

about North Korea's compliance with the nuclear inspection. And when South and North Korea agreed on the declaration of nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, the precondition was that North Korea will sign the nuclear safeguards treaty with the IAEA and submit its facilities to international inspection. And that has been promised by the North Korean side. And in my view, they will faithfully follow through with their commitment.

Now, if and when North Korea balks at these commitments, then I believe North Korea clearly understands what international sanctions are awaiting for their faults. And in light of North Korea's current situation and realities, I do not believe North Korea could forfeit their promises regarding these commitments.

And the United States and the Republic of Korea will continue our cooperation and our efforts to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons development, as well as to have North Korea abandon their nuclear reprocessing plants as well as the enrichment facilities to the extent they exist. And we will expect support and cooperation of the international society. And along with this support, I am quite certain that our efforts will succeed.

As far as South-North Korean summit talks, we did not go into any specifics, but President Bush has expressed his support of these talks to the extent that these talks will be conducive for the reduction of tension on the Korean Peninsula and for the long-term unification of the Korean people.

Japan and the U.N. Security Council

Q. Mr. President, the U.S. has called for Japan to take a broader role on the world stage, to go beyond checkbook diplomacy. In line with that expectation, is the U.S. prepared to accept Japan's request for a seat on the permanent U.N. Security Council? And if not, why not?

President Bush. Japan is a very important country. They are an economic power to be respected and to be reckoned with. But your question relates to changing the Charter of the United Nations Security Council, something that is extraordinarily difficult to do. And in addition to Japan, there are other claimants to seats on what clearly

would have to be an expanded Security Council. So, we are in the position of hearing from, as the world has changed, from various friends, Japan being one of them, others in Europe being among them, as to their aspirations to be on the Security Council.

But before there could be any change in the Charter, there would have to be extensive consultation. It simply is not going to just happen. And so, we haven't tried to stand in the way of it, nor have we advocated Japan over other seriously interested people.

I think President Nixon back in '72 indicated a willingness to support Japan if the Charter ever came open for change. But my experience at the U.N. tells me changing the Charter is extraordinarily difficult. But we'll be open-minded, and we will be prepared to consult.

Visit to Japan

Q. Mr. President, tomorrow you head for Japan, which has been characterized sort of as the Super Bowl of this Asian trip of yours. Politically, sir, what is the bottom line for you? What do you have to achieve in Japan and take home to the United States to make that a successful trip?

President Bush. I don't know, but the political opponents are already kind of raising the bar on the high jump. And we will be discussing in Japan economic issues, not exclusively economic. We're going to be talking about the very important security considerations that Japan has. Indeed, we've talked about them here in Korea. And so, I have no set list that must be achieved to declare this visit a success. I've heard very positive statements coming from a very respected leader, Mr. Miyazawa. And that is all very encouraging. Indeed, they've already taken some steps on the economic front, the monetary front, that I think are important in terms of lowering interest rates.

So, I just can't help you in what makes a success or what makes a failure. I can guarantee you political opponents, no matter what is achieved, will be saying, "Hey, you didn't jump quite high enough. You need to get over the bar. We've just raised it an-