

U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle's Address Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference Singapore, 22 May 1991

Thank you very much Mr. Das, and thank you for reminding everyone as to why I am here. Our Ambassador to Singapore comes from Indiana; Mr. Fairbanks comes from the great state of Indiana, and we look forward to the PECC conference being held next year in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Minister Lee, Mr Mah, Mr Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished guests, members of the PECC, and ladies and gentlemen:

Before I begin my remarks, I must take note of the tragic incident in India. As you all know, Rajiv Gandhi has been assassinated. Mr. Gandhi, who visited the United States a number of times, was a person who fought for economic development, progress, who had a strong commitment to democratic values. Gandhi was a leader of the new generation of leadership that is emerging around the world. He, more than many, epitomized what a new generation of leadership would offer to this world. On behalf of President Bush and our entire country, our prayers will be with his family and with the people of India. India has lost a great leader, and the world has lost a great leader.

Now, as I focus on the topic at hand, I can't help but note that it's rather appropriate that we meet here in Singapore. Singapore represents open markets, trying to get rid of the barriers, a commitment to progress, a commitment to economic development. I would like to congratulate Chandra Das for his excellent work as Chairman of PECC, and to wish the incoming chairman, my friend Dick Fairbanks, the very best in his new position.

When I visited Singapore last it was May 1989, and I spoke to the American Business Council at that time. The topic of my speech was "American Decline". At that time, the so-called "declinists" of America were in full swing and in full operation. It was fashionable at that time to say that America's best days were behind her and that we, the United States, and we, the world, would just have to accept that America was in irreversible and inevitable decline. Well I said then that these prophets of doom and gloom were simply wrong, and I say now, two years later, that these prophets of doom and gloom were simply wrong, and are wrong today. They stand refuted by history. First, by the collapse of communism and second, by the events in the Persian Gulf. Look at the changed world in these last two years — the Berlin Wall is down, Germany is united, communism has been consigned to the dustbin of history, Saddam Hussein's aggression did not stand, and the post cold war era has begun.

But some still say that America should retreat. I say, retreat from what, victory? Retreat from what, responsibility? Retreat from what, world affairs? I say no. We will not retreat. We are not interested in retreating into a fortress America. We will remain engaged, we will remain a Pacific power, we will continue to be engaged around the world, because our engagement from our viewpoint, and I hope from your viewpoint, means an opportunity for peace, and an opportunity for freedom.

Actually, America is more committed now than ever to assuming world responsibilities and world leadership. We are committed to providing security and deterrence from attack. We can, and will help promote economic development and investment opportunities. We can, and will foster the growth of democracy, and the advancement of human rights. We can, and we will deter nuclear proliferation. And finally, we can, and we will work to promote trade, open markets and to generate prosperity. No one better understands the importance of this last goal than the members of the Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference. Indeed, the founders of PECC, some of whom are with us today, were pioneers of the Pacific Economic Co-operation. Their vision is carried on today as PECC's membership is being expanded to include four new economies — Hong Kong, Mexico, Peru and Chile. Hong Kong's growth is legendary and well known. It has a strong commitment to open markets and to free trade. With the admission of Mexico and Peru and Chile, we recognize the change of attitude in Latin America. The leaders of these countries represent a new generation — a generation without the anti-American and anti-private sector prejudices of some of its predecessors. Today's Latin America wants trade, and trade opportunities, and not handouts and not subsidies. They want trade, not aid; they want an opportunity. And that's what we will give them.

People use many geographical descriptions for the countries of the Pacific — the Pacific Rim, the Pacific Basin, the Asia-Pacific Region. But two words describe this area best of all — growth and opportunity. The beginning of the last decade, U.S. transatlantic trade exceeded U.S. transpacific trade. By 1990, the situation was reversed, and our transpacific trade was one-third greater than our transatlantic trade. In 1990, U.S. trade turnover with ASEAN alone almost equalled U.S. trade with Germany, our leading European trade partner. Indeed, the United States is ASEAN's largest export market. But more than trade binds this region together. Travel within the region, whether for business or tourism, has increased enormously. By 1993, traffic on the Pacific air routes should overtake the Atlantic on a passenger mile basis.

