

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Remarks With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at Joint Base Pearl Harbor—Hickam, Hawaii**

*December 27, 2016*

*Prime Minister Abe.* President Obama, Commander Harris, ladies and gentlemen, and all American citizens: I stand here at Pearl Harbor as the Prime Minister of Japan.

If we listen closely, we can make out the sound of restless waves breaking and then retreating again. The calm inlet of brilliant blue is radiant with the gentle sparkle of the warm sun. Behind me, a striking white form atop the azure is the USS Arizona Memorial.

Together with President Obama, I paid a visit to that memorial, the resting place for many souls. It was a place which brought utter silence to me. Inscribed there are the names of the servicemen who lost their lives. Sailors and marines hailing from California and New York, Michigan and Texas, and various other places, serving to uphold their noble duty of protecting the homeland they loved, lost their lives amidst searing flames that day when aerial bombing tore the USS *Arizona* in two.

Even 75 years later, the USS *Arizona*, now at rest atop the seabed, is the final resting place for a tremendous number of sailors and Marines. Listening again, as I focus my senses, alongside the song of the breeze and the rumble of the rolling waves, I can almost discern the voices of those crewmen: voices of lively conversations, upbeat and at ease on that day, on a Sunday morning; voices of young servicemen talking to each other about their futures and dreams; voices calling out the names of loved ones in their very final moments; voices praying for the happiness of children still unborn. Each and every one of those servicemen had a mother and a father anxious about his safety. Many had wives and girlfriends they loved, and many must have had children they would have loved watch grow up. All of that was brought to an end. When I contemplate that solemn reality, I am rendered entirely speechless.

"Rest in peace, precious souls of the fallen." With that overwhelming sentiment, I cast flowers, on behalf of Japanese people, upon the waters where those sailors and marines sleep.

President Obama, the people of the United States of America, and the people around the world: As the Prime Minister of Japan, I offer my sincere and everlasting condolences to the souls of those who lost their lives here, as well as to the spirits of all the brave men and women whose lives were taken by a war that commenced in this very place and also to the souls of the countless innocent people who became the victims of the war.

We must never repeat the horrors of war again. This is the solemn vow we, the people of Japan, have taken. And since the war, we have created a free and democratic country that values the rule of law and has resolutely upheld our vow never again to wage war. We, the people of Japan, will continue to uphold this unwavering principle while harboring quiet pride in the path we have walked as a peace-loving nation over these 70 years since the war ended.

To the souls of the servicemen who lie in eternal rest aboard the USS *Arizona*, to the American people, and to all peoples around the world, I pledge that unwavering vow here as the Prime Minister of Japan.

Yesterday, at the Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, I visited the memorial marker for an Imperial Japanese Navy officer. He was a fighter pilot by the name of

Commander Fusata Iida, who was hit during the attack on Pearl Harbor and gave up on returning to his aircraft carrier. He went back instead and died. It was not Japanese who erected a marker at the site that Iida's fighter plane crashed; it was U.S. servicemen who had been on the receiving end of his attack. Applauding the bravery of the dead pilot, they erected this stone marker.

On the marker, his rank at that time is inscribed—lieutenant, Imperial Japanese Navy—showing the respect to a serviceman who gave his life for his country. "The brave respect the brave." So wrote Ambrose Bierce in a famous poem. Showing respect even to an enemy they fought against, trying to understand even an enemy that they hated, therein lies the spirit of tolerance embraced by the American people.

When the war ended and Japan was a nation in burnt-out ruins as far as the eye could see, suffering under abject poverty, it was the United States and its good people that unstintingly sent us food to eat and clothes to wear. The Japanese people managed to survive and make their way toward the future, thanks to the sweaters and milk sent by the American people. And it was the United States that opened up the path for Japan to return to the international community once more after the war.

Under the leadership of the United States, Japan, as a member of the free world, was able to enjoy peace and prosperity. The good will and assistance you extended to us Japanese—the enemy you had fought so fiercely—together with the tremendous spirit of tolerance, were etched deeply into the hearts and minds of our grandfathers and mothers. We also remember them. Our children and grandchildren will also continue to pass these memories down and never forget what you did for us.

The words pass through my mind, those words inscribed on the wall at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, where I visited with President Obama: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, let us strive on to do all which may achieve and cherish a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." These are the words of President Abraham Lincoln.

