

POSTON II REUNION
SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 1987
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

MORIO L. FUKUTO

GOOD EVENING,

WHEN I WAS ASKED TO BE THE SPEAKER TONIGHT, I WAS HESITANT TO SAY YES. I REALLY THOUGHT THAT THIS AFFAIR SHOULD HAVE A SPEAKER SUCH AS THOSE WE HAVE HAD IN THE PAST -- DALLAS McLAREN IN SAN JOSE AND PETE HIRONAKA HERE IN 1983. PETE WROTE ABOUT DALLAS McLAREN'S TALK IN 1977, AND DESCRIBED HOW HE HAD THE AUDIENCE IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND RECALLING THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF THOSE POSTON II YEARS. I HAD THE SAME REACTION TO PETE'S TALK IN 1983. I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED IT.

I WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ANY IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN POSTON -- NOT AT SCHOOL, OR WITHIN THE BLOCK, OR IN SPORTS. I WAS NOT THE BIG MAN ON THE CAMPUS, OR A LEADER OF ANY SORTS. I AM UNABLE TO REGALE YOU WITH CAMP HAPPENINGS OR EVOKE NOSTALGIC MEMORIES OF THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD TIMES. WHEN I THINK BACK ABOUT IT, I REALIZE I WAS JUST A LITTLE KID. HECK, I THOUGHT TONY NAKAZAKI WAS BIG. TONY IS NOT HERE TONIGHT. HE WAS ONE OF MY HEROES IN CAMP, AND, TO ME, HE STILL IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE BIG.

AT ANY RATE, WHEN GEORGE OKI REMINDED ME THAT THE THEME OF THIS REUNION WAS TO HONOR AND PAY TRIBUTE TO THE ISSEI.

AND TO THE NISEI SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II, IT WAS AN OFFER I COULDN'T REFUSE. HERE WAS MY OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICLY EXPRESS MY ADMIRATION, MY GRATITUDE, MY APPRECIATION, TO THE TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE WE ARE HONORING THIS WEEKEND. THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ATTAINING THE OFFICE THAT LED TO MY BEING ASKED TO BE THE SPEAKER IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE ISSEI, WHAT A NOBLE AND ADMIRABLE GROUP OF PEOPLE.

WE NIKKEI HAVE IT PRETTY GOOD NOW. SOME CALL OUR PRESENT SITUATION THE GREAT AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY. OF COURSE, THIS STORY BEGAN IN THIS COUNTRY WITH THE ISSEI.

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE ATMOSPHERE OF PREJUDICE, THE HARDSHIPS, THE DISCRIMINATION THEY FACED AND OVERCAME TO GET US STARTED ON THE PATH TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WE HAVE TO EXPLORE A LITTLE HISTORY AND EXAMINE SOME LAWS.

WE FIRST START WITH THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION. ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8, CLAUSE 3, PROVIDES THAT CONGRESS SHALL ESTABLISH A "UNIFORM RULE OF NATURALIZATION." THUS, IN 1790, THREE YEARS AFTER THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, CONGRESS DECREED THAT "ANY ALIEN BEING A FREE WHITE PERSON WHO SHALL HAVE RESIDED WITHIN . . . THE JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED STATES FOR TWO YEARS MAY BE ADMITTED TO BECOME A CITIZEN THEREOF." IN 1870, FOLLOWING THE CIVIL WAR, THIS REFERENCE TO "FREE WHITE PERSON" WAS CHANGED TO INCLUDE AMERICAN BLACKS AND PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT. LATER, AMERICAN INDIANS WERE INCLUDED. CAN YOU IMAGINE, INDIANS BORN HERE WERE NOT CITIZENS. NO ASIANS WERE INCLUDED UNTIL THE CHINESE WERE ADDED

IN 1943. THIS "INELIGIBILITY TO CITIZENSHIP" FORMED THE BASIS FOR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE JAPANESE FOR ALMOST 100 YEARS.

