Common Interests, Shared Values

Perspectives on the US-Japan Relationship

A Publication of The Congressional Study Group on Japan

About The Congressional Study Group on Japan

The Congressional Study Group on Japan is an independent, non-advocacy legislative exchange conducted by the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress (FMC), a congressionally chartered 501(3)c non-profit organization. The Study Group has brought current Members of Congress and senior congressional staff together with their peers, as well as high-level representatives of the academic, business, and diplomatic communities since 1993. With more than 65 current Members of Congress, The Congressional Study Group on Japan facilitates frank and candid dialogue on all issues that affect the strategic U.S.-Japan alliance through regular programs on Capitol Hill and delegations to Japan for Members of Congress and senior congressional staff.

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Leonard Steinhorn is a professor of Communication and an affiliate professor of History at American University. His expertise includes American politics, culture and media; strategic communication; the presidency; race relations; the 1960s; and recent American history. He is the author of *The Greater Generation: In Defense of the Baby Boom Legacy*, and co-author of *By the Color of Our Skin: The Illusion of Integration and the Reality of Race*. Steinhorn has written for the *Washington Post*, *Salon*, *New York Times*, *Politico*, *Huffington Post*, *The Hill*, and *History News Network*, among others, and he is the founding editor of PunditWire, where political speechwriters comment on the news. Steinhorn lectures regularly on politics and history, appears frequently in the media, serves as a political analyst for CBS News, and for ten years was the political analyst for FOX-5 News in Washington, DC.

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Preface

It's a dynamic time for the U.S.-Japan relationship. The world's two most economically powerful democracies are working together in every corner of the globe on issues vitally important to our nation. From the International Space Station to alternative energy development; from food security to human rights; from aid to the world's most vulnerable people to working to enhance regional and global security – U.S.-Japan cooperation is essential if we are going to create a better world for our children.

The essays in this volume present a strong overview of the breadth and importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship and of the challenges we must face together in the 21st century. Whether you are new to the issues surrounding our important alliance or have followed the U.S. Japan relationship for years, I'm sure you'll find much to ponder in these pages.

I want to extend my appreciation to The Congressional Study Group on Japan for its work strengthening the bonds between our two national legislatures. Over the past 69 years, our countries have together forged one of the strongest alliances in history. With your help and support, we will continue to build on our extraordinary friendship and alliance.

Ambassador Caroline Bouvier Kennedy
United States Ambassador to Japan

Senator Mazie Hirono

Toward A Meaningful Rebalance Between the United States and Japan

In a world of simmering tensions, resurgent nationalism, and too many misunderstandings, strengthening the bonds among countries that seek constructive approaches to our global challenges is crucial. In this context, President Obama's focus on the Asia Pacific region is both timely and critical. This comprehensive rebalance to the Asia Pacific is based not only on mutual security but also on economic, cultural, and diplomatic initiatives. The Asia Pacific region is home to some of the most dynamic and growing economies in the world. About 40 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is generated from countries in this region. It is also an area experiencing China's economic rise and North Korea's instability. This is a region of opportunity and flux, of immense potential and ongoing challenges. Our rebalance will go a long way toward shaping not only regional but also global peace and prosperity.

With this background, we must make the commitment to understand and know one another. International relations involve far more than diplomatic channels or a seat at the negotiating table. To be most effective – and to foster solutions – they must be real and tangible and built on an appreciation not only of our own perspective but that of the other nations involved. Decision-makers must incorporate this understanding as they forge agreements and build foundations for future cooperation. I have visited Japan often and have heard from officials and lawmakers who wonder why Members of Congress don't seem to prioritize Japan – America's most critical Pacific ally – the way they appear to do other countries. Japanese policymakers hear their American counterparts say how important Japan is, but they then ask why so few of us visit Japan regularly for face-to-face interaction, which to them is a more meaningful way to build relationships. Moreover, we cannot simply settle for legislative exchanges that begin and end with dialogue. We are faced with significant energy, trade, environmental, and security issues that beg for progress, so perhaps as legislators – as the individuals who ultimately must approve agreements between our nations – we should focus our exchanges on mutually acceptable but tangible outcomes that we can then use to inform our constituents. With better information, misconceptions with

regard to certain areas could be overcome, and can serve to better support our negotiators and policymakers as they move forward.

Think of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This agreement has been negotiated for several years, and has arguably as much geopolitical ramifications, as economic, for the United States and its role in the Asia Pacific. A final agreement may not come anytime soon, and there are major labor, environmental, and agricultural issues that need to be worked out. But wherever we end up on these negotiations on the issues, there is a general sense among some of my Congressional colleagues—and of key constituencies across the United States—that there has been a lack of transparency regarding key components of the TPP. Both the United States Congress and the Japanese Diet will be asked for an up-or-down vote on what our trade representatives conclude. Those of us who must cast a vote have a responsibility to make the most informed decision possible. Legislative exchanges with less of an emphasis on formal dialogue and a greater focus on reaching understanding on discrete issues, create a better framework for an agreement that would be mutually beneficial both to Japan and the United States. Given the unprecedented market access, reforms, and standards being sought in the agreement, the TPP could have significant benefits particularly in services and agriculture, and many of my colleagues from other states could similarly see advantages from an agreement. But none of us should be faced with a pact that forces us to choose between tangible benefits to our states and the possibility of lost jobs or weaker labor and environmental standards. Neither Japan nor the United States wants an agreement that engenders buyer's remorse afterward. More than ever, listening to each other, forging mutual understanding, and integrating that into the decisions and agreements that form the connective tissue between our nations are critical and can strengthen our legislative exchanges.

"We, in Hawaii, live at the crossroads of the American partnership with Japan. Ours is a state infused with Japanese cultural influence and enriched by citizens who trace their heritage to Japan."

Surely one area that has benefited from trust and understanding is the security alliance that Japan and the United States have grown and developed over the decades. Our two nations certainly have mutual defense interests, but that alone doesn't account for the high level of confidence we have in one another. The real foundation is the strong relationship between our respective militaries, which

is built on cooperation. This allows us to adjust and adapt to change. With the end of the Cold War, the emergence of China, and the continuing belligerence of a nuclear North Korea, our partnership has been able to pivot and recalibrate according to geopolitical circumstances yet still remain rooted in the abiding principles of regional and indeed global stability and peace. That is the security context for the United States' rebalance toward Asia, and Japan's debate regarding a constitutional reinterpretation to allow for the right of collective self-defense. The United States supports and encourages a Japan that assumes more of its defense responsibilities under the aegis of our security partnership. Our mutual goal is to minimize volatility, respond to allies in need, and create a check on any short-term incidents that could result in long-term consequences. Some in China may interpret our rebalance as a strategy to contain their country. They may accuse Prime Minister Abe of trying to militarize Japan. However, the invitation by the United States to China to participate in the 2014 Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) speaks to our intentions and regional goals for greater cooperation and trust among nations of the Pacific leading to greater stability and away from armed conflict.

Beyond the security and trade spheres, our two nations have a number of other concerns in common that can benefit from a rebalance built on greater dialogue and understanding. Consider immigration. Japan has little experience with – and a great deal of uncertainty over – opening its border to immigrants. Yet encouraging immigration to help address some of its elder care issues is now part of the Japanese political conversation. Hawaii has over a 100 years of experience with immigrants from Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. Immigrants helped build our state – much like the immigrants who helped build the American mainland. We have a perspective to share as Japan navigates this issue. And dealing with an aging population is a matter that both of our nations need to address. Energy is another challenge we can face together, particularly as a post-Fukushima Japan pivots away from nuclear and toward alternative sources to fuel its country. In the long-term we both have an interest in creating sustainable solutions through the clean energy technologies our two nations are capable of creating together. The people of Hawaii understand Japan's energy situation perhaps better than any other Americans since we are the most fossil fuel dependent state in the country. Addressing energy needs is in a sustainable way is in all of our interests.

Travel and tourism has arguably the most direct impact on everyday Japanese and American citizens. Some bilateral initiatives that I support and believe can be advanced through legislative exchanges are Japan's participation in the Department of Homeland Security's Preclearance and Global Entry programs which expedite customs clearance for travelers before and after they arrive in

the United States. In 2013, travel supported a total of 8 million American jobs, was our largest service export. Japanese visitors spent $18 billion, second only to Canadian visitors. A report by the U.S. Travel Association found that as of July 2013, travelers used Global Entry kiosks more than 5.4 million times, reducing traveler wait times by 70 percent with just the swipe of a passport and saving Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers more than 50,000 inspection hours. These benefits are boosted to a larger scale with CBP's Preclearance facilities which allow both American and foreign travelers to complete the customs process before arriving at a port of entry in the United States and avoid long lines altogether. Including Japan among the foreign nations eligible for Global Entry and establishing a Preclearance facility in Japan recognizes the longstanding trust and security cooperation between our countries. Japanese travelers underpin trade flows and business ties that create jobs for the American people and opportunities for American businesses large and small. These practical win-win initiatives can bolster the United States rebalance by facilitating our people-to-people, economic, and security ties simultaneously.

While the United States and Japanese administrations continue discussions on these issues I hope we, as legislators, can come together and make our collective voices heard and urge our governments to prioritize programs like these that have a profound benefit to our two peoples. To many of us in the United States, Japan is a nation with a highly developed economy built on the most modern technology layered over a social structure that remains highly traditional. And that is why we are particularly interested observers watching Prime Minister Abe's effort to reform and rejuvenate Japan's economy by empowering women – his "Womenomics" agenda. Making cultural change is not easy in any country, especially so in a country with such deep ingrained culture, customs, and traditions. So we applaud the Prime Minister for shaking up the sediments and pushing his country to recognize that economic progress must go hand-in-hand with cultural advancement – that bringing more women into the workforce will enrich Japan not only by increasing its GDP but by tapping the talent and enthusiasm of the half of society that has long sought to contribute but lacked opportunities to do so. Seeing him name five women to his cabinet, among them ministers of trade and justice, underscores his seriousness and says both to Japan and the world that a nation which had largely overlooked the role of women is poised to change. From my perspective as a Japanese-American woman in politics, seeing these changes go a long way toward building stronger bonds of cooperation and understanding.

