

Chronological: Japan-American Society, Honolulu

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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TAPE (SIDE A)
SENATOR DANIEL INOUE
JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY
AUGUST 27, 1991
ILIKAI HOTEL
HONOLULU, HAWAII
(50th ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR)

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Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



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AMERICA SOCIETY

, AUGUST 27, 1991

LIKAI HOTEL

HONOLULU, HAWAII

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JAPAN AMERICA SOCIETY

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 1991

ILIKAI HOTEL

HONOLULU, HAWAII

Honolulu, Hawaii--

I appreciate your very generous introduction. I must confess to you that as a politician whenever I get those words of praise I like it, but knowing the effect it would have upon a person, I always remind myself of an event that happened not too long ago.

In 1973, during the highly televised Watergate hearings, the Gallup Poll did a survey and found that my identification among Americans was the highest in the United States Senate because of my constant appearance on television. As a result, I began receiving invitations, about a hundred a day, from all over the United States. And I decided to accept one of them and this was in Connecticut. I got on a flight at National Airport in Washington and took out my notes to scan over them and a very lovely young lady took the seat next to mine. As we flew I somehow sensed that she was staring at me. I am certain that many of you have had this experience--you don't have to see their eyes, but you know they're staring at you. It's a very uncomfortable feeling--I have no idea what she had in mind, and finally she cleared her throat and the sign came on "fasten your seat belt", and she said "I'm sorry to bother you, sir, but I must tell you this before we part--you're a great American, you're doing a great job, we all admire you. Keep up the good work, Dr. Hayakawa." Well, as all of us know, we all look alike.

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economic, social and political havoc in the United States and Japan--for that matter as well as the rest of the world.

Over the past decade, in the comparative nature of trade, I believe Europeans have come to the conclusion that one on one, they are not able to really compete with either the United States or Japan. So it's no secret they decided to coalesce, form a confederation and today we have in reality one entity--it's made up of several nations. As they constitute this formidable economic force, I think we should be prepared for competition of real magnitude-- they are already beginning the practice of pitting one against the other--pitting Japan against the U.S. and vice versa.

Having said all of this, the question now rises, where do we stand as far as the relationship of Japan and the United States is concerned. In a few months the United States will observe the 50th Anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It was a date that many of us hope would close this dark chapter in the history of the United States and open a new era in the history of Japan-America relationship--an important date, and I think much good can come out of this event depending on how we address it and approach it. Yet on this 50th Anniversary, though it provides us with this rare opportunity to visibly embrace with much fanfare and excitement with the hope for a good 21st century, many of us sadly observe that hatred and racism and pain are still present among our fellow Americans--it is still loud and persistent 50 years later. And sadly, I think the cries of hatred have been so loud that the Administration have had to make special accommodations to appropriately observe this ceremony.

And so I am extremely pleased that the President of the United States, George Bush, sensing the importance and the great possibilities of this moment, has decided to visit Japan on the eve of the 7th. And there, I believe he will meet with the Japanese leaders and with the people of Japan and frankly discuss the past and the potentials of the future. I think it is important that the leadership of both countries frankly discuss the importance that each other holds for the future of this Pacific Rim. After this meeting the President will return to the United States--he will come to Hawaii to participate in the observance of December 7th. He will return to pay tribute to those who died in the war as well as to herald this new beginning. And I hope that all of us will commend the President for this act of political bravery and courage because I know he is doing this in the face of the outcry of hate.

I just hope that the Japanese will receive our President--receive him with open arms of friendship, because I know he is going there to demonstrate to the people of Japan in a very extreme way the desire that we have on our part to continue our friendly relationship and to hopefully look into the next 50 years.

As the Japanese receive our President, I also hope and pray that Americans, after 50 years, will begin to put behind this pain and this hatred that December 7th has represented for many of us. We cannot continue to look back into the past by keeping this pain and hatred in the forefront of our memories. Yes, it is well to remember. We should never forget a war because to forget a war would lead us into the temptation of another war. We should remember the horrors of this war and do our utmost to prevent any further conflict. But we as Americans must look forward---we must learn to close this dark chapter of December 7, 1941, and accept Japan's hand of friendship, and I believe that hand-in-hand we can move forward to ensure ourselves that 50 years of advancement, of progress, of friendship, of peace. It will not be easy for Americans for many of them who lost their loved ones, still feel the pain of war. Neither will it be easy for the Japanese who have felt the pain of war. But I think 50 years of pain and hatred is long enough. I think the time has come for reconciliation and I hope that we have the sense to use December the 7th as that moment of reconciliation.

Thank you very much.

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