

**Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)  
Japan Chair Forum**

**“The Coming U.S.-Japan Summit”**

**Moderator:**

**Michael J. Green,  
Japan Chair and Senior Advisor on Asia,  
Center for Strategic and International Studies**

**Speakers:**

**His Excellency Ichiro Fujisaki,  
Ambassador of Japan to the United States,**

**The Honorable Kurt M. Campbell,  
Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs,  
U.S. Department of State**

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MICHAEL GREEN: Thank you. They did close that wall – the room got smaller, right? I'm not imagining –

So, we promised you a special bonus after our – we had really excellent series of panels on U.S.-Japan relations, trade and security politics, and a great keynote speech by Hayashi-sensei. And we promised you a special bonus, and here they are.

So I'm going to turn it over first to Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki and then to Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell to tell you what they can about the upcoming visit of the prime minister of the “Two-plus-Two” and the agenda for U.S.-Japan relations.

I don't need to introduce them. They've both been extremely busy, and we're grateful, really, at this important time as they're preparing for the prime minister's visit, that they've agreed to join us and share some thoughts.

So, Ambassador Fujisaki? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR ICHIRO FUJISAKI: Ichiro Fujisaki. Thank you very much for being here, ladies and gentlemen. What a big crowd. And I said, just in going through the corridor, I'm going to be a bit nervous with such an impressive crowd. And Michael Green said, don't be nervous; everyone is just coming here to listen to Kurt Campbell. (Laughter.) He didn't say that.

No, this visit of Prime Minister Noda is very important because – three reasons, I think. One, President Obama – Secretary Clinton has always been saying that now they are focusing on Asia-Pacific and placing importance. So this visit is going to be taking place on that background. Second, we have so many issues to discuss in the international arena. And, third, on the bilateral account we had so many issues which were not moving but now is moving – now are moving. So in that light I think it's very important.

Now, let me put this visit in perspective. The first encounter was in United Nations last September. In that meeting the prime minister said that although his first priority is recovery from 3/11, he will tackle with all the existing issues which have been there before assuming the post; one by one. And that is exactly what he did.

On the Okinawa issue, the Japanese government issued EIA, which is an Environment Impact Assessment, sent it to Okinawa government in December last year. That was the first time. And this assessment is a requirement for the – if the governor is going to issue a(n) approval for the landfill of sea surface in Okinawa. So, one step was done.

And also, on Okinawa, as you know, that we'll be coming to an agreement soon. And this has been also, as you know, bogged down for years, but now we have been able to come up with a new approach of delinking Futenma relocation from other elements,

like moving out Marine forces to Guam and return some parts of Okinawa. And these are going to start moving.

And if these new deployments will be done, there will be more distribution of U.S. forces in Asia-Pacific, which will fortify U.S. presence, I think, and which will add to a fortification of deterrence in that area. So we welcome that.

Now, on TPP issue – I know that you have already discussed this, but the prime minister said in November that – just before APEC, that he will – that Japan will get into consultation towards the participation of the negotiation, and that is exactly what we're doing with the United States and all other eight partners.

And we have been consulting very closely – and this is with a view that Japan should be involved, if possible, in rulemaking of trade and investment in this area. Well, we have not come to conclusion on both sides, but we hope that we could accelerate discussion on this matter.

On beef, this has been always on the discussion, but finally, in last December, the government of Japan had decided to refer to Food Safety Commission if we can relax from 20-months age to 30-months age, and now Food Safety Commission is studying, and we hope that they would come up with their judgment.

Now, these, as you know very well, have been done in a very difficult environment. Last week – I think it was in the Post, an op-ed – very good op-ed that was explaining the challenges that Japan is facing, and one of them is, as you know, the aftermath of 3/11 disaster.

The infrastructure reconstruction is coming back rather quickly, with \$225 billion worth of budget. However, of course there is the lingering issue of nuclear. And we have 54 nuclear reactors, and only 14 was hit, but as you know, after three months we have to put into maintenance. And only one is operating now and it will be closed May the 5<sup>th</sup>, as well, for the maintenance.

So, if we can start other reactors which have gone through the maintenance, discussing with the local community is one issue facing the government, and this is one of the most difficult issues that we are facing.

