

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

**Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan:
The United States and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Asia-Pacific and
Beyond**

April 25, 2014

The relationship between the United States of America and Japan is founded on mutual trust, a common vision for a rules-based international order, a shared commitment to upholding democratic values and promoting open markets, and deep cultural and people-to-people ties. The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone for regional peace and security as well as a platform for global cooperation. The U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific and Japan's policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation both contribute to the Alliance playing a leading role in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific.

Close U.S.-Japan cooperation is essential in managing and responding to long-standing and emerging threats and challenges in Asia and around the world. Recent events underscore the importance of coordinated action to uphold regional and global rules and norms. At the March 25 Trilateral Summit in The Hague, the leaders of the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea urged North Korea to take concrete actions to meet its international obligations on nuclear and missile issues and to address, without delay, humanitarian concerns, including the abductions issue. In concert with our G-7 partners, the United States and Japan have condemned Russia over its illegal attempt to annex Crimea and are consulting closely on further measures against Russia over its deplorable conduct, while strongly urging Russia to deescalate tensions in Ukraine. Together, we are taking concrete steps to support Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and economic stability. The United States and Japan are working collaboratively to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue, support Middle East peace efforts, contribute to Afghan reconstruction, and improve the situation in Syria, including through the disposal of its chemical stockpiles. The United States and Japan recognize that China can play an important role in addressing all of these challenges, and both countries reaffirm their interest in building a productive and constructive relationship with China.

The United States and Japan, as maritime nations with global trade networks that depend on open seas, underscore the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon respect for international law, including the freedom of navigation and overflight. The United States and Japan share strong concern over recent actions that have raised tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea, such as the uncoordinated declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone in the East China Sea. Our two countries oppose any attempt to assert territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. The United States and Japan urge the establishment of confidence-building measures among governments and militaries in the region to address these tensions. In the South China Sea, we call on countries concerned to clarify the basis of their maritime claims in accordance with international law. We support efforts for the early establishment of an effective Code of Conduct as a way to reduce the risk of an unintended incident. The United States and Japan fully support the use of diplomatic and legal means, including international arbitration, to settle maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

Given the common security challenges our two countries face, the United States and Japan are strengthening and modernizing our security alliance as directed by the Security Consultative Committee, including through the revision of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. The United States has deployed its most advanced military assets to Japan and provides all necessary capabilities to meet its commitments under the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. These commitments extend to all the territories under the administration of Japan, including the Senkaku Islands. In that context, the United States opposes any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands. The United States appreciates Japan's establishment of a National Security Council and creation of a legal framework for information security that will facilitate enhanced policy and intelligence coordination between the two countries. The United States welcomes and supports Japan's consideration of the matter of exercising the right of collective self-defense. The United States and Japan reaffirmed the importance of the U.S. extended deterrence to maintain regional security. The United States and Japan are also making sustained progress towards realizing a geographically distributed, operationally resilient and politically sustainable U.S. force posture in the Asia Pacific, including the development of Guam as a strategic hub. The early relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Camp Schwab and consolidation of bases in Okinawa will ensure a long-term sustainable presence for U.S. forces. In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to reducing the impact of U.S. forces on Okinawa.

The United States and Japan also coordinate closely in multilateral financial and economic fora to advance trade liberalization and promote economic growth. Our joint efforts are grounded in support for an international economic system that is free, open, and transparent, and embraces innovation. In order to further enhance economic growth, expand regional trade and investment, and strengthen the rules-based trading system, the United States and Japan are committed to taking the bold steps necessary to complete a high-standard, ambitious, comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. Today, we have identified a path forward on important bilateral TPP issues. This marks a key milestone in the TPP negotiations and will inject fresh momentum into the broader talks. We now call upon all TPP partners to move as soon as possible to take the necessary steps to conclude the agreement. Even with this step forward, there is still much work to be done to conclude TPP.

We also support Japan's Chairmanship in the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its accession to the OECD and support China's hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and Australia's hosting of the G20 this year. We are working together in the APEC and the G20 on the promotion of the role of women, which is an important domestic and foreign policy priority for both countries. Through the Equal Futures Partnership and upcoming events such as the White House Summit on Working Families and Japan's international symposium on women's empowerment, the two countries are committed to ensuring women's full participation in society. Furthermore, the United States and Japan continue to be world leaders in high-technology, where our collaboration is expanding the frontiers of robotics, space, and medical science.

The United States and Japan view energy security as vital to prosperity and stability. Both sides welcomed the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Japan and other strategic partners. The United States welcomed Japan's new Strategic Energy Plan, which includes global, peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy and acceleration of the introduction of renewable energy. Both countries are working together to promote the development of clean energy, including by facilitating business cooperation and

deepening civil nuclear cooperation. These steps are part of a broader effort to address the urgent challenge of global climate change. Both countries plan to put forward robust post-2020 nationally determined contributions, building on decisions taken at the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP-19) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in order to promote the adoption of a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC applicable to all Parties at COP-21 in Paris in December 2015. We will continue to work with other countries on complementary initiatives to encourage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The United States and Japan are committed to promoting peace, stability, and economic growth throughout the world, including in Africa. Through our recently launched senior-level U.S.-Japan Development Dialogue, we are expanding our development cooperation in these areas. Furthermore, the United States and Japan are continuing bilateral policy coordination to address other global challenges and promote our common agenda, such as women's empowerment, human security, humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, the post-2015 development agenda, global health, climate change, counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime, cyber policy, the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, nuclear security, and cooperation at the United Nations, including in peacekeeping. The United States looks forward to a reformed UN Security Council that includes Japan as a permanent member. Our two countries are continuing to cooperate in the field of disaster risk management based on the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The United States and Japan renew our commitment to deepening diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recognizing the importance of ASEAN unity and centrality to regional security and prosperity. We are coordinating closely to support ASEAN and its affiliated fora as its members seek to build a regional economic community and address trans-border challenges, including cybersecurity and cybercrime. In this context, the two countries view the East Asia Summit as the premier political and security forum in the region. We support the Asian Development Bank work to address the region's infrastructure and connectivity needs. The United States and Japan are collaborating to assist Southeast Asian littoral states in building maritime domain awareness and other capacities for maritime safety and security so that they can better enforce law, combat illicit trafficking and weapons proliferation, and protect marine resources. The robust U.S. and Japanese civilian and military response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines demonstrated our ability to collectively assist the region in disaster relief and risk reduction.

