

17 February 2017

Dear friends,

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife, Akie Abe visited the United States of America from the 10th to the 12th of this month. During this visit, Prime Minister Abe attended a leaders' meeting with President Donald Trump as well as a working lunch in Washington D.C. Discussions on how to further improve Japan-U.S. relations were also held with bipartisan members of Congress and CEOs of U.S. companies.

In the leaders' meeting, Prime Minister Abe and President Trump confirmed that both Japan and the U.S. will take a leadership role in maintaining peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region as well as worldwide. Both leaders shared the same recognition of the importance to unflaggingly strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and enhance cooperation with allies in an increasingly tense regional security environment.

The two leaders also recognised the importance of the economic partnership between Japan and the U.S., and that the Japan-U.S. alliance, which provides the foundations for regional stability and prosperity is supported not only by defence and security cooperation, but economic ties as well. Furthermore, Prime Minister Abe and President Trump stated that both countries stood firmly for free trade following WWII, and their initiative to spread free trade globally has resulted in today's prosperity. They then agreed to take the bilateral economic partnership to new heights as well as ramping-up economic dialogue under Deputy Prime Minister, Taro Aso and Vice-President, Mike Pence.

Following the leaders' meeting, Prime Minister Abe and President Trump released a joint statement in which they expressed their strong determination to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and continued commitment to strengthening economic relations. The two leaders also confirmed they would actively promote

cooperation in specific areas of mutual interest ([joint statement](#)).

In the evening of the 10th, Prime Minister Abe accompanied President Trump to his residence in Palm Beach, Florida on Air Force One. The two leaders together with their families enjoyed two dinners together and spent a long time in discussion which no doubt strengthened their relationship based on trust. During their time in Florida, the two leaders held an impromptu press conference in response to North Korea's missile launch at that time, which clearly demonstrates the strong ties between Japan and the U.S.

I strongly believe in the great significance of the discussions held by Prime Minister Abe and President Trump regarding Japan making a greater contribution to the promotion security and free trade for peace, stability and prosperity for the whole Asia-Pacific region, including Australia.

Yours Sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia