



Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer
Speech and Question-and-Answer Session

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AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: As always, it is an honor to address the Japan National Press Club. This will be the fourth and last time that I address you as the American Ambassador of Japan. Since becoming a diplomat, I have felt it is essential to try to speak to the general public as well as the government about what it is that America is trying to do in the world. Your forum has given me a wonderful opportunity to do just that. Let me also say both to the Japanese media and your international colleagues that I have greatly appreciated the way you have treated me while I have been serving in Japan. While I am sure there were times you did not personally agree with what I was saying or what my government was doing, you always treated me fairly and with respect and for that I will always be grateful.

Tomorrow, I will return to the United States having ended almost four years of service to my country here in Japan. Before that I spent almost four years as Ambassador of the United States to Australia. I would like to share with you today some of my personal experiences in those two jobs.

At a time like this one cannot help but be both reflective and a bit wistful. It has been a good run, as we say, and I will miss it, but I have made memories and friends here that will live in my heart forever. I will never forget walking with Mr. and Mrs. Yokota along the same path Megumi traveled on that fateful day when she was snatched from her family and friends in Niigata. I regret that we were not able to make more progress on the abduction issue while I was ambassador here, but I want to assure the Yokotas and the members of the abductee families and the people of Japan that I will continue to support their efforts to find justice in this matter no matter where or what I might do in the future. The Yokotas' courage and the other abductee family members' courage and perseverance in trying to find their daughter and their loved ones is an inspiration and an example to all of us, and I appreciate very much their sharing it with me in such personal terms.

Friendship brought me to Japan – my friendship with President Bush and his friendship with Prime Minister Koizumi. During my time here I came to understand why the President had such a high regard for Mr. Koizumi. Prime Minister Koizumi is the kind of principled, visionary leader that too rarely occupies the world stage. He saw an international order in transition, and he was determined that Japan would not only be a part of it, but would lead it. The United States and Japan benefited from his governing out of conviction. I hope that I will always be able to call upon his wise counsel and continue to enjoy his warm friendship.

While I was here I was also privileged to serve my country before three other friends of America, Prime Minister Abe, Prime Minister Fukuda, and Prime Minister Aso. All showed me extraordinary kindness and gave me access to their inner circle to explain why my government was taking the actions that it did. I believe our discussions deepened our two countries' mutual understanding and strengthened our alliance. I am grateful for their wise counsel and their strong personal friendships.

So too did I enjoy warm and fruitful relationships with Chief Cabinet Secretaries Hosoda and Shiozaki, Speaker Kono and dozens of other ministers. I would like to thank especially Ministers Machimura, Nukaga, Tanigaki, Nakagawa, Koumura, Ishiba, Koike and Nakayama for all the help and understanding they showed me. I believe we worked together in the best interests of both our countries and I think we can all be proud of our achievements.

In the ministries themselves I developed extraordinary relationships with Vice Ministers Yachi and Yabunaka and their colleagues Kawai-san, Sasae-san, Saiki-san, Kanemoto-san, Mitani-san, Nishimiya-san, Monma-san, Umemoto-san, Mori-san and Miyamoto-san. At the Kantei I enjoyed invaluable and close relationships with Bessho-san and Ishikane-san. They went out of their way to accommodate my requests to interact with their Prime Ministers.

No thanks can be sufficient, however, for the help that I was given by the gifted and extraordinary diplomat who served as Japan's ambassador to Washington during most of the time that I was here in Tokyo. Ryoza Kato and his wife Hanayo gave me incredible insight into the thinking of the Japanese people as well as the government itself. We began our relationship out of a shared love of baseball but it came to be so much more than that. Ambassador Kato is a wise student of the American mind. He understands our shortcomings, but he also understands our aspirations. No diplomat ever represented his country better; no friend ever strived to help me more. I will always be in his debt.

Ambassadors deal with more than personal relationships when they represent their country and my time here was no exception. We dealt with big issues that had big consequences, and I am proud of what we accomplished. On the morning when North Korea launched seven missiles, I was able to stand before the Japanese public and proudly say that America stood with Japan that day just as we had stood with Japan the day before and just as we would stand with Japan the day after. Later in October

when the North Koreans exploded a nuclear device, Prime Minister Abe was asked by a reporter if this meant that Japan would have to acquire nuclear weapons. And he replied, "No, that's what the American alliance is for." To me that was the ultimate expression of just how strong our alliance is. Both of us – Japan and the United States – believe that the U.S.–Japan relationship is the linchpin of our foreign policies in Asia and the Pacific.

As a steward of that relationship it was tremendously gratifying to me to hear those words because without a strong and healthy alliance no Japanese Prime Minister would have been able to give that answer at that difficult moment.

There were many other accomplishments as well. Over the last four years we negotiated the most significant agreement in our bilateral relationship since the signing of the Security Treaty in 1960. The force transformation that will occur as the result of that agreement will modernize our alliance for the challenges we will face together in the 21st century. It will also reduce the number of troops stationed in Okinawa without reducing the capacity of the United States to defend Japan or keep the peace in Asia. Now, all we have to do is implement it.

