military leaders on how to coordinate things. It will be very interesting to see how that develops. Once again, America will not try to tell Japan what it should do or what it expects with regard to its participation in this war against terrorism.

Let me switch if I may to other things. You live and are preparing to enter into public policy careers perhaps. This is perhaps what is the most exciting time in all of civilization. The range of opportunities for young men and women today is unparalleled. Educational opportunities, economic opportunities, your training opportunities here at this great university are virtually unparalleled. Your access to that training is certainly of historic dimensions. I expect in the years to come it will be recorded that your generation—this generation—was able to take advantage of the history and perspectives of

our previous encounters to chart a course that will be of benefit of all mankind. There is no shortage of problems, no shortage of injustice in the world. There is no shortage of opportunity to be of service. The world is full of danger, terrorists and otherwise. The world is also full of opportunity as well. So the one thing that I think would be your greatest error would be to not participate in the challenges. As young men and women, with your extensive training and experience, you have it seems to me an obligation to contribute not only your knowledge, but your insights and ideas about what can be done to make a better life for your generation and those that follow.

I am an optimist by instinct, but I am also an optimist by choice. I believe optimists will win. The time before you will be the greatest time in the history of civilization, as a result of your participation, as a result of the rewards of science and technology, as a result of advanced philosophical thought, as a result of the ability of the world community to communicate, in a world where you have instantaneous communication around the globe, and with jet airplanes we almost have instantaneous transportation between the people of the world, we are becoming a community, a civilization. While nation states will not disappear, it seems to me that the likelihood that the concerted effort against a common enemy will expand and extend. So I envy you and your generation. You are entering on the best time perhaps in the history of civilization. It is up to you to take advantage of it.

I will be happy to try to answer your questions. Thank you.

Question and Answer Session (*ed.—slightly edited for brevity and clarity*)

Moderator (Professor Kurosawa Mitsuru): Thank you Ambassador Baker. This is a great opportunity for the students to ask questions. We have already asked for the students' questions ahead of time, and I would like to go ahead and designate the first student, Ms. Shinyo.

Ms. Shinyo (First year, Master's Student): Thank you for your opening comments. Do you feel that this is an especially challenging time to have been appointed Ambassador? Likewise is there anything specific that you hope to achieve during your time here in Japan as Ambassador, particularly in terms of the Japan-U.S. relationship?

Ambassador Baker: Thank you very much. When you are appointed Ambassador, you become the representative of the president and the spokesman for your country to that nation. The president gives you a charge that is two pages long. It is historic in its language because it has been utilized almost since the beginning of our republic. One of the charges in that letter is to improve and enhance the friendship between our two countries, and I take that very seriously. In order to do that, it has been my purpose to try to understand this country. I have traveled to Japan many times in the past but to live here and to serve here as Ambassador is a very different thing from visiting here. So my special charge, my special ambition is to see that when I leave, the friendship and relationship between Japan and the United States is stronger even than it is today.

I was privileged to attend the 50th anniversary celebration of the signing of treaty of peace and friendship between Japan and the United States in San Francisco—in fact that is where we were when the events of September 11 occurred and we could not get back for days—but it occurred to me during that meeting that over the period of half-century, not only have Japan and the United States been firm allies, but the two nations have become friends, and that we share an economic destiny, we share a common purpose in our commitment to the freedom of the individual and the aspirations of individual citizens, and that we have already come a long way to establishing a unique relationship between Japan and the United States. It will be my purpose to try to continue that.

I had never expected to be Ambassador to Japan. I was surprised when the president asked me to do it, but I am a pushover for presidents. (Laughter) I had never expected to be President Reagan's Chief of Staff, and I was surprised when I agreed to do it. (Laughter) It would be too grand to say that I have a feeling of responsibility to do these things when asked by the president, but it would not be too much to say that I take it very seriously.

The Foreign Service of the United States government is a wonderful institution. Most of our Ambassadors are from the Foreign Service. People like my friend the Consul General devote their careers and their lives to seeing that the Foreign Service as a permanent adjunct to our government functions well. Some portion of the ambassadorial representation is political; that is to say the government chooses people not for their long service in foreign policy, but because they are chosen for some other reason. The tradition in Japan at least since World War II has been to have both "political"

ambassadors as well as career ambassadors. You have people like former Vice President [Walter] Mondale, Ambassador [Michael] Mansfield, who was our Majority Leader of the Senate and who died recently, Tom Foley, who was Speaker of the House of Representatives. The important point here is that our government has chosen people who have been prominent in our government in other capacities in order to speak for our government in Japan. I think it is a good idea.

