

East Asian and Pacific Bureau Chiefs of Mission Conference

Senator Daniel K. Akaka Papers

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REMARKS OF SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA
EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC BUREAU CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE
Honolulu, Hawaii

June 6, 1994

Thank you for that gracious introduction Assistant Secretary Lord. Aloha ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Honolulu. You could not have selected a more optimal location for the East Asian and Pacific Bureau's Chief of Mission Conference. We here in Hawaii, perhaps more than most, have long understood the importance of the Asia-Pacific region to our economic prosperity and security interests. President Clinton's commitment to center American foreign policy on the Asia-Pacific region, and to develop and maintain an active leadership role in the region, have fostered expectations here that our state, the crossroads of the Pacific, will play a significant role in future initiatives, conferences, and international meetings. It is an honor to address you today and offer a few observations on issues and trends for U.S. foreign policy in the region.

The political stability and economic development of the nations of Asia and the Pacific are key to American interests. At the APEC leaders meeting last November, President Clinton eloquently described his vision of a "New Pacific Community." This ambitious pronouncement signaled a heightened American commitment to an active leadership role in Asia. The President repeatedly has expressed the view that future American prosperity is closely linked to increased trade with the economies of Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Our engagement in the region, reflected in our bilateral and multilateral initiatives, has reflected the direction articulated by President Clinton. The Asia-Pacific region figures prominently in our post Cold War foreign policy. The successful APEC leaders meeting in Seattle, the lifting of the trade embargo on Vietnam, democratic elections in Cambodia, the inclusion of China, Vietnam, and Russia in regional security dialogues, and the ongoing cooperation with South Korea, Japan, China and the international community on North Korea's nuclear program are testament to American engagement in the region. Maintenance of our forward deployed U.S. forces in East Asia is essential to the region's strategic and economic security. The United States remains in position to exercise a pivotal leadership role in alleviating regional anxiety over North Korea and the prospect of nationalist expansionist ambitions.

Overall, our policies and actions in Asia have met the principles laid out by the President and serve the interests of the United States and our allies as we seek regional peace and security, economic development, and the promotion of political freedom. This progress, limited in some instances, is more

notable in light of the ongoing evolution of the post Cold War environment and its influence upon our nation's domestic and international interests.

I believe two recent policy actions will help to alleviate the friction experienced in our bilateral relations with Japan and China. First, the resumption of negotiations on the U.S.-Japan Framework for Economic Partnership agreement is a positive development toward the resolution of our disagreements with Japan on trade and macroeconomic issues.

Second, I support the President's decision to renew most favored nation trade status for China and separate trade relations from our efforts to promote human rights and democracy. I'm reasonably certain that a bipartisan majority of my colleagues in the Senate also support this action. Our policy of linking progress on human rights to MFN had outlived its usefulness and posed an obstacle to our security and economic interests in Asia. All of our allies in the region urged the continuation of MFN for China.

My travels in Asia over the past two years and meetings with delegations visiting the United States reinforced my opinion that linking MFN with non-trade issues was no longer a useful instrument of American policy. To continue viewing our relationship with China through the Cold War prism of 1989 is detrimental to our security, economic, and political interest with China and our allies in Asia.

A New Pacific Community excluding China would be domestically and internationally unsustainable. Efforts to marginalize China would only serve to further isolate the United States from Asia, undermine our interests, and exacerbate resentments and criticism over the direction of our engagement in the region. The nature of China's economic, political, and cultural development is central to the stability and prosperity of the Asian community and our own vital interests. We can, indeed we must, pursue our relationship with China within a larger framework which establishes a constructive dialogue and prioritizes our long-term economic, security, and political goals.

While cooperation with China may never develop into a close friendship anchored by shared values and institutions, I believe there is consensus in Congress that we must establish a cordial working relationship with China if we are to realize our immediate objectives, most significantly the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear confrontation, and advance our other long range interests.

In the long run, China's economic growth is the best vehicle for social and political reform. Trade and foreign investment are the prime reasons for China's opening to other nations. Economic growth has secured limited economic and personal

freedoms for the Chinese people. The continued expansion of trade and economic development will increase the flow of information and influence into China. Our policy interests must be driven by efforts to increase China's exposure to democratic, free market forces.

A dynamic market economy and repressive, centralized political system cannot coexist indefinitely. Our approach on human rights must reinforce and sustain the forces that are liberalizing China.

Our new policy framework with China should also guide our bilateral and multilateral policy with other nations in Asia and the Pacific. Economic development and prosperity in East Asia have brought about political and social changes which must be taken into account by policymakers. We need to understand and respect the significance of this transformation in both the structure and tone of our regional diplomatic initiatives.

