

Inaugural Tokyo-Washington Dialogue
– The US-Japan Alliance After 3/11 –

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It is a great pleasure and honor to be given this opportunity to speak before you today at this inaugural dialogue to consider the U.S.-Japanese alliance in the wake of the tragedy of March 11th.

As many of you know, this symposium was originally scheduled to take place in May; then the disastrous events that occurred in Japan on March 11th forced its postponement. Nearly six months have now passed since the disaster. During this time, we Japanese have learned a great deal; and we have come to look differently at various things. Among them, the most significant, I believe, is the vital importance of good relations between Japan and the United States. The speed and scale of the disaster relief activities undertaken under the American military's "Operation Tomodachi" made many Japanese aware of the importance of maintaining close ties with the U.S. Also, the donations raised by the U.S. – from the grass-roots level to the industrial sector – are contributing greatly to recovery in the affected regions. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to the people of the United States for your generous and warm support.

Since March 11th, the average Japanese citizen has come, in this way, to realize once more how vitally linked our two countries are. However, at the same time, there is concern that positive dialogue between our two governments often breaks down. Important agreements supposedly reached between our two countries last year – concerning national security, economic issues, and cultural and personal exchanges – have apparently failed to go forward. Moreover, issues relating to the reorganization of U.S. military bases in Okinawa and to our Economic Partnership Agreement have been put on hold. Allowing these matters to remain in limbo is of benefit to neither side.

Unfortunately, discussions toward resolving these various issues have made no headway,

especially because of Japan's unstable political situation. I sincerely hope that with the formation of a new Cabinet under Prime Minister Noda, efforts will now resume quickly toward resolving these matters.

As you all know, global society today is undergoing structural changes of historic proportion, symbolized by the emergence of China and the other developing countries. Too little discussion is taking place today, however, concerning what new roles the U.S.-Japanese partnership should play globally in such times, from a medium to long-term perspective. This is a situation that causes me even greater concern. These are times when the U.S. and Japan should be working together to draw up a new blueprint for establishing a solid partnership that will continue long into the future. What's needed today, I believe, is for the private and public sector to come together to create a framework that will enable ongoing discussions from a long-term perspective, even as immediate issues are being addressed.

In 2008 and 2009 the Nippon Foundation organized three sessions of the U.S.-Japan Sea Power Dialogue, convened in Tokyo and Washington. Last year, we held a symposium marking 150 years of amity between Japan and the U.S. and the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between our two countries. As organizer of these events, we gave much thought to U.S.-Japanese relations. And the feeling we came away with was that seeking ways to resolve specific immediate issues is not enough. What's also needed are opportunities for taking U.S.-Japanese relations forward to a new stage through wide-ranging discussions within a greater, global context. Your gathering here today, as leaders who can impact U.S.-Japanese relations today and tomorrow, and your engaging in free and open discussions, will unquestionably serve as a first step toward achieving that goal.

Given the enormous scope of addressing the U.S.-Japanese partnership from a long-term view, however, convening one symposium is surely not enough. Debating the issues on a frequent and ongoing basis is of vital importance. By the same token, merely debating the issues is not enough either. What's necessary is to take the ideas put forward during discussions and analyze them on a deeper level, and to study matters on a sustained basis. Regrettably, it seems that even when good ideas and helpful opinions emerge from

meetings like this, only seldom are they followed up by further studies and verification over time.

It is with this in mind that I have set an ultimate goal for this symposium: to make proposals, to the governments of both our countries, of policies for developing a new phase in U.S.-Japanese relations. My time frame for achieving this goal is five years, with a symposium to be held once each year. My aspiration is for there to be ongoing discussions that will lead to proposals of comprehensive and strategic policies. One major long-range topic I have in mind is the U.S.-Japanese partnership in matters relating to the world's oceans. This is an issue that the Nippon Foundation has been actively involved in for many years. As you know, managing the waters around the Pacific island nations today is a matter of increasingly great importance. Relying on the traditional approach to national security – a basically military approach – is no longer enough. We must also consider how to deal with threats from terrorism, acts of piracy, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. In doing so, we need to seek greater maritime monitoring in a broader sense, and to pursue closer multinational cooperation. To be effective in such an expansive area, cooperation must include not only the Pacific island nations themselves, but also countries of a similar mind to the United States and Japan. This was the impetus, I believe, behind U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell's visits this June to nine Pacific island states. Problems also remain in the Indian Ocean and Asian maritime zones, particularly concerning safe passage through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. As these problems are expected to grow in importance over the long term, multinational cooperation encompassing the U.S. and Japan will be vital.

Cooperation in maritime matters is but one example. My hope is that you will consider U.S.-Japanese relations and debate new possibilities from many different approaches. I also hope to create opportunities for following up on the policy proposals that will be made after the last symposium five years from now.

Specifically, I would like to propose introducing mechanisms for engaging in active and ongoing discussions between the annual symposiums, in order to make the proposals all the more substantial. One idea I have in mind is to launch a project to support studies to enable your active and ongoing involvement in discussions on U.S.-Japanese relations.

The project would support the next generation of scholars, both in the U.S. and Japan, in areas related to the future of U.S.-Japanese relations and a new maritime order. Study topics would be areas that would contribute to those goals, in areas such as diplomacy, national security, economics, and comprehensive maritime management, with the aim of developing specific policies. My aspiration is for the results from this project to lead to deeper discussions at the annual symposiums, and ultimately to policy proposals more substantial in content. I have high hopes that through initiatives of these kinds, the proposals developed based on your collective wisdom will surely usher in a new phase in U.S.-Japanese relations.

Over the course of the next two days, you will begin the long journey toward developing new U.S.-Japanese relations. As befits the start of such a voyage, I hope that you will all debate the issues freely and actively.

Thank you for your kind attention.