

Remarks in Tokyo, Japan

November 14, 2009

Thank you so much. *Arigato*. Thank you so much. Please. Good morning. It is a great honor to be in Tokyo, the first stop on my first visit to Asia as President of the United States. And it is good to be—[*applause*]. Thank you. It is good to be among so many of you—Japanese and I see a few Americans here—who work every day to strengthen the bonds between our two countries, including my longtime friend and our new Ambassador to Japan, John Roos.

It is wonderful to be back in Japan. Some of you may be aware that when I was a young boy, my mother brought me to Kamakura, where I looked up at that centuries-old symbol of peace and tranquility, the great bronze Amida Buddha. And as a child, I was more focused on the *matcha* ice cream. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank Prime Minister Hatoyama for sharing some of those memories with more ice cream last night at dinner. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much. But I have never forgotten the warmth and the hospitality that the Japanese people showed a young American far from home.

And I feel that same spirit on this visit in the gracious welcome of Prime Minister Hatoyama, in the extraordinary honor of the meeting with Their Imperial Majesties, the Emperor and Empress, on the 20th anniversary of his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne, in the hospitality shown by the Japanese people. And of course, I could not come here without sending my greetings and gratitude to the citizens of Obama, Japan.

Now, I am beginning my journey here for a simple reason. Since taking office, I have worked to renew American leadership and pursue a new era of engagement with the world based on mutual interests and mutual respect. And our efforts in the Asia Pacific will be rooted, in no small measure, through an enduring and revitalized alliance between the United States and Japan.

From my very first days in office, we have worked to strengthen the ties that bind our nations. The first foreign leader that I welcomed to the White House was the Prime Minister of Japan, and for the first time in nearly 50 years, the first foreign trip by an American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, was to Asia, starting in Japan.

In 2 months, our alliance will mark its 50th anniversary, a day when President Dwight Eisenhower stood next to Japan's Prime Minister and said that our two nations were creating "an indestructible partnership" based on "equality and mutual understanding."

In the half-century since, that alliance has endured as a foundation for our security and prosperity. It has helped us become the world's two largest economies, with Japan emerging as America's second largest trading partner outside of North America. It has evolved as Japan has played a larger role on the world stage and made important contributions to stability around the world, from reconstruction in Iraq to combating piracy off the Horn of Africa to assistance for the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, most recently through its remarkable leadership in providing additional commitments to international development efforts there.

Above all, our alliance has endured because it reflects our common values: a belief in the democratic right of free people to choose their own leaders and realize their own dreams; a belief that made possible the election of both Prime Minister Hatoyama and myself on the

promise of change. And together, we are committed to providing a new generation of leadership for our people and our alliance.

And that is why, at this critical moment in history, the two of us have not only reaffirmed our alliance, we've agreed to deepen it. We've agreed to move expeditiously through a joint working group to implement the agreement that our two Governments reached on restructuring U.S. forces in Okinawa. And as our alliance evolves and adapts for the future, we will always strive to uphold the spirit that President Eisenhower described long ago, a partnership of equality and mutual respect.

But while our commitment to this region begins in Japan, it doesn't end there. The United States of America may have started as a series of ports and cities along the Atlantic Ocean, but for generations, we have also been a nation of the Pacific. Asia and the United States are not separated by this great ocean, we are bound by it. We are bound by our past, by the Asian immigrants who helped build America and the generations of Americans in uniform who served and sacrificed to keep this region secure and free. We are bound by our shared prosperity, by the trade and commerce upon which millions of jobs and families depend. And we are bound by our people, by the Asian Americans who enrich every segment of American life and all the people whose lives, like our countries, are interwoven.

My own life is a part of that story. I am an American President who was born in Hawaii and lived in Indonesia as a boy. My sister Maya was born in Jakarta and later married a Chinese Canadian. My mother spent nearly a decade working in the villages of Southeast Asia, helping women buy a sewing machine or an education that might give them a foothold in the world economy. So the Pacific Rim has helped shape my view of the world.

And since that time, perhaps no region has changed as swiftly or dramatically. Controlled economies have given way to open markets. Dictatorships have become democracies. Living standards have risen while poverty has plummeted. And through all these changes, the fortunes of America and the Asia Pacific have become more closely linked than ever before.

