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The Honorable Mufi Hannemann  
Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu

August 17, 2007

Dear Mayor Hannemann:

On the occasion of my visit to the City and County of Honolulu, I would like to express my sincere condolences in a token of respect to the memory of the many people who lost their lives during the Pearl Harbor attack.

The City of Nagaoka is the hometown of two people who left their footprints in the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century diplomacy between the U.S.A. and Japan. One of them is Hiroshi Saito who became a Japanese ambassador to the U.S.A. at the rather young age of 49. The other is Isoroku Yamamoto who instructed the Pearl Harbor attack as the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet of the Japan Imperial Navy.

Both Hiroshi Saito and Isoroku Yamamoto tried to avoid the outbreak of war between the U.S.A. and Japan. I would like you to refer to the attached sheets of paper for detailed information on this matter. Both Hiroshi Saito as the Ambassador to the U.S.A. and Isoroku Yamamoto as the Under Secretary of the Navy stood firmly against the outbreak of war between the U.S.A. and Japan. It is a well-known fact among the Japanese people that their opinions exposed them to the great danger of attacks from pro-war Japanese citizens, signifying the volatile situation in those days. However, Yamamoto was appointed as the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet and was to instruct the Pearl Harbor attack. Consequently, he had to assume the entire responsibility for the surprise attack that was carried out. Since the proclamation of war was delayed, the attack was criticized as illegal in later years.

On August 1, 1945, four years after the Pearl Harbor attack, the City of Nagaoka was air raided by the U.S. Air Force. The bombing claimed 1,476 lives and burned down 80% of the city.

Despite Saito and Yamamoto's efforts to avoid the war, the air raid caused tremendous devastation to the city. Thus, the people of Nagaoka know much better than anyone else that the lack of mutual understanding among nations can lead to a tragedy like war.

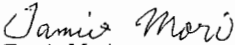
It has been 62 years since the end of the war. I am convinced that it is now time for us to deepen the mutual understanding between our cities, which will hopefully contribute to strengthening friendship between the U.S.A. and Japan.

Please allow me to propose two specific ideas of mine. First, I would like to send a delegation from Nagaoka to the City of Honolulu at the beginning of next year. If the delegation is able to be accepted, it would be a precious opportunity for us to deepen mutual understanding about our historic bonds.

Secondly, I would appreciate it if we could welcome you, the Mayor of Honolulu, to Nagaoka. It would be a great pleasure and honor for the City of Nagaoka to have you in our city. Early August would be the best time for you to visit our city. The Grand Fireworks Show has been held on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> every year since 1947 in memory of the Nagaoka air raid victims and to represent the determination of post-war recovery. Recently fireworks have also been launched in the hopes of a safe restoration of the earthquake-stricken Nagaoka. We are proud of Nagaoka's Grand Fireworks Show believing it to be the biggest display of fireworks in the world in quality and quantity. I would certainly like you to enjoy our gorgeous fireworks show.

I would like to stress that deepening ties between our cities will help our friendly relationships further develop between Hawaii and Japan and the U.S.A. and Japan, hoping that it will eventually contribute to the pursuit of world peace.

Very truly yours,

  
Tamio Mori  
Mayor of Nagaoka City  
TM/mh

ホノルル市長殿

今回、ホノルル市を訪問させていただくにあたり、真珠湾攻撃によって多くの命が失われたことに対しまして、謹んで哀悼の意を表します。

長岡市は、20世紀における日米外交の歴史に多くの足跡を残した二人の人物の故郷です。一人は、49歳の若さでアメリカ大使となった斉藤博、もう一人は、連合艦隊司令長官としてあの真珠湾攻撃を指揮した山本五十六です。

斉藤博も山本五十六も、日米開戦を回避しようとした人物です。詳しくは別添の資料をご覧くださいと思いますが、斉藤博は大使として、山本五十六は海軍次官としてアメリカとの開戦に強硬に反対しました。この行為は、当時の日本の状況からすればテロを受ける危険性もあったことは、日本国民に広く知られています。しかし、その後、連合艦隊司令長官に任命され、真珠湾攻撃を指揮することとなりました。宣戦布告の遅れから後世、非法な奇襲攻撃と非難されることになった責任を一身に背負う結果となりました。

そして、真珠湾攻撃から4年後の1945年8月1日、長岡市は米軍による空襲により1,476名の市民の命が失われ、市街地の8割が焼け野原になりました。

斉藤博、山本五十六の戦争回避への努力があつたにもかかわらず、空襲により多大な被害を受ける結果となってしまった長岡市民は、戦争が国と国との理解不足から起きてしまう悲劇であることを誰よりもよく知っております。

戦後62年を経た今、長岡市とホノルル市とが相互に理解を深めることは、日米友好の更なる発展に貢献できると確信しています。

具体的なお願ひですが、第1に、来年の早い時期に、長岡市からホノルル市へ訪問団を派遣したいと考えています。もし、受け入れていただけるならば、歴史的な事実についてお互いに理解を深める良い機会となることでしょう。

第2に、ホノルル市長にぜひ長岡市を訪問していただきたいということです。長岡市を挙げて歓迎いたします。時期は、8月上旬が最善です。長岡市は、犠牲者の追悼と復興への決意を込め、1947年から毎年、8月2、3日の両日、大花火大会を開催しています。最近では、地震の被害からの復興への祈りも込めた大会となっており、質量とも世界一の規模を持つ大会だと自負しております。ぜひご覧いただきたいものだと思います。

両市の交流が深まることにより、日本とハワイ、日本と米国の友好関係が更に強化されるとともに世界平和に貢献できることを願ってやみません。

長岡市長 森民夫