The security posture of Japan and the United States were also significantly enhanced by the arrival of the nuclear powered aircraft carrier George Washington as well as the unprecedented cooperation shown in missile defense. Northeast Asia can be a dangerous place but the presence of American forces here makes it less so. Japanese and Americans alike should take comfort in that fact.

But, all the progress in our relationship has not been confined to matters of security. The Regulatory Reform Initiative identified over 280 measures in the last four years that improved trade and job growth. The public comment system that was greatly expanded in 2006 has allowed Americans and Japanese alike to make constructive, positive and well received comments about prospective government regulations that allow all parties to do business more easily. In recent years we have also largely avoided the destructive aspects of trade disputes that plagued our relationship in the '80's and '90's. Regulatory and economic reforms have reduced tension and allowed our two countries to integrate the first and second largest economies in the world better. The financial turmoil of the past few months has demonstrated that we can work closely together in tackling the difficult economic problems that face the world.

Now, we should focus on the future where the promise of even greater cooperation and integration beckons.

In agriculture for instance Japan is already America's largest overseas customer but we could do more if regulatory obstacles were removed. The Japanese people often express worries about food security and they are understandable. After the war, significant numbers of Japanese went hungry and no nation would want to go through that again. But, Japan has a demographic problem. The average age of Japanese farmers today is about 70. With the birth rate at 1.2 that average is not likely to come down. Does it not make sense then to open Japanese markets further to great democracies like the United States that will not blackmail you for food? I think it does and I hope the United States and Japan will explore ways to do that in the years ahead.

So too do I hope that the U.S. and Japan will work to integrate our economies more. We welcome the investment of Japanese companies in America. When you do that you create jobs in America. Investment and trade are the harbingers of a prosperous and healthy future. But trade and investment must be reciprocal and we should work together toward a goal of making it as easy for an American to do business in Japan as it is for a Japanese to do business in America.

Neither should we fear the economic future. The knowledge-based economy that has been created around the world is a reflection of our strengths, not our weaknesses. Seventy-two percent of the patents issued around the world are issued to American and Japanese companies. Why, because we spend more on research and development than any other two countries. We have first rate universities and research centers that are coming up with the ideas that are building a better world. We must not pause and we must not fear. We can compete against anyone in the world. And we will be able to do it better if we work together rather than apart.

We should also work to resolve problems that just keep hanging on, doing damage to our relationship. The ongoing beef dispute, for instance, has been a recurring cause of friction. We should figure out a way to solve it. American beef is safe. The Japanese public buys it. We ought to adopt international standards that will allow Japanese consumers rather than Japanese bureaucrats to determine its ultimate success or failure in Japan. I can assure you that the incoming Obama Administration would

welcome Japan moving to reduce this thorn in our relationship at the earliest possible moment.

In areas outside our economic and security relationships we can do some things to deepen the ties between our two peoples. We should make it easier for children to visit parents who have been divorced. Japan's ratification of the Hague Convention on the Abduction of Children would make a big difference in their lives and send a strong message to the international community that the well-being of children is more important than the bitterness and revenge of separated parents.

Japan can also join the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Canada in outlawing the possession of child pornography. Japanese children are being abused on a daily basis by deviants who record their crimes on all kinds of media for sale or distribution on the Internet. Japan is the only nation in the Group of 7 that does not criminalize the possession of child pornography. Japan is a better country than that. It should give Japanese police the ability to prosecute those who provide the financial incentive for the abuse of all of our children no matter where they might live.

Finally, let me address one last major issue. In recent months there has been a lot of negative debate about the role Japan can play in the world because of the domestic political situation that exists in Japan. Often the argument is made that Japan cannot do this or that because the Japanese government is divided. True, there has never been a time in Japan when the two houses of the Diet were controlled by different parties. But these kinds of situations often occur in other countries. Many times in America the two parties control different branches and even different houses of Congress. It may not be either party's first choice of how to govern but both have managed to find a way to do it because it was in the national interest. And that practice is not confined to the United States.

When I was the Ambassador to Australia, the ruling coalition there never achieved a majority in the upper house until the last few months of my ambassadorship and then it was the first time in twenty-five years that one party had controlled both houses of Parliament.

Japan will figure out a way to overcome the political gridlock it now faces. I am confident of that. But I hope that Japan will not marginalize itself in the international community in the meantime.

The world needs Japan. You are a great people who have shown the ability to build a great nation out of the ashes of a devastating defeat. We need your example, your hard work, your creativity to give hope to those who like you want to build a better world.

There is no doubt that the world is changing. The old order that grew out of the post war period has ended. A new order is emerging. Japan needs to be a part of that new order. Japan needs to be a country that is shaping that new order, not just reacting to it.

Japan enters this dynamic period in world history as a staunch ally and friend of the United States. You have proven for more than sixty years the value of your friendship to America. You do not need to worry that America will suddenly decide to look elsewhere for allies and friends. We have an old saying in my home state of Texas, "You never trade an old friend for a new friend or you will wind up with no friends." We understand the meaning of those words in America and I hope the Japanese people understand how deeply Americans treasure our alliance and our friendship with Japan.

