Greetings. Upon this occasion, I extend my heartfelt regards to those of you in the Republic of China and the United States. My name is Keiji Furuya, and I serve as Chairman of the Japan-ROC Diet Members’ Consultative Council. Our Council is a Diet members’ league with membership of approximately 300 bipartisan parliamentarians from both Japan and Taiwan.

To begin, I sincerely thank and congratulate everyone involved in the stellar efforts to convene this Taiwan-US-Japan Trilateral Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue.

 Today, from the Japan side, we are pleased to present a message from our former Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe. Likewise participating in the dialogue with legislators from the ROC and the United States will be Ms. Haruko Arimura – Deputy Secretary General of the Japan-ROC Diet Members’ Consultative Council.

 In recent years, nations around the world have been advancing vigorous activities in support of Taiwan.

 Today, we are witnessing a one-sided push by Mainland China, rooted in a clearly abnormal course of action, aimed at altering the global status quo. Against such a backdrop, it is crucial for those of us in Japan, Taiwan and the United States to join hands with other nations which respect the basic values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, devoting our shared energies to the causes of global peace and stability.

 On this July 29, the Consultative Council sponsored a historical strategic dialogue by national legislators from Japan, the United States and Taiwan. Taking part from the U.S. was Senator William Hagerty, and from the ROC You Si-Kun, President of the Legislative Yuan assembly. Both of these gentlemen are also part of today’s discussions.

From Japan, we were happy to have former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, as well as representatives from the various Japanese political parties who also serve as members of our Consultative Council. The conference was highly informative and fruitful, and we plan to continue to hold regular sessions going forward.

 Last year, struggling with the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan was greatly honored to receive N95 face masks and hazard protection body suits from the ROC. In gratitude for that generosity, Japan worked behind the scenes to arrange for 4.2 million doses of covid vaccine as support on that front, with those doses supplied to Taiwan.

 In March of this year, Mainland China suddenly placed an import ban on Taiwan-grown pineapples. In Japan, that action prompted spontaneous moves to furnish assistance for the ROC through the purchase of its pineapples. This push also included the supermarket chain “Valor,” which is headquartered in my own legislative base of Gifu Prefecture. As a result, Taiwanese pineapples quickly emerged as a major presence in retail outlets throughout Japan.

 This development once again underscored the deep bonds of friendship which exist between Taiwan and Japan. It also provided an excellent example of how to transform “crisis into opportunity.”

 Japan firmly supports the application by the ROC, as one of our truly vital partners, to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. In moving to help negotiate Taiwanese membership in the TPP, we eagerly look forward to resolution of a number of related issues. Among them, the ROC ban on imports of food products from a total of five Japanese prefectures.

 Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the break-off in diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Japan. The following year, 2023, we will celebrate a full half century since the founding of our Japan-ROC Diet Members’ Consultive Council in 1973. As this milestone approaches, we are more determined than ever to redouble the solid bonds forged between our nations over the decades. Our aim is to empower the next generation of leaders to continue to build and excel on this foundation of unwavering trust.

 Taking this to heart, it my most profound hope that today’s online exchange will be instrumental in further enhancing the strong bonds of understanding and cooperation between the ROC, the United States and Japan.

Finally, on behalf of everyone at the Japan-ROC Diet Members’ Consultative Council, I thank you for the precious privilege of addressing this esteemed summit of concerned legislators.