



**New Governments, Renewed Purpose**  
**The 19th Japan-US Security Seminar**

**A Conference Report**

**Brad Glosserman**  
**Rapporteur**

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Yoshiji Nogami and Ralph A. Cossa

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## **Japan Institute of International Affairs**

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The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the US or Japanese governments, the co-sponsoring institutes, or the group of workshop participants as a whole.

## Foreword

The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) and the Pacific Forum CSIS were pleased and honored to again co-host the 19th annual Japan-US Security Seminar on March 15-16, 2013. Our chief task this year was properly assessing the regional security environment as North Korea ramped up its provocative behavior and bellicose rhetoric and China increasingly asserted itself in regional affairs, regardless of the unease that those actions created among neighbors and other concerned parties. We struggled to understand the motivations of those governments and others; without a proper appreciation of their thinking, it will be difficult if not impossible to fashion policies that will safeguard regional peace and security.

Designing and implementing appropriate policies has been complicated by domestic politics in each country. Japan went through a change of government with the LDP's landslide victory in the December parliamentary elections, and the new administration in Tokyo had little time to find its feet; fortunately, its long experience in power facilitated the transition. Now, the world is watching to see if Prime Minister Abe and his new team can revive the economy and provide the political stability that are the prerequisites to a strong and confident Japan. Meanwhile, President Obama has won a second term in the White House. That victory promises policy continuity, but a large turnover among political appointees in the foreign policy and security bureaucracies means that there will be questions about implementation and priorities. As always, personal relationships will play an important role in alliance management.

Fortunately, support for the alliance is strong in both countries. The impact of *Operation Tomodachi* continues to reverberate, reminding both publics of the importance of their partnership. There are many opportunities for the two countries to cooperate across a range of issues and both governments appear eager to seize those moments as they arise. Of course, obstacles remain but the prospects for the alliance appear brighter than they have for many years. Indeed, one of the key purposes of this meeting is to look ahead and to try to chart a course for success.

We are grateful to all the participants and especially keynote speaker Ambassador Thomas Schieffer for taking time from their busy schedules to join us and share their thoughts. Their commitment, insights, and ideas for the future of the alliance made this conference a success. We would also like to thank Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Japanese Consulate in San Francisco for their generous support for this project.

Yoshiji Nogami  
President  
Japan Institute of International Affairs

Ralph A. Cossa  
President  
Pacific Forum CSIS



## Executive Summary

The Japan-US alliance confronts a challenging security landscape. North Korea continues to develop missile and nuclear capabilities, China is flexing its muscles, and even if Beijing doesn't court a confrontation with other nations, the possibility of an accident, miscalculation, or mistake makes that prospect real. Russia too seeks to extend its power and influence, and ongoing economic modernization throughout Asia sharpens the competition for resources in the region. Bitter partisanship and political gridlock in the US and Japan's reluctance to devote sufficient resources to its military overshadow the continuity in policies in both capitals and send worrying signals to allies and adversaries in the region. Especially troubling is the friction between Japan and South Korea, two countries that should be cooperating to meet shared challenges and concerns.

China poses particular problems for the alliance. There is no simple or single explanation for China's troubling behavior in recent years; Beijing's policies reflect a variety of views and actors. There was agreement that China is an opportunistic country, eager to right perceived historical grievances and expand its influence in the region. China's readiness to see containment whenever its ambitions are frustrated, an apparent need to distract its populations from home grown ills, and its increasingly problematic relationship with Japan – victory in World War II legitimates the CCP's claim to rule China – all make resolution of problems with China difficult. China is also probing the Japan-US alliance to test its resilience and to introduce insecurities. It is incumbent on both sides to counter this strategy with a firm position that concedes nothing to China and doesn't reward Beijing's misbehavior.

Foreign policy making is complicated by domestic politics in each country. The US must counter the notions that it is not committed to its "rebalance" to Asia or that partisan squabbles in Washington will undermine its commitment to regional security. Meanwhile, Japan needs to continue the economic reinvigoration process promised by Abenomics; that will be the foundation for its re-emergence in regional affairs. History issues remain problematic and there is a risk of friction between the two countries because of divergent views of their significance.

An important element of Asian regional dynamics is the divergent economic performances of key players. The Chinese outlook is rosy with the overwhelming majority of Chinese positively assessing their performance and prospects; less than a third of Americans have a similarly optimistic outlook, and the Japanese assessment is darker still. This confidence (or lack thereof) has a powerful impact on perceptions and performance, shaping outcomes. Abenomics is designed to help turn Japanese thinking around; the decision to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership is considered a very encouraging sign, both for the economic potential and the indication of political leadership in Tokyo. It is important for Japan and the US to see such deals as more than mere trade agreements; they are strategic in nature and have a value that goes beyond the determination of tariff levels. One potential wild card is the shale gas revolution. Exploitation of those resources has the ability to transform economic and security relations, not only for the US but for Japan as well.

