

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Naoto Kan of Japan in Toronto, Canada

June 27, 2010

President Obama. Well, Prime Minister Kan and I just had an excellent conversation and bilateral meeting after 3 days where we've had an opportunity to share ideas on not only the most pressing issues that are facing our economies but also a range of security issues.

I congratulated Prime Minister Kan on his leadership. And we both noted the significance of 50 years of a U.S.-Japan alliance that has been a cornerstone not only of our two nations' security but also peace and prosperity throughout Asia.

We discussed some very pressing security issues, in particular, North Korea, the sinking of the *Cheonan*, and the importance of both our countries standing in solidarity with South Korea and the entire international community standing with South Korea in condemning the incident and making sure that North Korea gets a clear signal that such provocations are unacceptable.

I also expressed appreciation to Japan for its support for the Iran sanctions that we passed through the United Nations Security Council, and we discussed issues of implementation.

But, of course, in addition to significant dangers, we also talked about great opportunities. We see the possibilities of strengthening our economic ties across a whole range of issues. That's been, obviously, the subject of this summit.

We're both determined to pursue opportunities in clean energy and job growth and promoting the kind of sustainable recovery that will create opportunities for our people and increase opportunities not just for this generation but for future generations.

And I'm very much looking forward to visiting Japan and enjoying the hospitality of Prime Minister Kan as he helps to shape the agenda for the next APEC meeting. And I thanked him for the very generous offer of boom and skimmers coming from Japan that can help in what is going to be a very lengthy process of cleaning up the Gulf in the wake of the oil spill.

But it's an example of a friendship and an alliance in which Japan and the United States have consistently been there for each other. And although that friendship and alliance has to continually be renewed and reshaped in light of new circumstances, the core values and the shared vision at the heart of our alliance remains strong, and I am very confident that working with Prime Minister Kan, we are going to be able to continue to build on that tremendous history over the last 50 years.

Prime Minister Kan. I am very happy to have such a—have candid discussions with President Obama today. And at the outset of our meeting, I talked about my experience from 30 years ago when I visited the United States on the invitation of the Department of State and about the experience of seeing the various NGOs are making activities depend solely on the nations, and I saw the grassroots democracy there. And I shared my recognition that President Obama was elected on such a background of the democracy in the United States. And I said to the President I have an experience of political life based on such grassroots activities, and I will also continue to pursue such a style of politics with my allies.

And I am also happy to have such a meeting in a year which is a milestone of 50 years—50th anniversary of the Japan-U.S. alliance. And this alliance between Japan and the United

States not only has brought peace and prosperity not only to Japan, but also, it has been a foundation and cornerstone of civility of the whole Asia-Pacific region. And President Obama has such a recognition, and he completely shares the same understanding about our alliance. And for the stability of Asia, Japan is proud of working—having been working together with the United States.

And I told the President that it is very important to further enhance the partnership and our alliance, and at the same time, in order to pursue that goal, it is important for the Japanese public themselves to think really about the significance of our alliance and for them to think about the decisions for the future of our alliance. And I talked about my recognition with President Obama today. And in other words, it is often the case that people see the way—people see the situation as politicians make their decisions and the public makes complaints about it, that it is important for us to avoid such a situation by creating real discussions about our future ways.

And we talked also about the incident in which North Korea attacked the—attacked and sunk the North Korean naval—South Korean naval vessel, and we talked also about the issue of Iran and Afghanistan. Always we have to work together to respond, and we share the common understanding of those issues.

And I also reaffirmed our recognition that it is important for us to cooperate in such issues as climate change or nuclear disarmament in North Korea's regime.

And during the past 3 days, we talked about the economic issues at the G–8 and G–20 meetings, and we discussed these issues together. And President Obama expressed the support for the economic policy that Japan will pursue, and I was strongly encouraged by his comments.

When I was the Finance Minister, Mr. Geithner was my counterpart, but now Finance Minister Noda is his counterpart, and we have other counterparts between us. And we will make sure that these counterparts will work together well.

And I'm happy that in November, we are hosting the APEC meeting, and on that occasion, we will be welcoming President Obama in Japan. I will make sure that we prepare much ice cream for him.

President Obama. That's my favorite. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Kan. And even before November, if I have an opportunity to visit the United States, I would be happy to do so, and as President Obama has suggested, that if our schedules meet, it would be good to create such an opportunity. And in September, I haven't made the final decision, but there is a possibility of visiting the United States for the United Nations General Assembly. So I will be considering it then.

President Obama. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at the Toronto Convention Center. Prime Minister Kan spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings with Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Japan :: Prime Minister Kan.

Locations: Toronto, Canada.

Names: Kan, Naoto.

Subjects: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Canada : President Obama's visit; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Gulf of Mexico : Deepwater Horizon oil spill :: Environmental effects and cleanup efforts; Iran : U.N. Security Council sanctions; Japan : Economic growth and development; Japan : Energy, alternative and renewable resources and technologies; Japan : President Obama's visit; Japan : Prime Minister; Japan : Relations with U.S.; South Korea : Navy patrol ship Cheonan, sinking; United Nations : Security Council.

DCPD Number: DCPD201000553.