We, in Hawaii, live at the crossroads of the American partnership with Japan. Ours is a state infused with Japanese cultural influence and enriched by citizens who trace their heritage to Japan. To us it is natural to reach our arms across the

Pacific to build understanding and draw the very best ideas from both sides. And it is no surprise that we are home to institutions such as the East-West Center and the Department of Defense's Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, both located in Honolulu. These institutions place shared dialogue and policy outcomes at the center of their work. In the last seven decades our two nations have built an extraordinary partnership and alliance. Just imagine how much more we could do if we infused this relationship with outcomes and solutions derived not just from guarded official negotiations but from transparent legislator-to-legislator and person-to-person exchanges where we can find common ground and build mutual perspectives. Closer, less scripted, and more frequent exchanges will make a difference not only for our economies and people, but also the future of peace in the Pacific.

Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii serves as the Democratic Senate Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. Born in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, Sen. Hirono became the first Asian-American woman elected to the Senate and the first U.S. Senator born in Japan upon her election in 2013. Previously, she served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Hawaii's 2nd congressional district from 2007 to 2013 and earlier as Hawaii's Lieutenant Governor and a member of its House of Representatives. Sen. Hirono serves on the Senate Armed Services, Judiciary, and Veterans' Affairs Committees.

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Securing Our Friendship in the Post-Fukushima World

About a year after the devastating tsunami hit Japan in March 2011, a massive wave of debris from across the Pacific began to wash up along the Alaskan shore. Styrofoam, plastic bottles, building materials, wood docks, even refrigerators and fuel tanks began to pile up, creating an ecological repercussion along our coast that, to be sure, didn't come close to rivaling what Japan was undergoing but still caused significant problems for our wildlife and environment. We are still seeing the after-effects two years later. At the time, Japan was still reeling from the natural disaster. Cleanup at the Fukushima nuclear plant was slow and treacherous. Entire towns had been flattened, hundreds of thousands were displaced, the energy grid was upended, and this vibrant and determined country was still trying to cope with the loss of life and the economic disruption. It would have been fully understandable if Japan had not paid much attention to what was happening on the Alaskan coast.

But the Japanese were paying attention. And they reached out. To the various states along the Pacific as well as the Canadian province of British Columbia, Japan sent $6 million to be divided among them to help cover the cleanup costs. That money won't take care of the entire problem, but as a gesture it speaks to a larger truth about Japan: it is a country that understands the genuine obligations of friendship and is earnestly committed to sustaining and deepening its alliances.

There are times, however, when I wonder if we are holding up our end of the partnership. Back in 2006 when I was serving as chair of the Senate Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I led a congressional delegation on a week-long trip to Japan. This is a vital ally whose economic and security interests generally align with ours, so our goal was to learn as much as possible through high-level conversations and first-hand visits around the country. Yet when we arrived my hosts told me that we were among the few Members of Congress who at the time had intentionally visited Japan – most would simply make a stop in Tokyo to fuel up and then head to the trouble spots nearby in Asia.

The Japanese told me that they are here for us as allies but we don't seem to have quite the same focus. Now yes, with President Obama's recent Asia pivot and the tightrope walk we have with China, we're seeing a resurgence of interest in the essential role Japan can play. But it struck me back then – and it continues to concern me today – that we do both ourselves and Japan a disservice if we take this relationship for granted. Good relations are by their very nature reciprocal. And that reciprocity is especially necessary in our post-Fukushima world today.

"Further building our economic partnership – and in the process meeting Japan's critical energy need – is a natural goal that will benefit us both."

It is an axiom of international politics that energy equals security – that any nation facing energy vulnerability will ipso facto also face a degree of national security vulnerability. When one's very economic health depends on others – when it depends on the stability of energy markets – it can create a sense of uncertainty even among the strongest and most prosperous of nations. We ourselves have lived through years of energy instability with its many national security reverberations, so of all countries we should understand that well. For Japan, that moment of vulnerability came, literally, overnight.

In a mere historical instant, a nation that had relied on nuclear power for 30 percent of its energy decided to shutter all but one of its nuclear reactors. We cannot and should not underestimate the economic and political tremor that the tsunami and Fukushima caused Japan. And we can and should – as a close friend and ally – do all in our power to help them restore the energy stability they need. This is a pressing issue for Japan, and every time I visit on a congressional delegation the conversation always turns to energy. In terms of energy and national security, what is in Japan's interest by extension is in ours.

That is why the trade talks between our two nations must assume top priority – from both an economic and a national security perspective. Japan has tried to fill in some of its energy gaps through coal, but that was a diminishing source for Japan before Fukushima and it is no long-term solution today. The answer, really, is liquid natural gas. It is a resource we have in abundance and one that can fulfill Japan's need for a clean, affordable, secure and stable energy source. If our supply and Japan's need can help us untangle some of the automotive and agricultural knots that have tied up our trade relations over the years, then it is a

win-win in so many ways for both of our nations. But it's a process that needs more far more momentum now.

What I know personally is how well trade with Japan can work. My home state of Alaska has been shipping natural gas to Japan for 40 years now – it is our state's longest running uninterrupted export contract, and it is still going strong. So successful has it been that we are looking into building a pipeline to transport natural gas from the North Slope of Alaska to tidewater, which we would liquefy, put in tankers and send to Japan – thus reducing the cost and increasing the amount we can ship. For us in Alaska, Japan is a natural market, easier and less expensive than shipping to the lower 48. And as I often say to my friends in Japan, it's precisely the type of stable energy source they want – no Strait of Hormuz to travel through, no pirates on the high seas. What Alaska has accomplished with Japan should be writ large for what the rest of the country can do. Our two nations already have the strongest of political partnerships. Further building our economic partnership – and in the process meeting Japan's critical energy need – is a natural goal that will benefit us both. Truly we must seize this moment – because if we won't, we have to wonder who will.

This is not to say that our two nations won't face obstacles or complications along the way. It's with the proverbial raised eyebrow that I and others greeted Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and the mixed messages he has sent on the comfort women issue. From our American perspective it is in no one's interest for Japan to fray ties with our other East Asian allies, and it is in everyone's interest for those ties to be strengthened.

"It struck me back then – and it continues to concern me today – that we do both ourselves and Japan a disservice if we take this relationship for granted."

But I also urge us all to take a longer perspective on these political tempests and to recognize the larger bonds that unite. These are matters for dialogue and discussion, not for heated or hyperbolic rhetoric. For me, there has not been a time in my life when Japan has not been a very tangible and visible friend and ally. When my dad was Alaska's Commissioner of Economic Development he led a trade mission to Japan, and in 1965 ours was the first state to open a trade office in Japan. Besides natural gas, Japan is a major market for Alaskan fish and timber, and for so many of our communities trade with Japan is their economic

oxygen. So I have seen first-hand over the years how we in Alaska have built a relationship based on mutual need and, more importantly, mutual respect. It is a bond of honor and the best of intentions. We certainly saw that bond a year after Fukushima when a still wounded Japan showed such solicitude as all of that marine debris started washing up on our shore. What mattered, really, was our friendship. That should be the cornerstone of all to follow.

Senator Lisa Murkowski serves as the Republican Senate Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. She is the senior senator from Alaska and was first elected to the Senate in 2002. Sen. Murkowski is the senior Republican member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and also serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where she is the ranking Republican of the Interior and Environment Subcommittee.

Representative Diana DeGette

A Revitalized Partnership Agenda

In February 2011 I had the privilege to attend the New Shimoda Conference in Tokyo, where lawmakers, government leaders, and experts from both the United States and Japan discussed ways to revitalize and renew the critical partnership between our two countries. Our conversations rightly centered on the permanence of our bond and the bedrock strength of the values, interests, and strategies we share. But they also emphasized that in a world where relationships and technologies are dissolving old boundaries and creating new opportunities, we cannot be complacent about the state of our alliance. Ours is a world of unprecedented capabilities, one in which an Iowa farmer and Kyoto manufacturer can video chat – or a Tokyo researcher and Denver doctor can consult in real-time about a procedure. So all of us at the conference agreed that our governments and institutions need to do more – that with all the resources and good will our countries share, we would be abdicating our responsibility to each other if we did not facilitate greater contact and connections between our peoples. Building more and better channels of communication and understanding will help our two nations fully appreciate that the global challenges we face are far more effectively addressed together, not separately. We all walked away with a greater sense of urgency, not because of any shortcomings in our alliance but because the strength of our alliance obliged us to make the very most of our friendship. It was an urgency borne out of opportunity, not necessity.

Then, barely three weeks later, tragedy struck Japan. The pain, devastation, and massive dislocation caused by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami remain seared in the collective memories of Japan and the United States. And in a sense, the necessity of that moment drove home the urgency of opportunity that we had discussed at that conference only weeks before. As Americans, we opened our arms and hearts and resources to our friends in Japan and spared no effort to help and assist our ally. It was the will and resilience of the Japanese that brought them through this moment, but it was the outpouring of aid, commitment, and technical support from the United States that showed our partner they were not

alone. And we know that Japan would do exactly the same for us. Little good ever comes from a crisis of the magnitude Japan faced in 2011. But if there was any positive glimmer it was the spotlight it placed on our bilateral bond.

Since then we have seen considerable progress on some of the goals we set at our 2011 New Shimoda Conference. At the personal level, we are placing greater emphasis on the types of legislative and cultural exchanges that breathe life into a relationship. At the national level, we are seeing a Japan energized by economic policies that build outward rather than protect inward. At the bilateral level, we see how U.S. ties with Japan are the foundation for an American pivot toward Asia. At the trade and partnership levels, we are immersed in conversations and initiatives that focus on energy, technology, and global health. And this is only the beginning.

"Little good ever comes from a crisis of the magnitude Japan faced in 2011. But if there was any positive glimmer it was the spotlight it placed on our bilateral bond."

A more secure world helps ensure a more stable world, and the American peacekeeping alliance with Japan has contributed a great deal to that security and stability. But history is not static, and the security challenges we may have faced a generation ago are far different from those we confront today. So an alliance must be both dependable and adaptable all at once, and in recent years that is precisely what the U.S.-Japan relationship has demonstrated. Perhaps there were worries in Japan that an America which was pulling back from its military engagements abroad might mute its voice on nettlesome regional issues such as Japan's dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands. But when President Obama visited Japan in April 2014, he made it clear that the U.S. will come to Japan's defense in case of a conflict over these islands, reinforcing the fact that the security alliance between our two nations is central to America's involvement in Asia. Japan has likewise shown its dependability by adapting its military posture for a world in which security is not just defined by resisting attack but by ensuring regional peace and preparing to assist allies against aggression. That is the essence of Japan's constitutional reinterpretation allowing it the right to exercise collective self-defense, which America supports. Ours is not just a security alliance; as friends what we really must have is a problem-solving relationship that will develop, adapt, and recalibrate depending on the regional and global challenges that we face together.