Policy coordination between Japan and the US will be more important than ever in this evolving environment. There are concerns that the two countries have differing priorities, especially when dealing with China. This is most manifest in the confrontation over the Senkakus, which Americans see as important but Japanese consider “a touchstone for the alliance.” There is some concern in Tokyo that the US will subordinate this territorial dispute to a broader set of issues that Washington has with Beijing. One way to minimize this fear is for Japan to strengthen its defense capabilities. At the same time, the US must ensure that its policies are seen as ways to counter, but not contain, China.

There is a danger of divergent threat perceptions – or the perception of divergence. It is important that the US recognize the emotional content of Japanese concerns: Japanese territory is being threatened. Both countries must be better able to signal resolve, both to adversaries and to allies. This requires not only statements of purpose, but actual progress in the resolution of thorny issues that have hindered alliance modernization, such as replacing Futenma Air Station. There should also be deeper discussions of roles, missions and capabilities, as well as the inclusion of “new” domains such as cyber and space. Both governments, singly and together, need to be thinking about contingencies that are 10-15 years ahead. Also, they should be explaining what their alliance is for, not just what it is against. Trilateral (Japan-US-South Korea) security cooperation is also necessary.

Ultimately, the US must better communicate its aims and ambitions in the region; the rebalance is poorly understood, often because the US is explaining what the rebalance isn't, rather than what it is. Washington must also show greater sensitivity to Japanese concerns. That doesn't mean that the US must defer to Tokyo on regional issues, but it must not be – or seem to be – dismissive of its ally's concerns.

For Japan, the new government must first restore confidence in Japanese leadership among the public and friends. That demands revitalizing the economy. Japan will also have to increase defense spending and flesh out the bones of its “dynamic deterrence” policy. The new government must show Americans, and Japan's neighbors, that it understands history and its implications.

Together, the two countries must articulate a shared vision of their partnership, of which the Japan-US alliance is but a part. Once they have this vision, the two governments can then redefine roles, missions, and capabilities that prepare them as nations and as an alliance, to deal with an evolving security environment and over the horizon contingencies. This will modernize their partnership and create opportunities for cooperation with third parties. It will also shape the regional environment in ways that are congenial to our two countries and present friends and allies with choices of our making, rather than leaving them to the mercy of other nations.



## **Conference Summary**

Brad Glosserman, Rapporteur

Two simple messages dominated the 19<sup>th</sup> Japan-US Security Seminar. Americans warned Japanese counterparts, “Don’t go there!” – don’t reopen history issues that would antagonize neighbors and alienate supporters in the United States. Japanese countered with a bumper sticker of their own: “Be consistent” – reminding Americans that they must quiet fears of inconsistency as Tokyo faces direct challenges from China and threats from North Korea. All in all, it was a frank and candid discussion that probed some of the rawest issues in the bilateral relationship, airing grievances and uncertainties. Yet, at its conclusion, the 69 participants (52 senior Japanese and US attendees, along with 17 Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leaders, all joining in their private capacities) had a better understanding of each side’s concerns and confidence that the alliance had a solid foundation to deal with the inevitable divergences. More importantly, we identified important next steps for the two allies as they grapple with a changing security environment and shifting political terrain in each capital.

### **‘A bleak situation’**

For Yukio Okamoto (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*), the security situation in East Asia is “bleak.” North Korea continues to develop missile and nuclear capabilities and is trying to acquire the ability to threaten the US homeland. Russia too seeks to extend its reach and influence, but President Vladimir Putin has thus far focused on the states of the former Soviet Union and his policies – despite the proclamation of a Russian “pivot” toward Asia when he hosted the 2012 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting – so far had little impact on the Far East. China has “limitless expansionary ambitions,” aiming not only to rise but to reclaim what it has lost over the past two centuries. Okamoto worries that Chinese aggression is not just the product of animus toward Japan, but is also the natural outgrowth of a maritime strategy that aims for hegemony over the waters on both sides of the first island chain reaching towards the second island chain. Moreover, China’s rapid economic growth demands a national strategy that includes not only military objectives but a desire to control resources connected to those waters as well.

Okamoto acknowledged that actions in the US and Japan also contribute to heightened threat in the region. The “rebalance” to Asia is welcome, but absent real changes in force structure, the policy remains more rhetoric than reality. The budget crisis in Washington raises questions about the durability and dependability of the US commitment to Japan’s defense (and Asia more generally). Japan, he said, is even more culpable for the sense of threat. The US may be dealing with sequestration, but Japan has swallowed de facto budget cuts for over a decade: the result, Okamoto argued, has been “systematic negligence of Japan’s defense structure.” But the problem isn’t just funding.

Twenty years after the Persian Gulf War, Tokyo would answer as it did two decades earlier if asked to contribute to that effort. Interpretations of the constitution would still force Japan to sit on the sidelines. Politicians remain risk averse and bureaucrats (apart from those at the Security Seminar) continue to demonstrate a lack of imagination. For its part, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) have an overemphasis on safety. Finally, Japan's failure to push through a solution to the Futenma issue "is an open invitation to China to be more audacious." Okamoto concluded that as long as that situation remains unresolved, the region will not enjoy long-term stability.