So I want everyone to know, and I want everybody in America to know, that we have a stake in the future of this region, because what happens here has a direct effect on our lives at home. This is where we engage in much of our commerce and buy many of our goods, and this is where we can export more of our own products and create jobs back home in the process. This is a place where the risk of a nuclear arms race threatens the security of the wider world and where extremists who defile a great religion plan attacks on both our continents. And there can be no solution to our energy security and our climate challenge without the rising powers and developing nations of the Asia Pacific.

To meet these common challenges, the United States looks to strengthen old alliances and build new partnerships with the nations of this region. To do this, we look to America's treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines, alliances that are not historical documents from a bygone era, but abiding commitments to each other that are fundamental to our shared security.

Now, these alliances continue to provide the bedrock of security and stability that has allowed the nations and peoples of this region to pursue opportunity and prosperity that was unimaginable at the time of my first childhood visit to Japan. And even as American troops are engaged in two wars around the world, our commitment to Japan's security and to Asia's security is unshakable, and it can be seen in our deployments throughout the region, above all, through our young men and women in uniform, of whom I am so proud.

Now, we look to emerging nations that are poised as well to play a larger role, both in the Asia Pacific region and the wider world, places like Indonesia and Malaysia that have adopted democracy, developed their economies, and tapped the great potential of their own people.

We look to rising powers with the view that in the 21st century, the national security and economic growth of one country need not come at the expense of another. I know there are many who questioned how the United States perceives China's emergence. But as I have said, in an interconnected world, power does not need to be a zero-sum game and nations need not fear the success of another. Cultivating spheres of cooperation—not competing spheres of influence—will lead to progress in the Asia Pacific.

Now, as with any nation, America will approach China with a focus on our interests. But it's precisely for this reason that it is important to pursue pragmatic cooperation with China on issues of mutual concern, because no one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century alone, and the United States and China will both be better off when we are able to meet them together. That's why we welcome China's effort to play a greater role on the world stage, a role in which their growing economy is joined by growing responsibility. China's partnership has proved critical in our effort to jump-start economic recovery. China has promoted security and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and it is now committed to the global nonproliferation regime and supporting the pursuit of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

So the United States does not seek to contain China, nor does a deeper relationship with China mean a weakening of our bilateral alliances. On the contrary, the rise of a strong and prosperous China can be a source of strength for the community of nations.

And so in Beijing and beyond, we will work to deepen our strategic and economic dialog and improve communication between our militaries. Of course, we will not agree on every issue, and the United States will never waver in speaking up for the fundamental values that we hold dear—and that includes respect for the religion and cultures of all people—because support for human rights and human dignity is ingrained in America. But we can move these discussions forward in a spirit of partnership rather than rancor.

In addition to our bilateral relations, we also believe that the growth of multilateral organizations can advance the security and prosperity of this region. I know that the United States has been disengaged from many of these organizations in recent years. So let me be clear: Those days have passed. As a Asia Pacific nation, the United States expects to be involved in the discussions that shape the future of this region and to participate fully in appropriate organizations as they are established and evolve.

That is the work that I will begin on this trip. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum will continue to promote regional commerce and prosperity, and I look forward to participating in that forum this evening. ASEAN will remain a catalyst for Southeast Asian dialog, cooperation, and security, and I look forward to becoming the first American President to meet with all 10 ASEAN leaders. And the United States looks forward to engaging with the East Asia summit more formally as it plays a role in addressing the challenges of our time.

We seek this deeper and broader engagement because we know our collective future depends on it. And I'd like to speak for a bit about what that future might look like and what we must do to advance our prosperity, our security, and our universal values and aspirations.

First, we must strengthen our economic recovery and pursue growth that is both balanced and sustained. The quick, unprecedented, and coordinated action taken by Asia Pacific nations and others has averted economic catastrophe and helped us to begin to emerge from the worst

recession in generations. And we have taken the historic step of reforming our international economic architecture so that the G-20 is now the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

Now, this shift to the G-20, along with the greater voice that is being given to Asian nations in international financial institutions, clearly demonstrates the broader, more inclusive engagement that America seeks in the 21st century. And as a key member of the G-8, Japan has and will continue to play a leading and vital role in shaping the future of the international financial architecture.

