

me in Japan, some of whom made the trip all the way. And they haven't seen the recent studies that show overall U.S. productivity is the highest in the world, far exceeding Japan's. We must work hard to keep that productivity growing. I know and these business leaders know that as long as the playing field is level, American workers can outcompete and outproduce anybody, anywhere, anytime.

Yes, we faced a turning point with Japan, and when the time came, we took a major step forward. But it was only a step, one in a long process to achieve markets as open as our own. We will build on these results. We will monitor the progress, and I will keep pressing for jobs and market access when Prime Minister Miyazawa comes to the United States, hopefully in a few months.

That ongoing effort includes the strategy for world growth which the Prime Minister and I developed and which we are coordinating with the other industrialized nations. America and Japan are the two largest economies in the world. Together we comprise 40 percent of the total world economy. And global growth is a top priority for both of us. Already our two countries have made deep progrowth cuts in interest rates. Japan cut their discount rate to 4.5 percent, and as you know, our Federal Reserve has just lowered interest rates a full percentage point, both of which are keys to stimulating long-term growth here and abroad.

But clearly, with December's unemployment figures, our economy is not growing fast enough. In my State of the Union Message later this month, I'll present to the American people my action plan to get it growing faster. And I am looking forward to spelling out our ambitious agenda for economic growth clearly and repeatedly to the American people in this vigorous and exciting political year. I am absolutely confident that the American people will join me in this vision for a new era of expanded markets, of peace, and prosperity.

So, thank you all very much, and thank you for being with us on that trip. I appreciate it enormously.

Unemployment

Q. Does the unemployment increase

mean that the Federal Reserve System's interest rate cuts aren't working?

The President. No, I think it takes a while to work. But certainly the Federal Reserve cuts will work their way through, and they are very, very important to economic growth. But I think it is a little too soon to expect them to have taken hold and turned around the December unemployment figures.

Japan-U.S. Trade

Q. Sir, what else can you do to put the pressure on Japan to open up its markets?

The President. Well, in the first place, we're going to monitor the agreements we've made, and then we'll see. I will resist protectionist legislation, however; I don't view that as pressure.

Q. Mr. President, why are you optimistic about the auto agreement, and the auto makers so pessimistic?

The President. Well, I think that we might have achieved more. I am proud of what we did achieve. And I think there is nobody suggesting anyone here is totally satisfied. What I am saying is, we made dramatic progress, and it will result in jobs for the American workers.

Q. Cuomo says it's inadequate.

The President. Well, he is entitled to his opinion. And I can't say that we've gotten everything we want, so maybe we're not very far apart. Who knows?

Q. What are the short-term—

Q. Why isn't the managed trade—

The President. Will you make up your mind? I'll go with either one of you. You're both wonderful people. Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News], go ahead. Men first, maybe. Whoops, Michel [Michel McQueen, Wall Street Journal], sorry about that. [Laughter]

Results of President's Trip

Q. In the short term, was this trip a political bust for you personally?

The President. I don't think collapsing with the flu helped, but I think I can handle that one, Jim. I feel fine, my health is good, and I don't think it's a bust at all. And I'll be glad to debate any of the—eventually; maybe I'd better phrase this proper-