Gordon Flake (*Mansfield Foundation*) highlighted an irony: there has been considerable change in the region despite great continuity in regional politics. There were political transitions in almost every country in Northeast Asia – President Obama faces a new leadership in every country except in Mongolia – but in each case, the party most inclined to stick to the status quo prevailed. And yet, like Okamoto, Flake sees a real deterioration in the security environment.

He too blames the creeping modernization of North Korean missile and nuclear capabilities and it's over the top rhetoric. He is most worried about an accident or miscalculation in Pyongyang that is driven by over confidence. Flake noted that South Korean calculations have changed as well: no leader in Seoul can afford a less than robust response. The danger of escalation following a North Korean provocation is real. Meanwhile, relations between Tokyo and Seoul have deteriorated. While the primary sources of these difficulties are ROK domestic politics and the unique legacy issues of President Park Gyun Hye, Prime Minister Abe doesn't help when he reminds both countries of the close relationship between her father and his grandfather. Equally worrisome is the chance of an accident, miscalculation, or mistake on the part of China. Contributing to the sense of unease with China is escalating conflict in cyberspace. Finally, Flake offered some thoughts about the Obama administration's "rebalance." He tried to play down the hype, noting that there is considerable continuity in this policy as well.

Our discussion covered the landscape, or at least most of East Asia. While India wasn't mentioned in the prepared remarks, several participants applauded Delhi's increasing engagement with Japan and the US, and even within trilateral settings. Once reluctant, India is now viewed as an active partner that is pushing ideas from trilateral discussions. A Japanese participant noted that progress with India is easier when discussed by militaries since there is less political interference in that setting.

The rest of the discussion teed up subsequent sessions as we explored developments on the Korean Peninsula and tried to parse motive forces behind the US rebalance and the new Abe administration in Tokyo. All participants expressed concern over the modernization of North Korea capabilities, while conceding that Pyongyang's bellicose rhetoric was more a reflection of weakness than strength. No one believed that

North Korea could be convinced to give up its nuclear arsenal, especially after the country's constitution was rewritten to include its status as a nuclear-armed state. There was general agreement that South Koreans have a more benign perspective toward China than do Japanese or Americans. There was also a consensus that the new government in Seoul would be obliged to escalate when it responded to a North Korean provocation, making crisis management more difficult.

As we tried to parse ROK thinking, consensus evaporated. Most Japanese were inclined to attribute ROK ill will toward Japan to group think in Korea and a demand for political correctness. One Japanese participant told the group that President Park could stop the downward spiral in relations by halting the use of rhetoric about victims and victimization. "If she stops, the rest of the country will stop." Other Japanese participants noted that their country has no monopoly on nationalism and complained about the unfairness of focusing on Japan when similar sentiments were visible elsewhere in the region. Americans countered that notions of fairness have no place in discussions of justice. They argued that victimization of women is the core issue, and disputing numbers or legal responsibility misses the key point: this is a human rights issue, one that commands considerable support along the entire political spectrum in the US. Americans cautioned Japanese counterparts that any argument that suggests a lack of sympathy for victims is going to be a loser regardless of legal intricacies or historical norms. In a comment that reflected the sentiment of all Americans in the room, one US participant argued that there is nothing Prime Minister Abe can do about the Kono Statement – other than affirm it – that will not make things worse.

Since Japan and South Korea make the same argument – it is up to the other side to fix the problems that plague their bilateral relationship – US participants suggested that the two sides focus on goals that they share, such as Korean reunification under a democratic government in Seoul, to demonstrate common interests and purpose. (One Japanese participant reminded the group that for all their troubles, the two countries still have working relations and continue to press the limits of cooperation, even if they haven't gone as far as some would like.)

The topic that consumed the most time and energy was the US "rebalance" to Asia. Japanese participants continued to question the significance of the policy, asking US counterparts to focus more on what it is than what it is not. While Chinese officials and analysts insist that the new policy is a renewed attempt to encircle or contain China, US participants repeated the mantra that engaging China is one of the pillars of the rebalance. The failure of Secretary of State John Kerry to mention the policy in his confirmation hearings has fed a narrative that suggests the rebalance may not survive a second Obama administration; again, US participants pushed back, arguing that the foundations of the rebalance were evident in the 2008 campaign, even if the policy hadn't been labeled as such. The driving force for the rebalance is the president and the White House, and the

policy itself will survive leadership changes at Foggy Bottom or the Pentagon. Bottom line: the United States must do more to communicate the meaning, intent, and content of the rebalance. Efforts to date haven't quelled doubts about its purpose or answered questions about its implementation.