Now, more than ever Japan needs to focus on what it can do in the world. In a few days Barack Obama will be sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. He electrified America and the world with a simple slogan – "Yes, we can!" Japan's first response to this new administration must not be, "No, we can't."

There is much more that needs to be done by the international community in trouble spots like Afghanistan and the horn of Africa. And Japan can do it. Whether it is protecting the world's sea lanes from pirates who are by definition international criminals preying on the innocent or putting boots on the ground in Afghanistan, Japan can do it. Some people will argue that Japan is prohibited from doing those sorts of things by its constitution but I would argue that Japan can fulfill the promise of its constitution by doing those things.

Boots on the ground need not always be the boots of the military. Japan can put the boots of doctors and dentists, nurses, engineers, teachers, scientists and technicians

on the ground in places like Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East and help to build a better world. Would there be risks to those involved? Certainly, but there are risks to Japan if Afghanistan or Iraq or the Middle East fail and become havens for terrorists and jihadists who seek the violent overthrow and destruction of civilization as we know it.

These are difficult times in the world but we should keep their difficulty in perspective. We are in the middle of a financial crisis, but it pales in comparison to the severity of the Great Depression. Then, as many as twenty-five to thirty percent of our citizens were unemployed. That is not going to happen this time because we know a lot more about economics than we knew then. We have learned the painful lessons that will allow us to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

When the war ended Japan and Europe were in ruins. The specter of global communism hung over the future like a dark cloud. All of that has gone away.

Today, more citizens are the masters of their own fate than ever before. Today, more people are prosperous than ever before. Today, more people are healthier than ever before. Today, more people are well fed than ever before. Today, we have every reason for hope and little reason for despair.

America and Japan stand together. Two great nations that appeal to the same universal values. Two great nations that believe that men and women were destined to live in freedom, not servitude. Two great nations that believe in the value of tolerance, the wisdom of debate and the sanctity of religious belief. Our day is not ending, our day is just beginning.

I am proud to have been the American Ambassador to Japan at such an extraordinary moment in the history of our two great countries. I appreciate the kindnesses that you have shown me and I promise you that I will never stop working for an ever deeper friendship, an ever stronger alliance. I look forward to returning to Japan many, many times in the future.

But, now it is time for me to go. When Lyndon Johnson left the White House for the last time as President, he said he was returning to his home state of Texas, because it was "a place where they care about you when you're sick and they miss you when you're gone." To me, Texas is still that kind of place, and I hope you can visit me there

so I can help you understand why Texas still calls me home. Domo arigato gozaimashita.

JNPC REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONER: Thank you very much, Ambassador. You sent us a very strong message, and we were very much moved, and this is going to be our last opportunity to ask you questions, so please feel free to give us your candid opinion – things that you couldn't say before.

About the alliance first: 2010 will be the 50th anniversary of the security treaty, and the U.S. and Japan maybe will need to redefine the alliance or the security treaty. Redefinition was done during the Clinton era, but maybe we can do re-redefinition. Do you think such a kind of redefinition is needed? And we often discuss about the issue of the Japanese right to collective defense. How should we be addressing that problem in the redefining of the U.S.-Japan alliance? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I think a redefinition would be appropriate. I don't know whether redefinition is appropriate as much as it is just an examination of the alliance as to what both sides want it to be. It could be that the present definition is exactly what both sides want it to be, but I think we ought to talk about it, and I think we ought to try to understand where we want the alliance to go in the years ahead. I think America would welcome an alliance of equals, and I think Japan would too. An alliance of equals is one that has equal responsibilities and equal shares in the future. That hasn't always been the case in Japan in the past. I think Japan could easily assume a greater role in the alliance. That doesn't mean that the alliance has to be a blueprint for Japan just accepting every American suggestion on what Japan ought to be doing here, there or anywhere in the world, but I think Japan can speak with a louder voice in international affairs. I think America would welcome that, and a reaffirmation of that in the U.S.-Japan alliance definition, I think, would be helpful in that.

With regard to collective self-defense, I have spoken at this very club before about what missile defense does, or does not do, with regards to the alliance. Technology has changed what Japan is capable of doing. In the height of the Cold War, you could see the Soviet Union coming, if there was going to be an invasion of Japan. The technology of missile defense and all that is different than that. Right now, we are

increasing the capability to knock down missiles that might be fired toward Japan, and I think Japan has to be able to determine what their answer is going to be when a missile is launched. Do they have to decide whether the missile is headed to Japan to knock it down? Are they going to decide that if it's headed to the United States that they're not going to knock it down? These are critical issues, because I think if a missile was launched from Asia and a Japanese destroyer, for instance, had a chance to knock that missile down and they didn't, because they said it was going to the continental United States, I think the American people would find that very difficult to understand, the value of the alliance with Japan. So I think Japan has to answer those kind of questions, because it is important for America to know what that question is because it will affect the deployment of our assets in response. If for instance you had one Japanese destroyer in the Sea of Japan and one American destroyer in the Sea of Japan and the Japanese destroyer was not prepared to knock down a missile, then I think the American planners would have to say, "Well, it looks like to us we'll have to have two American destroyers there to have the same kind of defense capabilities."

