

Defense Minister's Message on U.S. Military Support

(Draft / Provisional Translation)

Delivered aboard USS Ronald Reagan, April 4, 2011

Please allow me, at the outset, to express my heartfelt appreciation and admiration to each and every U.S. service member that came to the aid of the victims of the March 11 Great Tohoku-Kanto Disaster. The incredible support that you are providing are touching the victims that are still suffering from a feeling of great loss and sorrow.

No time like the present have I've felt the United States, our ally, as a reliable partner, and have I felt so proud of our alliance with the United States.

The United States Forces has extended assistance to the disaster hit areas in various ways. For instance, you are helping to clean up schools that are covered by mud by the Tsunami, so that the students can come back for the new school year. Your warm help will be cherished and engraved in the hearts and soul of the Japanese people. More than three weeks have passed since the disaster. Our humanitarian and disaster relief efforts are about to transition to a phase to a mid to long term activities focused on rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It is my sincere wish that those of you who will depart from the relief efforts to assume a new mission, to leave with a feeling of utmost pride, for taking part in a noble operation such as Operation Tomodachi. And for those of you who will continue to provide assistance, I again wish to express my deepest appreciation for your contribution.

Disaster can destroy human life and property, but it cannot destroy the human spirit. This is what Ambassador Roos said when he visited the disaster hit elementary school, Watanoha, in Ishinomaki City. The Ambassador's remark will be long remembered in the history of Japan-U.S. relations as a message that tied the hearts and souls of the survivors and their lost loved ones.

In closing, I would like to say that the on going Japan-U.S. joint relief operation in tackling this unprecedented crisis that our country is now facing, will be long remembered in the memories of both the Japanese and American people. I am convinced that our joint efforts today will lead to further deepening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

ロナルド・レーガン訪問時 防衛大臣ご発言(案)

○ まずは、深い悲しみに置かれた被災者に対し、災害発生直後から直ちに駆けつけ、熱い支援の手をのべて下さいました、米軍の皆様には感謝と賞賛を述べたいと思います。今ほど、米国が同盟国であったことを頼もしく、また、誇りに思う時はございません。

○ 米軍からは、本当に様々な支援を頂きましたが、例えば、新学期を前にした学校の清掃は、米国の優しさが心に刻まれる、温かい支援だと思えます。被災から3週間以上経過し、我が国の救援活動も、被災者の生活を支え復旧・復興を支えるといった中長期的な活動へと移行しつつあります。

○ どうか、今後、この任務から離れる方々には、「ともだち」作戦に参加されたことを誇りに思って、他の任務に就かれることを希望します。また、日本人は永久に、あなた方の「ともだち」であると、心配されているご家族やご友人に是非伝えて頂きたいと思えます。一方、引き続き支援を頂く方々には、改めて感謝申し上げます。

○ 災害は、家やモノを奪っても人の心を奪うことはできません。これはルー ス大使が言われた言葉ですが、この言葉は、今後の日米の歴史に、そして亡くなられた方と生存された方の絆となるメッセージとして、歴史に残るものだと思います。

○ この未曾有の災害に際しての日米共同の救援オペレーションが、両国国民の胸に熱く刻まれ、今後の日米同盟の更なる深化に繋がるものであると確信し、私の言葉を終えさせて頂きたいと思えます。