### **“Moving Forward Together: The Future of the US-Japan Alliance”**

At the end of the first day, participants were honored to hear insights from former US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer during his evening keynote presentation. In his remarks (available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/issuesinsights\\_vol13no3.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/issuesinsights_vol13no3.pdf)), Ambassador Schieffer provided his assessment of the state of the alliance and prospects for the bilateral partnership with Prime Minister Abe and the LDP back at the helm. Schieffer argued that Abe will provide the leadership that Japan has lacked for the last few years and will strive to increase his country's influence in the world. That means that Japan will join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, that the country will change its interpretation of the constitution to be a better ally and partner of the United States, and conclude the transformation of the alliance that is needed to adapt it to 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges. While optimistic about the future, he cautioned the new government in Tokyo about revisiting historical issues, particularly the “comfort women,” noting that “there is simply no support of any kind for the position taken by some in Japan that that issue should be re-examined.”

### **Understanding China**

We probed Chinese thinking more deeply in the second session. Brad Glosserman (*Pacific Forum CSIS*) noted that Chinese motivations are complex. No single factor explains Beijing's behavior. He identified several forces animating the Chinese leadership. First, there is the leadership transition which reduces any inclination to compromise or do anything that might be construed as weak or insufficiently zealous in protection of national interests. A second factor is a general sense of insecurity in China and a great sensitivity to slights real and imagined to national honor. That the Senkaku dispute involves Japan makes it an especially touchy subject. Some of the blame for this sensitivity must be laid at the feet of the “Great Patriotic Reeducation Campaign,” which has embedded a problematic view of Japan at the core of the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy. An appalling misreading of Japanese politics and political dynamics has blinded Chinese observers to the reality of what is going on in Japan and encouraged the worst interpretations of Japanese intentions and developments. Political weakness in Japan also encourages Beijing to take a harder line. Finally, Beijing is probing to see how tightly coupled the US and Japan are. Beijing is testing US responses to challenges to its ally, suggesting that the US might not be a reliable partner and relying on it could be a mistake.

China doesn't have a single strategy, speak with one voice, or act with one purpose when it comes to foreign policy. There are many relevant actors, some of which have

considerable independence. Nonetheless, outside observers see continuity in Chinese foreign policy. Indeed, the sensitivity of policy toward Japan means that is likely to stay on its current trajectory even at times of tension because changing course – which, after all, reflects the current ruling consensus – takes authority and responsibility. Absent a crisis, there are few reasons to take risks and try something new.

Given the complexity of Chinese foreign policy, the US and Japan must manage expectations when dealing with China. Many of the most important drivers are domestic and the strategic calculations are proceeding according to an internal logic. Signaling is important and the most important message is resolve and consistency. We should make clear our expectations – respect for the rule of law, peaceful resolution of disputes, no unilateral actions that upset the status quo – of all parties and criticize any who violate them. The US and Japan should be doing things that make sense without reference to China, even though they may at some point have an impact on, or be directed at, the PRC.

Many of those views were shared by Akio Takahara (*Tokyo University*), who characterized Chinese behavior as “worrying.” He noted that the Chinese have been escalating incursions into Japanese waters surrounding the Senkaku islands. Fortunately, the Japanese reaction has been calm and prudent. Still, there is a dangerous risk of escalation.

Takahara is worried about anti-Japanese propaganda in China that bears no relationship to the real Japan. He argued that Chinese interest in the islands was driven partly by the need for oil and gas resources, and the dispute serves as a distraction from the country’s social problems. The belief that the correlation of forces has swung in China’s favor since the 2008 “Lehman Shock” has contributed to Chinese belligerence, as has fear of encirclement as a result of the US rebalance. China is on “heightened alert” and is attempting to head off any encroachment on its national interests, real or imagined.

There is a foreign policy debate in China, one that focuses on whether to continue to honor Deng Xiaoping’s admonition that China keep a low profile and bide its time. Tied to this debate are perceptions of Japan: is it an independent actor or a cat’s paw of the United States? Is Japan a weak and shrinking power or one that is on the brink of a militarist resurgence? Views of Japan also influence the appropriate response to the purchase of the Senkaku islands by the Tokyo central government. Takahara believes the hardliners have prevailed and this has had a profound impact on views of Japan within China.

The best response, according to Takahara, is a resolute position that concedes nothing to China and doesn’t reward Beijing’s misbehavior. The two governments should “agree to disagree” – acknowledge that there is a problem (although sovereignty is indisputably Japanese) and work toward a long-term solution. During this process, Japan

should reach out to moderates in China to try to support and empower them as the country continues its internal debates.

Our discussion returned to US perceptions of China and how those perceptions influenced US foreign policy. Japanese participants wondered to what degree Americans generally – not just those in the room – saw China as a threat? And if so, what kind of threat? Economic? A challenge to US supremacy? An actual physical threat to US national interests? Many Japanese believe, despite US protests to the contrary, that US policy toward China has swung between engagement and confrontation. Some Japanese analysts see a shift in US policy toward China within the first Obama administration, with the “China first” faction losing to the “alliance first” faction over time. For this group, the rebalance is a sign of this swing.