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1820 AND 1850, A SPACE OF TIME THAT COVERS THE MEXICAN PERIOD OF CALIFORNIA, 46 CHINESE ARE ON RECORD AS HAVING COME TO CALIFORNIA. BETWEEN 1850, THE YEAR CALIFORNIA WAS ADMITTED TO THE UNION, AND 1882, THE YEAR WHEN CHINESE WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE UNITED STATES, OVER 280,000 CHINESE WERE RECORDED AS HAVING ENTERED THIS STATE.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE ISSEI, YOU MAY ASK.

WELL, WE ALL REALIZE THAT A MAJOR FACTOR IN PREJUDICE AND INTOLERANCE IS ECONOMICS. THE CHINESE BEGAN ARRIVING IN CALIFORNIA IN LARGE NUMBERS AND WERE TAKING JOBS FROM AMERICAN WORKERS. A MAJOR EVENT TOOK PLACE IN 1869. THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD WAS COMPLETED. TEN THOUSAND WORKMEN WERE SUDDENLY WITHOUT JOBS. THOUSANDS OF CHINESE WHO HAD BEEN WORKING ON THE CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD WERE THROWN ON THE LABOR MARKET TO COMPETE WITH WHITE AMERICANS FOR THE JOBS THAT WERE AVAILABLE. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE CHINESE BECAME INTENSE. THE WORKING MEN'S PARTY, LED BY AN IRISH IMMIGRANT, DENNIS KEARNY, AGITATED FOR THE EXCLUSION OF ALL CHINESE. THE PRESSURE WAS FELT IN WASHINGTON, D.C., AND IN 1882, THE FIRST CONGRESSIONAL CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT WAS ENACTED.

COINCIDENTALLY, JUST ABOUT THAT TIME, IN 1884, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED A POLICY OF ALLOWING ITS LABORING CLASS TO EMIGRATE TO FOREIGN NATIONS TO WORK. SO, WHEN THE CHINESE STOPPED COMING, THE JAPANESE BEGAN TO ARRIVE, ALTHOUGH

NOT IN LARGE NUMBERS IN THE BEGINNING. IN 1900, HAWAII WAS ANNEXED TO THE UNITED STATES AS A TERRITORY. THIS HAD THE EFFECT OF ENABLING THOUSANDS OF JAPANESE CONTRACT LABORERS ON HAWAIIAN SUGAR PLANTATIONS TO COME TO THE MAINLAND. IN 1899, 2,844 JAPANESE ENTERED THE U.S. THE NEXT YEAR, 1900, 12,635 ARRIVED. AGAIN, AMERICAN LABOR FELT THREATENED. ANTI-CHINESE SENTIMENTS WERE NOW BEING DIRECTED AGAINST THE JAPANESE.

HEADLINES NOW READ, "THE JAPANESE INVASION -- THE PROBLEM OF THE HOUR -- THE JAPANESE, A MENACE TO AMERICAN WOMEN -- CRIME AND POVERTY GO HAND IN HAND WITH ASIATIC LABOR."

DENNIS KEARNY, FEELING HIS OATS AFTER SUCCESSFULLY LEADING THE EFFORT TO EXCLUDE THE CHINESE, WAS NOW RANTING, "THE FOREIGN SHYLOCKS ARE RUSHING ANOTHER BREED OF ASIATIC SLAVES TO FILL UP THE GAP MADE VACANT BY THE CHINESE WHO ARE SHUT OUT BY OUR LAW -- NOW JAPS ARE BEING BROUGHT HERE IN COUNTLESS NUMBERS TO DEMORALIZE AND DISCOURAGE OUR DOMESTIC LABOR MARKET AND TO BE EDUCATED AT OUR EXPENSE." HE CERTAINLY ^{WAS} NOT A VERY NICE GUY.