Despite an underlying continuity of purpose and direction in U.S. policy, and evidence of reasonable levels of success sustained in these efforts, the media and the American people have voiced growing dissatisfaction with the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. A recent Gallup poll reported that 52 percent of those surveyed disapprove of the President's handling of foreign policy, with 37 percent expressing approval. Another opinion poll reported that only 13 percent of all Americans believe the Administration has a clear understanding of what to do in the international arena.

This public perception of inconsistency and amateurism threatens the credibility of U.S. policy and obscures the important groundwork this Administration has established through engagement. The situation has elevated concern in the Senate with the development and conduct of our foreign policy. A greater public forum has also been created for Congressional critics and special interest advocacy groups seeking to shift policy, or in certain instances, to weaken the President.

I see three primary reasons for this perception. First, the ebbing of the Cold War paradigm in the calculation of our national interest has weakened the ability of the President and the Congress to reach a consensus on foreign policy.

Second, the elevation of economic interests in policymaking requires the articulation of long-term economic, security, and political goals that also account for current actions and needs.

Finally, post Cold War foreign policy requires a greater degree of cooperation and coordination between the State Department and other departments and agencies in the decisionmaking process. Much of the responsibility for the erosion of domestic and international confidence in our foreign policy rests in the seemingly freelance and very public manner in

which policy issues are made within the Administration. Until this situation is corrected sound policy decisions will play poorly in public. Firefighting maneuvers are a poor substitute for foresight. Priorities need to be established, and policy determined and enacted within a structured process.

It is imperative that the Administration and the Congress cooperate to resolve these problems, both perceived and real, and clearly explain our goals and interest to the American people. If we fail to define a new framework for post Cold War policy, the American public, in voicing their concern and dissatisfaction, will seek security through isolationism.

Let us be quite honest with each other. I don't have to tell you that adversarial nations attempt to exploit every real or perceived weakness. Allies become more tentative in the strength of their backing with every real or perceived lack of resolve. The media homes in on every real or perceived instance of indecisiveness and divergence. The confidence of the American public wanes with every real or perceived instance of vacillation. And, you know this best of all, the Congress, ever-increasingly, seeks to impose its own structures and initiatives everywhere there is a real or perceived Administration foreign policy void -- very often, even where there isn't.

I support my President. I do not wish for any one of those consequences to continue -- including the last.

Toward a new Pacific Community, into the Pacific Century . . . we are looking at an age of wonderful expectations, an era of boundless opportunity. And no one holds more excitement and optimism over that than the members of Hawaii's Congressional Delegation -- an assessment I am certain will be reaffirmed in no uncertain terms by my colleague-to-follow, Congressman Neil Abercrombie.

As such, realize that we are your most committed partners in U.S. endeavors in the Asia-Pacific region. Count on us. Let us, together, guide those expectations and opportunities to the fullness of their promise.

Aloha and mahalo.

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**Thank you for the gracious introduction Secretary Lord.
Aloha ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Honolulu,
Hawaii. You could not have selected a more optimal location
for this East Asian and Pacific Bureau's Chiefs of Mission
Conference. Here in Hawai'i, where there are no majorities;
only minority ethnic groups; where communities ideally live
and work together; where the population is about 1.2 million;
where we presently have a Hawaiian Governor, John Waihee,
a Filipino Lt. Governor, Ben Cayetano; and Italian Mayor of
Honolulu, Frank Fasi; Caucasian Mayor of Maui, Linda
Lingle; Japanese Mayor of the Big Island, Steve Yamashiro;
Japanese Mayor of Kauai, JoAnn Yukimura; Portuguese
Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Joseph
Souki; Japanese President of the State Senate, Norman**

Mizuguchi. Perhaps more than most, we have long understood the importance of the Asia Pacific region to our economic prosperity and security interests. President Clinton's commitment to center American foreign policy on the Asia Pacific region, and to develop and maintain an active leadership role in the region, have fostered expectations here that the State of Hawai'i, the crossroads of the Pacific, will play a significant role in future initiatives, conferences, and international meetings.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to address you today and offer a few Senatorial observations on issues and trends for U.S. foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region [and, time permitting, an insight by way of a Hawaiian metaphor].