Now, the other difficult issue facing of course is – more long-range, but imminent one is tax and welfare reform, which is the top priority of the Noda government. And Noda-san has put forth this proposal of raising this tax to 8 percent for the moment – the sales tax, consumption tax.

As you know, U.S. sales tax statewide is about 8.8 percent to 8.9 percent. Germany's is 19 percent. Japan is 5 percent. And the government has debt of vis-à-vis GDP for 212 percent, where U.S. is 100 percent and already in a very difficult situation.

So, the Japanese government cannot go on with this situation, and welfare has to be reviewed as well. So this is a challenge that he is facing. And if you look at both, a lot of people say that they understand the necessity of raising the sales tax, but in real politics it's a very difficult challenge for the government to raise the tax. So this is a(n) issue that the government is facing.

So you have these very difficult conditions, and the government has been challenging these and have come up and showed the advances that I've just talked on, some of the very difficult domestic issues.

Now, in light of this situation, we can now not only talk about we have to do this, we're going to do this, but more future-oriented issue in a global circumstance. And Japan and U.S. share common values in, I think, three-fold. One is that we value international law and order, including international organizations' values.

And before that, for example, in recent IMF Japan has come up with the assistance of \$600 billion, which has paved the way for other countries to join – I'm sorry, \$60 billion, and other countries have joined and has made it to \$430 billion in the IMF via emergency assistance. And so these United Nations and the international organizations think it's important, and we value a lot of rules in maritime and other issues.

Talking about these international organizations, we think that China is a very important partner. We – both U.S. and Japan would like to engage – see China's engagement, but these international norms and rules, including property rights and all of that, are very important as well.

Now, second element is, I think – nonproliferation is very important. From that angle, we have taken a very close position with the United States and Republic of Korea on the matter of North Korea's recent missile test. And we are very happy that China and Russia were on board, and we have come up with a strong statement, a U.N. presidential statement, only two weeks ago. Iran is also a big concern, and we cannot see nuclear Iran. So Japan has been very forthcoming in cooperating with the international community in sanctions on Iran.

Now, a third element is human rights, democracy, and I think we in Japan and U.S. share that. And we have been working on Afghan and we will have – hosting a meeting in July next – next July and we'll be discussing these issues. And Syria has been a concern, the human rights oppression, and we'll be working with the United States on this.

Also, on Myanmar – we think a very good sign there. So when Thein Sein, the president, came and had talks with prime minister only a week ago, prime minister said we'll be stepping up our aid in the area of capacity-building for infrastructure and for the people. And we'll be working very closely with the United States on that account.

So, these are the areas we think are very important. And it's not just piecemeal, but the background is, as I said, international sort of structure, the human rights, and also this nonproliferation. These are the basic concepts, strategically.

And also, very recently Japan and U.S. relations – what is most important is people to people. Eighty percent of Japanese – 82 percent of Japanese people say that they feel affinity to Americans. Eighty-four percent of Americans feel that Japan is an important partner. So it's a very people-to-people relations. We have seen a very successful cherry blossom centennial.

And we feel that this is a very basis, and we have to step up these – from 3/11 was a disaster, but we're very happy that some of the projects came out, like TOMODACHI Initiative, which was initiated by Americans; the Kizuna Project, initiated by Japanese government – which are the cultural exchanges.

For example, in the Kizuna Project, 1,000 American high school students will be invited this year and 1,000 high school students from affected areas will be coming to Japan – coming to the United States. These are very important exchanges, and we would like to step up other exchanges as much as possible. And I hope that this meeting will be a step towards those, as well.

And this is a sort of quick overview, so I talked a bit about economy, politics and cultural, but I don't know how prime minister and president will be discussing these issues. It's for them to speak. But I think these topics that I have just referred to will be some of the important elements that they will be discussing. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. GREEN: Thank you.

Kurt?

KURT CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. And let me just welcome everyone to CSIS. It's great to see such a large and enthusiastic crowd out to celebrate the U.S.-Japan relationship.

I also want to take a moment to thank my dear friend, Mike Green, for all he has done for the U.S.-Japan relationship, and all he has done for me as a person and as a friend. I learned about Japan from Mike. I've learned more from him on these issues than just about anyone else. And he has continued to guide me and to give me advice, and particularly in the last several weeks.

And I want to thank CSIS for the role that they have played in helping all of us think about the challenges in terms of our posture in Asia. And if you would allow me, I want to just take a moment to thank Mike. That's right. (Applause.)

