

The following is a provisional English translation of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's remarks delivered in Japanese. The provisional translation, prepared by the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, is supplied as a courtesy and may differ from the language interpretation at the meeting.

### **Welcome Luncheon speech - May 1, 2015**

I am filled with gratitude that so many people, who have helped to support the Japan-U.S. relationship in a variety of fields, are here today. A Japanese prime minister's visit to the United States has typically consisted of a round trip between Washington, D.C. and Tokyo, because my predecessors often stepped down after only one year at the helm. Fortunately, I have been in office for two-and-a-half years, allowing me an opportunity to visit other cities beyond Washington, D.C.

Taking U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy's advice, I added Boston to my list. I had, however, already decided to visit Los Angeles. For a two-year period beginning in 1977, I lived in Los Angeles as a student. Nearly 40 years later, Los Angeles has changed considerably. But some things have remained unchanged. For instance, California Highway Patrol uniforms are the same. And to my surprise, the Governor (Jerry Brown) is the same as when I was studying in California! Also unchanged are the blue skies, the warm hospitality of the people of Los Angeles and their sincere thoughtfulness towards people from other countries.

Just as I was able to pursue studies in Los Angeles and Mayor Eric Garcetti studied in Japan, exchanges between people are very important. I've been told that Mayor Garcetti and his wife, and Ambassador Kennedy and her husband spent their honeymoons in Japan. To any soon-to-be newlyweds, I encourage you to honeymoon in Japan. And if you come to my electoral district in Yamaguchi, you will be welcomed with open arms.

I came to the United States this time for an official visit, the first by a Japanese prime minister in nine years. During my visit to Washington D.C., I addressed a joint meeting of Congress, becoming the first Japanese prime minister to do so. I also visited Boston, and spent time in San Francisco yesterday. I am very pleased to have this opportunity as prime minister to come to Los Angeles, a city that my grandfather Nobusuke Kishi himself visited in 1957 as prime minister.

Los Angeles is the top destination for Japanese companies in North America, symbolizing the close economic ties that connect Japan and the United States. I believe the vitality of Los Angeles, driven by its cultural diversity, and the revitalization of Japan's economy will generate synergies across the Pacific Ocean. The Japan-U.S. Economic Forum, which follows this event, is part of that effort. I welcome everyone to join me at that event as well.

I have been told that Japanese traditional culture, manga, anime, and Japanese food is widely popular here. And the Los Angeles Dodgers was among the first to welcome a Japanese baseball player to Major League Baseball. That player, Mr. Hideo Nomo, remains highly regarded in Japanese baseball.

Los Angeles culture is widely known in Japan, mainly through films and television dramas. In particular, Hollywood films enthrall movie fans worldwide, stirring excitement and emotion. I have also been captivated by Hollywood movies. After a long day at the Diet, where I have been subject to tough

questioning by opposition parties, I will watch a movie or DVD for a change of mood. I remember being impressed by the movie “The Graduate” when I was younger. When I was studying in Los Angeles, I visited sites where scenes were filmed.

The Japanese government is currently working on plans to establish a proposed “Japan House” around the world as a way to present Japan and its attractiveness, and to increase appreciation of Japan. To begin, Japan House facilities are scheduled to be established in three global cities, including Los Angeles. We aim to have the Japan House in Los Angeles promote Japan’s attractions across all of the United States and the world. We will ask for your cooperation to do so.

When I last visited the U.S. two years ago, I declared “Japan is back,” and promised to revitalize the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Our alliance is currently the strongest it has ever been. In my speech to U.S. Congress, I described the Japan-U.S. Alliance as an “Alliance of Hope”. We see the alliance as one that will enable us to tackle global issues such as climate change, infectious diseases and disaster prevention.

Many Japanese Americans are in the audience today. They have worked tirelessly to help Japan win the trust of the United States. For that, I extend my deepest gratitude. Japan and the United States overcame many difficult obstacles to cultivate a solid relationship. As prime minister, I would like to say thank you for your many contributions.

As the Asia Pacific region continues to flourish, I continue to hope for deeper ties between Japan and the U.S., Japan and Los Angeles, and Japan and California.

## Q&A

### 1. How will the new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation impact East Asia?

The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were revised for the first time in 18 years. This reflects major changes that are sweeping the world. Weapons of mass destruction proliferation, cyberattacks and other threats know no national borders. A single nation alone is therefore unable to maintain peace and security.

In such an environment, Japan seeks to be a proactive contributor to peace. More than ever before, our nation will proactively contribute to maintaining global and regional peace and stability. Without peace and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region, Japan is unable to secure peace and security at home. The key is the Japan-U.S. Alliance. To secure peace and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region, Japan will partner with the U.S., which itself is rebalancing to the Asia Pacific. Revisions to defense cooperation guidelines have strengthened deterrence and capabilities. This will contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

We are in the final stages of Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. The pact will create a 21<sup>st</sup> century economic zone in the Asia Pacific, where growth is already remarkable. Japan and the U.S., with its shared values, should play a leading role.

### 2. What is your view of the progress being made with the third arrow of Abenomics?

I often hear criticism that the third arrow is falling short of the mark. But I was a member of the archery team in college, so I guarantee my arrow will hit the target. The current Diet session is discussing

proposed legislation that would liberalize retail sales of electric power, which has remained unchanged for 60 years. Other deliberations include reforming agricultural cooperatives, another area that has been unchanged for 60 years. Longstanding regulations in such fields as agriculture, medical care and energy will be reformed. With Japan's population rapidly shrinking, Japan will tap foreign workers and women. Female executives at listed companies increased by only 60 people in the six years prior to my government. In the two years since my government was inaugurated, the number has increased by at least 180 in two years.

When I approach companies, I tell them that if Lehman Brothers had been "Lehman Sisters and Brothers", the financial crisis probably wouldn't have occurred.

Yesterday, I visited Silicon Valley and was impressed by its fast pace. Being in that atmosphere with the workers was very exciting.

I urge everyone to visit us to see a new Japan.