Our economies are equally intertwined, and just as our security relationship has evolved, so too must our economic relationship. It is naïve and unrealistic today to think that any nation is an economic island, that what happens in New York won't reverberate in Tokyo and then back to New York. Ours is a world of trade and technology exchange and product development that crosses borders digitally and materially. As industries and economies continually evolve, we must continually seek out opportunities to work together for our mutual benefit.

But emblematic of our revitalized relationship, neither of our countries is waiting on formalities. Prime Minister Abe has launched a program to modernize agriculture, institute structural reforms, and more fully integrate women into his nation's economy – all initiatives that have the potential to energize Japan's economy and also minimize some of the obstacles currently facing us with TPP. Our two nations are also tackling another problem together: addressing Japan's energy needs in the aftermath of Fukushima. Whether exporting more liquid natural gas or sharing some of our alternative energy technology, the U.S. is a committed partner in addressing this challenge. And as Japan makes strides to create alternative energy sources, all of our economies will benefit. Maintaining the dynamism of our economic relationship is essential for national and global progress.

Security and trade may be the most visible spheres of our partnership, but the U.S.-Japan cooperation agenda can and must reach far and wide into some of the key areas of global wellbeing. Consider climate change. We are nearing two decades since the Kyoto Protocol was signed, but despite the global commitment it reflected back then, in the years since we have struggled to enforce a collective international approach to slowing and mitigating the effects of global warming. We ignore the climate warning signs at our peril. But perhaps our two nations can spur others. In the face of inaction and resistance, President Obama will now seek a non-binding climate accord for reducing greenhouse gases at the U.N. climate summit in Paris next year. Japan can also play a leadership role particularly in the Asia-Pacific region where some developing countries resist climate change action because they fear it will hurt their economies. Providing opportunities for joint technology ventures to address climate change should also be part of our mutual portfolio.

And we should carry that spirit of collaboration into another critical challenge: global health. From SARS to influenza to Ebola, we have seen just how easily and quickly pandemics can debilitate individuals and countries across the globe. A rampant virus in a small village can spread illness and death to a major city – seemingly overnight. For years, the U.S. and Japan have been strong partners

in health research and biomedical innovation. We share a commitment both to high standards and to collaborative relationships among our research institutions. I am a major proponent of modernizing medical research and have seen first-hand how teams working in Japan and the U.S. have achieved some of the most crucial advancements in this field. Through partnerships like ours, Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells studied in a lab in Tokyo can one day be used to correct glaucoma in Boston. With my Republican colleague, Rep. Fred Upton of Michigan, I am also developing bipartisan legislation that would streamline and restructure biomedical research in the United States, which would then facilitate the types of joint international efforts that we already see in stem cell research.

Congresswoman Diana DeGette serves as Democratic House Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. Rep. DeGette has represented Colorado's 1st District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1997. She is both Chief Deputy Whip of the Democratic Caucus and a senior member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. Born in Tachikawa, Japan, Rep. DeGette led The Study Group's inaugural delegation of U.S. Members of Congress to Japan in February 2014.

The U.S.-Japan friendship can and must yield fruits of collaboration. Because if the two largest economies among democratic nations aren't looking out for global peace, prosperity, and the common good, one has to wonder who will?

Representative Billy Long

The Trade Imperative

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of President Obama's recent pivot to Asia is that it took so long to happen. This is a region that may well shape the contours of global politics and economics in the decades ahead. Think of Japan and South Korea, friends and allies of ours who are manufacturing and electronics powerhouses. Think of China, now the world's second largest economy with an outsized influence throughout the region. Unfortunately we also have to think of North Korea, a tinderbox that can provoke and destabilize. With so many moving parts and different dynamics in the region we would be abdicating our global leadership role if we did not make Asia a top economic, political and diplomatic priority.

Influence in this region requires attention. It is essential to know the players, to understand the history, to recognize the tensions, and to appreciate the culture. I myself have traveled to China, Japan and South Korea. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to speak with Japanese Prime Minister Abe and members of the Diet. Thankfully, we have seen an uptick in interest as more congressional delegations visit Japan and other parts of Asia. But it is still far too few. Too many of my congressional colleagues – for whatever reason – don't or won't travel to that part of the world. That, really, is a mistake. These are among our major trading partners. Their geopolitical, environmental and energy decisions have an impact on every part of the world. Their security needs are tangible and real. This is a region still confronting its history, and that history continues to create conflict and cause strain. It is our job as lawmakers to augment relations and identify opportunities. Legislative exchanges and visits are crucial to understanding one another and to solving pressing issues and conflicts. Meeting not only their political but also their business, civic and military leaders will provide us with powerful insight essential to crafting our bilateral and regional relations throughout East Asia. With the president's pivot now in place, it is incumbent upon the rest of us to focus our attention as well.

And this is no mere academic matter. Before Congress now is a trade initiative that, if passed, can help us unlock some of the economic barriers that are keeping us from even better ties with Asia. I'm speaking specifically of the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation – also known as "fast track" – that will restore a key component of our trade policy that unfortunately expired in 2007. What TPA will do is give the president full authority to negotiate trade agreements that Congress must then approve or disapprove – no amendments or filibustering allowed – within ninety days. TPA will send a message to trading partners such as Japan that they can negotiate with us in good faith without worrying that a deal we have reached after painstaking months and years will then be rehashed and renegotiated in the halls of Congress. With TPA in place, Members of Congress will still have an opportunity to express their views and interests – explaining, for example, how a potential agreement will affect their constituents – but it will be done by speaking with our trade representatives before and during the negotiations and not after a deal is done. It's just far more rational and sensible to do it this way. But it requires us all to do our due diligence in advance rather than to nitpick it afterward.

"Saying we're pivoting to Asia is a good first step, but talking a good game isn't enough. We have to back it up with results."

It's no secret that members of my party in Congress don't agree much with the president on most issues, but in this case we are on the same page. The problem is with some in his own party. After the president called for passage of TPA in his State of the Union address earlier this year, it was the Democratic leaders in both the House and Senate who said it wasn't going to happen. As I understand it, some fear that any trade agreement will compromise our environmental, labor, and food safety laws, others want to protect their local industries, and others still claim a bitter aftertaste from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which to them didn't do what it was supposed to do. I am certainly all in favor of upholding our standards and laws and promoting U.S. industry – that should be a basic negotiating principle for our trade representatives. But trade is not a game where we can play by our rules and our rules alone. It's not a matter of this constituency or that nation getting the better end of a deal. Rather, it's about brokering a fair and equitable deal that is best for our country and our trading partners going forth. We should have a stake in their success just as they should have a stake in ours. It must be good for all sides. TPA simply gives our

negotiators the assurance that if they reach such a deal it cannot be renegotiated all over again in the House or Senate chambers.

In terms of our relations with Asia, TPA is far more than a procedural bill dealing with congressional consent. It is really a precondition to achieving a larger goal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is a comprehensive trade pact that will open the Pacific corridor to unprecedented commerce benefiting all of our nations. To put it simply, without TPA we will not have TPP. And without TPP, our economic influence in the region may shrink and we will likely see an alternative far worse: the Chinese will step in to fill the void. If we don't seize the opportunity and the Chinese do, they will negotiate their own trade deals with the goal of dominating commerce in East Asia. That is not an outcome in anyone's best interests.

In fact the worst course of action today would be to dither on TPA and to deemphasize the TPP negotiations. China right now is a bit beleaguered by domestic troubles – widespread corruption, environmental problems, and ham-handed attempts to control social media. And that may be why they are saber-rattling these days and acting more aggressively on such issues as the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and their nine-dash line claim of jurisdiction over parts of the South China Sea. Stirring up international issues is a proven way to distract people from their domestic difficulties. China also seems to have overreacted to Japan's reinterpretation of its constitution to allow for the right of collective self-defense, meaning the Japanese military can now work alongside other countries – most visibly the U.S. – on joint security efforts to protect their allies. Now I personally believe the Chinese are pragmatic, and while they will push these issues as far as they can and take every opportunity to press their advantage, they will not cross any line of provocation. But I also don't think they would be stirring things up as much if the United States were more fully engaged in the region. And one of the best ways to accomplish that is to move ahead with TPA and TPP. Saying we're pivoting to Asia is a good first step, but talking a good game isn't enough. We have to back it up with results.

Now I prefer to be an optimist. Yes, I realize there are interests in this country that don't support free trade. It's the same in Japan as well – Diet members have told me about local farmers who fiercely resist TPP because it would open them up to American competition. And for years politicians in every country and every party and every legislative body have used trade issues to score points with their constituents. Even some of my own friends in Congress haven't been as helpful as I would like. But the upside to TPP is clear. It will break down barriers and facilitate the type of close economic and security ties that will foster balance and

stability in the region. Not all of our East Asian allies get along so well, but it is our job to lead and build bonds of mutual interest, and a strong trade agreement will help position us even better to make that happen.

When I first arrived in Congress, a colleague, Representative David Dreier, noticed my support for free trade and asked me to join a free trade working group that was pushing for trade deals with Colombia, South Korea and Panama. At first I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to roll up my sleeves immediately in Congress and get real work done on an issue of vital importance, though I wondered if it was just another Washington waste of time because they had been working on those deals seemingly forever. But we gathered Democrats and Republicans, we found common ground, and we got the agreements passed. As one of 535 Members of Congress, I certainly can't will my way on TPA and TPP. But as I saw with the free trade deals with Colombia, South Korea and Panama, I know there are many others – a majority – who share these views. I am confident that if we do the work and build the coalition, progress and reason will prevail. And the benefit that will accrue to our country and to our allies will be invaluable.

Congressman Billy Long serves as the Republican House Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. A native of southwest Missouri, Rep. Long has represented Missouri's 7th District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2011 and serves on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. He is a member of three critical Energy and Commerce Subcommittees: Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade; Communications and Technology; and Oversight and Investigations.