IN 1905, A SEEMINGLY MINOR LOCAL EVENT TOOK PLACE. IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PASSED A RESOLUTION REQUIRING ALL JAPANESE STUDENTS TO ATTEND WHAT WAS KNOWN AS THE CHINESE SCHOOL. THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED, IT IS SAID, AT THE INSTIGATION OF TWO LOCAL POLITICIANS WHO WERE ABOUT TO BE INDICTED FOR MUNICIPAL CORRUPTION IN ORDER TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM THEMSELVES. NINETY-THREE (93) STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED, 25 OF WHOM WERE AMERICAN BORN. THE ISSEI PARENTS

DECIDED TO FIGHT THE SCHOOL ORDER, ARGUING THAT THE NISEI COULD NEVER BE EXPECTED TO BECOME GOOD AMERICANS IF THEY WERE NOT PERMITTED TO ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER AMERICANS. THE SCHOOL ORDER ATTRACTED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION. THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT WERE UPSET. THEIR PROTESTS WERE HEARD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT, WHO AT THE TIME HAD A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR JAPAN -- JAPAN HAVING DEFEATED RUSSIA IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR JUST 13 MONTHS EARLIER -- SENT HIS SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND LABOR TO SAN FRANCISCO TO SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE JAPANESE STUDENTS.

AFTER A FEW MONTHS, THE SCHOOL ORDER WAS REVERSED. BUT, ATTITUDES DID NOT CHANGE. AN EDITORIAL IN A SAN FRANCISCO PAPER READ, "THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE LAST NIGHT BUT ONE THAT WE THINK IT WILL CORRECT WHEN THE MEMBERS HAVE THOUGHT THE MATTER OVER. THE BOARD DECIDED TO ALLOW JAPANESE TO ATTEND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ON EQUAL TERMS WITH AMERICAN CHILDREN. THE JAPANESE ARE INELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP AND, AS SUCH, ARE NOT FIT TO ASSOCIATE AND BE PLACED WITH AMERICAN CHILDREN. THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED THEM AN INFERIOR RACE AND SUCH THEY ARE IN THE EYES OF ALL TRUE AMERICANS."

AS A RESULT OF A DISCRIMINATORY ORDER AFFECTING 93 STUDENTS, TWO GOVERNMENTS BEGAN NEGOTIATING REGARDING THE PROBLEMS OF THE JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS. ULTIMATELY, THE 1908 GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT WITH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT WAS

CONCLUDED. JAPAN VOLUNTARILY AGREED TO RESTRICT EMIGRATION FROM JAPAN, AGREEING NOT TO ISSUE PASSPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES TO EITHER SKILLED OR UNSKILLED LABORERS UNLESS THEY WERE PREVIOUSLY HERE OR HAD BLOOD RELATIVES HERE. THE GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT SLOWED IMMIGRATION, BUT DID NOT SEAL IT OFF. THAT DIDN'T OCCUR UNTIL 1924, WHEN THE LABOR UNIONS AND THE LABOR LEADERS SUCCEEDED IN HAVING CONGRESS PASS THE JAPANESE EXCLUSION ACT OF 1924.

BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR UNSKILLED FARM LABOR, MANY ISSEI FOUND THEIR FIRST JOBS IN AGRICULTURE. THEY ALSO WORKED ON THE RAILROADS, IN THE MINES, THE MILLS, THE CANNERIES -- IN THE CITIES THEY WORKED AS DOMESTICS, IN HOTELS, IN RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, FACTORIES, GROCERY STORES, DRY GOODS STORES, LAUNDRIES -- WHEREVER JOBS BECAME AVAILABLE. IN TIME, MANY BECAME ENTREPRENEURS.

A REMARKABLE THING OCCURRED ON THE FARM. THE MOST ENTERPRISING ISSEI WERE NOT CONTENT TO CONTINUE WORKING FOR OTHERS. BY 1900, SOME ISSEI WERE FARMING ON A "SHARE" PLAN, LEASING LAND AND PAYING THE RENT WITH A PERCENTAGE OF THE HARVEST. WITHIN A SHORT TIME, THEY MOVED TO CASH RENTAL PAYMENTS, WHICH ALLOWED THEM TO KEEP A LARGER PART OF THE PROFITS WHEN INCOME WAS GOOD. AND, AS SOON AS THEY ACCUMULATED SOME SAVINGS, THEY STARTED TO PURCHASE THEIR FARMS. BY 1910, 17,000+ ACRES OF FARM LAND WERE OWNED BY JAPANESE IN CALIFORNIA, AND 177,762~~4~~ ACRES WERE HELD IN VARIOUS FORMS OF LEASEHOLD. THIS AMOUNTED TO LESS THAN 2% OF THE 11 MILLION