So those are – I'm not one who believes that Article 9 necessarily has to be revised, but I think the interpretation of collective defense needs to be looked at, as to what Japan believes that is in the modern day with the modern kind of technology that we have.

QUESTION: This again might be a difficult question. I would like to ask about the ASDF Mr. Tamogami's paper. He indicated that during World War II Japan was not an aggressor, and it became a great controversy. What is your view on his paper? In addition to that, do you think Japan and the United States have yet to reconcile with each other vis-à-vis the past war? What is necessary to come to a complete reconciliation?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Tamogami's statement was disappointing. I also think it was wrong – the facts don't support it. And I think that is an issue that most Japanese would not agree with General Tamogami over. And I think all of us take some comfort in that. With regard to reconciliation, I think the United States and Japan have reconciled. And I think the key to our reconciliation is a benefit to others in Asia, and that is that we chose to look to the future and not the past, and we built a relationship upon what we could do for each other and for the world in the future, and I think that's served us well, and I think others would benefit by the same kind of philosophy.

QUESTION: You might not like this question, but President Bush was not necessarily popular in Japan. It depends on people's views, but on the global stage, I don't think President Bush was that popular either. When a president is not very popular, was it difficult as an Ambassador to work in that kind of situation?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: It wasn't difficult for me, because if it hadn't been for President Bush, I wouldn't have been here. I think the difficulty of any leader in these times is to try to provide leadership when the solution is not politically easy. If you look around the world, I don't know that there is any leader that is popular right now other than President Obama. There may be a reason for that. It may be that we haven't just come up with an incredibly mediocre group of politicians; it may be that the problems are so difficult that they're not easily solved by political solutions. That doesn't mean we ought to give up on them. I think President Obama has given people hope that they can basically push the restart button, and that we can look at the world again, and hopefully people will come together and try to approach it together. I think that's a good thing. I think the American people want President Obama to succeed. I think that's a big part of it. And I think the world at large wants President Obama to succeed, but in order for President Obama to succeed, the American people and the people of the great democracies around the world have got to participate. They've got to decide that they have something in the game and that they need to come together and try to resolve their differences and advance in some sort of coordinated way on a wide range of issues.

I never felt that the Bush Administration was trying to be unilateralist. I always thought that the Bush Administration was trying to be multilateral in its approach, and I certainly think that was the case here in Asia. But making that argument, I was frustrated about it and finally just gave up on it, because people didn't want to hear that answer. There's much to be done in the world, but the answer is not for America to go carry the fight for everyone else. A lot of the advice that Americans get is, "We'll hold your coat while you go do the fight." We need other people to take off their coats and go with us. And is that easy? No. But there is nothing that frustrates the American people more than the thought that only their sons and daughters can be put in harm's way in order to make a better world. We need the entire world to shoulder its responsibilities and to be a part of the international solutions that we seek, and again I hope that President Obama can take that message to the rest of the world and that it will be better received than it was from President Bush.

QUESTION: It seems like no one knows who the next ambassador to Japan would be, but I'm sure you would be giving advice to your successor. As a U.S. ambassador to Japan, is there anything that you would advise to do, and what not to do? Just one each.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I think it's very important that the U.S. and Japan work together. I'm one who believes that Asia works, and will come out alright, and a peaceful solution will be had in the international order – if the U.S. and Japan are together. If however, Japan lost confidence in the United States and thought it had to go its own way, then I think this part of the world could become more dangerous very quickly. So the paramount advice that I would give to any successor is, "Do not undervalue the importance of working with Japan and keeping Japan and the United States traveling the same path." There's no reason, as I look out the next 10, 20, 30 years, in which I believe that the fundamental interests of Japan and the United States will diverge. I just don't see that. And if that's the case, then we need to keep this alliance and this friendship going down that path together, and it will be important.

What not to do? I don't know. I think what I would say is what not to do is not to isolate yourself from the Japanese public. And I would say that to any American ambassador. I think it is one thing to be sent to represent your government to other governments – and that's the primary purpose of what ambassadors do – but I think in the modern era, an ambassador has to be involved with the public of the country that he is sent to. And I think the fact that I was able to get out with ordinary Japanese to be able to interact with them gave me a greater perspective on what Japan could and could not do with the relationship with the United States. And I found it very beneficial. So I would say don't succumb to the temptation to just talk to the prime minister or the foreign minister and the people that you run into in your official life. Talk to people that don't have official roles in the government.

QUESTION: This will be another opportunity for you to pass on your message to the Japanese people. So this is going to be my last question. Since you're at a press club, I'd like to ask the next question: Japanese media covers a lot about the United States, about the U.S.-Japan relationship, and if you have any complaints about our coverage, the way we communicate, please let us know.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I don't. And as I've said, I think I've been very fairly covered. That doesn't mean I've always liked everything that's been written about me,

but I can't complain. You have been open to me, and you've given me the chance to express my views and to advocate the positions of the American government, and I can't ask for any more than that.

