

Toward an Alliance of Hope

Excerpts from the Address to a Joint Meeting of the U.S. Congress
by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Delivered in Washington DC, April 29, 2015

Full text: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201504/uscongress.html

Back in June 1957, Nobusuke Kishi, my grandfather, standing right here, began his address by saying, and I quote “It is because of our strong belief in democratic principles and ideals that Japan associates herself with the free nations of the world.”

Thank you so much, Ambassador Kennedy, for all the dynamic work you have done for all of us.

A lady named Catherine Del Francia let me live in her house when I spent a spell in California. She was a widow, and always spoke of her late husband saying, “You know, he was much more handsome than Gary Cooper.” My wife, Akie, is there. I don’t dare ask what she says about me.



American Democracy and Japan

As for my family name, it is not “Eighb,” as former President Lincoln was affectionately known. The son of a farmer-carpenter can become the President . . . Our encounter with America was also our encounter with democracy.

World War II Memorial

Before coming over here, I was at the World War II Memorial. More than 4,000 gold stars shine on the wall. I gasped with surprise to hear that each star represents the lives of 100 fallen soldiers. I believe those gold stars are a proud symbol of the sacrifices in defending freedom. History is harsh. What is done cannot be undone. With deep repentance in my heart, I offer my eternal condolences.

Late Enemy, Present Friend

In the gallery today is Lt. Gen. Lawrence Snowden. Seventy years ago, he landed on the island of Iōtō, or Iwo Jima, as a captain in command of a company. Concerning the memorial services held jointly by Japan and the U.S. on Iōtō, he said, and I quote, “We didn’t and don’t go to Iwo Jima to celebrate victory, but for the solemn purpose to pay tribute to and honor those who lost their lives on both sides.” Next to General Snowden sits Diet Member Yoshitaka Shindo, who is a former member of my Cabinet. His grandfather, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, whose valor we remember even today, was the commander of the Japanese garrison during the Battle of Iwo Jima. Enemies that had fought each other so fiercely have become friends bonded in spirit. I pay tribute to your efforts for reconciliation.

America and Postwar Japan

Postwar, we started out on our path bearing in mind feelings of deep remorse over the war. Our actions brought suffering to the peoples in Asian countries. We must not avert our eyes from that. I will uphold the views expressed by the previous prime ministers in this regard.

TPP

Prosperity is nothing less than the seedbed for peace. We must take the lead to build a market that is fair, dynamic, sustainable, and is also free from the arbitrary intentions of any nation. We cannot

overlook sweatshops or burdens on the environment. Nor can we simply allow free riders on intellectual property. Let us bring the TPP to a successful conclusion through our joint leadership.

Reforms for a Stronger Japan

We are bringing great reforms toward the agriculture policy that’s been in place for decades. Rock-solid regulations are being broken, and I am the spearhead. We are changing some of our old habits to empower women. Japan will not run away from any reforms. There is no alternative. And there is no doubt about it whatsoever.

Postwar Peace and Japan’s Choice

Together with the U.S. and other like-minded democracies, we won the Cold War.

The Alliance: Its Mission for the Region

We must make the vast seas stretching from the Pacific to the Indian Oceans seas of peace and freedom, where all follow the rule of law. We must fortify the U.S.-Japan alliance. That is our responsibility.

Japan’s New Banner

In Cambodia, the Golan Heights, Iraq, Haiti, and South Sudan, members of our Self-Defense Forces provided humanitarian support and peacekeeping operations. Their number amounts to 50,000. Based on this track record, we are resolved to take yet more responsibility for the peace and stability in the world. It is for that purpose we are determined to enact all necessary bills by this coming summer. And we will do exactly that. We must make sure human security will be preserved in addition to national security. We must do our best so that every individual gets education, medical support, and an opportunity to rise to be self-reliant. In our age, we must realize the kind of world where finally women are free from human rights abuses. “Proactive contribution to peace based on the principle of international cooperation” should lead Japan along its road for the future. Problems we face include terrorism, infectious diseases, natural disasters, and climate change. No new concept should ever be necessary for the alliance that connects us, the biggest and the second biggest democratic powers in the free world, in working together.

Hope for the Future

When I was young in high school and listened to the radio, there was a song that flew out and shook my heart. It was a song by Carole King. “When you’re down and troubled, . . . close your eyes and think of me, and I’ll be there to brighten up even your darkest night.” And that day, March 11, 2011, a big quake, a tsunami, and a nuclear accident hit the northeastern part of Japan. But it was then we saw the U.S. armed forces rushing to Japan to the rescue at a scale never seen or heard before. Lots and lots of people from all corners of the U.S. extended the hand of assistance to the children in the disaster areas. Yes, we’ve got a friend in you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the finest asset the U.S. has to give to the world was hope, is hope, will be, and must always be hope. Let us call the U.S.-Japan alliance an alliance of hope. Alliance of hope . . . Together, we can make a difference. Thank you so much.



Edited video of the speech
<http://youtu.be/h2m8izwHliw>