ACRES OF IMPROVED FARM LAND AT THE TIME. NOT MUCH, BUT ENOUGH TO ALARM A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CALIFORNIANS. AN ALIEN LAND MEASURE WAS ENACTED IN 1913, PROHIBITING ALL "ALIENS OTHER THAN THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP" TO PURCHASE LAND OR TO LEASE LAND FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS. OF COURSE, THE ISSEI WERE NOT DUMB. THEY NOTED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO PREVENT AN ALIEN JAPANESE FROM BUYING FARMLAND IN THE NAME OF HIS AMERICAN BORN OFFSPRING. SHORTLY, NISEI CHILDREN IN DIAPERS WERE BEING LISTED AS LEGAL OWNERS OF PROPERTY WHICH WAS MANAGED AND OPERATED ON THEIR BEHALF BY THEIR ISSEI PARENTS IN THEIR ROLE AS LEGAL GUARDIANS. THE LOOPHOLES IN THE 1913 LAW WERE CLOSED IN 1920 AND IN 1923. THE END RESULT WAS THAT ANY LAND THEREAFTER ACQUIRED IN VIOLATION OF THE ALIEN LAND LAW BECAME SUBJECT TO BE ESCHEATED, THAT IS, TAKEN BY THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

IF YOU WERE TO DESCRIBE THE EARLY ISSEI BY USING ONLY THREE ADJECTIVES, ONE OF THEM SURELY WOULD BE "HARD WORKING." IT IS IRONIC THAT THIS VIRTUE OF BEING HARD WORKING, WHICH IS HIGH, ON ANYBODY'S SCALE OF VALUES, WOULD BE USED AS A REASON FOR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE ISSEI. THE FOLLOWING REMARKABLE PASSAGE APPEARED IN AN OFFICIAL CALIFORNIA AGENCY REPORT:

"AMERICANS CANNOT POSSIBLY COMPETE WITH JAPANESE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE ACTIVITY OF THE JAPANESE -- THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WORK LONG HOURS AND TO ASSUME TIRESOME POSITIONS, THEIR GENERAL STANDARD OF LIVING AND THE FACT THAT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WORK IN THE FIELDS, ALL COMBINE TO GIVE

THEM A DECIDED ADVANTAGE OVER AN AMERICAN FAMILY." THE ISSEI WERE NOT FAIR. THEY WORKED TOO HARD!

WELL, THE ISSEI DID WORK HARD. BY THEIR HARD WORK, THE ISSEI MADE A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO CALIFORNIA, ESPECIALLY IN AGRICULTURE. GEORGE USHIJIMA (HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO SHIMA) TAUGHT THE CALIFORNIANS THAT THE DELTA COUNTRY, WHERE THE SACRAMENTO AND SAN JOAQUIN RIVERS MEET, COULD BE RECLAIMED TO YIELD BOUNTIFUL CROPS OF POTATOES. BY 1913, HE WAS HARVESTING 2,800 ACRES, MOSTLY LEASED. WHEN HE DIED IN 1926, HIS ESTATE WAS ESTIMATED AT \$15 MILLION. ISSEI FARMERS, LED BY KYUTARO ABIKO, TOOK OVER THE SEMI-ABANDONED COMMUNITY OF LIVINGSTON AND MADE IT A PROFITABLE FARMING AREA. ISSEI FARMERS DEVELOPED BERRY PRODUCTS IN THE WEST BY INCREASING THE YIELD FOUR OR FIVE TIMES OVER WHAT IT HAD BEEN IN THE PAST. IT WAS THE ISSEI WHO SUCCEEDED IN THE MOUNTAIN FRUIT SECTIONS IN PLACER COUNTY AFTER OTHER GROUPS HAD FAILED. THEY RECLAIMED WASTELAND THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA AND MADE THEM HIGH YIELDING, FERTILE, AGRICULTURAL ACRES. THE ISSEI WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR GRAPES IN LODI AND REEDLEY, FRUITS, STRAWBERRIES, TOMATOES AND PEAS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CROPS OF ALL KIND IN IMPERIAL COUNTY AND ORANGE COUNTY, GARLIC IN SAN JUAN VALLEY, LETTUCE IN HOLLISTER, RICE IN VISALIA AND THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY, WATERMELON IN DINUBA -- THE LIST CAN GO ON AND ON.