QUESTION: Was there anything that we missed or we should have focused more on, or any wishes that you had to us?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Well, you could have written more about what a great guy I am, I guess. (laughter) But no, I really don't. I think you've done a good job. It's an intense media environment in Japan, as it is in the United States – as it was in Australia. It's the world we live in. And I think sometimes ambassadors or government officials make a huge mistake when they don't want to show up on the days when it's hard to show up. On the days when it's hard to show up, that's the day you ought to be there, even though that may not be your first choice, and if you do that, I think you're able to engage in dialog with people and you're able to express your point of view. And I think you have to understand that if you're going to be able to do a credible job in this day and time.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much Mr. Ambassador. Thank you very much Mr. Nakai. Now I'd like to open the floor for questions. Anyone who wishes to take the floor, please state your name and organization. Go ahead, Mr. Jameson?

QUESTION: You just got through saying that the interpretation of collective self-defense has to be looked at. It was looked at. Abe set up the Yanai Commission. The Yanai Commission issued its reports last June. Prime Minister Fukuda dismissed it by telling the TV reporters who interview him at the end of each day, "I never use the word 'change.'" In other words, "I was never thinking about change." So they have rejected your proposal. Are you unaware of that? Or why did you make these comments about everything being rosy and happy?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Sam! How nicely you put that. Yes, I was aware of that. The question is do I think that collective self-defense ought to be looked at. The answer is yes. Does that mean it was on stone tablets, if that report – or that rejection – was made? I don't think so. We live in a dynamic society in which people talk and debate about things a lot. I think that collective self-defense is something that the Cabinet defines. It's not something defined by the constitution. And I think it

could be examined again. The question was asked do I think it ought to be. The answer was yes.

QUESTION: TV Asahi's Suzuki. Secretary of State-designate Hillary Rodham Clinton told her confirmation hearing today that the Obama Administration will seek the ratification of the comprehensive test ban treaty. President-elect Obama himself has made it known, during the campaign and on other occasions, that he will make it his long-term goal to totally abolish all the nuclear weapons in the world. Mr. Ambassador, do you support his goals? Do you believe it realistically possible to achieve those goals while he is in office, I mean President-elect Obama in four years now or maybe eight years from now? And is there anything Japan can do to help achieve those goals working with the Obama Administration? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I think every American administration has expressed the hope and desire that nuclear weapons could be done away with. This administration – the Bush Administration – has done more in that area than anybody else has, as far as reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles. The agreement that we reached early on with Russia substantially reduced the number of warheads, I think from something like 8,000 to 2,000 – something in that neighborhood. I think we all want to do away with nuclear weapons, and I hope that President Obama is successful in doing that. The peace has in many respects been kept as a result of the American nuclear umbrella being extended over Japan and over Europe, and it had a dramatic and positive impact on peace in Europe, and I think in Japan. So I think whatever we do, we have to be careful that we don't disturb that balance that has been struck. But I wish him every success and wish him well on that, and I don't think that his desire is terribly different than a lot of his predecessors has been. And I think we can have – there is a point in time in which you could do away with nuclear weapons. It's going to require a lot of work and a lot of hope and a lot of understanding on people's parts, but I think it's certainly doable. Whether it's doable in four or eight years, I don't know. But let's give the man a chance and see what he can do.

QUESTION: Japan's role?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Well, I think Japan has had a great moral voice for the abolition of nuclear weapons because it's the only country that has ever come under atomic attack, so I think when people speak of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they speak with conviction and they say they don't want that to happen again. And I don't know

that there's anybody that disagrees with that. I think, as I signed the book when I went to Hiroshima, the words that I said – all those who come to Hiroshima mourn the tragedy of war. You don't want that to happen again. And that's something that we all need to work toward, and I have every good wish for President Obama in that area.

QUESTION: My name is Miichi, a personal member. Time, a U.S. magazine, wrote that Israel cannot win. The Palestinian issue during the Security Council meeting, the U.S. was the only country that abstained from the resolution, while Japan also said yes. Why is the U.S. unwilling to take leadership in this area?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I think the Americans and the United States took leadership in it. I think the reason a compromise was reached was because of the work that Secretary Rice did. I was very happy that the United States did not veto that resolution, because if the United States had vetoed that resolution, then all parties would have been able, the whole Palestinians Hamas would have been able to say, "This is all the fault of the United States." Because the United States abstained, the resolution passed. There was no veto. Both sides then ignored the resolution. Until both sides – both sides – decide that peace is better than war, there will be no peace in the Middle East. And when Hamas fires rockets into Israel and kills innocent people, they rob themselves of the opportunity to say that they're trying to make peace in the world. When Hamas refuses to sit down and negotiate with Israel, they rob themselves of the argument that they are trying to make peace in the Middle East. When Hamas says that Israel needs to be wiped off the face of the Earth, they rob themselves of the peacemaker role in the Middle East. Peace is not up to the United States. Peace is up to Israel and Palestine and the groups within Palestine. They must decide that they are prepared to have a peace. They are the ones that have to lay down their arms and stop killing each other, and when they do that, I think we've got a chance. And when they decide that they want to do that, and they have an interest in doing it – equally – then I think we have a chance to have a peace in the Middle East. And no nation on Earth would welcome that opportunity more than the United States.