And if you'll allow me just to say one other word, it is often the case that if you work in diplomacy – I can't tell you how many times people come to me and say, you know, what, in reality, does an ambassador do – I mean, what do they actually do? I mean, they have big cars and these wonderful homes; but you know, we've got modern communications and we can do anything at a moment's notice. Do we really need them? Isn't this sort of an archaic tradition that we no longer need?

Let me just say to anyone who doubts that –

AMB. FUJISAKI: I see a lot of nodding.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. (Laughter.) Oh, and they're members of your staff. That's pretty – (laughter).

So, to anyone who doubts or has questions about the role of an ambassador – the case study for what's involved – is the last 48 hours for Ambassador Fujisaki. I won't go into very great detail but it has been enormous, the role that he's played at every possible level. And we are excited and hopeful about the upcoming visit of the prime minister here to Washington. The president is very excited. It's our first big visit in some time.

Later this evening we will be releasing what we think really is a groundbreaking "Two-plus-Two" statement that will be issued by Secretary of State Clinton, Secretary of Defense Panetta, their colleagues and friends, Japanese counterparts.

And this is, we believe, a major achievement. And I'm going to just go through a few elements of that, and then I think we'd be happy to take some questions. Obviously it's going to be released this evening at around 10:00 p.m. There will be some backgrounding on it.

So I'm going to give you some highlights and how to think about it, but it obviously comes at a very auspicious time. We've had – faced new challenges on the Korean Peninsula, new provocations from North Korea. We have been busy with a number of steps in the Asian-Pacific region associated with our overall defense posture.

I think there has (sic) been some questions about the U.S.-Japan alliance in this context, our partnership. This agreement and the steps that have preceded it and that will follow makes, I think, in my view, one thing very clear and dispels any doubts: We're still the foundation. We're still number one.

We are the foundation for everything the United States does in the Asian-Pacific region. And this agreement will make very clear across many dimensions the determination in the United States and Japan to continue to play a role in our security partnership to maintain peace and stability well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The agreement does many things, and I'll just go through some of them. I think most important, as Ambassador Fujisaki has indicated, we think it breaks a very long

stalemate on Okinawa that has plagued our politics, that has clogged both of our systems, that has made it difficult to deal with the critical and crucial issues that confront the United States and Japan and other countries in the Asian-Pacific region.

We believe the agreement has the unique advantage that it has very strong support now across the U.S. government, in the Japanese government. We think that there will be support and appreciation in Okinawa and in other parts of the Asian-Pacific region.

We have worked closely with colleagues and counterparts in the Diet and on Capitol Hill, and they will speak directly about these things. But we've appreciated their input and their support for this process as it's gone forward.

So, again, it breaks the long stalemate on Okinawa by lifting and delinking steps on Guam from progress in Okinawa. The two governments make clear that we still fundamentally believe that the ultimate resolution of the Futenma replacement will involve the move to the FRF, but there are also steps that can be taken in the meantime, and we've sought to do so.

The overall agreement takes a number of steps to, we believe, strengthen and secure Japan and strengthen the JRNS (ph). We've allowed steps to go forward that will take immediate steps to increase our capacity on Guam – our military capacity on Guam. Guam will become a strategic hub. So we will see very clear statements about troop levels, Marine levels in the Asian-Pacific region – specific commitments in Okinawa, in Japan, on the mainland.

This is part of a larger set of steps on the Korean Peninsula, in Guam, on Singapore, in Australia and elsewhere. And I think, as you know, we are in close consultation with a number of other countries in the Asian-Pacific region about ways that we can increase our deployments, our engagements and our training.

So it's a very important contribution to our defense posture in Asia. It includes a very generous financial commitment from Japan for the necessary steps that we'll be taking in Guam. It also includes significant and substantial land returns in Okinawa, which are a down payment on the commitments that we have made to the people of Okinawa to ease their burden and to work closely with them as good neighbors.

The agreement pioneers new training opportunities for the United States and Japan – in, frankly, unprecedented ways that couldn't have been imagined just a few years ago. And it commits the United States and Japan to actually work together to build partner capacity in the Asian-Pacific region, working closely with countries like the Philippines. And this is a very important step that has never been achieved before.

