

he was pointing out what others were doing, not what he was doing. And to see a community come together like this and not be interested in who's getting credit, but just making sure that the job gets done, that says a lot about the character of this place.

And so we're very, very proud of all of you. Michelle and I grieve with you. The whole country is thinking about you. And we're going to make sure that we're there every step of the

way as we go through the grieving, the mourning, the recovery. We're going to be strong right alongside you. All right?

Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Oso, WA, resident and volunteer Teresa Smith; and Willy Harper, fire chief, Snohomish County Fire District 25 in Oso.

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.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Tokyo *April 24, 2014*

Prime Minister Abe. On behalf of the Japanese people, I would like to express my heartfelt welcome to President Barack Obama, who is in Japan as our state guest. Barack and I met at the White House for the first time last year in February. We talked about all the different themes that one could think of. We had talks without reserve, and we confirmed that we had the same awareness with regard to issues and that we share common objectives.

The Japan-U.S. alliance has been revived very strongly. And the nature of our talks in this time was such that we were able to demonstrate this both inside and outside of the country. Barack said this before: To create a large economic zone in the Asia-Pacific would bring about major benefits to Japan, the United States, and to the Asian nations.

The TPP was indeed a very farsighted plan. As a result of serious exchanges between Barack and myself, Japan was able to make the transition to the next stage, which was to participate in the TPP talks. It's been 1 year since then, and Japan, along with the United States, is in a role to lead, in a major way, the TPP talks. To make the talks between the two leaders a milestone and so as to resolve pending issues between our two countries, Minister Amari and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Froman decided that they would energetically and earnestly continue the talks.

President Obama and I instructed the Ministers to continue these talks so as to bring to a conclusion the remaining issues so as to bring about a major conclusion of the TPP talks as a whole. Today and tomorrow, the talks will continue. So the joint statement released will see the result of this, and we will formulate the joint statement after this.

Between Japan and the United States, we share values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. We have shared these basic values and strategic interests. We are global partners. So we have this partnership and this strong alliance between our two countries. It's the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan espouses the principle of proactive contribution to peace. And the United States is moving forward with its policy of pivoting to the Asia-Pacific. These are contributing to peace and stability in the region. And we mutually appreciated and welcomed each other's policies. Having done so, between Barack and myself, we were able to confirm that the Japan-U.S. alliance would play a leading role in ensuring peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific. This is what I wanted to communicate to you.

With regard to security, including the review of the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation guidelines, wide-ranging security and defensive cooperation would be promoted. We agreed on this point. With regard to the re-