

150 Years ago in a Nice Hotel near the White House.....

Speech given to “An Alliance of Maritime Nations: The United States and Japan” by Shinzo Abe, Member of the Japanese Diet and former Prime Minister of Japan
Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Washington, D.C., Friday, April 17, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind introduction. Thank you very much for having me today. And let me extend my appreciation, deepest appreciation, to all the people, Japanese and American, who have made this dialog such a huge success.

Next year, 2010, will mark the 50th anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. We must all meet here in Washington, D.C. and in Tokyo to celebrate this remarkable alliance and to honor the vision and courage of the people who created it.

Fifty years ago, in 1960, my grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, was leading Japan as Prime Minister. I now understand how many risks he took professionally but also personally to bring this treaty to life.

Ever since, the treaty he signed has played an enormous role to make Japan a safe place, to allow the Japanese to live their lives as they see fit, above all to make the waters in Asia free, open and peaceful, and to make his grandson a proud Japanese.

We must join together again next year to celebrate the endurance of this great alliance, what we might call "the Pacific Alliance."

But 2010 also marks another important anniversary in the history of our treasured relationship. Next year, it will be the 150th anniversary of the first transoceanic voyage by a Japanese diplomatic mission.

150 years ago, in 1860, a group of samurai visitors were here in Washington, D.C. They were here first to ratify a new bilateral treaty called the Treaty of Amity and Commerce.

Second, and tellingly, they were engaged in the first ever negotiations over the foreign exchange rate between the dollar and the Japanese currency. This is a negotiation that would be repeated many times.

President James Buchanan and the American government were generous to the odd-looking, but hugely proud, samurai diplomats. The American side covered all the lodging expenses for the Japanese mission.

They spent one full month in a nice hotel near the White House. Guess which hotel that was. Yes. The same hotel we are in now.

Because of the hospitality they received, members of the mission came back home with lots of fond memories about America. That is evidence that you already possessed "smart power."

Of no less significance, however, is that the ship they used to cross the Pacific was the first ever ocean-going vessel manned and operated by a Japanese crew, among whom were the early visionaries who founded modern Japan. It was called the Kanrin-maru, with "kanrin" broadly meaning friendship. Even today, most Japanese know the name of the ship.

With the Kanrin-maru, Japan demonstrated its intention to join the ranks of modern nation states and foreshadowed its destiny as a natural partner with the great maritime powers like America.

A century and a half after the Kanrin-maru sailed, America has no better friend than Japan ---- true to the name of that ship. And the Pacific is a place of peace ---- true to the name of that great ocean.

Sometimes I imagine myself viewing the Pacific Ocean from space, realizing that the wide space of blue ocean below is at peace *NOT* by chance, *BUT* because of the security we provide.

The United States and Japan are the guardians of that great maritime realm. With the US on the

right-hand edge, Japan on the left-hand, the Pacific has provided the world with what Alfred Thayer Mahan said is the great highway of commerce and communications.

So today, I am here only to say a very simple thing. So simple, that it hardly makes news.

And that is, America and Japan are the guardians, protecting the order, peace, freedom and prosperity that have made the Pacific the greatest highway for humankind. And that we must remain so from now on, for no one else can shoulder our lofty role.

That is why, this year and the next, all of us at this gathering sharing the same vision and mission must work hard, really hard, to further reinvigorate the alliance.

And to do that, we can waste neither time nor effort. Together, Japan and the US must offer to the rest of the world something they can continue to count on and to build on. Our countries should jointly be a role model in many respects.

First, as the two largest economies in the world, the United States and Japan must work together to lead the world economy out of its current crisis. By enhancing our own bilateral economic ties, we can contribute to open and inclusive regional and global growth.

Let's pave the road now for a Japan-US Economic Partnership Agreement that is advanced, rule-based, open and transparent, and that is a model for the entire

world.

Second, we must ensure that global capital does not resort to narrow-minded "home bias." Japan and the US must encourage free capital flows, both in-bound and out-bound.

Third, we must resist protectionism. You and I know that the menace of the Smoot Hawley Act is a distant memory, never to return, because the alliance between us, the great Pacific Alliance, ensures we will never repeat the same mistakes and we are here to guarantee that the Pacific will remain the highway of commerce and an ocean of peace.

This last point bears greater importance this year than usual. Come December, we have the UN conference on climate change in Copenhagen. Climate change is largely a phenomenon taking shape in the seas.

Japan and America have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge on how best to tackle climate change.

Yet we also have Doha. And we should never forget that if we fail at Doha we cannot succeed in Copenhagen. Because the dynamics involved are identical. The fault lines are the same.

Developed and developing nations must work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to expand free trade. We cannot do one without the other.

It is for that reason that the Pacific Alliance must

lead to keep world trade as free and open as possible and to build a consensus on climate change that bridges the demands of our economies and the needs of our planet.