Now that we are on the brink of economic recovery, we must also ensure that it can be sustained. We simply cannot return to the same cycles of boom and bust that led to a global recession. We can't follow the same policies that led to such imbalanced growth. One of the important lessons this recession has taught us is the limits of depending primarily on American consumers and Asian exports to drive growth, because when Americans found themselves too heavily in debt or lost their jobs and were out of work, demand for Asian goods plummeted. When demand fell sharply, exports from this region fell sharply. Since the economies of this region are so dependent on exports, they stopped growing and the global recession only deepened.

So we have now reached one of those rare inflection points in history where we have the opportunity to take a different path. And that must begin with the G-20 pledge that we made in Pittsburgh to pursue a new strategy for balanced economic growth.

I'll be saying more about this in Singapore, but in the United States, this new strategy will mean that we save more and spend less, reform our financial systems, reduce our long-term deficit and borrowing. It will also mean a greater emphasis on exports that we can build, produce, and sell all over the world. For America, this is a jobs strategy. Right now our exports support millions upon millions of well-paying American jobs. Increasing those exports by just a small amount has the potential to create millions more. These are jobs making everything from wind turbines and solar panels to the technology that you use every day.

For Asia, striking this better balance will provide an opportunity for workers and consumers to enjoy higher standards of living that their remarkable increases in productivity have made possible. It will allow for greater investments in housing and infrastructure and the service sector. And a more balanced global economy will lead to prosperity that reaches further and deeper.

For decades, the United States has had one of the most open markets in the world, and that openness has helped to fuel the success of so many countries in this region and others over the last century. In this new era, opening other markets around the globe will be critical, not just to America's prosperity but to the world's as well.

Now, an integral part of this new strategy is working towards an ambitious and balanced Doha agreement, not any agreement, but an agreement that will open up markets and increase exports around the world. And we are ready to work with our Asian partners to see if we can achieve that objective in a timely fashion, and we invite our regional trading partners to join us at the table.

We also believe that continued integration of the economies of this region will benefit workers, consumers, and businesses in all our nations. Together with our South Korean friends, we will work through the issues necessary to move forward on a trade agreement with them. The United States will also be engaging with the Trans-Pacific Partnership countries with the

goal of shaping a regional agreement that will have broad-based membership and the high standards worthy of a 21st century trade agreement.

Working in partnership, this is how we can sustain this recovery and advance our common prosperity. But it's not enough to pursue growth that is balanced. We also need growth that is sustainable for our planet and the future generations that will live here.

Already, the United States has taken more steps to combat climate change in 10 months than we have in our recent history, by embracing the latest science, by investing in new energy, by raising efficiency standards, forging new partnerships, and engaging in international climate negotiations. In short, America knows there is more work to do, but we are meeting our responsibility and will continue to do so.

And that includes striving for success in Copenhagen. I have no illusions that this will be easy, but the contours of a way forward are clear. All nations must accept their responsibility. Those nations, like my own, who have been the leading emitters must have clear reduction targets. Developing countries will need to take substantial actions to curb their emissions, aided by finance and technology. And there must be transparency and accountability for domestic actions.

Each of us must do what we can to grow our economies without endangering our planet, and we must do it together. But the good news is that if we put the right rules and incentives in place, it will unleash the creative power of our best scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. It will lead to new jobs, new businesses, and entire new industries. And Japan has been at the forefront on this issue. We are looking forward to being an important partner with you as we achieve this critical global goal.

Yet even as we confront this challenge of the 21st century, we must also redouble our efforts to meet a threat to our security that is the legacy of the 20th century: the danger posed by nuclear weapons.

In Prague, I affirmed America's commitment to rid the world of nuclear weapons and laid out a comprehensive agenda to pursue this goal. I am pleased that Japan has joined us in this effort, for no two nations on Earth know better what these weapons can do, and together, we must seek a future without them. This is fundamental to our common security, and this is a great test of our common humanity. Our very future hangs in the balance.

Now, let me be clear: So long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a strong and effective nuclear deterrent that guarantees the defense of our allies, including South Korea and Japan.

But we must recognize that an escalating nuclear arms race in this region would undermine decades of growth and prosperity. So we are called upon to uphold the basic bargain of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: that all nations have a right to peaceful nuclear energy; that nations with nuclear weapons have a responsibility to move toward nuclear disarmament; and those without nuclear weapons have a responsibility to forsake them.

Indeed, Japan serves as an example to the world that true peace and power can be achieved by taking this path. For decades, Japan has enjoyed the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, while rejecting nuclear arms development, and by any measure, this has increased Japan's security and enhanced its position.