Admiral Dennis Blair

Japan's International Challenge

After nearly two decades of economic and security policy stagnation, Japan's leaders have been quite clear-eyed in recognizing the geopolitical complexities and realities of our contemporary world, and they have responded with an appropriate military and national security strategy to deal with the challenges they face and the significant role they must play in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, support from potential partners for their new strategy has been undermined in part by statements from senior government officials about their national history that seem misguided, insensitive and even dangerous. For Japan to achieve the "'Proactive Contribution to Peace' based on the principle of international cooperation" called for in its National Security Strategy, it needs to convince its potential partners that it understands and regrets the chapter of its history when it conquered much of East Asia and took brutal actions against many of the soldiers it captured and the civilians it ruled.

Japan's self-defense capabilities have always been excellent. I spent much of my own military career in the Asia-Pacific region and was commander of the U.S. Pacific Command a little more than a decade ago. I operated with a capable, well-maintained Japanese self-defense force that had excellent tactical skills and an ability to carry out military operations with professionalism and precision. They were extremely well prepared for their Cold War missions of defending their territory against an attack from the Soviet Union.

However, since the end of the Cold War in 1990, security challenges for developed countries from Europe to North America to East Asia have become less predictable and more complex. They require innovative thinking, adaptation, and flexibility. The constitutional restrictions on the use of its armed forces have severely limited Japan's ability to support its interests, which generally correspond to America's. Japan raised a generation of defense officials and military officers who were militarily capable but constrained by legalistic thinking in making

operational decisions. Confronted by a security challenge, such as supporting a peacekeeping operation in East Timor or joining the international coalition after 9/11, Japanese military leaders first had to deal with legal ambiguities before they could proceed with military planning.

"To think that other countries will hear only Japan's arguments that changes in its national security posture simply reflect a response to current realities – and not connect those changes to other concerns, past or present – is to misunderstand the power of symbolism and to misread the imperatives of public diplomacy."

During the Cold War, the overriding mission of defending Japan against the Soviet Union provided clear political guidance for military planners. But times have changed. Security challenges are far more complex today, and Japan no longer has the luxury of parsing each threat for its constitutional implications. Japan's response to North Korea's bellicosity and China's ambitions in the East and South China Seas requires flexible planning based on clear political and military guidance. Japanese military contributions are needed for United Nations peacekeeping missions, disaster relief, and humanitarian operations. Adaptability and agility in the service of Japan's own interests and those of its allies are necessary for both national and regional security.

And it is precisely these qualities – improved military adaptability and agility – that the national security reforms Japan has instituted in recent years have produced. In 2006, Japan elevated what was then its Japanese Defense Agency to a cabinet-level Ministry of Defense, allowing it greater involvement in national decisions. Last year the Diet approved the formation of a National Security Council to coordinate defense policies across government agencies. Also last year, the government adopted a new national security strategy that outlined a more proactive and comprehensive approach to Japan's defense needs based on its alliance with the United States as well as a realistic appreciation of both threats and opportunities. Perhaps most important, Japan reinterpreted its constitution this year and qualified its self-imposed prohibition on exercising the right to collective self-defense. Japan is moving towards a 21st century national security posture consistent with the defense needs and regional responsibilities of a peaceful yet vigilant nation.

For Japan to develop the military capability of a normal nation, however, it will need full support and cooperation both from its traditional ally, the United States,

and from its logical potential security partners in the region – The Republic of Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, Australia, other countries in Southeast and South Asia, and a range of fellow members of the United Nations. Yet it is the potential support and cooperation from these countries that is jeopardized by statements and actions of some senior Japanese government officials. Potential partners are worried about the undercurrents of statements these leaders make. Even as the country takes useful steps to enhance its own security and that of the region due to changed circumstances, the sentiments expressed by some of Japan's leaders suggest otherwise.

It can be argued that Japan – like any nation – has every right to correct the historical record and develop a national narrative that doesn't portray its past as wholly negative. After all, Japan has repeatedly apologized and expressed remorse for its war crimes and mistreatment of so many. And thus it is wrong to propose any link between Japan's views of its history of three-and-a-half generations ago and its new defense and national security strategy.

Those who think this way in Japan have a point. However, they are missing something fundamental about international politics and communication, for that is a realm where logic and reason mix with history, ambition, psychology, and national identity. Japanese leaders should understand those interconnections because they largely drive the visits they make to Yasukuni Shrine. For other countries, these visits demonstrate insensitivity toward the history, psychology, and national identity of the countries where Japanese militarism had the worst consequences. To think that other countries will hear only Japan's arguments that changes in its national security posture simply reflect a response to current realities – and not connect those changes to other concerns, past or present – is to misunderstand the power of symbolism and to misread the imperatives of public diplomacy.

It is certainly possible for Japan to show how its new military approach has nothing to do with any revanchist impulses. But it will require far greater willingness by Japan to deal publicly with the dark sides of its history. Other countries hope that Japan will demonstrate a heartfelt reckoning with its past. Yet too often what they hear from Japan tends to be overly legalistic, as when they apologize to South Korean "comfort women," but then qualify their contrition by asserting that other countries' militaries brutalized women in the same way and contest the degree of coercion by the Japanese army, or when they show remorse for the Nanking massacre but then quibble over the numbers killed. The Japanese ask rhetorically how many times they need to apologize for this history, and the answer is something they don't want to hear: many more times.

Paying reparations or making an apology is never enough on its own, and any country that has done harm to its own people or those of other countries must show ongoing remorse in a variety of ways. In Germany, responsibility for the country's historical crimes is encoded in its monuments, politics, education, and law. In the United States, we constantly engage in public and political – often wrenching – dialogue about our enslavement of Africans, devastation of Native Americans, and internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. But in Japan one doesn't hear such public soul-searching about its history.

That's not to say individual Japanese do not privately discuss and reflect on their nation's past. They certainly do, and personally I've been privileged to hear it. But the tendency of Japanese culture is to keep these matters private, to maintain appearances and hide behind rituals. Public discourse on such sensitive topics is not a Japanese custom. To me, as a great admirer of Japan, there is a certain Shakespearean poignancy in seeing how Japan's intentions are so often misunderstood precisely because its culture prevents these issues from being discussed in public.

My hope is that Japan can find a way to begin this public conversation, to teach it in schools, to engage thought leaders and educators and journalists in a national discussion that will help the country fully come to terms with its history. Nor is this important merely for public diplomacy reasons; it is good for Japan's own sense of nationhood and history. And when Japan begins that conversation, other countries will take notice. They will recognize that Japan truly does understand the impact of its history, of the suffering of others at its hands. And they will better understand that Japan's security changes – far from reflecting a return to the militarism of its past – constitute a rational and necessary approach to meeting the country's current and future national security challenges.

Admiral Dennis Blair is the Chairman of the Board of Sasakawa Peace Foundation, USA, a think-tank devoted to US-Japan relations. From January 2009 to May 2010, he served as U.S. Director of National Intelligence, where he led 16 national intelligence agencies and provided integrated intelligence support to the President, Congress and operations in the field. Prior to his retirement from the Navy in 2002, Admiral Blair served as Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, the largest of the combatant commands. During his 34-year Navy career, Admiral Blair served on guided missile destroyers in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

Ms. Junko Chano

Strengthening the Bonds: Japan, the United States, and the Power of Communication

It is important to understand why Japan sees its relationship with the United States as so profoundly vital and special. And it goes far beyond America's status as the most powerful and influential nation in our global community. One has to go back nearly seven decades, when our nation was vanquished, our economy was shattered, and our people desperately sought a political stability that would secure them the rights and freedoms we had been denied during the war. What the United States did back then was to open itself to a nation with whom it had been at war only months before. It helped us rebuild our institutions, our economy, and our society in a way consistent with our traditions but grounded in the principles that the United States had come to represent. Strategically it made sense for America, which sought and needed a partner in a region where communism had established a foothold. But it also spoke to a fundamental American decency, one that truly believed in – and acted on – the values of individual rights and a constitutional democracy. And born out of that moment in history has been a thriving alliance between two nations that weaves together our political, economic, regional, and strategic interests. Call it an international success story in a world that too often lacks them.

What we have also found in this friendship is how much our two cultures share with each other. We were early adopters of the economic and cultural modernization the U.S. pioneered, exemplified not only in such consumer products as cars and electronics but also in a general openness to new ideas and initiatives. Though at first blush many may see cultural dissimilarities based on our different histories, languages and customs, to the Japanese people our common aspirations, way of life and cultural preferences are far more similar than any surface differences. Ask Japanese citizens which country's values they share and most will say the United States.

Given these strong ties, it has been more than a little troubling to see that Japan may not be as high an international priority for the United States as it was in

the recent past. For example, we have the third largest economy in the world, we are among the international innovators in electronics and consumer goods, and we play a pivotal role in the security of our region, yet we see American thought leaders and foreign policy experts writing white papers and articles about Asia that focus primarily on China with mostly peripheral references to Japan. We see the American rebalance toward the Pacific region, and we know that it cannot happen without Japan, yet we also see how little Japan is highlighted in the American political dialogue on this issue. Think back only two decades and much of the discussion about not only Asia but global economic matters involved Japan. Now yes, our economic engine was running in overdrive back then, but we remain an economic powerhouse by any rational analysis today. So this relative inattention touches a nerve in Japan, not because we see any erosion in our special relationship with the United States but because to us what the United States says and emphasizes represents the global perspective. From our vantage point, Japan ought not to be an afterthought or a secondary consideration. That seems all out of proportion to the role we do play and want to play as a key partner with the United States in our region and around the world.

"To the Japanese people our common aspirations, way of life and cultural preferences are far more similar than any surface differences. Ask Japanese citizens which country's values they share and most will say the United States."

Perhaps one obstacle is communication. Perhaps the Japanese have not been quite effective in expressing ourselves and explaining our outlook. As much as our two nations share cultural values, our communication styles most definitely diverge. Americans tend to be more direct – the opposite of most Japanese, whose interactions tend to build on a foundation of patience and trust. So in a global dialogue of immediate impressions, the more indirect Japanese style may leave some wondering what point we are trying to make if we do not make it immediately. Those familiar with Japan know that we open up and often give people even more than they need once we establish a relationship. But we are living in an impatient world made even more so by media demands that expect reactions and decisions within moments of hearing the news.

It is why the Sasakawa Peace Foundation has made the strengthening and opening of communication channels between our two countries a top priority. Since

"For two nations that share so much, it is not enough to know we are partners in the abstract; there is no substitute for the real and personal conversations and experiences that clarify and humanize."

2008 we have supported a series of Japan-U.S. exchanges that bring together legislators, opinion leaders, policymakers, experts, scholars, and government officials for the types of extended conversations and cultural exposure that lead to further understanding and interchange. For two nations that share so much, it is not enough to know we are partners in the abstract; there is no substitute for the real and personal conversations and experiences that clarify and humanize. We were inspired by the close relationship in the 1980s and 1990s between then-Senator Bill Bradley and the late Diet Member Motoo Shiina, whose ongoing conversations and dialogue helped defuse various misunderstandings that could have strained relations between our two nations. Politics and diplomacy are often built on nuance, and there is no better way to interpret and appreciate nuance than to have the type of exposure with each other built on personal contact and interaction. Nor are these exchanges ends in themselves. The conversations continue even after the lawmakers and officials return to their home countries, and they create a ripple effect in which those who have participated now encourage others to do the same, which then multiplies the power and influence of each exchange initiative.

Beyond the mutual awareness and understanding these exchanges establish, we each can become wiser about the world from the insights of one other. Japan sits at the locus of the Asia-Pacific region and navigates the political and economic swells with far greater immediacy than what the United States typically encounters. That knowledge can be of considerable help to U.S. decision-makers particularly as America reaches across the Pacific and seeks out cooperation and partnership with the nations of our region. Dialogue can also help place some transitory tensions and concerns in a far greater context than their heated portrayal in the media. We also can learn about the domestic challenges we share and how each country is attempting to deal with them. Both Japan and the United States have large cohorts of aging citizens who require ongoing care and support. How each of us structures our health care, social welfare and elder care systems can provide valuable insight and perspective. Japan, for example, has been considering the option of inviting foreign workers to help us take care of our elderly particularly as more and more Japanese women join the workforce. Japan has little experience with immigration, even in small

or incremental steps, and fear of the unknown can sometimes dominate our political discussion on whether to open our nation's doors. Learning more about the American immigration experience could seed our judgment on this issue.

The bottom line is that our two nations are partners with common values and interests. Ours should be a relationship of innovation and problem-solving and a shared strategic vision. But we have to remain close, and not only when our immediate needs come into play. It is a special relationship, and we must do everything possible to treat it that way.

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Speaker J. Dennis Hastert

The Ties that Bind: Building an Even Stronger U.S.-Japan Relationship

It is a truism of international politics: relations between two friendly nations are built on a foundation of shared economic and security interests. But as necessary as these building blocks may be, they are not wholly sufficient. Strong ties rest not only on mutual need but also on mutual understanding. Foremost, of course, is recognizing the values and histories that different nations share, but equally important is the effort we make to accept our differences and build resilient bonds of mutual respect. Such is especially the case with our relationship with Japan, a vital ally and friend whose culture may be different but whose values and interests align with our most essential national principles.

I had the privilege of spending a formative part of my own life in Japan – it was 1965 when I had just graduated from college and I participated in a People to People program sponsored by the International YMCA. We were 17 American and 17 Japanese students who lived for two months in a small village in Osaka Prefecture, and trust me, when you're a group of young people cloistered in the countryside, you get to know a lot about each other. No question we shared many of the same hopes and aspirations – for peace and prosperity and societies grounded in strong families and hard work.

But our differences were apparent as well. America tends to be an "I" culture built on the rugged individualism encoded into our history, whereas Japan is more of a "we" culture where the actions of one are measured against their impact on others. Conversations in America often get right to the point, whereas in Japan they are more indirect and based on establishing trust. I think of how we in the United States begin a speech – with a story about ourselves designed to bond with our audience – while in Japan a speaker begins with an apology, "sumimasen," as if to express humility that one is about to request the attention of others. That was an impressionable experience for a young college graduate, but it taught me a lesson that has become a guiding north star in my work and life: embrace the challenge of navigating between cultures because that is the only way to build the strongest possible bridges of confidence and trust between nations and peoples.

There is no question that our two nations are intertwined. Our paths have joined and at times crossed throughout history, and today we are stronger both economically and culturally because of each other. The Census counts 1.3 million Americans of Japanese descent, and among them are leaders in politics, business, education, the arts, and the military. We drive Hondas, Toyotas, and Nissans, and in our homes we enjoy electronics from Sony, Toshiba, and Panasonic among so many others. Clearly we have ties that bind.

But I have to think we could do even more. From my perspective as a former American legislator, I understand why most Members of Congress keep their political focus at home, why most demur from internationalism. But Japan is the third largest economy in the world, it is a linchpin of security in the Pacific Rim, it is a trendsetter in media and technology, and its history is entwined with our own. Engaging Japan more wholly is not just a matter of maximizing our national or economic interest but also a matter of appreciating a country whose vision and vitality are influencing our own and shaping the world. If we want to be global citizens – which we say we do – we must resist the default temptation of cultural complacency and isolationism.

"Our paths have joined and at times crossed throughout history, and today we are stronger both economically and culturally because of each other."

Personally I strongly support both cultural and legislative exchanges. Do more to bring our students together because the impact is lifelong and broadening – I can attest to that. And do more to bring our legislators together – I can attest to the value of that as well. We must view congressional delegations that visit Japan and Diet Members who visit America not as expenditures but as investments that allow us to see the world not just from our own context but from each other's as well. Trust me, it's both illuminating and eye-opening to get up at four in the morning and go to the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo. You just see people in a way that no briefing paper or research study will teach you.

The more we interact, the more we will better understand each other's motives and needs. Take the recent controversy over Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. As we know all too well, symbolism steeped in history and conflict can carry powerful and cogent messages, and yes, making a high-profile visit to a shrine that houses the spirits of war criminals was deeply impolitic and insensitive

to other countries like our own who suffered during the war. Yet it is a mistake to read too much into what the Prime Minister did, to view it as a conscious insult or a sign of resurgent nationalism. It may well be that the Prime Minister simply sought to give solace to those whose brothers or fathers or husbands lost their lives in war – much as we do in every country where we all build shrines to the fallen. Whatever a country did during a war, people still grieve their loved ones, and no one should politicize grief. Perhaps Prime Minister Abe misread or disregarded the cultural sensitivities involved, but perhaps our own reaction did the same. Greater cultural awareness will help all of us avoid the misunderstandings that distract us and set us back.

Greater insight into Japan's unique security and economic needs can also help us advance the geopolitical interests we share. Japan is a mainstay of stability in Asia, and the state of our relations with Japan sends a signal to other countries in the region. How we coordinate with Japan also influences the way China calibrates its own regional and global interests. Let's be honest with ourselves: in terms of any power balance in Asia, we cannot match China's hard power man-for-man and resource-for-resource, so our alternative is to establish an economic interdependence by leveraging the power of foreign investments and trade. For all the tough rhetoric that China throws at Taiwan, the reality is that Taiwan invests heavily right across the Taiwan Strait in China's Fujian Province, and China is not about to jeopardize its dependence on Taiwanese capital for the sake of a Pyrrhic military victory. Call it coexistence through capital, but that is a far better model for détente with China than any saber rattling or bellicosity. All of us – the United States, Japan, China, and all of our Asian friends – will benefit. And an economically strong Japan is central to making it work.

Certainly Japan's involvement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks is an important step forward in advancing the economic ties between our two countries and opening up markets throughout the region. As we all know, TPP is not a friction-free process – U.S. environmental, labor, and industry groups have their concerns, and in Japan we face a system that has long privileged and protected certain sectors of the economy, agriculture in particular but also automobiles and other goods.

But Fukushima changed the calculus in Japan. Energy is and must be a priority, and renewables supply only a sliver of what Japan needs. So all eyes are on natural gas, and that is where America can play a significant role. Currently Japan pays a premium for the gas it imports, and the reason is that Japan continues to place restrictions on commodities – as it does with other goods – and thus does not

have a market system conducive to stable pricing and fixed costs. That is where TPP can help – by developing markets that meet not just Japan's interests but our mutual interests.

If we think through the logic, an economically strong Japan is vital to a peaceful Pacific Rim, Japan's long-term economic stability rests on dependable and affordable energy, and getting dependable and affordable energy requires more open markets. But if logic were the only factor involved, we would have an agreement in place. It's why I put such an emphasis on cultural understanding, because at root we must recognize not just our policy differences but the underlying worldviews that give rise to them. We all have a stake in getting it right. Because if we don't, the alternative might not be what's best for either of our two countries.

Speaker J. Dennis Hastert serves as Honorary Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. From January 6, 1999, until January 3, 2007, Hastert was Speaker of the House of Representatives—the longest-serving Republican Speaker in history. He was first elected to the House in 1987 and served Illinois' 14th Congressional District. Hastert is currently a member of the public policy and law practice division at Dickstein Shapiro, LLC.

The Honorable Yoshimasa Hayashi

Taking the Long View of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

Our ties are strong, our values are compatible, our futures are intertwined – and to me, that best sums up the relationship between Japan and the United States. In Japan we take the long view of our alliance. Even when we are not always able to realize our common goals, we never doubt how enduring they are. There are times when our nations face political situations at home that can distract us from the work of our alliance. But never do we take that as a sign of any shortcoming in our relationship. The smart path is to accomplish what we can now and keep building for more work together when the circumstances are right.

So central is our alliance that we in Japan are highly attuned to the political dynamics and rhythms of our American ally. And because of that, we are realistic in terms of what we can do to advance our shared interests – and when we can do it. We understand, for example, that issues related to commerce, agriculture, and trade are dependent on both the White House and Congress, and given the differences between the two which will probably last throughout President Obama's term, some of the matters before us, such as TPP, may not reach any final resolution soon. At the same time, with the Obama administration's pivot toward Asia and our own move toward the right of collective self-defense, we are seeing increased opportunities to build greater cooperation on security and defense issues. As friends we should seize the openings and never let any short-term challenges or delays color the bond between us.