On behalf of the Japanese people, I hereby wish to express once again my heartfelt gratitude to the United States and to the world for the tolerance extended to Japan.

It has now been 75 years since that Pearl Harbor. Japan and the United States, which fought a fierce war that will go down in the annals of human history, have become allies, with deep and strong ties rarely found anywhere in history. We are allies that will tackle together, to an even greater degree than ever before, the many challenges covering the globe. Ours is an alliance of hope that will lead us to the future.

What has bonded us together is the power of reconciliation made possible through the spirit of tolerance. What I want to appeal to the people of the world here at Pearl Harbor, together with President Obama, is this power of reconciliation. Even today, the horrors of war have not been eradicated from the surface of the world. There is no end to the spiral where hatred creates hatred. The world needs the spirit of tolerance and the power of reconciliation now and especially now.

Japan and the United States, which have eradicated hatred and cultivated friendship and trust on the basis of common values, are now—and especially now—taking responsibility for appealing to the world about the importance of tolerance and the power of reconciliation. That is precisely why the Japan-U.S. alliance is an alliance of hope.

The inlet gazing at us is tranquil as far as the eye can see: Pearl Harbor. It is precisely this beautiful inlet shimmering like pearls that is a symbol of tolerance and reconciliation. It is my wish that our Japanese children and, President Obama, your American children, and indeed, their children and grandchildren and people all around the world will continue to remember Pearl Harbor as a symbol of reconciliation.

We will spare no efforts to continue our endeavors to make that wish a reality. Together with President Obama, I hereby make my steadfast pledge. Thank you very much.

*President Obama.* Prime Minister Abe, on behalf of the American people, thank you for your gracious words. Thank you for your presence here today, an historic gesture that speaks to the power of reconciliation and the alliance between the American and Japanese peoples; a reminder that even the deepest wounds of war can give way to friendship and lasting peace.

Distinguished guests, members of our Armed Forces, and most of all, survivors of Pearl Harbor and their loved ones: Aloha.

*Audience members.* Aloha.

*President Obama.* To Americans, especially to those of us who call Hawaii home, this harbor is a sacred place. As we lay a wreath or toss flowers into waters that still weep, we think of the more than 2,400 American patriots—fathers and husbands, wives and daughters—manning Heaven's rails for all eternity. We salute the defenders of Oahu who pull themselves a little straighter every December 7, and we reflect on the heroism that shone here 75 years ago.

As dawn broke that December day, paradise never seemed so sweet. The water was warm and impossibly blue. Sailors ate in the mess hall or readied themselves for church, dressed in crisp white shorts and T-shirts. In the harbor, ships at anchor floated in neat rows: the *California*, the *Maryland* and the *Oklahoma*, the *Tennessee*, the *West Virginia*, and the *Nevada*. On the deck of the *Arizona*, the Navy band was tuning up.

That morning, the ranks on men's shoulders defined them less than the courage in their hearts. Across the island, Americans defended themselves however they could: firing training shells, working old bolt-action rifles. An African American mess steward, who would typically be confined to cleaning duties, carried his commander to safety and then fired an anti-aircraft gun until he ran out of ammo.

We honor Americans like Jim Downing, a gunner's mate first class on the *West Virginia*. Before he raced to the harbor, his new bride pressed into his hand a verse of Scripture: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." As Jim fought to save his ship, he simultaneously gathered the names of the fallen so that he could give closure to their families. He said, "It was just something you do."

We remember Americans like Harry Pang, a fireman from Honolulu, who, in the face of withering fire, worked to douse burning planes until he gave his last full measure of devotion—one of the only civilian firefighters ever to receive the Purple Heart.

We salute Americans like Chief Petty Officer John Finn, who manned a .50-caliber machine gun for more than 2 hours and was wounded more than 20 times, earning him our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

And it is here that we reflect on how war tests our most enduring values. How, even as Japanese Americans were deprived of their own liberty during the war, one of the most decorated military units in the history of the United States was the 442d Infantry Regiment and

its 100th Infantry Battalion: the Japanese American Nisei. In that 442d served my friend and proud Hawaiian, Daniel Inouye, a man who was a Senator from Hawaii for most of my life and with whom I would find myself proud to serve in the Senate Chamber; a man who was not only a recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, but was one of the most distinguished statesmen of his generation as well.

