

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

November 19, 2015

President Obama. Well, it is good once again to be with my friend, Prime Minister Abe, and the Japanese delegation. We have been able to forge, I think, an excellent relationship on a whole host of issues and this gives us an opportunity to continue to discuss both our security cooperation and our economic cooperation.

The United States-Japanese alliance is one of the linchpins of our security as well as Japan's, and this gives us an opportunity to continue to deepen that relationship, building off the discussions we've had in Washington. It includes the realignment in Okinawa. I want to congratulate Prime Minister Abe on his recent legislation related to bolstering Japanese defense capabilities, and it will give us a chance to talk about a wide range of threats, both regionally and internationally.

I also want to express my appreciation for the hard work that Shinzo has been involved with in building up stronger regional understandings. The trilateral meetings that have been taking place between Japan, China, and South Korea I think are especially important. And Shinzo and I both share an interest in continuing to foster rule of law, supporting international norms in areas like navigation—freedom of navigation and maritime law. And again, this bilateral gives us an opportunity to examine how we can work with some of the regional organizations like ASEAN in order to continue to maintain the stability and—that has been the hallmark of this region and has allowed for extraordinary prosperity and growth.

And finally, we'll be discussing a wide range of economic issues coming out of our meeting at the G-20. Both of us are interested in ratifying and implementing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which has been a major topic of conversation here at APEC and the G-20. There's a recognition that these kinds of high-standard rules that provide enforceable protections for labor and the environment are the wave of the future and could not have been done without Shinzo's leadership. We'll also be talking about the climate change conference in Paris, and the importance of all of us working together in order to achieve a strong agreement that can protect the planet for future generations.

So I want to say that on every issue that is of great importance to the United States of America, we've got a great partner in Japan and we very much appreciate it.

Prime Minister Abe. Well, first of all, I feel like it's been long since we had a thorough discussion between us, since the last time I had this discussion with you, back in April, in Washington, DC. And also, thank you very much for your congratulatory message with regard to the passage of the legislation for peace and security. I achieved this development back in September. And also, I appreciate your kind remarks about the most recent holding of the trilateral summit among Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China.

And also, I'd like to underscore that the hospitality that you extended—and also the First Lady extended—to both of us is something that I won't forget about. And taking this opportunity, I would like to express my appreciation for that. And I believe my wife Akie might have already told you yesterday over dinner, but both myself and Akie are very much looking

forward to welcoming Mr. President and the First Lady to the G–7 summit, which will be held in Ise Shima next year.

During my visit to the United States, together with you, Barack, we reaffirmed that there is a robust alliance between Japan and the United States. And after the visit, progress has been made in promoting our cooperation, for instance, in the economic context, such as in the areas of energy and infrastructure. I am delighted to know that there is now a basic agreement between us on public financing of coal-fired power generation and also the Federal funding has been provided to a maglev project so I am very pleased to see that we are achieving concrete results.

So against that backdrop, I would like to turn this summit meeting into an occasion where we add a new introductory chapter for our renewed Japan-U.S. cooperation, through which we effectively utilize our robust alliance for the peace, stability, and prosperity regionally—namely, in the Asia Pacific—and also, eventually, globally.

In our joint vision statement, which was released during my visit to the United States back in April, both of us confirmed that we will collaborate with each other through Japan's policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace, based on the principle of international cooperation and the U.S. rebalance policy. We also confirmed that we will further cooperate in ensuring regional peace, stability, and prosperity. So I would like to have a candid discussion with you, Barack, today on specific ways to materialize such cooperation. In addition, I very much look forward to having a discussion in addressing global challenges, including climate change.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. in the garden tent at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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