Even if we don't see major progress on the economic and trade front right now, it doesn't mean that our two nations aren't moving toward greater cooperation in these areas. Japan recognizes, for example, that agricultural reform is an imperative for our economic growth and trade relations, and the fact that it is a major issue in our TPP talks gives our reform effort a little more wind at the back. Part of our task at home is to address our own internal politics, particularly some of the domestic interests that push for greater government protection and subsidies for agricultural products. In Japan, only ten percent of our total farmland is abundant, the average age of our farmers is 66 years old, and while our people

are eating only half the rice they did fifty years ago, we have not adapted our agricultural production to a changing market. Our reform effort is targeted at each of these issues with the singular goal of revitalizing this sector. So as we move ahead on these challenges, we are confident that they will result in a more competitive and innovative agricultural industry which will then help us eliminate some of the obstacles to agreement on TPP.

Because the whole of our relationship with the United States is far greater than the sum of any protocols and negotiations, it is important to keep top of mind the key role that America plays in the Asia-Pacific region. Asia is not like Europe – we are not creating a European Union. Collectively we may have the fastest growing economic region in the world, but our nations are diverse with different agendas, divergent systems, and historical memories that still need attention and healing. From our vantage point in Japan, we understand that the fate of our region is inextricably linked to our friend across the Pacific – the United States – so perhaps unlike the EU we consider our region inclusive of the United States and not simply an essential ally on the other side of an ocean. Indeed the American presence in Asia, with its alliances with Japan and South Korea, has been a cornerstone of security and stability in our region. And the economic prosperity we see in Asia today is based on that security and stability. So the fact that Japan and the United States are forging new security ties and increasing our high level dialogue is essential to the future of region. As two of the principal Asia-Pacific nations, the more we advance our mutual security the better off our region will be.

"…the American presence in Asia, with its alliances with Japan and South Korea, has been a cornerstone of security and stability in our region. And the economic prosperity we see in Asia today is based on that security and stability."

Both the United States and Japan know that our regional stability and security will only improve if we can find a way to build greater trust and understanding between Japan and South Korea. We in Japan recognize how deep-rooted the problem is. For South Korea, the "comfort women" issue touches very sensitive historical nerves. We might like to think that the 1993 Kono Statement settled the issue, but as sincere as our apology is, we also know that memory cannot be allayed by any single statement of regret. So perhaps it is simply better – and in all of our interests – that we build trust step-by-step, that we try to avoid diving into the easily politicized historical issues and instead focus on more discrete and

achievable undertakings on the security side. And through this process, we will not only improve our mutual security but also show our good faith as partners, which can only result in a better relationship. Here the United States can play a pivotal and constructive role. America has strong relations with both Japan and South Korea, but the link missing in this triad is the one between Japan and South Korea. Helping to identify those areas that bring us together will in the long run build stronger bonds that will serve us all.

Perhaps less direct but still important is what the United States can do to smooth our relations with China, which is essential for regional stability. The U.S. clearly understands this geopolitical dynamic and supports greater ties. We are obviously disappointed to hear some of the overheated rhetoric about our history that both China and South Korea are directing toward Japan, but we also realize that harsh words are often a product of frayed relations. So consider how improved relations with China might impact our region. There would be fewer points of contention. High level discussions could proceed without an overlay of historical tensions. We might find more common ground on the North Korean situation. And since Seoul and Beijing are forging bonds, better ties with China could help to soften the atmosphere between Japan and South Korea. Again, it would be in all of our interests.

At the root of all international relations is better understanding between nations. Earlier in my career I was privileged to serve as an intern in the office of Senator William Roth, and in that position I was involved in the establishment of the Mansfield Fellowship, which has become an extremely successful exchange program between Japan and the United States. Each year the fellowship program selects five to ten Americans from the U.S. legislative and executive branches who then spend their first year in intensive Japanese language and cultural studies and their second year in Japan working full-time alongside their Japanese counterparts in a government ministry such as Finance or Defense. For all of my political and government work over the years, I gain considerable satisfaction seeing the bridge that this fellowship builds between our two nations every year.

And it is an important bridge. Our countries are alike in so many ways, but appreciating how we are both similar and different is essential to ensuring that our bond is built on understanding and not derailed by misunderstanding. For example, both of our nations are democracies, but our legislative systems differ in fundamental ways, something I saw first-hand during my time on Senator Roth's staff. In our system, laws are built on precedent. Think of our basic legal code as similar to the first story of a building. When making new laws, they are

like new stories that must be fashioned in a way to fit upon the first story. If a new bill does not conform to existing law, it would have to be modified until it does. In the United States, however, new legislation essentially overrules existing laws. Because each new idea does not have to build on what preceded it, one will find far more bills introduced in the U.S. Congress than in the Japanese Diet. So in Japan, more than 90 percent of bills introduced to the floor will be enacted, whereas in the United States it may be as little as two or three percent. That is why any American stakeholder looking at Japanese politics must take very seriously every bill our Diet Members introduce, whereas a Japanese official looking at American lawmaking must decode the politics of a bill to see if it has any chance to pass. If we don't understand the differences, we might misunderstand the consequences.

Yoshimasa Hayashi has been a member of the House of Councillors in the Japanese Diet since 1995. A member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Hayashi served in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries from December 2012 until September 2014. He was also Minister of Defense in Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's cabinet in 2008. Early in his career, Hayashi worked as a staffer for U.S. Representative Stephen L. Neal and U.S. Senator William V. Roth, Jr. in Washington, DC.

In the end, there are many pillars supporting the U.S.-Japan relationship, and we must constantly seize every opportunity to advance our common goals of security and national well-being. But relations between two friends are never solely transactional – they are personal. Lawmakers and policymakers in each country have so many questions. They read about the politics in the news and wonder if these are short-term phenomena or long-term trends. Greater knowledge creates greater understanding. The more exchanges we create, the more we stimulate interest among this next generation, the more we engage leaders in academia, government, and the private sector – that really is the glue of a thriving alliance. And it will nourish our partnership and enable us to build a better region and better world in the years ahead.

Secretary Norman Y. Mineta

Relations Between the United States and Japan: Diplomatic, Economic, and Deeply Personal

For those of us who are Americans of Japanese ancestry, the relationship between our two countries is and always has been personal – and it hasn't always been by choice. We have long been on the whipping tail of these relations, going up and down depending on the good and the bad, and when relations sour we are like a raw nerve that feels it most. It's a complex phenomenon driven by a sad and tragic war, a history of nativism in the United States, and a cultural dissimilarity that gets magnified at times by what many believe to be Japan's insularity, insecurity, and excessive sense of pride. So the process of stabilizing and normalizing relations – making them more like the U.S. bond with Britain, for example – is not just an academic or diplomatic matter for us. It is essential to our wellbeing.

Every American of Japanese descent must live to some extent with our nation's unfortunate history of harsh and restrictive laws against Japanese immigrants. For years our ancestors were denied citizenship simply because of their ethnicity. States up and down the West Coast passed what were known as alien land laws, which prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" – in practice that meant Japanese immigrants – from buying and owning property. Laws like that were designed to create an inhospitable climate and discourage immigration, and when these didn't get the job done Congress passed the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act, which reduced Japanese immigration to a trickle, at most 100 to 200 per year.

As a child growing up in California – and as a natural born citizen – these laws and the motivation behind them left a powerful imprint. I remember how my parents were unable to buy property to build a home. I remember as a 10-year-old looking at big placards posted around town informing us of our evacuation and internment which said, "Attention: All those of Japanese ancestry, Aliens and Non-Aliens" – deeming those of us who were citizens "non-aliens," not seeing us as the Americans we were. That's why I cherish the word "citizen" because my own government was not willing to accommodate me as a citizen. I remember when my brother, a 19-year old pre-med student at San Jose State, was sent a new draft

card that changed his classification from 1-A to 4-C, which meant "enemy alien." Our time at the Heart Mountain Internment Camp in Wyoming remains seared in my memory, as it does for all Japanese Americans who were forced by law from their lives and their homes. My father continued to believe in this country and secured his release from Heart Mountain to teach Japanese to U.S. Army soldiers at the University of Chicago under the Army Specialized Training Program. Yet for seven months the Army still denied permission for my mother and me to join him in Chicago.

Thankfully the postwar years challenged this culture of nativism and eventually the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act erased these odious laws from the books. And from the nadir of war, relations between our two countries have transformed into a partnership built on trade and common political values. But even in this more benign era, we Americans of Japanese descent feel the reverberations when relations aren't just right. Think back to the late 1980s when Japan's economic star was rising and Japanese investors were buying up iconic American properties such as the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and the Pebble Beach golf course. Yes, some thought leaders were praising the Japanese and saying we needed to emulate aspects of their economic model. But not far from the surface was the politics of envy, and the barbs directed at the Japanese were at times tinged with an ugliness that reminded many of the more unsavory moments in our history.

"Even with the strong alliance we have, it is in all of our interests to make it stronger, to minimize the insecurity and pride and build in far more of the balance and equipoise that characterize U.S. relations with many of our allies across the Atlantic."

The Japanese have not always been sympathetic to the plight of their brethren living in the United States. For years they considered that first generation who emigrated here – the Issei – as never-do-wells who couldn't cut it in Japan and left for the United States, and they transferred some of that contempt onto people like me – the Nisei, the second-generation Japanese Americans who were born here. That began to change in the second half of the last century, and over time the Japanese people and government gained a better understanding of the hardships and discrimination that Japanese Americans faced. But the fact that such attitudes were so prevalent speaks to a certain mindset in Japan that to me needs to be softened and changed.

Japan is an extraordinary country that has achieved breathtaking success since the end of World War II. Both economically and politically, it is a thriving nation rich with hard-work, inventiveness, and democratic values. Yet scratch below the surface and what one sees, to some extent, is an undercurrent of insecurity. For years Japan had the second largest economy in the world, yet rather than acting with the confidence and calm of an accomplished nation, the people and their leaders would wring their hands, constantly look over their shoulder at China, and decry the terrible fix they were in. Now they are number three in the world and it bothers them even more. And they are facing a demographic challenge with an aging and declining population, with some estimates suggesting that they may drop from 127 million today to 92 million in 2025.