If I can put it in a larger context, if you look at the last decade, some of the most urgent and important security challenges that the United States and Japan faced were in Asia – in South Asia and the Middle East. And Japan was up to that challenge, worked very closely with the United States and other countries in the international community to

support our mutual efforts. But I think there's a recognition across the board – in the United States, in Asia, Europe and elsewhere – that the big game, the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century increasingly will be in the Asian-Pacific region.

One of the surprises of the U.S.-Japan alliance and relationship is that there is still very much untapped capacity in terms of the ways in which the United States and Japan can coordinate and cooperate together in the Asian-Pacific region. I recognize that a lot of people don't like the term "pivot." I accept that. But this is, in a way, the pivoting of the United States and Japan towards new opportunities, a new focus and creative new ways of working together in the Asian-Pacific region.

I must say our teams worked very hard on this. Marc Knapper is with me here today. I want to thank him directly and personally for his commitment. Jim Zumwalt and others – all the team that worked with Ambassador Fujisaki. We are proud of this, honestly. I feel proud to be associated with this agreement. I think it will serve our alliance well, and this will be a moment that we can build on going forward.

I'll just conclude with one last thing. Our alliance goes far beyond security and defense issues, although that is the primary focus and onus of the "Two-plus-Two" statement. Ambassador Fujisaki and others have really helped us to ensure that when the prime minister comes, that we will be talking about a range of other areas of the deep relationship between the United States and Japan.

One of the things that we're most excited about – I've spoken about this before, but on Monday evening, in a gala dinner, the United States will be formally announcing what we hope will be a gift that will be long remembered in Japan. A hundred years ago, Japan gave the United States probably the most gracious gift that it's ever received, right up there with the Statue of Liberty: the 3,000 cherry trees that have come to adorn and to be the symbol of Washington. And it is something that we celebrate on a yearly basis.

You don't have to be a visitor to Washington to love the beauty of the Tidal Basin in March. It used to be in April and May but now it's March. (Laughter.) But there is no climate change; sorry. (Laughter.) We treasure this gift. It has meant an enormous amount to us. And we know that this year really represents a wonderful hundred-year anniversary of that gift of 3,000 cherry trees.

And it is essentially the anniversary of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance as well, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. So the president – President Obama, Secretary Clinton, the American people, will be giving Japan, on Monday, 3,000 dogwood trees, specially grown for Japan. And they will be a gift to the Japanese people, with a lovely plaque in places where they will be planted in Tokyo and in a special park not far from the tragedy that struck Japan last year – about a year ago, in which, again, the ambassador and others helped lead us through.

I want to say that we're quite proud of this, and we hope that as a gesture it will be something that our children and our children's children, both in the United States and

Japan, will have the opportunity to enjoy and treasure, just as we've had the opportunity to treasure the cherry trees.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

MR. GREEN: Thank you both. Kurt, thank you in particular for the kind words.

Ari (sp), could you pull the op-ed I just sent to the Washington Post about the administration? I'm feeling a little guilty now. (Laughter.)

We have announced that at CSIS we're doing – we've been asked to do, based on the legislation that passed a few months ago, an independent assessment of our force posture options in the Pacific. And this work is ongoing and we're still doing our own analytics. But it has given us a window into how intense and important the work that the ambassador and Kurt do, and it's been very impressive and we shall be grateful for the dedication they've shown.

So let's open it up. We have, I think, about 20 minutes for Q&A. And I'll begin with our co-host, Dan Bob.

Q: Thanks very much. I had a question mainly for Kurt.

Yesterday I was with the former defense minister of Japan, Hayashi Yoshimasa, and we had a chance to get together with Senator Webb, who had just sent his letter over to the secretary of defense. And he had a number of questions about some of the announcements that were coming out.

I'm just wondering if perhaps you can shed a bit of light on some of those questions. In particular, he was wondering about how the basing issues regarding Okinawa fit into the broader strategic concept within the region, the Marine Corps' concept of operations and the positioning of U.S. Air Force units in the Asia-Pacific.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Dan, and I appreciate the question.

I should say that I think both countries are very grateful to the leadership of a number of senators who have taken – and other legislators – who have taken a real interest and support over their lifetimes and their professional experience in strengthening the U.S. role in Asia and the U.S.-Japan relationship.