The Asia-Pacific region is clearly suited for economic co-operation. The enormous success of ASEAN as a diplomatic unity indicates that there are great benefits to be attained from co-operation. Given the vast economic flows linking our economies, we need to discuss the issues facing us all, and to work together where we can. That is why, following the vision of PECC, the ministers of 12 countries in November 1989 created a new vehicle for co-operation — the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation or, as we commonly refer to it as, APEC.

We are pleased with the progress APEC has made in its brief existence, and we feel that its future is quite bright. From the outset, APEC re-affirmed its support for a strong, open, multilateral trading system. APEC's number one priority this year is a successful outcome to the Uruguay Round, and the group has worked actively to this end. Let us think for a moment what the world would be like if the Uruguay Round would happen to fail. Slow economic growth, with poor nations condemned to the cycle of poverty, stagnant trade, regional blocs committed to protectionism and closed markets — that would be the result of a failure of the Uruguay Round, of the GATT negotiations. But let us look at what a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round would mean, and what we can expect. We can expect an additional four trillion dollars of world GNP over the next decade. Additional exports, which means additional jobs and opportunities. International acceptance of free trade and open markets, and the best hope for under-developed countries to achieve prosperity and growth. We agree totally with APEC's choice of a successful outcome of the Uruguay Round as its primary objective this year.

I just came from Japan, where the most talked about subject was the completion of the Uruguay Round at GATT. And I said to the Japanese what I say here today. Everything must be on the table. That means that Japan must put on the table sensitive commodities like rice; it means that Europe must

put on the table sensitive commodities like wheat, sugar and dairy products; and that means the United States must put sensitive commodities on the table like sugar, peanuts, dairy and cotton. All nations must be willing to put sensitive items on the table to have fruitful negotiations and to have a successful conclusion. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round is the United States' top trade priority.

Let me just say a word about Japan since I just came from there. As you well know, Japan is an economic superpower. We welcome that fact. It has allowed her to be a powerful engine for Asia Pacific growth. She has provided major economic assistance and investment to Asia and the Pacific region. And Japan's contribution to four mine sweepers to the Gulf operation is a welcome step in the development of our global partnership with Japan. We also would welcome a political role by Japan commensurate with its economic strength, an assumption of leadership and responsibility in concert with the United States and other nations of the region. Earlier this week in Tokyo, I stressed to the Japanese leaders the importance of their role in producing a successful completion to the Uruguay Round. A fitting contribution symbolizing their new role of economic and political leadership. After five years of intensive work, the world's trading countries must not fail in our efforts to achieve a far reaching agreement.

Let me briefly address a related development in the eastern part of the Pacific Rim which will benefit the region as a whole. As you know, the United States, Canada and Mexico intend to pursue a free trade agreement. We expect this agreement to lead to expanded growth in our three countries. This should make us even more attractive to trading partners in the Pacific Basin countries. Let me, however, make one point very clear. The United States, Canada and Mexico do not seek to create a trading bloc. On the contrary, we seek to eliminate trade barriers. Expanded trade and economic growth require political security and stability. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. military presence has helped provide the Asia Pacific region with stability. This stability has allowed the nations of the region to develop and prosper. Of course, our military presence will be adjusted to deal with the threat and the potential threat. New arrangements are appropriate for new times, such as the MOU we signed last year with Singapore.

Meanwhile, our security arrangements with the Philippines remain important. We hope that an updated bases agreement can be negotiated soon. Regardless of the result of the base negotiations in the Philippines, the U.S. will remain a Pacific power. The practical elements of our Asian security strategy, forward deployed forces, overseas bases and bilateral security arrangements will remain in place. These provide the basis for economic growth and the advancement of democratic values. We must never permit occasional friction over trade and other economic issues to undermine the security arrangements on which our common prosperity rests. Our goals have been, and remain: a secure and peaceful world; a growing world economy dedicated to free trade, open markets, economic integration; freedom and democracy. These goals are in America's vital interests. These goals are in Asia's vital interests. And these goals require continued Asian-American co-operation of the sort that PECC embodies.

Thank you very much.

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