My worry here is that instead of judiciously addressing their insularity and considering more open policies on immigration and women, Japan may overcompensate by doubling down on the sense of pride and nationalism that has intermittently influenced Japanese politics and culture over the years. It is certainly possible to see Prime Minister Abe's policies and actions this way. Consider his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine or his initiative to "reinterpret" the Japanese constitution in a way that slightly pivots away from its hitherto pacifism and no longer limits the military to self-defense from external attack. Yes, I do understand that the United States supports a revived Japanese military that can be supportive in security missions around the world. But to me this may be a bit shortsighted given that a major factor in our relations with Japan is not merely how our two countries interact but how Japan gets along with its immediate neighbors, particularly China and South Korea. And if these Abe initiatives lead to greater tensions, that is bound to affect our own relationships in the region. It would be unfortunate if Japan became a source of tensions rather than a partner in addressing them.

I often wonder if Japan appreciates how its pride and protectionism can at times be self-defeating. Consider, for example, Japan's approach to the Fukushima crisis, when they accepted some international help with the clean-up but resisted offers of technical assistance from anyone outside of Japan. Had they let down their pride a bit and invited in, say, American or French engineers with nuclear power experience, it might have significantly helped and sped up their remediation efforts. Only when they were on the verge of collapse and utter disorganization did they accept our help.

Or think of their inspection requirement for every foreign vehicle imported into Japan. It's not that the Japanese import many foreign cars from us – their streets are narrow and their cars are right-hand drive. But every single automobile that arrives in Japan must sit in the Yokohama port awaiting a detailed inspection.

And by that I don't mean just safety inspections but rather a detailed examination that even includes using calipers to measure the distance between the hood and the fender. If the U.S. had such a policy, ships loaded with cars would be backed up from Los Angeles to Yokohama. But we've never gone to such extremes, even when our two nations were dealing with trade and tariff issues. Yes, the U.S. does inspections, but these are random checks, and for the most part we rely on the Japanese manufacturers to certify that their cars meet our standards.

Secretary Norman Y. Mineta serves as Honorary Co-Chair of The Congressional Study Group on Japan. For almost 30 years, Mineta represented San Jose, California—first on the City Council, then as mayor and later as a member of the U.S. Congress from 1975 to 1995. In 2000, President Bill Clinton appointed Mineta Secretary of Commerce. President George W. Bush then appointed him Secretary of Transportation in 2001, where he served until 2006. A recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, he currently serves as President and CEO of Mineta and Associates, LLC.

And that's the point: Japan needs to trust more and protect less. Even with the strong alliance we have, it is in all of our interests to make it stronger, to minimize the insecurity and pride and build in far more of the balance and equipoise that characterize U.S. relations with many of our allies across the Atlantic. Certainly we should do more to promote cultural exchange and understanding – sister city programs have been very successful over the years. And it also requires the utmost candor and transparency among policy-makers and negotiators, whose dialogue, agreements, and public statements can help build even more openness between our two countries. As Secretary of Commerce I saw how determined efforts can yield positive results – in aviation and fisheries, for example. But I also saw how restrictive and protectionist policies can not only hinder commerce but send a message of defensiveness as well. And today we see how actions that Japanese leaders take in the name of patriotism can seem to others as prideful and even confrontational, leading to unnecessary tensions that magnify rather than mitigate international issues.

We Americans of Japanese ancestry have long held our own nation accountable for some of the ugliness that has infected our own lives and influenced American relations overseas. I can only ask my brothers and sisters in Japan to examine how some of their assumptions and attitudes contribute to obstacles in what should be one of the strongest, most trusting, and most resilient of international partnerships.

The Honorable Akihisa Nagashima

Japan's Three Challenges

Nothing is more vital to maintaining peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region than the health and wellbeing of Japan's relationship with the United States. Our two countries are trusted allies. We rely on each other to maintain regional stability. But we also know that our ties could be stronger. Our trade relations are incomplete and our regional alliances require more tensile strength. So our goal must be to build an economic and security partnership that is even more powerful, resilient, and enduring than what we have today. And this progress cannot come too soon. With the rise of China and the issues posed by Chinese economic, military, and territorial ambitions, the need for regional stability is even more essential today. How our two nations advance our relationship will go a long way toward determining the future alignment of our region.

From my vantage point in Japan, we face three central challenges in the years ahead that directly and indirectly influence our relations with the United States. First is the need to move ahead with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which will serve not only as a foundation for greater trade and investment between our two nations but also as a framework for economic order throughout the region. Second is to resolve the historical tensions among our natural allies, South Korea in particular, as a way to ensure that we collectively address the security concerns posed by China and North Korea. And third is to address our own aging population which can impact not only our economic wellbeing but also, by extension, the balance of power in our region.

Challenge one, TPP, is vital in a number of ways. It will surely open up new markets and opportunities for all of the nations involved, benefiting both our individual and regional economies. But trade is far more than simply the exchange of goods. After all, commerce between our countries has long been robust – the U.S. and Japan already constitute the largest markets for the national economies of our region. What makes TPP even more critical is that it will create a concrete mechanism to normalize and regulate trade and ensure that our markets remain as free and open as possible. As trading partners we face a number of complicated legal and

economic issues involving intellectual property, environmental standards, labor law, and overseas investments, so TPP will provide all of our nations with clear and settled processes to address our concerns without disrupting our commerce. Rather than viewing trade as a series of transactions between individual economies, TPP will help us build a stronger and far more durable regional economy. And whatever trade hurdles our two nations have faced in the past will now have a system in place to help resolve them. Both Japan and the United States have been champions of our region, so reaching agreement on TPP is in all of our interests.

"Rather than viewing trade as a series of transactions between individual economies, TPP will help us build a stronger and far more durable regional economy."

The problem, of course, is that our larger interests don't always align with our domestic politics. Both the United States and Japan feel tremendous pressure from key constituencies at home – most visibly the auto sector in the U.S. and the agricultural sector in Japan. But while some in Japan see TPP as a threat, I see it as an opportunity. Agriculture may be the most protected industry in Japan, and because of that we have done it a disservice because protecting an industry reduces incentives for innovation and competitiveness. With the average age of Japanese farmers now approaching 70 and demand for rice—their major crop—softening, the agricultural status quo is simply unsustainable.

What I hope is that TPP can serve as an impetus for us to make the structural reforms that in the long run will serve our nation well. So to me we have a unique opportunity to revitalize our agricultural economy. We can, for example, open the agricultural sector to allow participation from more private firms, which are largely excluded. We should also welcome new ideas, such as integrating more information technology into agricultural work. Look at the Netherlands, which despite being a relatively small country is now the second largest exporter of agricultural products worldwide after the United States. And they did it by introducing innovative technologies to monitor production and identify opportunities. It wasn't a choice for them – they did it to remain competitive. Reducing trade barriers can have the same positive effect here in Japan – to spur agricultural innovation and create a strong foundation necessary to compete with foreign producers. And while agriculture may be the most visible of our protected industries, it is symbolic of the overall issues confronting Japan's economy. My

hope is that the Abe administration will continue to resist the political pressures that for years have impeded reform. The stakes not only involve agriculture. It's about our long-term economic competitiveness and our ability to partner with the United States as leaders of a regional economic compact.

Challenge two involves security, and it's a multilayered problem. Without question, China's recent behavior, particularly in the South and East China Seas, poses a serious test for both our regional security and for Japan's individual security as well. That is why our constitutional reinterpretation recognizing the right to collective self-defense is fully appropriate. This is no exercise in militarism as the Chinese try to portray it, but rather a measured and realistic approach to maintaining regional peace and stability all within the framework of our alliance with the United States. The real reason for China's opposition is that they see it as an impediment to their own regional agenda.

The problem may be less China's objection than the pushback we are getting from South Korea. There should be no rational reason for the Koreans to oppose our collective security approach; in fact, if anything ever happens on the Korean peninsula, Japan will be a willing partner with the United States to defend South Korea. But Korea's opposition has far less to do with security and far more to do with history. What Prime Minister Abe has done, unfortunately and unnecessarily, is to fan these historical embers – with his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and his perceived backtracking on the comfort women issue – which in the process undermines his sensible security reform agenda. Nor is South Korea the only nation to speak out on these matters; it gives China an opening to cast Japan as the aggressive or insensitive country, and it also raises concerns among our friends in the United States.

"Symbolic gestures may not heal the pain of the past, but they can salve the wounds of the present."

From a regional perspective, one supported by the United States, improving relations with South Korea must be an urgent priority. Yet through his words and actions Prime Minister Abe has focused instead on relations with Australia, India, Russia, and even North Korea. But these should not be mutually exclusive. We can reach out to South Korea as well as to other countries simultaneously. And there is an honorable and dignified way to bridge this historical divide. Much the way Germany's chancellor kneeled down to honor the victims of the Warsaw

Ghetto Uprising in 1970, Prime Minister Abe could gather the women – only 54 remain alive – and by expressing his sorrow and sympathy he could restore their dignity, which is really all they seek. It would be a sign of respect, repentance, and reaching out.

Symbolic gestures may not heal the pain of the past, but they can salve the wounds of the present. And there are few Japanese leaders better positioned to do this than Prime Minister Abe, whose voice on this issue could reach many of the more conservative Japanese who might otherwise resist it. Just as President Nixon's vocal anti-communism gave him credibility for his opening to China, Prime Minister Abe's traditionalism can do the same if he offers this olive branch of history to South Korea. Now is it likely to happen? Probably not. Is it within the realm of the possible? Yes. Will it send a strong message to South Korea's President Park Geun-hye that our two nations can progress beyond the ghosts of our past? Certainly. Will it serve all of our security interests in the region? Most definitely.

Challenge three is the aging of our population, and while that may seem primarily a domestic matter, it has long-term economic and political consequences for our role in the Asia-Pacific region. In Japan we are united across the political spectrum in recognizing the seriousness of this problem. Looming labor shortages mean that we must provide more opportunities for women to work, and at the same time we must initiate aggressive policies to boost our birthrate. But even that may not be enough particularly in the short-term. Sustaining our economy with a shrinking labor force and the health care needs of the aged will stretch our resources and strain our economy.