And foremost among them is Senator Webb, who has been a stalwart in supporting a strong U.S.-Japan alliance. And I think it would be fair to say that we have been involved in a very sustained dialogue with his office, with him personally. I think I can tell you that very senior conversations have been taking place.

We've worked closely with the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I will let him, the senator, speak for himself, but my sense is – and maybe the ambassador can – I think he's satisfied and appreciative of the efforts that have been taken.

But does this agreement answer every question? It does not. Is there more programmatic and technical work that is necessary? Yes. Do other things and opportunities need to continue to be studied? Yes, they do. But at a fundamental level, we think this agreement moves the ball very substantially down the field in a way that no one would have anticipated a few months ago.

And I think Senator Levin, Senator McCain and Senator Webb – we have benefited enormously from their attention, their determination and their keen desire to hold us to a higher standard in our work.

Ichiro, do you want to say – do you want to say anything, Ichiro?

AMB. FUJISAKI: I'd just say that I think – as Kurt said, I think the document will be released so it will speak for itself, and we don't really go into the process of how it is drafted or how we came to whatever.

But I really value the, as he said, the involvement of Senator Webb and other senators that he has referred to in U.S.-Japan relations. They have been there. They've been to other – Guam and other places and really have been into this. And I think their interest and their friendship is so much valued by us as well. Thank you.

MR. GREEN: Kato-san.

Q: This question is to Dr. Campbell – Secretary Campbell. You won't like this, but I still have to ask. (Laughter.)

MR. CAMPBELL: He always asks the hard questions.

Q: Yoichi Kato, Asahi Shimbun.

MR. CAMPBELL: OK.

Q: Looking at the process of this negotiation, or this “Two-plus Two” statement, I was a bit surprised because it seems to me that the United States government made a series of unilateral compromises to make this statement happen, starting with the amount of cash contribution where you, the United States, started – at the beginning asked more than 2.8 billion (dollars) but ended up with 2.8 billion (dollars). And, also, the number is not mentioned – clearly stated in this new statement.

And also, you agreed to have this phased early return of the facility and land south of Kudina (ph). All those things; just compromise from U.S. side. And I was wondering

why you decided to make so many compromises to make this happen? And was there – is there anything that we are missing on the part of Japan?

Are you paying more attention to much, perhaps, bigger strategic necessity that Japan and the United States should accomplish at this juncture, for example to deal with China? Perhaps you can enlighten us why you made so many compromises.

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, you're certainly absolutely right; I don't like your question. (Laughter.) Or, as I say to my daughter, I don't like your tone either. (Laughter.) Look, I think – and I understand you're asking the question in almost a rhetorical way.

I think that thinking in those terms about how a partnership works is so zero-sum and so inappropriate. We think that both sides have taken necessary, hard steps to advance the ball. And so, the idea that land returns to the people of Okinawa to allow for productive development, housing and the like, is somehow conceptualized as a unilateral step as opposed to something that's in all of our best interest, I just reject that.

I think we've worked together on a set of initiatives that are very generous from the Japanese government that are strategic, that respond to some of the urgent challenges we face in the Asian-Pacific region, and we've sent a message that we're not sitting on the sidelines. We too are modernizing in a way that is vital and vibrant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

So, I don't have any concerns that the agreement will be perceived as somehow unilateral steps from the United States. I think, as I recall, it was your newspaper who described our trip to Japan last week as about arm-twisting and – (laughter) – and intimidation, I think. And I always think of myself as quite friendly.

But – so I – so, you know, Kato-san, you can't have it both ways here. And so, I think it's a great agreement. I think it's very clear in terms of what both countries are bringing to the table.

AMB. FUJISAKI: I was not asked, but just to say that we have to, please, evaluate the document after it comes out, but this is the first time that I was – I heard from this newspaper that we negotiated too well. Thank you. (Laughter, applause.)

MR. GREEN: Rick?

Q: This is a question to both of you. This is regarding the question of U.S. natural gas exports to Japan.

My understanding – and correct me if I'm wrong – is that because natural gas is regarded as a security issue and an energy thing, that it's cumbersome for countries with which the U.S. does not have any kind of a free trade agreement to easily buy this natural gas. Meanwhile, because we're getting a surplus, the price is going down.

We're asking Japan and our other allies to buy less oil from Iran in order to stop their nuclear program. It would seem to me, as an economist who knows nothing whatsoever about national security, that it would be in the interest of the U.S. and of the alliance that we say, if we're going to make life more difficult for you, especially after 3/11, by asking you not to buy oil from Iran, we should help make it easier for you to do that by selling you natural gas.

