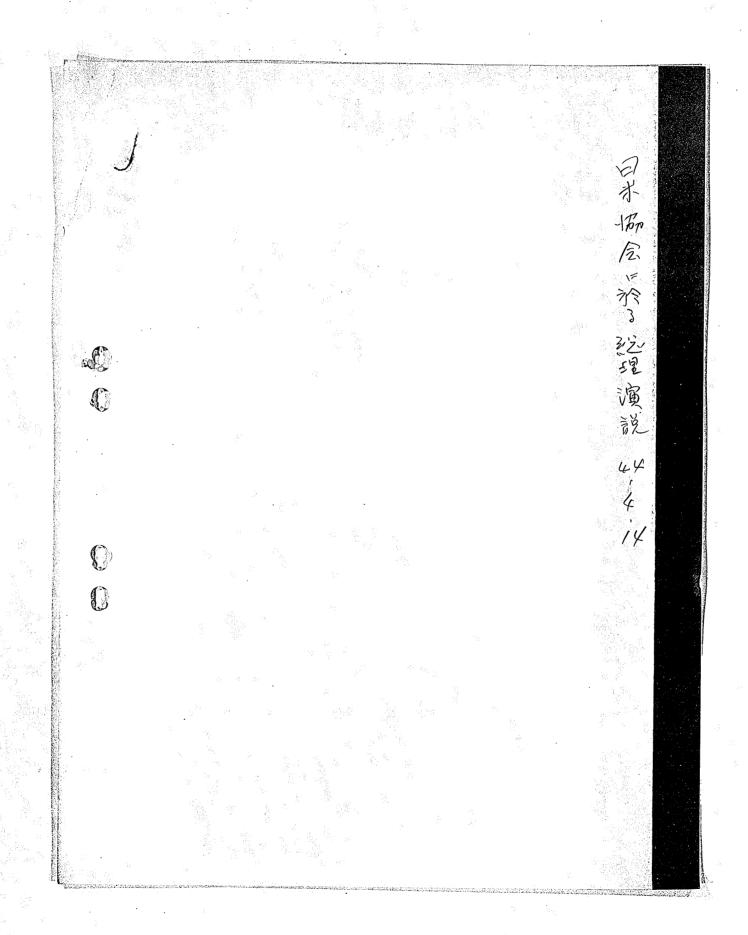
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## Address by Prime Minister Eisaku Sato before the America-Japan Society

April 14, 1969

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am extremely happy and deeply honored to have been given this opportunity today to address this distinguished group of leaders from the political, business and academic worlds in the United States. I am particularly grateful to the America-Japan Society for this occasion where I can present my views in a frank and forthright manner.

You are visiting Japan at the height of the spring season when my country is at its finest. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy your stay here and, at the same time, will further deepen your understanding of my country.

As all of you are aware, in the 100 years following the Meiji Restoration, Japan has succeeded in the task of modernization. Needless to say, the process which led to this achievement was founded upon a unique cultural pattern which had been nurtured over thousands of years. It was on this foundation that We were able to build the image of a modern Japan by absorbing, digesting and harmonizing the philosophical and material values of Western civilization. In particular, the effect and influence of the contacts which Japan had with the United States over these 100 years have been most far-reaching. Since Japan was awakened from its 300 years of isolation by the arrival of Commodore Perry to our shores, our two countries have continued to maintain a close relationship as two great nations on the opposite sides of the Pacific. During this time, there was an unfortunate period when we found ourselves as adversaries in a bitter war. However, the fundamental relations between our two countries as Pacific powers reflected the international situation in the post-war Asia and the interests of our two countries coincided in many fields of our national activities to an even greater degree than before the war. It was upon such a common foundation that the Japan-U.S. Security was concluded. To-day, under this Treaty, our two countries have established a partnership and are cooperating in the maintenance of world peace in the face of a rapidly changing international situation.

I am convinced that Japan and the United States, adhering to the principles of freedom and democracy, share a common philosophy and a common ideal toward state and society. This stems from the spirit of true freedom and equality which is predicated upon the preservation of individual dignity and the recognition that all men are equal. The United States has consistently lived up to this spirit ever since its birth as a nation. In the case of Japan, it is something which the people have finally come to acquire through an arduous process of historical experience.

Today, both Japan and the United States possess a common outlook in political, economic and cultural affairs. With technological innovation and the spectacular advance of science and technology; the distance between our two countries has been conspicuously narrowed. As Pacific nations and, again, as advanced nations, our duties and our responsibilities are self-evident. I firmly believe that the wisdom and the industry of the Japanese people will bring about peace in Asia and that these very qualities can become a major force to ensure stability in the livelihood of the people in this part of the world.

However, I wish to take this opportunity, especially, to point out that, if Japan and the United States are to contribute to world peace as true partners, there is a certain obstacle that must be surmounted. That, as you are undoubtedly aware, is the question of Okinawa.

With your deep knowledge of international politics, I am sure that you are familiar with the historical background in which more than 60 countries have acquired independence since the end of the Second World War. Before these countries achieved their independence, there were many cases in which arguments were brought forth to either limit the scope of autonomy to be offered, or postpone the day when independence would be granted. Indeed, in certain of the situations, such arguments appeared to have some validity. Judging from the results, however, they were of no avail. They proved to be futile when faced with the overwhelming desire of a people to change the state of affairs wherein it was considered unjust for one people, by virtue of a higher political status, to exercise control over another.