And to meet our responsibilities and to move forward with the agenda I laid out in Prague, we have passed, with the help of Japan, a unanimous U.N. Security Council resolution

embracing this international effort. We are pursuing a new agreement with Russia to reduce our nuclear stockpiles. We will work to ratify and bring into force the test ban treaty. And next year at our nuclear security summit, we will advance our goal of securing all the world's vulnerable nuclear materials within 4 years.

Now, as I've said before, strengthening the global nonproliferation regime is not about singling out any individual nations. It's about all nations living up to their responsibilities. That includes the Islamic Republic of Iran, and it includes North Korea.

For decades, North Korea has chosen a path of confrontation and provocation, including the pursuit of nuclear weapons. It should be clear where this path leads. We have tightened sanctions on Pyongyang. We have passed the most sweeping U.N. Security Council resolution to date to restrict their weapons of mass destruction activities. We will not be cowed by threats, and we will continue to send a clear message through our actions and not just our words: North Korea's refusal to meet its international obligations will lead only to less security, not more.

Yet there is another path that can be taken. Working in tandem with our partners, supported by direct diplomacy, the United States is prepared to offer North Korea a different future. Instead of an isolation that has compounded the horrific repression of its own people, North Korea could have a future of international integration. Instead of gripping poverty, it could have a future of economic opportunity where trade and investment and tourism can offer the North Korean people the chance at a better life. And instead of increasing insecurity, it could have a future of greater security and respect. This respect cannot be earned through belligerence. It must be reached by a nation that takes its place in the international community by fully living up to its international obligations.

So the path for North Korea to realize this future is clear: a return to the six-party talks; upholding previous commitments, including a return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and the full and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And full normalization with its neighbors can also only come if Japanese families receive a full accounting of those who have been abducted. These are all steps that can be taken by the North Korean Government if they are interested in improving the lives of their people and joining the community of nations.

And as we are vigilant in confronting this challenge, we will stand with all of our Asian partners in combating the transnational threats of the 21st century by rooting out the extremists who slaughter the innocent and stopping the piracy that threatens our sea lanes, by enhancing our efforts to stop infectious disease and working to end extreme poverty in our time, and by shutting down the traffickers who exploit women, children, and migrants and putting a stop to this scourge of modern-day slavery once and for all. Indeed, the final area in which we must work together is in upholding the fundamental rights and dignity of all human beings.

The Asia Pacific region is rich with many cultures. It is marked by extraordinary traditions and strong national histories. And time and again, we have seen the remarkable talent and drive of the peoples of this region in advancing human progress. Yet this much is also clear: Indigenous cultures and economic growth have not been stymied by respect for human rights; they have been strengthened by it. Supporting human rights provides lasting security that cannot be purchased in any other way. That is the story that can be seen in Japan's democracy, just as it can be seen in America's democracy.

The longing for liberty and dignity is a part of the story of all peoples. For there are certain aspirations that human beings hold in common: the freedom to speak your mind and

choose your leaders; the ability to access information and worship how you please; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice. These are not impediments to stability; they are the cornerstones of stability. And we will always stand on the side of those who seek these rights.

That truth, for example, guides our new approach to Burma. Despite years of good intentions, neither sanctions by the United States nor engagement by others succeeded in improving the lives of the Burmese people. So we are now communicating directly with the leadership to make it clear that existing sanctions will remain until there are concrete steps toward democratic reform. We support a Burma that is unified, peaceful, prosperous, and democratic. And as Burma moves in that direction, a better relationship with the United States is possible.

There are clear steps that must be taken: the unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; an end to conflicts with minority groups; and a genuine dialog between the Government, the democratic opposition, and minority groups on a shared vision for the future. That is how a Government in Burma will be able to respond to the needs of its people. That is the path that will bring Burma true security and prosperity.

These are steps that the United States will take to improve prosperity, security, and human dignity in the Asia Pacific. We will do so through our close friendship with Japan, which will always be a centerpiece of our efforts in the region. We will do so as a partner through the broader engagement that I've discussed today. We will do so as a Pacific nation with a President who was shaped in part by this piece of the globe. And we will do so with the same sense of purpose that has guided our ties with the Japanese people for nearly 50 years.

The story of how these ties were forged dates back to the middle of the last century, sometime after the guns of war had quieted in the Pacific. It was then that America's commitment to the security and stability of Japan, along with the Japanese people's spirit of resilience and industriousness, led to what's been called "the Japanese miracle," a period of economic growth that was faster and more robust than anything the world had seen for some time.