There was agreement among all participants that domestic factors play a large role in shaping Chinese behavior and there is a desire on the part of Beijing to redirect unhappiness and unease toward foreign sources. There was also agreement that bad behavior must not be rewarded and our two countries should work together to encourage Chinese adherence to the rule of law and the peaceful, negotiated settlement of disputes. Several participants reiterated Takahara’s call to figure out ways to influence domestic debates in China and empower moderates. China must be persuaded that the forcible correction of historical grievances is not a workable foreign policy.

While there was general skepticism about Chinese motives and intentions, it seemed that Japanese discussants took a harder line against China than did Americans. While US participants reiterated the US commitment to the defense of Japan and the inclusion of the Senkakus in the US-Japan Security Treaty (covered by Article 5, “territory administered by Japan”), US analysis focused on the strategic value of the Senkakus. A word of caution here: while this is understandable, Americans must be attentive to the emotions behind Japanese responses to Chinese behavior and not appear insensitive to Japanese concerns.

### **Domestic Politics**

National sentiment featured prominently in our third session which explored the impact of changes in domestic politics on the alliance. As in previous meetings, a speaker from each country assessed developments in the other. In his take on the United States, Toshihiro Nakayama (*Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan Institute of International Affairs*) contended that the alliance remains on track and a second Obama administration will largely continue on its current track, with some minor shifts in policy. Obama will continue to readdress the excesses in US foreign and domestic policy that emerged in the Bush administration; overall that means a focus on US domestic affairs and Nakayama expects “something of a retreat from the world.”

Nakayama voiced worries about the new US foreign policy team. He has doubts about Secretary Kerry's priorities (echoing earlier complaints) and fears that Secretary Hagel was badly damaged in his nomination fight. A more intense focus on the economy – whether jobs or the budget – could mean that Japan's security concerns get short changed in the US strategic calculus. That is part of a larger issue: Nakayama worries about Japan's place in US foreign policy generally, fearing that a shrinking pool of expertise about Japan could undermine its salience in US security and foreign policy planning.

Torkel Patterson (*Group Pacific Inc.*) echoed Nakayama's final point, noting that most Americans don't think about Japan. When they do, Japan is a brand, once characterized by Sony, sumo, and sushi, and now associated with manga, anime, fashion, energy efficiency, cars, and high-quality food. But Americans will rise to the moment when pressed, as they did in the aftermath of March 11, and that should reassure Japanese about the deep ties between the two countries.

Patterson worries that the Shinzo Abe "brand" is that of a nationalist, which he is, but his image does not correspond to the man Patterson knows. He fears that Japanese attempts to address history issues will make matters worse; in particular, any reassessment of statements regarding comfort women will antagonize friends and supporters in the US. He urged the Japanese government to do a better job of courting the media and to launch a campaign to get Japanese views to US audiences. This task takes on more urgency given an aggressive and relatively successful campaign by pro-Chinese groups in the US to get their message across.

In the discussion, Americans warned that a second Obama term is likely to underperform. Second-term presidents tend to be lame ducks almost from their inauguration; this often forces them to focus on foreign policy to build a legacy. The division of government and the Republican Party – some would say "Tea Party" – grip on the House of Representatives means that policy making will be difficult. One US participant warned that division could continue until 2020.

Japanese participants explained that Abe is looking to serve two full terms in the Kantei to restore the stability and leadership that have been missing since Koizumi left office in 2006. His first objective, however, is prevailing in the summer House of Councilors ballot. To win, he has moderated positions and focused on the economy. One Japanese participant warned that the prime minister is likely to stick to that approach as long as he enjoys wide support; he worried that dwindling popularity will force Abe to rely on a smaller, more nationalist circle of advisors. Another Japanese participant reminded the group that Japan has a Cabinet-style system and Abe has well-informed advisors and supporters in the Prime Minister's Office. The emphasis on his personality – the fear that he is only hiding his true colors until after he wins a mandate in the Upper House election – is "too American."

A US participant countered that while Americans may have a distorted view of the new prime minister, the new prime minister has an equally distorted view of how the US sees him. The tumultuous tenure of Yukio Hatoyama should not be used as the benchmark for the DPJ government; the Japan-US alliance was doing quite well in the final year of DPJ rule under Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda. The discussant warned that an “ABM – anything but Minshuto” policy would backfire given the progress made in the last year of DPJ rule: “It isn’t enough to *not* be the DPJ.” Moreover, there is a danger that the LDP’s talk about “saving the alliance” could raise expectations to levels that would be hard to meet. Delaying hard decisions until after the summer ballot is a sure way to frustrate Washington. At the same time, US participants made it clear that they want a strong and steady hand on the wheel in Tokyo. While most Americans can’t name the Japanese prime minister, they do want a confident and healthy partner. The US doesn’t seek to hold Japan back, but it does want to work with its ally to accomplish shared goals and objectives.