To achieve our shared objectives of promoting peace and economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and around the globe, the United States and Japan are strengthening trilateral cooperation with like-minded partners, including the Republic of Korea, Australia, and India.

The United States and Japan reaffirm our long-standing and indispensable partnership in shaping the future of the Asia-Pacific and beyond through close cooperation and collaboration.

Annex: Leaders Statement on U.S.-Japan Bilateral Exchanges

Broad people-to-people exchange between Japan and the United States has been a key pillar of our Alliance since its inception. Close ties and shared values between the people of the United States and the people of Japan form the foundation of the global partnership between our nations.

To ensure the future strength of the U.S.-Japan relationship, the two governments share the goal, established by the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), of doubling two-way student exchange by the year 2020.

Recognizing that people-to-people exchange is an irreplaceable investment in the future of the Alliance, President Obama and Prime Minister Abe announced their intent to create a new bilateral exchange program that would enable Japanese youth to visit the United States, enhance their English language abilities, and develop professional skills through internship opportunities. The leaders also intend to explore internship opportunities for U.S. youth in Japan.

Furthermore, Japan is going to send 6,000 Japanese students to the United States in fiscal year 2014 through student exchange support programs, including public-private partnerships such as the TOBITATE! Young Ambassador Program, further contributing to reaching our shared goal established by CULCON. Japan and the United States also plan to explore new avenues for exchange, including support for Japanese researchers and programs linking the next generation of Japanese and U.S. leaders and friends.

The Japanese government's program inviting Japanese-American leaders to Japan has promoted broad understanding and support for the U.S.-Japan Alliance. Building on this successful effort, Japan intends to broaden the scope of this initiative in fiscal year 2014 to further deepen mutual understanding.

The Japanese government's ongoing KAKEHASHI Project, under which a total of 4,600 young Japanese and U.S. citizens are expected to visit each other's countries in exchange programs, has made a significant contribution to fostering mutual understanding. In addition, following the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the U.S. government and the U.S.-Japan Council launched the TOMODACHI Initiative, a path-breaking public-private partnership that engages the private sector in promoting U.S.-Japan youth exchange. To date, with the support of over eighty U.S. and Japanese companies, organizations, and individuals, more than 2,300 Japanese and U.S. youth have participated in TOMODACHI exchange programs.

These initiatives build on established programs, such as the binational Fulbright Program, which has benefited nearly 10,000 Japanese and U.S. students and scholars over more than 60 years; the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program; the Student Exchange Support Program and the Japanese Government Scholarship provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; the National Science Foundation's Summer Institutes in Japan, funded in cooperation with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science; the Japan-U.S. Training Exchange Program for English Language Teachers (JUSTE); and the Mansfield Fellowship Program. These programs have for years expanded and strengthened people-to-people connections between our countries.

These government programs are complemented by the many non-governmental programs linking the people of our two countries, such as the Japan-America Societies, the U.S.-Japan Council, and the more than 400 sister-city and sister-state and prefecture relationships between Japan and the United States. Such programs are indispensable, as are the dozens of academic associations, university linkages, and privately-funded exchanges, for example the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship; the United States-Japan Bridging Foundation Scholarships, the Grew Bancroft Scholarship; and the Japan-America Student Conference, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. Japan and the United States aim to further encourage new and expanded non-governmental dialogues to bring together opinion leaders from both nations.

Symbolizing the grassroots friendship uniting our nations, the U.S. government and a range of private sector partners have created the Friendship Blossoms Initiative, which is currently planting 3,000 American dogwood trees throughout Japan on behalf of the people of the United States, to reciprocate the City of Tokyo's gift of 3,000 flowering cherry trees to Washington, DC in 1912. The 1912 gift from Japan is celebrated each year during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, an iconic spring event in Washington, D.C.

The President and Prime Minister welcomed the invigoration of exchanges between the U.S. Congress and the Diet of Japan, praising the work of the U.S.-Japan Caucus and the Congressional Study Group on Japan in the United States Congress, the Japan-U.S. Parliamentary Friendship League in the Diet of Japan, as well as the U.S.-Japan Legislative Exchange Program and the Japan-U.S. Senate Inter-parliamentary Conference. Nearly 200 Diet Members visited the United States in fiscal year 2013, and the number of Members of Congress visiting Japan in 2013 more than doubled over the previous year and continues to increase in 2014.

Finally, the United States and Japan note that millions of Japanese and U.S. citizens visit each other's country every year to visit family and friends, enjoy tourist sites and cultural experiences, and conduct the business transactions that underpin the tight economic relationship between two of the world's largest economies. To facilitate this travel, the United States and Japan plan to expedite work to establish a reciprocal arrangement, including through Japan's participation in the U.S. Global Entry program, to streamline border formalities for trusted travelers from both our countries, and to make travel between the United States and Japan easier, faster and more secure.

NOTE: This joint statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 24, but due to the 12-hour time difference between Washington, DC, and Tokyo, Japan, the joint statement carries a release date of April 25. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

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