QUESTION: My name is Ota from Kyodo. This question is going to be related to the second previous question regarding nuclear abolition. North Korean official media agencies said yesterday they are not going to give up nuclear weapons until the U.S.-DPRK relations would be normalized, and also no more nuclear threats by the United States. That means DPRK is now seeking the revision of the nuclear umbrella provided by the U.S. to this region. So do you have any idea what kind of new

deterrence posture which might be acceptable to North Korea, and also China? Do you have any kind of a new idea about the future security deterrence posture, sir?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: North Korea's position is a nonstarter. The United States is not going to fold up the nuclear umbrella for South Korea or for Japan – not going to happen. It's not going to happen on this president's watch, and next week with the next president, it's not going to happen on his watch either, because American security is tied to the security of others, and we recognized a long time ago that if despots and tyrants are allowed to threaten and bully us – or our friends and allies – our security is put at risk. North Korea agreed to give up their nuclear weapons. They must give up those nuclear weapons if we are going to have a normalization of North Korea's position in the international community. If they refuse to give up those nuclear weapons, they will remain isolated from the rest of the international community, because the United States believes that nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea are tremendously destabilizing to this part of the world and increase the chance of accident and war, rather than decreasing it. And that's not what we're about. We recognize the pressure that the Republic of Korea would be under, that Japan would be under, if North Korea were allowed to have nuclear weapons and threaten its neighbors. We don't think that's a good thing, and I'm confident that the next administration will be just as active as this one was in trying to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons technology from North Korea.

QUESTION: I'm a personal member, Masuyama. I used to be a Jiji Press member. I have a question regarding the refueling issue of the Maritime Self-Defense Force. When you ask or try to solicit help and support from Mr. Ozawa, he rejected you, and I think it was a disappointment, but I think there is a possibility now for a Democratic Party of Japan administration to become a reality. In that case, what would it influence – or how would it influence the U.S.-Japan relationship? Can I have your views on that?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: The Japanese people will choose who they want to represent them and what kind of government they want to have. I was disappointed that Ozawa-san would not meet with me and said that he didn't really want to meet with any foreign ambassadors. I thought he would have benefited from the fact of having that kind of dialogue, not only with me but with others. We did finally have one meeting, and it didn't produce much. I would hope that if the Democratic Party of Japan came to power, that they would have the same commitment to the U.S. alliance

that the LDP and the New Komeito Party have had ever since the postwar period. I would hope that the alliance itself, and Japan's participation in it, would not be the subject of political debate between the two parties. I don't think that would necessarily benefit the alliance. My sense of it is that the Japanese people overwhelmingly support the idea of Japan being allied with the United States. And I think the political parties will have a tendency to reflect that. Now will they absolutely agree on what that alliance should look like or how it will work? My guess is no. But I would hope that the fundamental question of whether the U.S. and Japan should be in an alliance is one that would be above political debate, and that what you would have is a debate over the nuance of how that relationship would work, as opposed to about whether you would have a relationship at all.

QUESTION: I used to work for a radio station. My name is Hijikata. I'd like to talk about the level of people. Japanese people are allergic to nuclear ... they used to be, but I think the feeling is gradually going away. People in Japan did not distinguish atomic energy and nuclear before, but that kind of idea is disappearing in Japan, and I think Japanese people are changing these days. What are your views on this matter? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: With regard to ... ?

QUESTION: Yes, allergy against nuclear weapons and allergy against atomic energy. Many people were confused about the two. At least before, that was the situation in Japan, but nowadays people are less allergic, for example, nuclear powered vessels and the tragedy of the past experiences fading in Japan, and the ideas of Japanese people towards nuclear is changing.

MODERATOR: So what you are trying to say is not just an allergy toward Japan going nuclear.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Well, I think Japan's experience with nuclear energy on the civilian side has been very positive. I think Japan generates something like one-third of its power with nuclear plants. The level of technology here in Japan is as good as it is anywhere in the world – probably better than it is even in the United States. That's because you have embraced the idea of producing energy with nuclear reactors. That's positive. I think that's a good thing, and I think it will be nothing but positive for Japan in the future.

I hope the day will never come, however, when Japan feels that it needs to acquire nuclear weapons. And I say this for a couple of reasons. One: I think that it would destabilize this part of the world even more. But I think it would be a waste – a waste in the sense that the United States stands behind Japan. The United States has opened and maintained that nuclear umbrella since the end of the war, and it's worked. Now in France, Charles de Gaulle used to make the argument that I sometimes hear reflected in arguments here in Japan, and that basically was that the United States couldn't be counted on to deter the Soviet Union when it came to nuclear weapons. The phrase that de Gaulle used to use was "Washington won't risk New York for Paris." I think that was absolutely wrong. I think we were prepared and did risk American cities for all of those European cities, and I think there was no war, no nuclear exchange in Europe, as a result of that. I think the same thing exists now. People I hear sometimes make the argument, the U.S. will not risk New York for Tokyo. Well, we have. We've been doing that for 60 years, and that's not going to change.