So I'm wondering if you could comment on the issue, and what is the thinking of the administration on the issue, and what would it take to actually change that policy? And if the ambassador could talk a bit about how Japan sees that issue.

AMB. FUJISAKI: Before 3/11 happened, dependency on liquefied natural gas, LNG, was about 33 percent. Now it's nearly – about 50 percent. So, our dependency on LNG and, altogether, thermal energy is very much increasing. And if we are increasing, of course the diversification is very important.

And then of course, as you say, in light of the situation in the Middle East, it is natural that a lot of companies would think that we should diversify resources. And I think in the long run that would be the desirable course.

I have no – I'm not in a position to interpret your domestic loss, but speaking from the Japanese side, I think the Japanese companies, of course, and the people, would like to see the diversification. Thank you very much.

MR. CAMPBELL: And I think really all I can say is that we have had discussions with the Japanese government about it, and this is a subject of active dialogue. I think I really can't say anything more. And I think the way you described the situation is clearly how Japanese colleagues and others have conveyed it directly to us as well.

MR. GREEN: Nadia?

Q: Hi. Nadia Chow, with the Liberty Times. And I have a question about – you just mentioned this agreement will make you be able to work with the Philippines. I wonder, can you elaborate?

You know – what's this implication, once you finish this agreement, the implication for, in the future, like, a confrontation in the South China Sea or Taiwan Strait? Will this improve your capability to deal with this? And what will change the Japanese military's role in the future to confront all these, you know, contingencies?

MR. CAMPBELL: Look, Ambassador Fujisaki will want to speak to this issue directly as well.

Both the United States and Japan have a very strong interest in the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region and in preserving maritime security, and to ensure that contentious issues are dealt with in a peaceful way through negotiation.

It is also the case that we have agreed that we will work in terms of certain kinds of capacity-building – like coastal vessels – for a country like the Philippines, who has vast territorial waters, very difficult to patrol, and work in concert together on how to create greater capacity there and elsewhere. There also will be opportunities for training by Japanese self-defense forces in a variety of circumstances that have been – that will be unique.

I think Japan will continue a very strong commitment to its constitution, to its principles, and we will want to apply our security cooperation in such a way that is consistent historically with how we consider our roles and missions. And we think that these steps are prudent, they're responsible and they're welcomed by a number of countries in the Asian-Pacific region.

MR. GREEN: Do you –

AMB. FUJISAKI: Yes. Yes, if you are talking about the Philippines and relations with the role of Self-Defense Forces, I do not perceive the expansion of role of Self-Defense Forces in that region. Thank you very much.

Q: This is Yoshi Komori of Sankei Shimbun. This question is for Secretary Campbell.

Some members of the U.S. Congress, as well as some former senior administration officials here now say, some of them very emphatically, that the Japanese – Japan's current ban on the exercise of the collective self-defense is an impediment to the U.S. – (inaudible) – at least an impediment to the effort to strengthen the alliance. What's your view on that?

MR. CAMPBELL: You know, it would be my strong view that how Japan proceeds on an issue as important as this, how it interprets its own constitution, how it applies its laws, is a matter deeply for Japan itself.

Our interest is to work with Japan in the most constructive way, in a way that is consistent and comfortable for Japanese interlocutors to sustain a relationship that we believe has been in the best interests not just of our two countries but the Asian-Pacific region.

We are often asked on certain situations like this, about how would we weigh in. I think at least – the watchword for me is I think the potential for misunderstanding or for inappropriate role of outsiders in these kinds of domestic debates are very real.

And when we talk about treating a country as an equal and as a partner, I think you have to respect that internal process and have some understanding that comments and suggestions about adaptations and changes can be unsettling, can have unintended consequences, and it's much better as an ally to consult more closely and recognize that guidance can be given sparingly.

Q: Thank you both for the excellent preview. Good luck. We're looking forward to the prime minister's visit.

Thank you to Matt Goodman and Dad Bob and Chano-san for helping get this entire day started.

Kurt and Ambassador Fujisaki are actually in the middle of their workday and both have important meetings to go to, so let's let them escape so they can be on time, and let's thank them. (Applause.)

(END)