Finally, several Japanese participants expressed frustration with US warnings about reopening the history issue. As one explained, “the vast majority of Japanese acknowledge what Japan did in World War II.” The problem is rising frustration with the notion that Japan must accept without question the assertions of Chinese and Koreans about history. He added that the maritime territorial disputes are for many Japanese increasingly a symbol of “outrageous and ungrounded” claims made under the guise of dealing with history. He urged Americans not to accept counter claims and arguments without hearing the Japanese side.

### **The return of geoeconomics**

Since the global financial crisis of 2007-8, the Security Seminar has spent time assessing geoeconomic issues in the Japan-US alliance. We also tackled those problems during the first years of the seminar, but military and security concerns overshadowed economic issues during the last decade, pushing them from the agenda. The prospect of a changing regional balance of power, driven by the economic rise of China, stagnation in Japan, and political paralysis in the US (mostly the product of budget politics) has obliged us to again take up these topics.

Charles Morrison (*East West Center*) began by highlighting differences in perspectives among Chinese, Americans, and Japanese. A recent Pew survey showed that 83 percent of Chinese think their economy is in good shape and 82 percent believe they are heading in the right direction. By contrast, only 32 percent of Americans characterize their economy as good and just 29 percent think it is heading in the right direction. Among Japanese, the numbers are alarming: just 7 percent believe their economy is in good shape and a mere 20 percent say they are heading in the right direction. Prolonged stagnation has deprived Japan of the means to make an impression on the world; as two examples, Morrison noted that Japan’s share of global manufacturing is shrinking as is its Overseas



Development Assistance. A revitalization of the economy and the rekindling of confidence and purpose in Japan are vital to both the country and the alliance. Much hope rides on the Abe administration, and it is off to a good start, but Morrison warned that the real root of Japan's problems isn't deflation but the absence of investment and growth opportunities. He highlighted the country's demographic challenges and the failure to empower women. On the plus side, Japan by virtue of its geography, has extensive maritime claims, and by extension, substantial maritime resources as well.

This elevates the significance of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). It isn't just a trade deal. Rather it's a vehicle for political and economic change in Japan. But, Morrison warned, neither the future of the TPP, nor Japan's successful use of it to bring about reform, is guaranteed. At the same time, Morrison noted that the TPP plays another vital role: it solidifies an Asia-Pacific architecture that firmly welds the US to Asia.

Yoshiji Nogami (*Japan Institute of International Affairs*) noted that geoeconomics seems to be changing more rapidly than geopolitics, pointing to the BRICs – the grouping of Brazil, India, Russia, and China – that had such promise only a decade ago when it was postulated, but is now considered something of a relic. No one expected Brazil to grow more slowly than Japan, or for India's potential to be strangled by domestic politics, or for Russia's fate to be so deeply intertwined with the ebbs and flows of global energy prices. China remains a mystery: Beijing is still trying to cope with the after-effects of the massive stimulus package that was employed to stave off the global downturn in 2007, a task that is made even harder by the unreliable statistics generated in China. Corruption, rising wages, and an unbalanced economy – one that relies too heavily on investment and exports – make economic stability a real challenge. Meanwhile, Europe faces the possibility of its own lost decade as it tries to save the euro (if not the union) and balance budgets. While ASEAN has managed to weather the turbulence, prospects are uneven. Nogami concluded that there is no bright spot in the world economy.

Some dark spots are less gloomy, however. The US, for example, has the fundamentals for growth. Its corporate sector has cash and households are in the last stages of deleveraging. If the political system can reach some consensus, recovery is a possibility. Japan too has pieces in place for a recovery. There is the prospect of stable political leadership, and a government that grasps the need for reform. Yen depreciation is a stimulus to growth that can make restructuring more palatable, and the scheduled increase in the consumption tax is an important first step toward getting a grip on spiraling debt. Nogami, too, sees TPP as a litmus test of Tokyo's attitude toward reform. While there are reasons to contemplate the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP, another, less demanding trade negotiation), it is a lowest common denominator approach to trade. It has merits for ASEAN, but Japan must take a broader view of such deals.

Some participants took issue with the speakers' characterization of the economy. A US participant argued that the consensus view (globally, not just in the room) underestimated the speed of the transition to a non-Western dominated world. All rich economies are heavily indebted and it will take decades for them to deleverage. He questioned the assertion that China faces insurmountable challenges. He believes it can continue on its current path for some time, although there is a danger of overconfidence and overextension.

Energy politics and economics consumed much of the discussion. We had a spirited debate about the impact of the shale gas revolution. Exploitation of these resources means the US economy will be less reliant on government policy. It will lower energy prices, spurring growth, producing higher tax revenues, and reducing the current account deficit. Some Japanese participants feared that it would decrease US attention to and involvement in the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Americans pushed back against that assertion, arguing that the US has an ongoing stake in regional stability as well as security and maintenance of sea lines of communication. The opportunity to tap US liquid natural gas supplies has powerful implications for Japan's nuclear policy: if the country has alternative energy sources, then the nuclear energy equation is transformed. At present, the Abe government's determination to continue the high reliance on nuclear power is at odds with a public sentiment that is overwhelmingly in favor of closing all nuclear power plants. Reconciling these two positions may prove to be the biggest challenge for the Abe administration opined one Japanese participant.