In the coming years and decades, this miracle would spread throughout the region, and in a single generation, the lives and fortunes of millions were forever changed for the better. It is progress that has been supported by a hard-earned peace and strengthened by new bridges of mutual understanding that have bound together the nations of this vast and sprawling space.

But we know that there's still work to be done so that new breakthroughs in science and technology can lead to jobs on both sides of the Pacific and security from a warming planet; so that we can reverse the spread of deadly weapons, and on a divided peninsula, the people of South can be free from fear and those in the North can live free from want; so that a young girl can be valued not for her body but for her mind; and so that young people everywhere can go as far as their talent, their drive, and their choices will take them.

None of this will come easy, nor without setback or struggle. But at this moment of renewal, in this land of miracles, history tells us it is possible. This is the—America's agenda. This is the purpose of our partnership with Japan and with the nations and peoples of this region. And there must be no doubt: As America's first Pacific President, I promise you that this Pacific nation will strengthen and sustain our leadership in this vitally important part of the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in Suntory Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko, and former Prime Minister Taro Aso of Japan; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League of Democracy in Burma. He also referred to his brother-in-law Konrad Ng. The Office of the Press Secretary also released Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean language transcripts of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Tokyo, Japan.

Locations: Tokyo, Japan.

Names: Aso, Taro; Aung San Suu Kyi; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Emperor Akihito; Empress Michiko; Hatoyama, Yukio; Ng, Konrad; Roos, John V.; Soetoro-Ng, Maya.

Subjects: Afghanistan : International assistance; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Nonproliferation efforts; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Security; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia, proposed expansion; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Asia : Defense relationship with U.S.; Asia : Democratization; Asia : Economic growth and development; Asia : Human rights issues; Asia : President Obama's visit; Asia : Relations with U.S.; Asia : Trade with U.S.; Asia : Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); Asian Nations, Association of Southeast (ASEAN); Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Budget, Federal : Deficit; Burma : Democracy and human rights issues; Burma : Democracy efforts; Burma : Diplomatic relations with U.S.; China : Afghanistan, role in; China : Defense relationship with U.S.; China : Democracy and human rights issues; China : Economic growth and development; China : Pakistan, role in; China : Relations with U.S.; China : Strategic and Economic Dialogue, U.S.-China; Civil rights : Freedom of religion; Civil rights : Freedom of speech; Civil rights : Freedom of the press; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Stabilization efforts; Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Unrest; Commerce, international : Group of Eight (G-8) nations; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Commerce, international : Piracy; Commerce, international : U.S. exports, expansion; Developing countries : Doha Development Agenda; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction; Energy : Developing countries, energy sources; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Environment : Climate change ; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Foreign policy, U.S. : Infectious diseases, efforts to combat the spread of; Foreign policy, U.S. : Poverty, efforts to combat; Foreign policy, U.S. : Trafficking in persons, efforts to combat; Indonesia : Democracy efforts; Indonesia : Economic growth and development; Iran : Nuclear weapons development; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Japan : Afghanistan, role in; Japan : Economic growth and development; Japan : Emperor; Japan : Empress; Japan : Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Japan : Former Prime Minister; Japan : Iraq , role in; Japan : North Korea, past abductions of Japanese citizens; Japan : Nuclear energy; Japan : Nuclear weapons and material, nonproliferation efforts; Japan : Pakistan, role in; Japan : Piracy reduction efforts, role in; Japan : President Obama's visit; Japan : Prime Minister; Japan : Relations with U.S.; Japan : Trade with U.S.; Japan : U.S. Ambassador; Japan : U.S. military forces, realignment; Malaysia : Democracy efforts; Malaysia : Economic growth and development; North Korea :

International and U.S. sanctions; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Japanese citizens, past abductions; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; North Korea : Six-party talks; Pakistan : International assistance; Russia : Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with U.S., proposed expansion; Singapore : President Obama's visit; South Korea : Free trade agreement with U.S., proposed; State, Department of : Secretary; Terrorism : Global threat; Treasury, Department of the : Treasury bills, foreign holdings; United Nations : Framework Convention on Climate Change; United Nations : Nonproliferation and Nuclear Disarmament, Security Council Summit on.

DCPD Number: DCPD200900915.