

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Tokyo, Japan

April 24, 2014

Prime Minister Abe. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to sincerely welcome President Obama as our state guest.

At the outset, I would like to once again express my heartfelt gratitude for the assistance from the United States in the aftermath of the great east Japan earthquake. More than 20,000 servicemembers of the U.S. Forces participated in the Operation Tomodachi. And as a matter of fact, Japanese people were greatly encouraged and helped by the assistance extended from the Government and the people of the United States. And I am truly grateful for that.

Japan has been walking on the path of peace based on its peaceful orientation in a consistent manner for the past 70 years after the Second World War. Japan and the United States share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and fundamental human rights, and also we share strategic interests. And the alliance between these two nations is indispensable and irreplaceable as the foundation for a peaceful and prosperity—prosperous Asia-Pacific region.

Your visit to Asia this time is a testament to the U.S. revised policy which attaches importance to this region. This greatly contributes to regional peace and prosperity, and Japan strongly supports and also certainly welcomes this.

My administration intends to contribute to regional peace and prosperity more proactively than ever, in line with the policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace based on the principle on international cooperation. And together with the United States, Japan would like to realize our leading role of the alliance in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific.

Today, at this meeting, I look forward to having exchanges with you on how the alliance should look like in the future, based on the cooperation we have had so far.

President Obama. Well, let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Prime Minister, and your delegation, as well as the Japanese people for the incredibly gracious hospitality that you've provided us so far during this visit.

As you indicated, the U.S.-Japan alliance is the foundation for not only our security in the Asia-Pacific region, but also for the region as a whole. And we have continued to strengthen it. We are looking at a whole range of issues that are challenging at this time, including the threats posed by North Korea and the nuclearization that's been taking place in that country. But because of the strong cooperation between our countries, I am confident that we will continue to make progress in the future.

Of course, the bonds between our countries are not restricted to a military alliance. We represent two of the three largest economies in the world, and we have the opportunity, by working together, to help shape an open and innovative and dynamic economy throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Our shared democratic values means that we have to work together in multilateral settings to deal with regional hotspots around the globe, but also to try to make sure that we are creating a strong set of rules that govern the international order. And the strong people-to-

people bonds that we have and the educational and scientific and cultural exchanges that we have means that our friendship and alliance, I'm confident, will continue for generations to come.

So I look forward to very productive meetings today. And I want to once again thank you for your hospitality. As you said, my visit here, I think, once again represents my deep belief that a strong U.S.-Japan relationship is not only good for our countries, but good for the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at Akasaka 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.

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