US participants challenged the rosy view of Abenomics, wondering whether the government would follow through on structural reforms necessary to sustain economic growth, especially if the economy recovers. Reassurance was forthcoming: Americans should have more confidence in the "third arrow," said one Japanese participant, because the impetus for change was coming from the private sector.

Finally, the TPP was a source of considerable discussion. Many in the room saw the trade agreement as a part of a broader strategy to consolidate the existing balance of power in the region. Or, to put it crudely, TPP is another way to contain China. Most Americans pushed back hard against that idea, insisting that it was an attempt to revitalize trade negotiations and to create a "gold standard" for such deals. A US participant argued the ultimate goal should be to make TPP so big and so compelling that "China has to join."

### **National Security Politics and Strategic Cooperation**

In his examination of National Security Politics and Strategic Cooperation, Takashi Kawakami (*Tokushoku University*) highlighted the divergence in Japanese and US views about China: while Tokyo sees Beijing as a threat, he characterized the US position as one that sees China as a partner. This could be a result of a broader shift: China is a rising

power, while US power is declining. In fact, the two countries have mutual vulnerability, but China seeks to change the status quo via managed confrontations with nations on its periphery, testing US alliances for weakness.

Meanwhile, the US priority is getting its economy back on track. The result is sharp rhetoric when it comes to foreign policy but weak implementation of policy. Kawakami worries that the US may embrace an offshore balancer approach to Asian security, disengaging to some degree and intervening in regional security affairs only to protect the status quo and maintain the existing balance of power. The potential disconnect between Japanese and US thinking is apparent when Kawakami explained that from Tokyo's perspective, the Senkaku dispute is "a touchstone for the alliance."

He conceded, however, that Japan too must do more to strengthen its own capabilities, but the two countries need to push ahead with a discussion of new Japan-US defense guidelines. He is also eager to see more trilateral (Japan-US-ROK) cooperation, even though the history issue is a powerful obstacle to progress. Nevertheless, Kawakami believes North Korea can provide the glue for three-way coordination and the US should facilitate that process.

Evans Revere (*Albright Stonebridge Group*) offered three challenges and a concern. The first challenge is North Korea, which has acquired the ability to threaten all its neighbors with nuclear-armed missiles. As he pondered ways to increase pressure on Pyongyang and force it to behave, he concluded that China remains central to any solution, although he isn't optimistic about the chances of altering Beijing's calculus. He warned against over-reacting to the North's rhetoric, while calling for an assessment of our collective ability to respond to a provocation.

China constitutes the second challenge. It is acting in new and assertive ways, largely "because it can." He worries that historical and political conditioning will lock China into an adversarial view of Japan, one that sees its neighbor as threatening. That worldview, as well as developments in Japan, has fueled a desire to teach Japan a lesson. He would like to see ongoing dialogue between Tokyo and Beijing over the territorial dispute, and is concerned about the efficacy of Japan's embrace of "dynamic deterrence."

The third challenge is Japan-ROK relations, the difficulties of which were evident in the failure to conclude the intelligence sharing and acquisition and cross servicing agreements. Poor relations between these two neighbors complicate the defense of the ROK and must provide some comfort to Pyongyang and Beijing.

Hanging over all regional concerns is the US rebalance. Revere fears that it is perceived in the region – and especially by China – as exclusively military and as an attempt to contain Beijing. This perception has disinclined Beijing to cooperate with the US even when such cooperation is in China's interest. While Beijing may believe that it is

in China's interest to characterize the policy as being aimed at China – and scare off countries that worry about being drawn into a second Cold War -- the US must counter that narrative.

His final concern is history. Revere, along with many other Americans, finds the prospect of revision of official Japanese statements about history “very troubling.” He urged the new government in Tokyo to leave those statements alone.

The final discussion covered two broad sets of issues – threats and responses. There was in the last session, as throughout the meeting, a sense that Japanese and US threat perceptions diverged. Simply put, Japanese seem more concerned by a Chinese threat while US attention is more focused on a Korean Peninsula contingency. Several Japanese participants again commented on the “volatility” of US policy toward China (and again Americans pushed back against that characterization). Moreover, they reminded US counterparts of the emotional content of these issues. As one pointed out, “this is the first time the Japanese people have a real sense of the possibility that Japanese territory can be menaced by an external enemy.” Another Japanese participant explained that his country sees the Senkaku dispute as a test of the durability and stability of the global order. A failure to defend peaceful dispute resolution could have far-reaching consequences. Several US participants flatly asked whether Japan feared abandonment; the response was that the concern “was more nuanced” than that. One Japanese participant described the feeling as “don't go wobbly on us.”

