

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan in New York City

September 21, 2011

President Obama. I want to welcome Prime Minister Noda and his delegation to New York City and to the United States. As all of you are aware, we have an extraordinary alliance with Japan. They are one of our closest friends, our closest allies. We have worked cooperatively on a range of issues related to security, related to economics. And the bonds of friendship between our peoples is equally strong.

Prime Minister Noda and I have had the opportunity to speak by phone, although this is the first time that we've had a meeting face to face. I know that he, like all of us, has some extraordinary challenges that we have to address. And I know that at the top of his list is rebuilding Japan in the aftermath of the horrific tsunami that occurred. I've repeatedly pledged that America will do everything that we can to make sure that that rebuilding is a success.

At the same time, obviously, we have other important work to do together. As the two largest economies in the world, we have to continue to promote growth that can help put our people to work and to improve standards of living. We have to modernize our alliance to meet the needs of the 21st century. And so I'm looking forward to a very productive discussion and what I'm sure will be an excellent working relationship with the Prime Minister as well as his team.

Prime Minister Noda. The biggest priority and the immediate challenge for the Noda Government is the recovery from the great east Japan earthquake disaster and the degrading situation with the nuclear power plant. But at the same time, even from before the earthquake took place, we had a lot of challenges, both in domestically and in foreign policy areas. And those cohorts must be dealt with one by one and thereby creating a stable policy. That's the challenge and—for my Government.

My—our top priority is the reconstruction from the disaster of the earthquake in Japan, the great Japan—great east Japan earthquake. The United States has provided enormous amount of support, including Operation Tomodachi and a lot of efforts made by Ambassador Roos. And on behalf of the all Japanese nationals, I thank you. And thank you for your support.

I had a firm belief that the Japan-U.S. alliance is the key pillar of our foreign policy. And through the assistance that we received after the earthquake, this bridge has become an even more unwavering one. And the Japanese public also were assured, and we recognize the significance and importance of our alliance.

I was reported that the meeting between our Foreign Minister Gamba and Secretary of State Clinton was a very fruitful one, and we would like to further deepen and enhance the bilateral alliance between our two countries in the three major fields of security, economy, and also the cultural and people-to-people exchange.

One worry that I've had is that there is an emerging concern that once recovering the economy we might be drawn back into another recession, and Japan and the United States must work on the economic growth and the fiscal situation at the same time. And you have the presence of Secretary Geithner here, and we have to work together at the forum centers—the

G-20 and other multilateral forum—and to coordinate with each other. And I'm looking forward to having such discussions with you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. Prime Minister Noda referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Koichiro Gemba of Japan. Prime Minister Noda spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Japan, Prime Minister Noda.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Noda, Yoshihiko.

Subjects: Japan : Earthquake and tsunami, damage and recovery efforts; Japan : Economic growth and development; Japan : Prime Minister; Japan : Relations with U.S.; Japan : Security cooperation with U.S.; New York : President's visit.

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