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Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in St. Petersburg, Russia

September 5, 2013

Prime Minister Abe. It is my great pleasure to have a bilateral meeting on the occasion of G–20 today. Also, it was extremely meaningful for both of us to have a telephone conversation to discuss the situation in Syria. I certainly look forward to continuously and closely working with you to improve the situation on the ground.

And also, since my last visit to the United States back in February, I have made firm decisions on major issues in our bilateral contacts, including TPP issue.

We had a major victory in the upper house election back in July. Therefore, we now have the stable foundation as an administration, and I certainly look forward to addressing economic issues such as achieving economic growth and also addressing security issues.

And also, with regard to our joint endeavor to address these challenges, I would like to talk about mid- to long-term perspective and also direction of our collaboration.

President Obama. Well, it is wonderful to see Prime Minister Abe and his delegation again. As I've said before, the U.S.-Japan alliance is one of the cornerstones not just of Japan's and America's security, but also a cornerstone for peace and security around the world.

Here at the G–20, our primary purpose is to focus on the economy and how we can improve the world's prospects for jobs and growth and stability. And I know that Prime Minister Abe has taken some very bold steps to boost growth and jobs and demand in Japan.

But I know that Prime Minister Abe is also committed—as we are—to completing, this year, negotiations around the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which promises to open up markets and to create the kinds of high-standards trade agreements throughout the largest and most dynamic and fastest growing set of markets in the world.

During the meeting, we'll also have an opportunity to discuss a range of security issues, including our continued concerns about the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the importance of North Korea abiding by international law.

And I also look forward to having an extensive conversation about the situation in Syria and, I think, our joint recognition that the use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only a tragedy, but also a violation of international law that must be addressed.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. at the bilateral meetings pavilion of the Constantine Palace. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Japan, Prime Minister Abe.

Locations: St. Petersburg, Russia.

Names: Abe, Shinzo.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Chemical and biological weapons; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G–20) nations; Japan : Defense relationship with U.S.; Japan : Prime Minister; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; Russia : President Obama's visit; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

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