In general I think it is a good idea to have the Foreign Service representative to include a certain part that is political and not just professional. (Consul General) Bob (Ludan) may disagree with me (laughter), but I think it has worked well. I can think of other great ambassadors to other countries who have come from political backgrounds.

But I have the ambition to improve and enhance relationship between Japan and the United States, and I hope and trust that I will be able to work with other representatives of my country. When I leave, I want the relationship to be better than it was.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Our next question is from Mr. Tada.

Question (Mr. Tada, Second Year Doctoral Student): Thank you. I have two questions. Although I do not necessarily believe so, do you feel that the Japan-U. S. alliance, as it stands now, is past its usefulness with the ending of the Cold War? If so, how would you hope to see the alliance evolve to make it more relevant to today's geo-political environment?

Ambassador Baker: Yes. The Cold War is over, we are grateful for that But the world is still a dangerous place. The coming together of nations who have similar objectives is just as important now as it was during the Cold War, for different purposes, or slightly different purposes. The relationship between Japan and the United States now is in a way even more important than it was during the Cold War. During the Cold War, it was unlikely that there would be a great conflict here between Russia and the United States. But now it is more likely that you will have economic challenges, terrorist challenges, and other challenges of that sort, and so it becomes as important, if not more important to improve the relationship between Japan and the United States more than it was during the Cold War. That would not be so in Europe perhaps, where there the Cold War was a very immediate thing. There was a concern that the old Soviet

Union would come across the northern plains of Germany and try to invade or capture France and England. Nonetheless, it is still a dangerous world, and the alliance between our two countries is just as relevant today, as it was during the Cold War.

Moderator: Thank you. Mr. Shigemasa please.

Question (Mr. Shigemasa, Third Year Doctoral Student): Thank you very much. Mr. Ambassador, my question concerns military cooperation between our two countries. Would you like Japan to be more assertive or positive in military operations with U.S. forces, and what in your personal opinion, do you think about Japanese Self-Defense Forces providing logistical support in current and future operations? Thank you.

Ambassador Baker: That really is the fundamental issue. What is Japan's support? How is this new legislation in the Diet to be carried out? I have already said that we would not expect that Japan would exceed the guidelines of its culture and statutes of the Constitution. We would respect this.

But at the same token, Japan is not only a great economic power, but it is a great military naval power. It is often said, and I have said, that the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region depends to a greater extent on the solidarity of Japan and the United States than on any other factor. If that is true, then our relationship with China and Korea and other nations of Asia depends as well on how well we execute the alliance and friendship between Japan and the United States.

By the way, you are much closer to China than we are. You have a much longer history and more knowledge of China than we do. We in the United States hope and expect that you would give us your insight on how the future of these relationships will be shaped.

On the matter of your military power and naval power, I do not think that any time in the near future are you likely to change Article 9 of the Constitution—you could—but I doubt that you will. In addition to the letter of the Constitution, you have a strong sentiment in this nation against direct involvement in military action, and we respect that. But I also said a moment ago that you are a great nation state and have taken your place among the nations of the world, so not only is your responsibility to yourself, but also to the stability of the region. I do not think you will be involved in land forces in

Afghanistan—I would be very surprised if you were—you might be in peacekeeping operations, as in Cambodia and East Timor, but I do not anticipate that you will soon be involved in any direct military involvement. Your Maritime Self Defense Forces are a little different in that they are guarding the sea lanes, which are your lifeline for trade and commerce. As an island nation, you must depend on that.

I had a conversation with one of your senior naval officers, maritime officers, recently. I said Japan and the United States are the two largest economies in the world, and Japan and the United States have the two greatest naval forces in the Pacific. My friend in the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces said “No, that is not correct. Russia is still here. We may not be biggest naval force in the Pacific, but we are the best.” (Laughter) And that probably is right. The United States and Japan certainly are the most advanced naval powers in the Pacific.

Once again, it is unlikely that you will be directly involved in combat, but it is also likely that if your vital interests were challenged on the high seas, that you would defend them. That would include merchant ships, as well as naval forces. I do not think Japan will be a warring power, but I do think that Japan understands its responsibility as a nation state.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question is from Mr. Kaneko.

Question (Mr. Kaneko, First Year Doctoral Student): Thank you. My question might be a bit tricky. Currently, military operations are going on in Afghanistan, but I would like to ask something from a different perspective. If Japan were directly attacked by foreign terrorists, how would the Japan-U. S. alliance work in such a contingency? Would the United States take military action in this case too to prevent further terrorist attacks?