Here at Pearl Harbor, America's first battle of the Second World War roused a nation. Here, in so many ways, America came of age. A generation of Americans, including my grandparents, that Greatest Generation, they did not seek war, but they refused to shrink from it. And they all did their part on fronts and in factories. And while, 75 years later, the proud ranks of Pearl Harbor survivors have thinned with time, the bravery we recall here is forever etched in our national heart. I would ask all our Pearl Harbor and World War II veterans who are able to, to please stand or raise your hands, because a grateful nation thanks you.

The character of nations is tested in war, but it is defined in peace. After one of the most horrific chapters in human history, one that took not tens of thousands, but tens of millions of lives with ferocious fighting across this ocean, the United States and Japan chose friendship, and they chose peace. Over the decades, our alliance has made both of our nations more successful. It has helped underwrite an international order that has prevented another World War and that has lifted more than a billion people out of extreme poverty. Today, the alliance between the United States and Japan—bound not only by shared interests, but also rooted in common values—stands as the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and a force for progress around the globe. Our alliance has never been stronger.

In good times and in bad, we are there for each other. Recall 5 years ago, when a wall of water bore down on Japan and reactors in Fukushima melted, America's men and women in uniform were there to help our Japanese friends. Across the globe, the United States and Japan work shoulder-to-shoulder to strengthen the security of the Asia-Pacific and the world: turning back piracy, combating disease, slowing the spread of nuclear weapons, keeping the peace in war-torn lands.

Earlier this year, near Pearl Harbor, Japan joined with two dozen nations in the world's largest maritime military exercise. And that included our Forces from U.S. Pacific Command led by Admiral Harry Harris, the son of an American naval officer and a Japanese mother. Harry was born in Yokosuka, but you wouldn't know it from his Tennessee twang. [Laughter] Thank you, Harry, for your outstanding leadership.

In this sense, our presence here today—the connections not just between our governments, but between our people, the presence of Prime Minister Abe here today—remind us of what is possible between nations and between peoples. Wars can end. The most bitter of adversaries can become the strongest of allies. The fruits of peace always outweigh the plunder of war. This is the enduring truth of this hallowed harbor.

It is here that we remember that even when hatred burns hottest, even when the tug of tribalism is at its most primal, we must resist the urge to turn inward. We must resist the urge to demonize those who are different. The sacrifice made here, the anguish of war, reminds us to seek the divine spark that is common to all humanity. It insists that we strive to be what our Japanese friends call *otagai no tame ni*—"with and for each other."

That's the lesson of Captain William Callaghan of the *Missouri*. Even after an attack on his ship, he ordered that the Japanese pilot be laid to rest with military honors, wrapped in a Japanese flag sewn by American sailors. It's the lesson, in turn, of the Japanese pilot who, years

later, returned to this harbor, befriended an old marine bugler and asked him to play taps and lay two roses at this memorial every month, one for America's fallen and one for Japan's.

It's a lesson our two peoples learn every day, in the most ordinary of ways, whether it's Americans studying in Tokyo, young Japanese studying across America; scientists from our two nations together unraveling the mysteries of cancer or combating climate change, exploring the stars. It's a baseball player like Ichiro lighting up a stadium in Miami, buoyed by the shared pride of two peoples, both American and Japanese, united in peace and friendship.

As nations and as people, we cannot choose the history that we inherit. But we can choose what lessons to draw from it and use those lessons to chart our own futures.

Prime Minister Abe, I welcome you here in the spirit of friendship, as the people of Japan have always welcomed me. I hope that together, we send a message to the world that there is more to be won in peace than in war; that reconciliation carries more rewards than retribution.

Here in this quiet harbor, we honor those we lost, and we give thanks for all that our two nations have won together as friends.

May God hold the fallen in His everlasting arms. May He watch over our veterans and all who stand guard on our behalf. May God bless us all.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. at the Kilo 7/8 pier. In his remarks, he referred to Ichiro Suzuki, right fielder, Major League Baseball's Miami Marlins. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Joint Base Pearl Harbor—Hickam, HI; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Japan, Prime Minister Abe.

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