To some, the answer is simple: immigration. But unlike the United States, contemporary Japan has no tradition of opening its arms to immigrants, and the social conflicts caused by large-scale immigration in Europe should give us pause before we propose or consider any major shift in policy. But perhaps there is a way to test it, to ease immigration into our political bloodstream and at the same time address our increasingly aging society. The idea is to open our doors to immigrants who can help our elderly by serving as caretakers. As more women head to work, elder care assumes a greater urgency in our society. There are many in neighboring countries – the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, for instance – who would willingly come to Japan on a temporary basis to do this work and earn a good income. It would be a win-win opportunity for them and for us. And if successful, it may open Japan to a measured inflow of skilled immigrants who – like immigrants everywhere – seek a better life in a new land.

There is precedent, but we have to look back to our ancient history when many came to Japan from the outside and created the Japan we have today. The Japan we imagine as a homogeneous society actually emerged from an amalgam of many different people. But that was long ago, and now we have a mindset that sees our perceived homogeneity as a virtue. If we can take some small steps today, that mindset may change and as a result we may invigorate our economy, address the consequences of our aging population, and cast a different image worldwide—one that illustrates the generous and welcoming spirit that characterizes our society internally but which the rest of the world often doesn't appreciate or see. How we proceed on this issue may well shape our status as a regional leader in the decades ahead.

Akihisa Nagashima has been a member of the House of Representatives in the Japanese Diet since 2003. A member of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), he represents Tokyo's 21st District and serves as Deputy Secretary General of the DPJ. Earlier in his career, Nagashima spent several years in the United States including time as a visiting scholar at Vanderbilt University from 1993 to 1995, as an Adjunct Senior Fellow in Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C. in 1999, and as a visiting scholar at the Center for East Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins University from 2000 to 2001.

Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae

From Reconciliation to Partnership: The U.S.-Japan Relationship

To gain perspective on the relationship between the United States and Japan, one must step back and take a longer view of the way our bond has evolved and grown over the years. Next year marks 70 years since the end of World War II, and in these seven decades our two nations have traveled a long journey together, from the embers of war to a partnership for peace. Reconciliation between adversaries is never easy, and in the aftermath of conflict wounds take time to heal. But with the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco and the accompanying security treaty between our nations, reconciliation moved step by step to collaboration and then to a friendship and alliance that has grown deeper and more genuine over the years. At first ours were nascent bonds of trust, not yet fully formed, but during the Cold War years it became increasingly clear to the United States that Japan was not merely a geopolitical and strategic ally but also a kindred country that shared the same democratic principles and fundamental commitment to free markets and human rights. Ours is a friendship sealed by common values and ideals.

To be sure, as with any alliance there can be ups and downs. After Japan emerged as an economic power in the 1980s, our two nations began to wrestle more over trade. We have each questioned whether Japan has been bearing enough of its own security and defense burden. When tensions have risen we've heard intemperate words thrown at the other from each of our countries. But the true test of a friendship is its resilience, and we have weathered these challenges always knowing that what unites us is far greater than any temporary divide. And as we enter what is arguably a new era with America's pivot toward Asia and China's rise as a global power, our partnership and alliance may be more critical than ever before. When President Obama visited Tokyo in 2014 and met with Prime Minister Abe, it was clear that they were looking not only at areas of cooperation between our two countries but also at opportunities for shared leadership to address regional and indeed global economic and security challenges. Our two nations have invested enormous confidence and trust in each other over the years. With the world now focused on the Asia-Pacific region, our friendship faces what may

be its moment of greatest consequence and opportunity. But that is why our shared history is so important. We have spent seven decades building up to this moment. By leading together we honor this history.

Preserving peace and security in our region remains the most vital work of our relationship today. No one expects a world of complacency and calm, but the stakes seem especially high now as we watch an unstable North Korea with its nuclear threat and see China flexing its maritime muscle and expressing territorial ambitions. Maintaining stability is always a complex process, one that requires the type of careful planning and preparation that can stave off any imprudent moves which might reverberate in ways we don't want. So we are grateful that the U.S.-Japan bilateral security alliance is carefully designed to meet the challenges we face. It is substantial, operational, strategic, and fully grounded in joint exercises and planning, and with such a foundation we are prepared for any and all contingencies that could arise. It is, in short, the anchor of security in the Asia-Pacific region. And both of our nations recognize its value. In Japan we are ready for self-defense if such a situation should arise, but we are comforted knowing that the United States is there at our side. And the U.S. knows as well that if it did not have a friend and ally like Japan in the region, it would be far more challenging to deploy troops and maintain a forward presence. We should never lose sight of how essential this alliance is to both of us.

"With the world now focused on the Asia-Pacific region, our friendship faces what may be its moment of greatest consequence and opportunity."

Our two nations are also close enough to appreciate that the strategic side of an alliance is never static, that circumstances sometimes require minor adjustments and change, that we must always be attuned to each other's domestic political concerns. In Japan, we very much welcome how the American administration and Congress have shown strong support for the constitutional reinterpretation allowing for our right to collective self-defense. This is part of our ongoing effort to create a new security framework based on a more proactive peacemaking policy, and both of our countries recognize that it represents an important modification that will strengthen our bilateral alliance and provide reassurance that an America engaged in every part of the world has a thoroughly dependable partner in the Asia-Pacific region. Now yes, some have tried to portray it as a buildup that represents a new and possibly more aggressive posture for Japan, but the United States properly understands it as nothing more than a way for us to make greater contributions to regional and global security and peace.

We are also working closely together on an issue of great importance to our two countries and of considerable sensitivity in Japan: the realignment of U.S. forces in the region and the relocation of the Futenma Air Station to a site in Okinawa that will be far less disruptive to the people who live there. There are many complex factors involved that require a great deal of mutual collaboration. One is the need to gain support and understanding from the people of Okinawa, some of whom either resist change or prefer a total withdrawal of American troops – both Japanese political parties and the government must speak with a united voice on this issue. Another is setting in motion a process to decrease the American military footprint in Japan and move some Marines to Guam without disrupting our strategic and security operations. A third is gaining the financial backing from both of our countries to make these relocations possible, which requires the support of Congress and more bilateral dialogue and understanding between lawmakers of our two countries.

We also know that the U.S. would like us to secure and improve relations with South Korea, and that is certainly a major priority of ours. South Korea is and has been a very important neighbor to Japan, but we also know that building bridges over the choppy waters of history can require time, patience, and ongoing attention. As essential regional security partners with the United States, it is certainly in America's interest to see ties between South Korea and Japan grow stronger. But our relationship cannot merely run through the United States, and both South Korea and Japan understand that. So we should begin with the doable and use that to build greater trust and confidence. From a purely security and military perspective, we can certainly improve our information exchanges and defense collaboration. We also share common concerns, such as North Korea, China, and the need to coordinate better on some of the regional undertakings, among them ASEAN and the East Asian Summit. And we must do our best to resolve rather than intensify some of the territorial disputes. Americans should not be swayed by news reports that highlight conflict and instead know that Japan is committed to stepping up dialogue with South Korea. Our intent is to move from the Foreign Minister discussions that have taken place recently to conversations between our nations' top leaders. We are dedicated to tackling the issues that come between us because the regional concerns that unite us are far greater than anything that may divide us.

On a parallel track with our security responsibilities is the need to move forward with a regional economic pact, one that will link the Asia-Pacific countries with the United States in a dynamic new era of trade. Ours is a region bustling with cross-border dialogue and undertakings – including APEC, ASEAN, ASEAN +3, ASEAN

+6 – but it is TPP with its vast potential for trade liberalization that is now the focus of attention. The key is to create a partnership that advances open markets and holds nations to a high level of labor and environmental standards yet also finds a way to accommodate some of the developing countries whose weaker sectors may need time to meet the standards we want them to accept. Both Japan and the United States are critical to TPP's success, so the question is how much each of our nations is willing to address its domestic political interests and confront its protectionist voices. Clearly the U.S. recognizes that its involvement with TPP will go a long way toward defining its presence and role in the region in the years ahead. With TPP, our two nations can lead from a position of unity and strength, and we could then invite others to become a constructive force in the region working with – not against – us. Much rides on America's commitment to this region not just in the negotiating stage but over the span of many years.

Japan is wholly committed to advancing TPP and welcomes a negotiating table that includes every product, sector, and issue. The point is to keep our eyes focused on the larger goal of improved market access for all signatories. Every nation will surely make a case for different treatment of its more vulnerable and sensitive products, but there should be no product outside the realm of our negotiations and we must work toward the best solution possible for each special circumstance. For Japan has been making progress in our own internal economic reforms in such areas as health, labor, insurance, and most visibly in agriculture, where we are working to open the agricultural cooperatives and prepare that sector for a far more competitive global marketplace. From Japan's perspective – and we trust others share this view – a successful trade agreement that opens markets and liberalizes trade must work hand in hand with domestic reform and a willingness to confront entrenched interests.

In recent years some in Japan have expressed concern that U.S. interest in our country has waned. To them, Americans undervalue Japan as a friend and ally. They realize that our economy has been less than robust over the last two decades, but even so, a business cycle, even an extended one, is no reason to lose attention. But America should take notice: Japan is energized now. Our country is moving forward. With Abenomics and our new collective security policy, the Japanese people have regained the bounce in their step and are viewing the future with a greater sense of optimism and purpose. The truth is that every country lives through moments of doubt and uncertainty and economic stagnation, but there should never be doubt and uncertainty over an alliance that has been tested and forged over these past seven decades.

And I have no doubt that our partnership will continue to thrive if we abide by the basic principles of a bilateral friendship that have defined our relationship for seventy years. One, never take one another for granted. Two, in an ever-challenging world, never let complacency define the relationship. Three, there should be no surprises. Four, always act and negotiate in a manner that strengthens trust. And five, focus on understanding, not difference, which is why we should place greater emphasis on exchanges at every level – legislative, cultural, commercial and educational. The Japanese people are proud of this alliance. We are both good countries with good values and good people who have acted with each other in good faith. At the end of the day, the strength of our partnership – the strength of our economic, political, and military ties – will help to determine the fate of our region and the peace and security of our global community.

His Excellency Kenichiro Sasae has served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America since 2012. Ambassador Sasae first joined Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1974, and his diplomatic career has included positions abroad in the United Kingdom and Switzerland in addition to his time in Tokyo at the Ministry. He is also a member of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, the Study Groups' outreach to the Washington diplomatic community which fosters dialogue between ambassadors and Members of the U.S. Congress.

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