Ambassador Baker: Well, the alliance is a two-way street. The treaty provides for our mutual defense and friendship. If Japan were attacked by terrorists, number one, I think it is highly likely that America would react in the same way that Japan has reacted to terrorism in the United States, that is with sympathy and understanding and support and finally, economic support. There have been enormous contributions for relief of the victims and the families in New York and Washington. But if you had a major assault on Japan by terrorist groups, there is no doubt in my mind that Japan would make its

own decisions on how to approach that. There is also no doubt in my mind that if Japan asked the United States to be helpful, that the United States would do it out of treaty obligations and also out of friendship, and because we are allied in a common war against terrorism. But we already are involved in cooperation. I do not disclose any secrets when I tell you that the United States and Japan compare notes on what is going on. They share information to the extent that they share information, but that is a matter I will let others discuss. But that is already happening. As in the case of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, we have about 190 Tokyo Police who are the security for that embassy. They are not Americans but Japanese police. We have a corps of about 20 Marines there, but the primary responsibility for protecting the embassy is undertaken by Japan. I think as well that in the case of the anthrax scare, which occurred here at the Consulate [in Osaka] and we received a letter at the Embassy in Tokyo, which turned out to be a hoax, but in those cases, it was the Japanese Tokyo police and local police here who took jurisdiction of that and investigated the incident. So there is already a level of coordination and cooperation in our common cause against terrorism.

I guess the next step beyond your question is what would happen if there were an overt attack against Japan, I do not mean a terrorist attack, but one by some nation. I have no doubt in my mind that the United States and Japan would make common cause. But how exactly would depend once again on what Japan wanted, not what the United States dictated. Japan after all is not a client state of the United States. Japan is a great and sovereign ally of the United States, and we respect Japan and its decision in this and other matters.

I do not know what would happen, but my guess is that it is not going to happen. My guess is that what we are doing now—what you are doing, what we are doing, what other nations are doing—will make it clear to terrorists that their actions are not without consequence, not without response. As I said in my opening remarks, it is unlikely that we will eliminate terrorism, but we can sure make it less easy for terrorists and make it clear that terrorists will be punished or that we will try to punish them if they engage in terrorist activity. That is sort of the real nature of the activity now to fight terrorism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Japan is a full partner in that.

Moderator: Thank you. Ms. Nakao?

Question (Ms. Nakao, Second Year Master's Student): It was an honor to meet you and shake hands with you at the door a moment ago.

Ambassador Baker: It was my pleasure too.

Question (continued): Although security issues have tended to dominate news and bilateral relations recently, the economy is also an important issue. Japan has been in a recession for a long time now, and the United States is increasingly experiencing economic problems. What can Japan do in the field of economic cooperation in order to help both countries get over the economic downturn and the impact of the recent terrorist attacks?

Ambassador Baker: That is a very important and interesting question. What can the two countries do for each other in the economic field? I made a speech today before noon saying if Japan prospers, America prospers, and if America prospers then Japan prospers, because we are so intertwined economically that you can't approach one without the other. What can you do here? Once again, I would not dare tell Japan what to do. But what I will do, and what I have done, is when the opportunity presents itself to compare notes with Japan. I have told Japanese officials about our experience with banking, the difficulties we had with our savings and loan situation, and how we approached that, about the RDC, which is a trust company, how we bought up bad loans, packaged them, and then put them back in the market to release credit and to create new opportunities for investment. I have shared those thoughts with Japanese officials. We have talked about the importance of trying to restore a level of confidence so people will want to be consumers and to travel and engage normal life activities. We have talked about those things.

But each nation is so individual and different that they once again must make their own decisions. I have been much impressed frankly with the efforts of Prime Minister Koizumi to spell out a package of economic reforms. His 7-point program is very impressive and very comprehensive. Whether or not it can be enacted is up to the Diet. The Diet has been sort of distracted from that because of the debate on the war against terrorism. But before long, I am sure that the Diet will focus on the Prime Minister's recommendations on economic matters. And it will be very interesting to the world and

America and certainly to Japan to see whether or not the Diet enacts those programs. They are not without difficulty because some of the things that are proposed by the Prime Minister involve structural changes, in terms of privatization and other things, will cause temporary dislocation and perhaps make economic circumstances worse temporarily. As in other matters, it is going to require not only good judgment, but courage and determination. As I say, I have been much impressed with the Prime Minister's appearance of determination and I am hopeful that we will see the program of economic measures enacted in Japan and that they will address the fundamental issues. Of all the issues involved, I think the banking issue is the most immediate because it provides the lifeblood of economic expansion, but there are many others and there may be some out there that I do not even know about. But I think your prime minister is well on the way to advancing the cause of reform and I think your Diet will consider it carefully. Once again, if Japan prospers, America prospers, and if America prospers, Japan prospers because we are so intertwined economically now and it is just that way. We wish you well, we wish ourselves well.

