

[At this point, the President and the Prime Minister shook hands. Then one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

California Floods

Prime Minister Murayama. I wish to extend my sincere condolence to the victims of the torrential rain and the flood in California.

The President. The people of California have suffered a lot in the last 2 years. They've had

earthquakes, fires, and now floods. It's a very—it's a wonderful place to live, but they bear a great burden.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:28 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Prime Minister Murayama spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama of Japan January 11, 1995

The President. Good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome Prime Minister Murayama here for his first official visit. It comes at a very important time, a time when we are beginning to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, a time when we must move to strengthen the vital partnership between our peoples for the 21st century.

We are starting this year in exactly the right way, working together as representatives of two great democratic nations, committed to solving the problems we face together. We know America has no more important bilateral ties than those with Japan. In a dramatically changing world, we look to Japan as an unwavering friend, one devoted, as are we, to promoting peace and advancing prosperity.

Recently, the vitality of our relationship has been illustrated again by our cooperation to diffuse the danger of nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. Working together with our South Korean allies, we have confronted the nuclear threat and stopped it. The agreement we reached with North Korea already has frozen their nuclear program in a way that is verifiable. North Korea will be giving up control of nuclear materials that could be used in bombs. Construction of new and dangerous reactors has stopped. Ultimately, this program will be dismantled. And all of this is being done, as I said, with strict outside monitoring and verification.

Prime Minister Murayama and I talked about our two countries' roles in implementing the North Korean nuclear agreement, including

some activities each of us will undertake. I want to express my appreciation for Japan's strong support for this agreement, including its willingness to play a significant financial role. I reaffirmed my intention to Prime Minister Murayama that the United States will also continue to play a leading role in implementing the agreement.

This year, the United States and Japan will also work together to develop a comprehensive blueprint for liberalizing trade among the rapidly growing Asian-Pacific economies. We're confident that during its chairmanship of APEC, Japan will show the leadership necessary to chart the course and fulfill the goals of the agreements announced in Indonesia in November. Free and fair trade in Asia will deliver more high-paying jobs for American workers, and those are exactly the jobs that will give more Americans a chance to pursue the American dream.

The Prime Minister and I discussed our bilateral economic relationship. Under our framework agreement, I'm pleased to announce that this week we reached an accord that will open up Japan's financial services sector to American businesses. Over the past 4 months, we have also forged agreements to open Japanese Government procurement as well as Japan's glass and insurance markets to American companies. These agreements must, of course, be fully implemented to ensure that real results are achieved, and more remains to be done. But in the last calendar year, we have reached 8