

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Taro Aso of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters February 24, 2009

President Obama. Well, I would just like to say welcome to the Prime Minister. Obviously, the friendship between the United States and Japan is extraordinarily important to our country. It is for that reason that the Prime Minister is the first foreign dignitary to visit me here in the Oval Office. I think it's a testimony to the strong partnership between the United States and Japan.

The alliance that we have is the cornerstone of security in East Asia. It's one that my administration wants to strengthen. We think that we have an opportunity to work together not only on issues related to the Pacific rim but throughout the world, and Japan has been a great partner on issues ranging from climate change to Afghanistan. We're going to have a very busy session, and I'm very grateful that the Prime Minister agreed to come, and I'm looking forward to a very constructive dialog.

Prime Minister Aso. Do I have to say something? Well, first of all, thank you very much for inviting a foreign official, a foreign guest, to the

White House. On behalf of not only Japan but as a nation, we are very honored to be here as the first of foreign guests.

Nowadays there are so many issues we will have to fight against, and we are the number one and second biggest economies of the world; we will have to work together, hand in hand. And I think we are the only two nations which can offer enough to solve those very critical, vital issue of the world. I do hope our cooperation will help for the future generation of the world.

President Obama. All right. Thank you, guys.

The President's Meeting With Prime Minister Aso

Q. Why Japan?

President Obama. It's a great partner, and as I said, a cornerstone of security as well as one of our strongest economic partners. Thank you very much, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress February 24, 2009

Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, the First Lady of the United States—she's around here somewhere: I have come here tonight not only to address the distinguished men and women in this great Chamber, but to speak frankly and directly to the men and women who sent us here.

I know that for many Americans watching right now, the state of our economy is a concern that rises above all others, and rightly so. If you haven't been personally affected by this recession, you probably know someone who has: a friend, a neighbor, a member of your family. You don't need to hear another list of statistics to know that our economy is in crisis, because you live it every day. It's the worry you wake up with and the source of sleepless nights. It's the job you thought you'd retire from but now have

lost, the business you built your dreams upon that's now hanging by a thread, the college acceptance letter your child had to put back in the envelope. The impact of this recession is real, and it is everywhere.

But while our economy may be weakened and our confidence shaken, though we are living through difficult and uncertain times, tonight I want every American to know this: We will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before.

The weight of this crisis will not determine the destiny of this Nation. The answers to our problems don't lie beyond our reach. They exist in our laboratories and our universities, in our fields and our factories, in the imaginations of our entrepreneurs and the pride of the hardest