

**Remarks by U.S. Consulate General Osaka-Kobe
Political/Economic Chief Travis Hall
To the Japan America Society of Hiroshima
Wednesday, December 4, 2024
*As prepared***

- アメリカ総領事館の Travis Hall と申します。本日は広島日米協会クリスマス・忘年の夕べにお招きいただきありがとうございます。
- Good evening and thank you for the kind introduction.
- Thank you to Chairman YAMAMOTO and to the members of the Japan America Society of Hiroshima for the opportunity to join you here tonight.
- The holidays are a very special time of year, and I am honored to be here with you this evening, enjoying together the rich diversity of the holiday season.
- Having arrived at the U.S. Consulate General in Osaka this past summer as political/economic chief after language training in Yokohama, I was especially excited to see how festive the Kansai/Chugoku region is, and -- from obon odori, to danjiri festivals, to Christmas lights, -- it has been a wonderful six months.
- As we enter the final month of 2024 and look towards the New Year, we are invited to reflect on progress in the U.S.-Japan relationship over recent years, and to look to the future.
- The United States and Japan are more aligned now than at any other time over the last 70 years.
- As President Biden declared during April's state visit to Washington by former Prime Minister Kishida, the United States and Japan are now "global partners," working together in every field to address common challenges and to ensure a world that is free, open, connected, resilient, and secure.

- That global partnership, and Hiroshima itself shone on the world's stage during Hiroshima's successful hosting of the G7 Leaders Meeting last year.
- On security issues, Japan and the United States strengthened their "lattice" of connections across the Indo-Pacific, deepening trilateral engagement with not only the Republic of Korea and the Philippines, but also with Australia and the United Kingdom, and within the Quad partnership, including India. All of this comes in the context of China's bullying behavior towards its neighbors.
- On the economic front, Japan and the United States are top investors in each-other's economies. In Huntsville, Alabama in the south of the United States, Mazda, together with Toyota has invested \$2.3 billion in the Mazda Toyota Manufacturing facility. And here in Chugoku, Micron's Higashi-Hiroshima chip plant is a multi-billion-dollar investment that is supporting the local economy.
- Micron and Hiroshima University are also working together on the "UPWARDS for the Future" program to cross-collaborate on semiconductor research and development to solve future challenges. Just this past month, Consul General Cubas joined the 3rd UPWARDS meeting in Hiroshima and heard about the first 18 months of progress made by this key network of 11 universities, supported by Micron, Tokyo Electron and the National Science Foundation.
- And on the people-to-people front, the sister-park relationship between Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Pearl Harbor National Memorial Park has in recent months resulted in positive exchanges between students and citizens on both sides of the Pacific, allowing them to share their experiences.
- This August when I visited Hiroshima for my first time, together with Ambassador Emanuel for the Peace Memorial Ceremony, I was deeply moved by the elementary school children Akira-san and Yuto-san, reading the "Commitment to Peace."

- Together with the members of Nihon Hidankyo, awarded this year's Nobel Peace prize, they remind us that we must continue our progress toward a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons, especially as the 8th decade since the bombing approaches next year.
- In Akira-san and Yuto-san, and in all Japanese and American children we see embodied such great potential, and that is why our global partnership with Japan is so indispensable, because together we are helping drive future peace and prosperity for generations to come.
- Which brings me back to tonight – to the Japan-America Society of Hiroshima. The people in this room, and in rooms like it across Japan, committed to deepening the bonds between the United States and Japan, are the guarantors of our Alliance.
- As we look to 2025, there are some things we can anticipate, such as shared excitement about the USA Pavilion at Japan's Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, where organizers expect some 28 million visitors. And a new Consulate-supported program to convene young people from the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea in Hiroshima next spring to consider how we can use technology in the service of peace.
- Other plans for 2025 are still taking shape. But with friends like those gathered here tonight, I have no doubt that together we will continue to advance peace and prosperity in Japan, the United States, and the region in the year ahead.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to join you tonight. Best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous 2025!
- ありがとうございます。良いお年を！