

July 19 2014, Newport

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Kazuhiko Togo, Special assistant on external affairs for Kawakatsu Heita, the governor of Shizuoka Prefecture.

In the long-time history of The Black Ship festivals held in New Port, already thirty one times by this year, tonight, is a special occasion. Why tonight, is this festival uniquely important?

Because the security relations between Japan and the United States that constitutes the basis of trust, friendship and cooperation between our two countries, entered into a new era, as the result of my government's decision in early July to make Japan a more responsible partner of the Alliance.

On this important and historic occasion, it is my pleasure and honor to deliver the message by the Governor of Shizuoka Prefecture, Kawakatsu Heita.

“Distinguished Guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Shizuoka Prefecture, let me extend my heartfelt congratulations on the 31st annual Newport Black Ships Festival. At the same time, please accept my deepest regrets for my absence at this historically important occasion.

Security relations between Japan and the United States are entering into an important new era. I do hope, and I am confident, that the post-war pacifism of Japan and enhanced securities ties between Japan and the United States would contribute to greater peace and stability in the region, precisely following the great spirit of Commodore Perry, who laid the foundation of extraordinary partnership between our two-countries.

On the part of the Shizuoka Prefecture,

Symbolically the Seventy-Fifth Shimoda Black Ship Festival was held in May where we welcomed the delegation from New Port, and for the first time in history, the delegation visited the town of Hakodate, which equally marked the beginning of our

friendship in the early Meiji years.

Symbolically, in the course of last year, Shizuoka Prefecture has received some 130 dogwood cherry trees out of 3000 trees which the US has presented to Japan in 2012 in responding to the 3000 Sakura trees presented by Japan over one hundred years ago.

Symbolically, with a view of passing the message of trust and friendship to younger generation, new cooperation started between the Shizuoka Prefectural University and the Roger Williams University and last August, 14 Shizuoka students had spent the summer in Rhode Island, this program to be continued again this year in this August.

I do hope that these symbolic fruits of cooperation will flourish into even greater roots for cooperation and partnership between our two countries.

I look forward to welcoming our friends from Newport and Rhode Island to Shizuoka to attend the 76th Black Ships Festival in Shimoda next year and visit our designated World Cultural Heritage Site of Mt. Fuji.

Hoping to visit Rhode Island again, Thank you very much for your attention.”