What I want you to understand more than anything else concerning Okinawa is the basic nature of the problem, namely the fact that one million inhabitants of Okinawa, who are part of our nation with a proud history and a high cultural standard, find themselves today, more than twenty years after the war, still under the administration of a foreign power and unable thus to enjoy the fundamental rights of being Japanese citizens. It has ceased to be just a political problem; it has become a humanitarian issue.

To be sure, the fact that the role of the United States in Okinawa is not a selfish one, particularly the fact that the bases in Okinawa are playing an important role in the maintenance of the peace and security of Japan and the Far East including Japan and the fact also that the United States has been taking various measures for the welfare of the inhabitants of Okinawa are well understood in Japan. Indeed, it will be said that it is for this reason that the foundation of U.S.-Japanese friendship has not been shaken inspite of being burdened by the difficult problem of Okinawa for these many years.

Nevertheless, even in the midst of such a favorable atmosphere of amity and mutual understanding, this problem should no longer be allowed to go unheeded. There is a national consensus in Japan which calls for the early return of Okinawa and this desire is exceedingly strong.

In these circumstances, the longer the delay in arriving at a solution to the Okinawan question, the greater will be the difficulties that face our two countries in the political field.

I am convinced that it is in the national interest of both our countries to overcome all obstacles and to seek a peaceful and mutually satisfactory settlement of the Okinawa issue. Once this is achieved, U.S.-Japanese relations will assume a wider dimension and we could hope for a further development of such a relationship over the long term.

The attainment of this objective is, I consider, my supreme duty as a statesman and it is my sincere hope that the accomplishment of this duty to my people will contribute to the sound development of the amicable relations between our two countries.

I would like those of you who are present here today to understand this point of view and to help set the right direction in the trend of American public opinion.

In the same way that you have displayed your interest in Japan, I am sure that you are also deeply interested in the general situation in Asia.

One of the greatest problems in Asia is the war in Viet Nam; another is the attitude and posture of Communist China. It is gratifying to note that with the commencement of the talks in Paris, the conflict in the Indo-Chinese peninsula is expected ultimately to be brought to an end. The United States and Japan share together the wish that the fighting will stop at the earliest possible date. It is my earnest hope that the parties concerned will continue the negotiations with calm and perseverance.

Japan keeps the door open to Communist China by maintaining a special policy of separating political and economic matters. On the Chinese mainland, the Cultural Revolution which has lasted for over three years is beginning to run its course and the Ninth Party Congress is under way. We are unable to perceive, however, any sign that the Communist Chinese regime intends to follow a flexible line in its external relations. As far as my country is concerned, we will continue to follow developments objectively whatever the initiatives and actions taken by China and seek to pursue our fundamental policy.

Asia has long been marked by a heterogeneous character with its diversities in history, ethnic background, religious traditions and customs. Coupled with the fact that a great many of the countries of Asia have a colonial past, intra-regional relations have been limited and, in certain cases, there has ever been mutual distrust among these countries. Of late, a spirit of solidarity to cooperate with each other in the common task to overcome poverty through economic cooperation has begun to emerge. I am convinced that this trend will have the most far-reaching effect on the future of Asia. I express the hope that the United States and the other advanced nations of the world will further increase their efforts in assisting the full-scale economic development of Asian countries through such international organizations as the Asian Development Bank and through bilateral negotiations. I would like to emphasize in this connection that peace in Asia is directly relevant to the peace of the world.

I would like to say a few words about one final topic, namely the economic relationship between our two countries.

I welcome the fact that Japanese-American economic ties have become increasingly close, supported as they are by the economic growth of our respective countries. For last year, the total trade volume between the two countries exceeded seven billion dollars both

ways. Our exports to and imports from the United States each accounted for nearly 30 per cent of Japan's total world trade. For the United States too, Japan is one of its best customers. The smooth and sustained development of this mutual trade is also of deep political significance.

I evaluate highly the role that the United States has assumed as the champion of free trade in the post-war world. In my country also, there is an increasing awareness that the free growth and expansion of trade and economic activities in the world is indispensable to our own growth. However, some of you may point out that the liberalization measures taken by Japan are inadequate. On this point I would like to reply that economic progress cannot take place simultaneously in all sectors of the economy. Inevitably there are certain sectors which fall behind and one of the major problems of the Government is to institute special measures to correct the strain for a certain fixed period.

We are making every effort to correct such a strain and I believe that as a result thereof liberalization of trade and capital transaction will be achieved soon in all sectors of the economy. In any event there will be no turning back from this direction, for the policy of liberalization has already been built in into the Japanese economy and we are already making steady progress on the way to liberalization. I strongly hope that the United States will fully understand and grasp Japan's resolve as well as the current situation of my country and continue to perform the role of champion of the free economic system in the interest of expansion and prosperity of the world economy.

I expect that numerous problems requiring solutions will continue to occur between our two countries. In this connection we must not overlook the existence of forces which attempt to harm the friendly relations between the United States and Japan by utilizing such issues. Nevertheless, inspite of the existence of such forces, I am firmly convinced that it would not be possible to create a rift in the relationship between two societies such as ours which share fundamentally the same aspirations and where cooperation is inevitably in the common interest.

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日米協会における佐藤総冊

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