IN SPITE OF THE HARDSHIPS, THE PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATORY LAWS, THE ISSEI PERSEVERED, THEY STUCK IT OUT, NOT ONLY ON THE FARMS, BUT IN THE CITIES. THEY RAISED THEIR

FAMILIES, PASSING ON TO THEIR CHILDREN THE VIRTUES OF HARD WORK, HONESTY, HUMILITY, OBEDIENCE, LOYALTY, RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY AND A LOVE OF LEARNING.

MOST ISSEIS ARE NOW IN THEIR 80s AND 90s. IT IS SAD BUT TRUE THAT AS THE DAYS AND MONTHS GO BY, THEIR NUMBERS CONTINUE TO DWINDLE. MANY ARE NOT FARING SO WELL, NEVER HAVING RECOVERED AFTER BEING WIPE OUT BY EVACUATION. A GREAT PERCENTAGE OF THE ISSEI ARE LIVING IN POVERTY.

AS YOU KNOW, THERE HAS BEEN FOR SOME TIME A CAMPAIGN IN THE NIKKEI COMMUNITY FOR MONETARY REDRESS FOR THE INJUSTICE OF EVACUATION DURING WORLD WAR II. A CRUCIAL VOTE ON THIS ISSUE IS SCHEDULED FOR THE MIDDLE OF NEXT MONTH IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. IF THE REDRESS EFFORT SHOULD BE SUCCESSFUL, IT IS A SHAME THAT IT WOULD BE TOO LATE FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF DECEASED ISSEIS -- WHO SUFFERED GREAT LOSSES AND WERE CERTAINLY DESERVING OF REPARATIONS.

THE NISEI, OFFSPRINGS OF ISSEI, HAVE DONE WELL. WITH THE VALUES INSTILLED IN THEM BY THEIR ISSEI PARENTS, THEY DID WELL IN SCHOOL AND BECAME MODEL, LAW ABIDING CITIZENS. TODAY, THERE IS NO AREA IN AMERICAN LIVING IN WHICH THE NISEI AND THEIR PROGENY, ARE NOT INVOLVED -- IN AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE, MEDICINE, BUSINESS, THE SCIENCES, EDUCATION, CIVIL SERVICE, LAW, POLITICS, THE MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT -- WHAT HAVE YOU. NO LONGER MUST A NISEI WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE AND PERHAPS WITH A PHI BETA KAPPA KEY IN HIS POCKET RESIGN HIMSELF TO A FUTURE WITH ONLY LIMITED EMPLOYMENT

OPPORTUNITIES. MANY HAVE BECOME LEADERS AND PROMINENT IN THEIR FIELD -- I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU ATTENDING TONIGHT ARE IN THIS CATEGORY.

HOW DID THIS ALL COME ABOUT -- FROM A DESPISED GROUP FACING OPEN HOSTILITY AND DISCRIMINATION, SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATORY LAWS, DISPLACED FROM OUR HOMES WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW, TO NEAR FULL ACCEPTANCE TODAY?

WITHOUT QUESTION, THE WARTIME SACRIFICE OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN IN UNIFORM WAS THE LARGEST SINGLE FACTOR IN BRINGING ABOUT OUR CHANGE IN STATUS. I DON'T HAVE TO RECOUNT TO THIS GROUP THE HEROIC DEEDS OF THE NISEI SOLDIER DURING WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE AND IN THE PACIFIC. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT THE "GO FOR BROKE" COURAGE OF THE NISEI SOLDIERS WHILE THEIR OWN PEOPLE WERE INCARCERATED BEHIND BARBED WIRES, DEMONSTRATED OUR LOYALTY AND THE INJUSTICE OF EVACUATION AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE JAPANESE AS NOTHING ELSE COULD. I BELIEVE THAT THE DEEDS OF THE NISEI SOLDIER HAS CHANGED THE ATTITUDE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY TOWARD THE NIKKEI FROM THAT OF MERE TOLERANCE TO RESPECT, ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION.