And the other point that I would make is that while de Gaulle believed that France needed an independent nuclear capacity, a nuclear strike force, I don't believe France was any safer as a result of that independent nuclear weapons source than it was as if it had just continued to depend on the nuclear umbrella of the United States. When it comes to nuclear weapons, deterrence is the key. I believe you have to have them right now because the other side has them. And I want America to be in a predominant position to where no one – no one – would contemplate using nuclear weapons against an American ally, America itself, or a friend, because the consequences would be so devastating to them. That kind of deterrent equation has existed since the war, and it has worked. And I don't believe that the peace of the world is served when there are more nuclear weapons powers and when their numbers increase. I just don't think it makes things better. So I think it would be a failure in American foreign policy and Japanese foreign policy if the Japanese determined that they had to have their own nuclear weapons to feel safe in the world.

QUESTION: I am a personal member. My name is Nishizaki. First of all, I would like to express my deep respect to your contribution to U.S.-Japan relations. My question is, since you go back to the United States, I would assume that you would meet with the new president at that time, and eventually I believe that President-elect Obama would visit Japan and China. In what order do you think he would visit? Do you have any suggestions that you would mention to him? Do you know what order he would be

making that visit? And the next question: In the event that President Obama visits Japan, would he be visiting Hiroshima? These are the two questions.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I don't know. First of all, I will not meet the new president. That's just not the way it works in our system. But I would expect that President Obama will come to Japan very quickly because this is central to what we do in all of Asia, so I think you can expect him, as much as he travels abroad here, that Japan will be at the top of those countries that he wants to visit.

Now the other thing that I think you ought to consider here is that he's coming into office in the midst of this financial crisis that is so difficult. So I think the American people would expect him to spend his time at home trying to get his arms around this crisis before he traveled abroad. So I don't think anybody should feel that he is not showing the proper respect if he doesn't travel abroad for a while to see others, but I expect him to come to Japan. Whether he comes to Hiroshima or Kyoto or Tokyo, he'll make all those determinations. But my sense of it is that President Obama has a good sense of Asia, which I think is good, from growing up in Indonesia and spending some time there. Growing up in Hawaii, which is a very diverse community with heavy, heavy emphasis on what goes on in Asia. So I think this president may be the most Asia-focused president that we have had, and I think that could be very positive, because I believe that the center of gravity in the international order is moving toward Asia. And I think American presidents should recognize that. And I think that there's a chance that this American president will and will act accordingly.

QUESTION: Kokubu from Asahi Newspapers. Ambassador, you referred to the situation of the Japanese domestic politics, and as you know, the Japanese government is divided right now, and we haven't overcome the situation yet, and the government is slow in countering the current economic crisis. The reason for that is the Japanese political party system is not mature, at least not as mature as the United States. Or Japanese political leaders are lacking flexibility. Those are two things that I'm thinking about, and I'm sure it was difficult for you to express your views about Japanese domestic politics during your assignment as the ambassador, but now can you comment on the Japanese domestic political situation a little bit? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: The question is could I, or would I? I think I'm going to leave that "would I" to somebody else maybe or to my successor. But I think you had

an election that occurred in 2007, I guess, that turned completely on domestic issues. I think the pension scandal was the reason that the Upper House was lost. I don't think that foreign policy issues were central to that campaign. In other words, I don't think there was a big debate about whether that Japan should be in alliance with the United States or where Japan was going on the international front. That never came up. And that leads me to believe that the stance that Prime Minister Koizumi took, and his desire for Japan to speak with a louder voice in international affairs, that most Japanese believe that was where they wanted Japan to be. So I don't think any of that part of it has changed. What has changed is that the same party doesn't control both houses, and that has been difficult for the Japanese public. It's been difficult for the political institutions of Japan to figure out how they're going to react to all that. I'm confident that they're going to figure that out, but what I worry about is that during the time that they take to figure that out, Japan will marginalize itself with regards to the rest of the international community, and I think that would be a huge mistake.

That's the reason I was very heartened by some of the indications that I saw the other day that Japan is talking about what it can do in Afghanistan, and it is prepared to take those suggestions to the new administration so that it can play a greater role in Afghanistan and thereby play a greater role in the international community. And I think that would be really well met by the new administration, but it would also be well received by the other people that are in Afghanistan right now, who I think would also like for Japan to make a greater contribution, and that's the NATO countries, people like the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark – these are countries that are doing a lot in Afghanistan right now, and I think they too would like for Japan to do more, and if Japan did more, I think it would bolster their reputation with all of those countries, not just the United States.