On the economy of the United States, it is true that things are not going well right now. In the last quarter, the numbers were not good, and there is a fair likelihood that the next ones will not be very good. But America has already put in place a range of measures that are calculated to change that, beginning with the reduction of the interest rate of the Federal Reserve, which is our central bank, by the U.S. Treasury announcing the other day that they were no longer going to issue long-term bonds, which will free up money for the private sector, in terms of the Congress appropriating so far about 100 billion dollars for new programs that will stimulate the economy.

Earlier today in that same speech, I expressed my personal view—and this is not wise, but I will do it again as it is just a personal view—that my guess is with all of these measures coming together at the same time, if you were sitting here a year from now Mr. President (Kishimoto), you would be worried about how to stop inflation. I think it will work, but it is going to work to the degree that may overshoot the mark. America has a terrible habit of doing that. Doing things that come on—line after they are needed and we stop them before too long a time.

Anyway I think both the Japanese economy and U.S. economy will find their way. But in all candor, I must say that I think your problems in Japan are much more difficult than ours, partly because they have been going on for so long. A long time, 10 years

or more since your recession started. But I am optimistic and I think you have strong leadership.

Moderator: Thank you. I believe Ms. Masumoto has a question for Mrs. Nancy Baker.

Question (Ms. Masumoto, First Year Master's Student): Thank you. My question is for Mrs. Baker. Mrs. Baker, it is often said that with diplomats who are married, both the U.S. government and the host government get "two ambassadors for the price of one." This is particularly true with regard to the both of you. You have had a very close relationship with Japan over the years and indeed in your own right could be the ambassador. Mrs. Baker, would you be willing to comment on what sort of role you see for yourself during your time here in Japan?

Ambassador Baker: I am holding my breath. (Laughter)

Mrs. Baker: It is a very thoughtful question because I have asked myself that on occasion. I did serve many years on the Senate Foreign Relations committee and I have had a great interest in Japan, although my assignment on the committee for African affairs.

First let me say how pleased I am to see so many women here in the graduate school. I hope this indicates that indeed there is going to be more women taking an interest in foreign service, more women providing leadership in public policy. I think it is a great opportunity. I have often thought of the remark I used to make that the "hand that rocks the cradle often builds the libraries, schools, and hospitals," long before we had the right to vote in our country. It has been a slow process for women here, as well as for us at home. But what is interesting to me here today is how society is changing, in particular for women. It is rather uncertain time and a challenging time for both young men and young women. I have three sons and a daughter who are all in the working world and home. I think as these roles change and demographics change here with people living longer and traditions become perhaps less certain, it is a very challenging time and an uncertain time. How exactly one meets these—and I am not sure even how I do because it is hard to step in and give any advice when really there is no good advice other than perhaps we did it at home. When I was elected to the United States Senate in 1978, I was the only woman there for a time. I was frequently asked how it was to be a woman

in the United States Senate. Of course the leader of the Senate at that time was Senator Baker who I called Mr. Leader. I don't do that today. (Laughter) I was frequently asked how I would address women's issues, but my belief was and is that women care just as much about economic issues, international issues, foreign policy issues as men do. We care about health care, we care the quality health care and education, but so do men. I think as we work together particularly in community efforts, utilizing your voice in those community efforts is one of the ways to exercise political power.

I think if I had any comment to make, it would be that I am not sure that that is done as much in Japan as it is in the United States. Women serve on school boards, we get involved in community efforts, and it is those efforts that I think lead to a voice in local government and in national government. For women today it is a very important responsibility. I think as you can exchange views in the school here and understand what some of those challenges are, not to forsake tradition, because I think that is very important to one's culture, particularly the unique and wonderful aspects and tradition here in this country, but to use it and not forsake it, to really build on the change taking place, and it is a terrific challenge, not only for young women but young men to accept the change that is taking place.

That is not a good answer, but it is one that interests me a great deal and if I can be of any help in sharing some of the things that we have done at home because it has been a long time actually that we have worked to bring about some changes, and we are still working on them. Out of 100 Senators, there are now 12 women in the United States Senate, so progress has been made, but we have been working a long time. I do not believe it is so much the numbers, it is what you do that is important, and where you are that counts. It is just as important as what one does here at the school, or in one's home community, as what is done at the Diet in Tokyo. In fact I would suggest it is even more important perhaps in seeing that change occurs.

Moderator: Thank you very much Ambassador and Mrs. Baker. We have many more questions, but I am afraid that time does not allow us to continue. I appreciate your very kind and sincere responses to the questions.