IN THE POST-WAR FIGHT TO REPEAL DISCRIMINATORY LAWS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CITE THE NISEI WAR RECORD TO WIN POPULAR SUPPORT. IN THE PRESENT REDRESS MOVEMENT, THE HEROISM AND SACRIFICE OF THE NISEI SOLDIERS ARE PLAYING MAJOR ROLES IN ADVANCING THE CRY FOR REDRESS. IN FACT, THE HOUSE BILL IS DESIGNATED HR 442.

MOST OF THE DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AGAINST THE JAPANESE ARE NOW OFF THE BOOKS. AS LATE AS 1950, THERE WERE MORE THAN

500 FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES AIMED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AGAINST RESIDENT JAPANESE, HAVING AS THEIR BASIS THE PHRASE, "INELIGIBLE TO CITIZENSHIP." THE PASSAGE OF THE WALTER-McCARRAN ACT IN 1952, BY WHICH OUR ISSEI PARENTS WERE FINALLY ALLOWED TO BECOME AMERICAN CITIZENS, HAS TAKEN CARE OF MOST OF THEM.

THERE IS STILL ONE RULE OF LAW THAT REMAINS. FIRST, A LITTLE BACKGROUND. FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 BY PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ON FEBRUARY 19, 1942, CONGRESS PASSED PUBLIC LAW 503 THAT MADE IT A MISDEMEANOR FOR ANYONE TO VIOLATE ORDERS OF THE MILITARY COMMANDER PRESCRIBED UNDER THE EXECUTIVE ORDER. AS YOU KNOW, UNDER AUTHORITY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066, LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN L. DEWITT PROMULGATED A NUMBER OF ORDERS RESULTING IN CURFEW FOR AND LATER EVACUATION OF THE JAPANESE. TWO PRINCIPLED AND COURAGEOUS NISEI, ACTING WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE, AND INDEPENDENTLY, OF EACH OTHER, GORDON HIRABAYASHI, IN WASHINGTON, AND MINORU YASUI, IN OREGON, DECIDED TO TEST THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF PUBLIC LAW 503. A THIRD NISEI, FRED KOREMATSU, JUST AS COURAGEOUS, ALSO ENDED UP TESTING THE LAW, NOT BECAUSE OF PRINCIPLES, BUT BECAUSE HE JUST DID NOT WANT TO BE EVACUATED. HE WANTED TO STAY IN SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA AND MARRY A CAUCASIAN GIRL THAT HE LOVED. GORDON HIRABAYASHI, WAS A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON. WHEN THE EVACUATION ORDER BECAME EFFECTIVE, HE DECLINED TO REPORT, INSTEAD HE TURNED HIMSELF IN TO THE LOCAL FBI OFFICE AND ADMITTED VIOLATING CURFEW. MINORU YASUI, THEN A

MEMBER OF THE OREGON BAR, AFTER ANNOUNCING HIS INTENTIONS TO TEST THE CURFEW ORDER TO THE FBI, VIOLATED THE CURFEW ORDER AND REQUESTED THAT HE BE ARRESTED SO THAT HE COULD TEST ITS CONSTITUTIONALITY. FRED KOREMATSU, AS I INDICATED, JUST PLAIN REFUSED TO LEAVE. AS YOU WOULD PREDICT, ALL THREE WERE CONVICTED. ON APPEALS THAT WENT TO THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT, ALL THREE CONVICTIONS WERE UPHELD IN THE YEARS 1943 AND 1944, THE SUPREME COURT RULING THAT THE CURFEW AND EXCLUSION ORDERS WERE A PROPER EXERCISE OF THE WAR POWER CLAUSE OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION BY CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THESE DECISIONS, AS THEY NOW STAND, SANCTIONED AND CONDONED THE WRONGFUL INTERNMENT OF MORE THAN 110,000 AMERICAN CITIZENS AND RESIDENT ALIEN JAPANESE.

