

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in St. Petersburg, Russia
September 5, 2013

Prime Minister Abe. It is my great pleasure to have a bilateral meeting on the occasion of G-20 today. Also, it was extremely meaningful for both of us to have a telephone conversation to discuss the situation in Syria. I certainly look forward to continuously and closely working with you to improve the situation on the ground.

And also, since my last visit to the United States back in February, I have made firm decisions on major issues in our bilateral contacts, including TPP issue.

We had a major victory in the upper house election back in July. Therefore, we now have the stable foundation as an administration, and I certainly look forward to addressing economic issues such as achieving economic growth and also addressing security issues.

And also, with regard to our joint endeavor to address these challenges, I would like to talk about mid- to long-term perspective and also direction of our collaboration.

President Obama. Well, it is wonderful to see Prime Minister Abe and his delegation again. As I've said before, the U.S.-Japan alliance is one of the cornerstones not just of Japan's and America's security, but also a cornerstone for peace and security around the world.

Here at the G-20, our primary purpose is to focus on the economy and how we can improve the world's prospects for jobs and growth and stability. And I know that Prime Minister Abe has taken some very bold steps to boost growth and jobs and demand in Japan.

But I know that Prime Minister Abe is also committed—as we are—to completing, this year, negotiations around the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which promises to open up markets and to create the kinds of high-standards trade agreements throughout the largest and most dynamic and fastest growing set of markets in the world.

During the meeting, we'll also have an opportunity to discuss a range of security issues, including our continued concerns about the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the importance of North Korea abiding by international law.

And I also look forward to having an extensive conversation about the situation in Syria and, I think, our joint recognition that the use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only a tragedy, but also a violation of international law that must be addressed.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. at the bilateral meetings pavilion of the Constantine Palace. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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

Locations: St. Petersburg, Russia.

Names: Abe, Shinzo.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Chemical and biological weapons; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Japan : Defense relationship with U.S.; Japan : Prime Minister; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; Russia : President Obama's visit; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

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