QUESTION: I am Ando from Tokyo Shimbun. On the 20th, there will be the inauguration of the new President Obama. Going beyond the political parties, it is indeed a historical event for the United States. On the fourth of November last year, when you heard of this historical news, what actually passed through your mind, more so not as an ambassador, but as an American citizen? Can you share some of that with us?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: It was a great moment of pride for me. To me it was the promise of America being fulfilled in very tangible ways. I grew up in the 1950s and 60s in the South, and the South was still segregated. I never attended a public school with

an African-American. African-Americans were prevented from going to school with me. They were prevented from going to restaurants to eat, where I could eat. They were prevented from staying in hotels where I could stay. They were prevented from sitting in a movie theater on the same floor that I sat on. One of my heroes was Lyndon Johnson because Lyndon Johnson passed in 1964 the Public Accommodations Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1966 Housing Act. Those changed America.

The one columnist I saw said that the real winner – the president who won on November 4 – was Lyndon Johnson, because America finally became what most Americans wanted it to be, a country where any child could grow up and be president. We have often said that, but in fact it was not the case. And when I was a young boy in Texas, no southerner, no citizen of the old Confederacy, could be elected president at that point in time because of the legacy of the Civil War. No Catholic could be elected president. No woman could be taken seriously as a candidate for president, and yet in this election cycle Americans have shown that an African-American can be elected, and they're proud of it. They have shown that a woman could run for president, and she may have lost her race for the presidency, but she didn't lose because she was a woman. And I think Americans can take pride in that. And I think you saw on election night in the faces of those people that were standing in that park in Chicago the realization that America had finally fulfilled its promise. And I think that feeling has gone around the world, and I think it is one that you will see again on January 20, an enormous sense of pride that we have begun to live up – that we are, because I think we began a long time ago, but that we are living up to the true ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution.

QUESTION: Ichihara from NHK. Mr. Ambassador, you met with the family members of abductees the other day, and you said that you will continue to support them moving forward. Not only the abduction issue, but including other issues, will you be playing a role in promoting U.S.-Japan relations in the future as well? Any specific ideas you already have?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: I certainly hope to play a role, and I certainly hope to be available to help any that might seek my counsel. I have been invited to serve on a couple of boards with regard to this, and I hope I'm going to be able to do that. But I want to stay involved. I think this relationship is absolutely crucial to the future of America, as well as the future of Japan. And I love Japan; I have loved being here. The

people have been so kind to me and so gracious to me, and I know that we can have a strong and healthy friendship and alliance, and it just needs people, as Ambassador Kato used to say, to go in and tend the garden and be sure that we don't see those weeds grow up amongst us that would prevent us from doing the things that are in our mutual interest. So I hope to be a part of that.

QUESTION: Jiji Tsushin alumnus Naganuma, currently a personal member. Mr. Ambassador, you have worked together with President Bush and are very close friends through baseball as well, and at the same time you are a member of a different party. If that's the case, have you ever said "This is my opinion, but that's very different from yours?" Have you ever advised Mr. Bush on that?

AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER: Well, there have been times, I'm sure, that our opinions might have differed, but he and I have had such a wonderful relationship over the years that we just kind of know each other. And I am a Democrat. I voted for Senator Obama, but President Bush never asked me to support a Republican candidate. What he asked me to do was to do the best I could for the United States, and I tried to do that. We have a long tradition in America of people serving administrations of a different party, and I think that's a good thing, and I wish we had more of it. And I think you've seen that President Obama has asked Secretary Gates, who is a Republican, to continue in the administration. I think he will ask other Republicans to be a part of the administration. Bill Clinton – his last Secretary of Defense was Bill Cohen, who was a Republican. Franklin Roosevelt, during World War II, his Secretary of War as well as his Secretary of the Navy, which were the two positions which today would be combined in the Secretary of Defense, were both Republicans. Abraham Lincoln asked Edwin Stanton to serve in his administration and to become Secretary of War after he was dissatisfied with the Secretary of War that he had. Stanton was a Democrat who had served as the Attorney General in President Buchanan's administration that had preceded Lincoln. Very different administrations, but President Lincoln asked him to serve, and he served with incredible distinction, and he was the one who said those immortal words when Lincoln died – he said, "Now he lives with the ages." He had a great affection for President Lincoln. You can serve your country and serve your party at the same time. Sometimes we, in the midst of this partisanship and bickering and vile nature of politics that we seem to have right now, we forget that. Democrats and Republicans are Americans before they are Democrats and Republicans. And American interests can be served abroad and at home. I think that's the best politics, but I also think it's the right thing to do, and that's why I have been very proud to have

served as the ambassador in Australia and in Japan as well, and I would hasten to add one thing about President Bush and his views on partisanship. And I think I can explain about as well as anybody. When he said he wanted to run for president, I said I wanted to help him, but I was not going to become a Republican, and he said, "I'm not worried about that." There are three of us that are political appointees that have served in both terms of the administration – only three. Nobody else has served all eight years. And two of us are Democrats. So I think that indicates that the President wasn't looking for partisan help; he was looking for help that would advance the interests of the American people.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Ambassador Schieffer.