REALIZING THIS, A GROUP OF DEDICATED NISEI AND YOUNG SANSEI, ALONG WITH OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS, BEGAN WHAT IN SHORT HAS COME TO BE KNOWN IN THE NIKKEI COMMUNITY AS THE CORAM NOBIS MOVEMENT. A WRIT OF CORAM NOBIS IS A PROCEEDING USED TO SECURE RELIEF IN THE SAME COURT IN WHICH A JUDGMENT WAS ENTERED FROM AN ERROR OF FACT ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED AT THE TRIAL. SEPARATE CORAM NOBIS PROCEEDING WERE BROUGHT IN ALL THREE CASES. THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS ESTABLISHED THAT THERE WAS A DELIBERATE CONCEALMENT OF INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, REFUTING THE CLAIM THAT JAPANESE AMERICANS POSED A THREAT TO THE MILITARY SECURITY OF THE WEST COAST AND THAT THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF GENERAL DEWITT WAS ALTERED TO REMOVE STATEMENTS SHOWING THAT RACE

PREJUDICE RATHER THAN MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS UNDERLAY HIS DECISION TO RECOMMEND INTERNMENT OF THE JAPANESE. WITH THE USE OF THIS RECENTLY DISCOVERED EVIDENCE, THE EXCLUSION ORDER CONVICTIONS OF FRED KOREMATSU AND GORDON HIRABAYASHI AND THE CURFEW VIOLATION CONVICTION OF MINORU YASUI WERE VACATED AT THE TRIAL COURT LEVEL, THAT IS THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT. IN THE HIRABAYASHI MATTER, THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT VACATE THE CONVICTION FOR CURFEW VIOLATION. AN APPEAL IS PENDING IN THE HIRABAYASHI CASE. PERHAPS THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECTIFY ITS MISTAKES.

THE NIKKEI IN AMERICA HAVE COME A LONG WAY. REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT WE WILL EVER ACHIEVE FULL ACCEPTANCE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. RECENTLY, THE TELEVISED IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS WERE CONCLUDED. WASN'T IT ABSOLUTELY MAGNIFICENT THE WAY SENATOR DANIEL INOUE CHAIRED THE JOINT COMMITTEE? I, FOR ONE, WAS COMPLETELY ENTHRALLED BY HIS PERFORMANCE, THE WAY HE CONDUCTED THE HEARINGS, HIS SOMBER, COMMANDING PRESENCE AND HIS DEEP, RICH AND MAJESTIC VOICE. WHETHER YOU ARE A DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN, WHETHER YOU ARE PRO-CONTRA OR ANTI-CONTRA, IF YOU ARE JAPANESE, YOU HAD TO BE PROUD OF SENATOR INOUE. YOU HAVE TO TAKE PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT HE IS ONE OF US. WHAT AN OUTSTANDING REPRESENTATIVE HE IS FOR US. AND YET, AFTER 24 YEARS AS A UNITED STATES SENATOR, AND CHAIRMAN OF THAT SELECT SENATE COMMITTEE, WHO SERVED WITH VALOR IN WORLD WAR II, WINNING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS, WHO LOST HIS RIGHT ARM IN THE

PROCESS, CALLS CAME IN TO CAPITOL HILL ABOUT HOW THIS "JAP" SHOULD NOT BE ATTACKING AN AMERICAN LIKE "OLLIE" AND THAT "JAP" OUGHT TO GO BACK WHERE HE CAME FROM.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? FORTUNATELY, THE CALLS ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREATER MAJORITY OF AMERICANS. MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS AT THE END CAME DOWN TO A CHOICE BETWEEN LIEUTENANT COLONEL OLIVER NORTH AND SENATOR DANIEL INOUE AND MOST OBSERVERS GAVE THE EDGE TO OUR SENATOR. AFTER THE HEARINGS WERE CONCLUDED, THE OTHER SENATORS CROWDED AROUND TO SHAKE SENATOR INOUE'S HAND. IT IS REPORTED THAT A VISITING BRITISH HISTORIAN WAS AMONG THEM. HE WAS AWED BY INOUE'S PERFORMANCE AND REMARKED, "WHERE DO YOU FIND SUCH MEN, ANYWAY?" WELL, WE KNOW -- THEY COME FROM THE ISSEI.

SO DID THE NISEI VETERANS. I JOIN WITH YOU ALL IN SALUTING THE ISSEI AND NISEI VETERANS.