The political stability and economic development of the nations of Asia and the Pacific are key to American interests. At the Asian Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) leaders' meeting last November, President Clinton eloquently described his vision of a "New Pacific Community." This

ambitious pronouncement signaled a heightened American commitment to an active leadership role in Asia. The President repeatedly has expressed the view that future American prosperity is closely linked to increased trade with the economies of Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Our engagement in the region, reflected in our bilateral and multilateral initiatives, has reflected the direction articulated by President Clinton. The Asia-Pacific region figures prominently in our post Cold War foreign policy. The successful APEC leaders meeting in Seattle, the lifting of the trade embargo on Vietnam, democratic elections in Cambodia, the inclusion of China, Vietnam, and Russia in regional security dialogues, and the ongoing cooperation with South Korea, Japan, China and the international community on North Korea's nuclear program are testaments to American engagement in the region. Maintenance of our (forward) deployed U.S. forces in East Asia is essential to the region's strategic and economic security. The United

States remains in position to exercise a pivotal leadership role in alleviating regional anxiety over North Korea and its prospect of nationalist expansionist ambitions.

Overall, our policies and actions in Asia have met the principles laid out by the President and serve the interests of the United States and our allies as we seek regional peace and security, economic development, and the promotion of political freedom. This progress, limited in some instances, is more notable in light of the ongoing evolution of the post Cold War environment and its influence upon our nation's domestic and international interests.

I believe that there are two recent policy actions that will help to alleviate the friction experienced in our bilateral relations with Japan and China. The first is the resumption of negotiations on the U.S.-Japan Framework for Economic Partnership agreement. It is a positive development toward the resolution of our disagreements with Japan on trade and macroeconomic issues.

The second is the President's decision, which I support, to the renew most favored nation trade status for China and separate trade relations from our efforts to promote human rights and democracy. I'm reasonably certain that a bipartisan majority of my colleagues in the Senate also support this action. Our policy of linking progress on human rights to MFN had outlived its usefulness and posed an obstacle to our security and economic interests in Asia. However, all of our allies in the region urged the continuation of MFN for China.

My travels in Asia over the past two years and meetings with delegations visiting the United States reinforced my opinion that linking MFN to non-trade issues was no longer a useful instrument of American policy. To continue viewing our relationship with China through the Cold War prism of 1989 is detrimental to our security, economic, and political interest with China and our allies in Asia.

A New Pacific Community excluding China would be

domestically and internationally unsustainable. Efforts to marginalize China would only serve to further isolate the United States from Asia, undermine our interests, and exacerbate resentments and criticism over the direction of our engagement in the region. The nature of China's economic, political, and cultural development is central to the stability and prosperity of the Asian community and our own vital interests. We can, indeed we must, pursue our relationship with China within a larger framework which establishes a constructive dialogue and prioritizes our long-term economic, security, and political goals.

While cooperation with China may never develop into a close friendship anchored by shared values and institutions, I believe there is consensus in the U.S. Senate that we must establish a cordial working relationship with China if we are to realize our immediate objectives, most significantly the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear confrontation, and advance our other long range interests.

In the long run, China's economic growth is the best vehicle for social and political reform. Trade and foreign investment are the prime reasons for China's opening to other nations. Economic growth has secured limited economic and personal freedoms for the Chinese people. The continued expansion of trade and economic development will increase the flow of information and influence into China. Our policy interests must be driven by efforts to increase China's exposure to democratic, free market forces.

A dynamic market economy and repressive, centralized political system cannot coexist indefinitely. Our approach on human rights must reinforce and sustain the forces that are liberalizing China.

Our new policy framework with China should also guide our bilateral and multilateral policy with other nations in Asia and the Pacific. Economic development and prosperity in East Asia has brought about political and social changes

which must be taken into account by policymakers. We need to understand and respect the significance of this transformation in both the structure and tone of our regional diplomatic initiatives.

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the Senate with the development and conduct of our foreign policy. A greater public forum has also been created for Congressional critics and special interest advocacy groups seeking to shift policy, or in certain instances, to weaken the President.

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Second, the elevation of economic interests in policymaking requires the articulation of long-term economic, security, and political goals that recognize current actions and needs.

Finally, post Cold War foreign policy requires a greater degree of cooperation and coordination between the State Department and other departments and agencies in the decisionmaking process. Much of the responsibility for the erosion of domestic and international confidence in our

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It is imperative that the Administration and the Congress cooperate to resolve these problems, both perceived and real, and clearly explain our goals and interest to the American people. If we fail to define a new framework for post Cold War policy, the American public, in voicing their concern and dissatisfaction, will seek security through isolationism.

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on us. Let us, together, guide those expectations and opportunities to the fullness of their promise.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these observations with you.

Aloha and mahalo.