

front and move forward, and we're developing a policy now.

Q. Mr. President, can we ask you a question about—

The President. Sure.

Chinese Democracy Initiative

Q. —we're just trying find out—the Governor will be here to ask you not to renew MFN with conditions. You have said that you will have some conditions. Can you have any kind of a compromise here? And the other question was, if you do support the Governor's proposals, do you think that will upset the Chinese?

The President. Well, let me answer the first question first. We obviously hope that we can maintain the maximum good relationship with the Chinese. I have no interest in trying to isolate them. I'm encouraged by the successes of their economic reforms. And that's got to be in the interest of the whole world if it is accompanied with responsible behavior and respect for human rights and movement toward a more democratic society. There has been some encouraging news in China on a number of fronts in the last few weeks. I still think that more needs to be done. And I'm hopeful that it will be. But we're not in the position to say finally what the condition of our relations will be—and next month when the time runs out because it's an evolving situation.

And secondly, I just have to say that I think that the democracy initiative in Hong Kong is a good thing. And I'm encouraged that the parties have agreed to talk about it. And it's one of the world's most vibrant, thriving important cities. It is an incredible center of commerce and haven of opportunity for millions of people who literally have—many of them have not a thing but the clothes on their back when they came there. And I think the idea of trying to keep it an open and free society after 1997 is in the best interest of the Chinese. I think it's clearly in the best interest of the Chinese. So I think this initiative is well-founded, and I support it. I hope it doesn't offend anybody, but how can the United States be against democracy? That's our job; get out there and promote it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:31 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not

available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing the Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month Proclamation

May 3, 1993

Thank you very much. Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to all of you, especially those who have traveled very great distances, as many of you have, to help celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

I'm pleased to be joined on the stage by Senator Dan Akaka, with whom I played golf last weekend, less well than he did I might add; and Representatives Bob Matsui, Norm Mineta, Robert Underwood, Patsy Mink, Eni Faleomavaega—did I do a good job? Pretty good—and Jay Kim. And let us also honor the memory of the late Senator Spark Matsunaga, who left such a wonderful legacy as a true friend of the Asian Pacific community.

My campaign and my administration have gained so much from the talents of Asian Pacific Americans, and I'd like to recognize just a few of them: Barbara Chow, my Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs; Neil Dhillon, at the Department of Transportation; Atul Gawande, who has been working on the Health Care Task Force; Maria Haley on our personal staff; Goody Marshall with the Vice President's staff; Doris Matsui in Public Liaison who did such a wonderful job with this event; Shirley Sagawa in Legislative Affairs; Debra Shon at the United States Trade Representative's Office; Melinda Yee at the Department of Commerce; and many others who are an essential part of our efforts every day.

Fifteen years ago, Representative Frank Horton introduced the first resolution proclaiming Asian Pacific American Heritage Week, honoring the significant contributions of Asian Pacific Americans in all walks of life. In 1990, Congress designated and President Bush proclaimed the month of May as Asian Pacific Heritage Month. And last year, with the help of Representative Horton and 106 of his colleagues, the designation of May as

Asian Pacific Heritage Month each year became the law of the land.

The month of May was chosen because of its significance to Asian Pacific American history. In the first week of May in 1843, the first Japanese arrived in America. And on May 10, 1869, Golden Spike Day, the Transcontinental Railroad, built partly with Chinese labor, was completed. Today, 150 years after these historic events, nearly 8 million Asian Pacific Americans can trace their roots to Asia and the islands of the Pacific.

It is astonishing to realize the breadth of diversity among Americans of Asian Pacific heritage. The Asian Pacific community stretches across thousands of miles and encompasses millions of diverse people. In our country the Asian Pacific American community can trace its roots to at least 25 different nationalities, more than 75 different languages, and literally hundreds of different ethnic groups. Now, that's diversity.

And still Asian Pacific Americans have something in common and something to emulate, a commitment to strong families, to community, and to instilling in each new generation a respect for educational opportunity and hard work. These values have been an essential part of success in achieving the American dream, as so many Asian Pacific Americans know.

And while we realize all the rich opportunities America has given to all our people, we are aware also of how much Asian Pacific Americans have given back to this country. Immigrants from Asia and the Pacific helped build our country. Today their descendants are making us even better. They are prominent among our scientists, artists, doctors, teachers, and other professionals who have enriched the lives of all of us in America.

I want to talk for a moment about the importance of education. The Asian Pacific community has demonstrated that a commitment to education is truly the key to bettering our lives. Among Asian Pacific Americans 25 years old and over, 82 percent have had 4 years of high school or more; 39 percent have completed 4 years of college or more. For individuals, education is the key to economic parity and social mobility. But for America, it is the key to our strength and our competitiveness in the global economy.

I want to thank you all again for coming here today to recognize all the achievements and the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to this great Nation. I hope that we can continue to come together as we have today to rejoice in our diversity as we renew the bonds of community that bring all Americans together. I believe that if we embrace those things which we share, if we embrace our common values and our common goals, we strengthen ourselves, our community, and our democracy, and we make ourselves free to celebrate the richness of our diversity.

Therefore, it is with great pride and admiration that I take this opportunity, my first one, to sign the proclamation proclaiming this Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Proclamation 6557—Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

May 3, 1993

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This month we honor the heritage and history of Asian and Pacific Americans and the contributions they have made to our country: to its economic development, its cultural wealth, its scientific and medical achievements, its institutes of education, and its government. As we celebrate the diversity of our people and their heritage, we remember that we are one Nation, united in a common quest for freedom and dignity.

Traders from the Asia-Pacific region reached North America as early as the 16th century, but the first significant wave of immigration began during the late 1800s. From China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and the Indian subcontinent they came and found work in America: as miners, railroad workers, farmers, and merchants. These settlers and their children preserved the rich legacy of their homelands while also learning the his-