Fourth, in order for the maritime traffic of goods and commodities to flow freely with no need to fear any interruption, let alone piracy or terror, Japan and the US must work together and with like-minded democracies to ensure that the oceans remain free for safe navigation.

These are the new missions of our "Pacific" alliance: first to lead in economic recovery and growth, second to maintain the free flow of global capital, third to push for free trade and shared efforts on climate, and fourth to prevent threats to free and safe passage at sea.

No other two countries can carry these burdens with the same shared capabilities and values of our Pacific Alliance.

But we cannot do this alone. We must expand our partnership with other maritime partners like India and Australia. And we must find new areas to work with China even as we encourage Beijing to be more transparent and responsible.

Ladies and gentlemen, when the world changes economically, ecologically, and in terms of security, we must ensure that the great highway of communications is not harmed.

Now is the time for the US and Japan to become the beacon of hope and the guardians of the

peaceful order.

For Japan, it's a tall order. The to-do list is longer for Japan than for America. So I make a pledge here in your presence, that I shall work hard to make Japan a country that can live up to our expectations, a "beautiful country" that inspires the greatest hope and confidence from our ally and from the entire world.

Also to my fellow Japanese participants, I shall call upon your support, your dedication, to further strengthen our time-honored alliance so that Japan and America can get the world going as safely, as orderly, and as peacefully as we have over the past 50 years.

Looking back, Japan and America have shaped the world and made it as we know it.

The rapid growth of Japan's postwar development owed very much to the calm waters spreading all the way from Cape Horn to the Strait of Hormuz and beyond.

Iron ore, coking coal, oil and copper, all came to the shores of Japan almost risk-free.

India was the country that helped Japan's early development with its iron ore. Australia followed suit with natural resources despite the bitterness toward the Japanese then lingering from the wartime past. When a big steel mill was built along Tokyo Bay, Japan had no dredger boat big enough to do the task. That dredger came from California.

There were heroes who made all that happen, whose business was business itself.

There were other heroes, unsung heroes, serving on carriers with the U.S. Navy, or in rifle companies with the U.S. Marine Corps, or in a dozen other dangerous and difficult missions at sea. The Japanese owe a lot to them.

When our Prime Minister, Taro Aso, placed a wreath at Arlington Cemetery in February, I know he was thanking those unsung heroes. I am, too.

Japan has played its role. Even when our military missions were constrained, our geography became critical. In the 1980s, Japan and America contained the ambitions of the Soviet Navy. Luck had it that Japan was placed exactly like the cap on a bottle, vis-à-vis Far Eastern Russia, or the genie in the bottle if you like.

By greatly enhancing its surveillance and anti-submarine capabilities, the US-Japan Alliance, the Pacific Alliance, checked Soviet naval expansion and helped to win the Cold War and keep the Pacific free.

Remember, your Google Earth will show you, that the long stretch of the Okinawa island chain must play a similar role to ensure that another power does not try to push the envelope or to challenge the status quo. Our alliance will face up to that challenge as well.

Such being our life-time achievement, thanks to the alliance Japan has come this far. Thanks to the alliance the world has come this far to thrive on

commerce that knows no border. Together, Japan and America must keep it that way.

Two years ago, in the summer of 2007, I was in Delhi, India, and addressed the Parliament. My speech, entitled the "Confluence of the Two Seas," called upon our three nations, namely India, Japan and the United States, to shoulder the solemn responsibility to provide the two Oceans, the Indian and the Pacific, with safety, peace, and prosperity.

Of late, there is a growing awareness that the greatest triangle of Japan, America and Australia, covering three corners of the Pacific Ocean, should act jointly as a great stabilizer, as ballast, for the security of the sea.

Of course, we have many more miles to cover for us to rest assured that the greatest highway of humankind remains safe through the joint efforts of the Americans and the Japanese, the Indians and the Australians, and all peoples who believe in freedom.

I know, however, that we have already set foot in that direction. Your call to launch a new union, a Union of Seafaring Nations, is a powerful endorsement of that journey we have embarked upon.

But we should always bear in mind that the Pacific Alliance between us, Japan and America, must act as a strong axle to set the union in train.

The sea, *la mer*, or in Japanese, *umi*..... it is no coincidence that in many different languages the

word for the sea sounds that broad, gentle, motherly tone. Because life, in its first form, came from the sea.

Our future, whether it will be prosperous and sustainable, also rests very much in the sea.

The greatest highway for humankind is also the greatest commons, public goods in the truest sense of the word.

That is the reason why the sea needs its custodians. Only we, the seasoned and experienced democracies, can and should play that role.

That gives you and me an added reason for us to join together, once again next year, in Tokyo and Washington, D.C., to hail the alliance, the great Pacific Alliance.

Thank you very much.

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