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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

July 15, 2014

Sōri Daijin Kantei
2-3-1 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8968
Japan

Dear Prime Minister Abe:

We are writing to commend your efforts to revitalize Japan's security, diplomacy and economy, specifically on the issue of collective self-defense. Every country has the right to exercise collective self-defense. The interpretation of that right under the Japanese constitution is up to the government and people of Japan. We believe that greater flexibility for Japan to be able to responsibly exercise that right can significantly benefit the security of Japan, the U.S.-Japan alliance and the region as a whole.

As you have explained publicly, this decision will also benefit global security as Japan will be able to more fully participate in international peacekeeping operations.

In the context of an increasingly complicated security environment in the Asia Pacific, the U.S.-Japan alliance has never been more important. We believe that greater flexibility for Japan will have immense benefits for our alliance. The opportunities presented by constitutional reinterpretation for collective self-defense to both deepen and strengthen our alliance, including the on-going defense guideline review, are significant. Japan's efforts to increase its defense spending and capabilities are also appreciated in Washington. Likewise, we support your outreach to other countries in the region to provide full transparency as Japan revises its approach to collective self-defense, and to work together for greater security, prosperity, and peace.

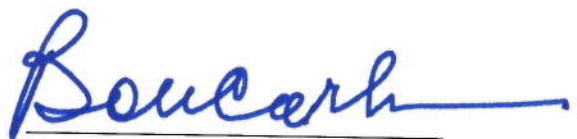
Moreover, your vow in Australia never to repeat the horrors of the past century demonstrates your commitment to statesmanship to address and overcome the burdens of history. Based on a spirit of good will and sincerity we hope and believe that Japan and the Republic of Korea, both vibrant democracies with shared interests and shared values -- and two of America's most vital allies and friends -- can take steps to put the past behind them and to focus more fully and cooperatively on the many significant common challenges of the present faced by both countries and by the region.

We stand ready to support such endeavors as well as your efforts to enhance Japan's security since success will leave a legacy of statesmanship for the region benefiting generations to come.

Sincerely,



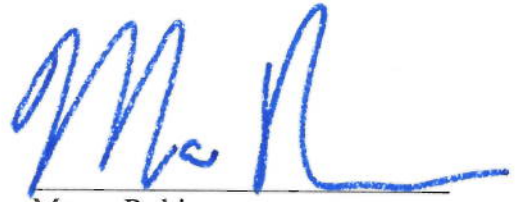
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