

Wataru Takeshita, Minister for Reconstruction
Greetings at the Welcome Reception
for the USS Ronald Reagan in Yokosuka

Thank you for that introduction. I am Wataru Takeshita, Minister for Reconstruction.

Commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Admiral Aucoin;
Commander of the Battle Force of 7th Fleet, Rear Admiral Alexander; Commander of U.S. Forces Japan, Lt. Gen Dolan; Commanding Officer of USS Ronald Reagan, Captain Bolt; the entire crew of the USS Ronald Reagan; Ambassador Kennedy; ladies and gentlemen;

I stand here today on behalf of the Japanese government to again add my words of welcome to the crew of the USS Ronald Reagan and everyone in the U.S. Forces, and express my most heartfelt appreciation.

At the last parliament meeting, the Diet of Japan just passed national security legislation. The most important mission for a nation is to protect the lives of the people and their prosperous and peaceful lives. To that end, we recognize that this peace and security acts have great significance for the creation of a seamless security system.

We are very grateful that the USS Ronald Reagan, the flagship aircraft carrier of the 7th Fleet, has called and will be stationed at Yokosuka, not only to contribute to the safety of Japan, but also to increase deterrence to ensure security, stability, and peace in the Asia-Pacific region. We would like to offer you our heartfelt welcome.

Moreover, as the Minister for Reconstruction, I would like to recall the Operation Tomodachi at the time after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The U.S. forces and Japan cooperated together to offer support to the disaster-affected areas by transporting supplies and carrying out search and rescue missions. We shall never forget the kindness showed, and would like to offer our most heartfelt gratitude.

Please allow me to speak about my personal story. When my brother, Noboru Takeshita visited the United States as then Prime Minister of Japan, he became so close with then President Ronald Reagan of the United States as to call each

other by their first names, Ron and Noboru. In this regard, personally, the name “Ronald Reagan” has double meanings, and it is the memorable name for me.

Currently, we are making steady progress in reconstruction. There are still many things that need to be done; however, with the support of people all over the world and the continuous support from people throughout Japan, we will continue to make steady progress in the reconstruction of the region.

We have one goal. When we host the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics Games in 2020, we are determined to show the visitors from all over the world just how far the country has come as a result of reconstruction.

I would be most grateful if the crews of the USS Ronald Reagan will have the opportunity to visit the affected areas in Tohoku.

In closing, I would again like to express my most sincere appreciation to all Americans, including the crew members of the USS Ronald Reagan, who implemented Operation Tomodachi, and would like to extend my heartfelt welcome.

Thank you very much.

(End)