The question then was how to avoid the perception of a lack of resolve, and how to successfully repulse Chinese probes and North Korean belligerence. The alliance is making progress. The 2012 decision to delink the Futenma move from the larger package of realignment measures was an important development but that was only the removal of an obstacle; “it's now time for positive steps” argued a Japanese speaker. For its part, Japan seeks a more substantive discussion of security cooperation and, in particular, a refinement of bilateral planning and a deepening of discussions on roles, missions, and capabilities. Continuation of the extended deterrence dialogue is an important part of this process, as are attempts to figure out how the two countries can make real the promise of “dynamic deterrence.” Participants from both countries endorsed discussions in “new” domains, such as space and cyber. All agreed that the two countries need to get ahead of the curve and look over the horizon, preparing for contingencies that are 10-15 years away. This sort of planning will allow the two countries to shape the security environment rather than merely respond to it. A US participant offered that the US wants “to think big and bold” and discuss roles, missions, and capabilities that “truly add value to the alliance and are big and flexible enough to encompass other contingencies.” A Japanese participant reminded the group that it is as important that the alliance speak regularly about what it is for and not just what it is against.

Missile defense will play a key role in strengthening defense and deterrence. North Korean threats make it even more necessary to hone those capabilities, even though such efforts are certain to elicit howls of protest from China. Planned missile defense deployments will not – and are not designed to – threaten China’s deterrent and most Chinese strategists know that. They rightfully fear, however, the prospect of deeper operational integration of Japanese and US forces, given the political and security implications of that stronger relationship.

Ultimately, both sides need to convince China that the US will stand with Japan in the event of conflict. A US participant suggested that Chinese protests over US statements and concern over the rebalance – even if exaggerated – make plain that Beijing knows where the US will be in a contingency. As Japan and the US talk to China, both singly and as an alliance, the two countries should be clear that China is not by definition their adversary; Beijing’s actions will be instrumental in defining these relationships.

All participants also agreed on the need to promote trilateral security cooperation with the ROK. North Korea can provide the glue for such cooperation. Unfortunately, South Korea’s new president, Park Gyun-hye, has never spoken out in favor of trilateral cooperation with Japan and the US. That could reflect concern in Seoul that enhanced cooperation could consolidate Cold War divisions on the Korean Peninsula at a time when the ROK feels it must be able to reach out to China to engage the DPRK. While China has a role to play in dealing with North Korea, there was palpable concern about the idea that the road to Pyongyang runs through Beijing: this sort of thinking could give China too much leverage over decision making.

### **Looking ahead**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Japan-US Security Seminar was a frank and curious discussion. Remarkably for two countries that have enjoyed considerable continuity for the last few years – the change in government in Tokyo notwithstanding; views of the alliance in the DPJ under Noda very much resembled those of the LDP – there was considerable debate about the meaning and impact of policy. The comfort level between both sides remains high – while there is a new government in Tokyo, key players on foreign and security policy are familiar. Nonetheless, there were questions, quite frankly, about trust. Japan worries about the US commitment to regional security and its readiness to stand with Japan against China. The US worries that Japan may reopen the history question and unleash a tsunami of grievance.

This brief summary makes plain each government’s immediate tasks. The US must convince its allies that it can devote attention to its economic ills and not neglect its foreign policy and security commitments. For Americans, the ability to do two things at once is a given. Apparently, however, our allies, partners, and adversaries are not convinced. At the

same time, there is a yawning gap between US policy and objectives and how they are interpreted by foreign audiences. More work must be done to better communicate our aims and ambitions in the region; the rebalance is poorly understood, partly because of deliberate misrepresentation by some and partly because of poor salesmanship. The US is continually explaining what the rebalance isn't; more time should be spent defining what it is. Regional governments are paying close attention to our actions, which speak louder than words. Finally, the US must show greater sensitivity to Japanese concerns. That is not to say that Washington must defer to Tokyo on regional issues, but there were times when the US seems insensitive to hot button, emotion-laden issues in Japan. We can disagree, but the US must not be – or seem to be – dismissive of our ally's concerns.

Japan's tasks are no less significant. The new government's first and most pressing assignment is the restoration of confidence in Japanese leadership among its public and friends. That will require, most critically, progress on revitalizing the economy. Hard choices are required on issues such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership – the decision to join the negotiations is only a first step – and base realignment. At some point, Japan will have to increase defense spending and flesh out the bones of its “dynamic deterrence” policy. At the same time, the new government must show Americans, and Japan's neighbors, that it understands history and that it isn't captive of fringe domestic constituencies. This demands more than a mere public relations campaign.

Together, the two countries must articulate a shared vision of their partnership, of which the Japan-US alliance is but a part. Once they have this vision, the two governments can then redefine roles, missions, and capabilities that prepare them as nations and as an alliance, to deal with an evolving security environment and over the horizon contingencies. This will modernize their partnership and create opportunities for cooperation with third parties. It will also shape the regional environment in ways that are congenial to our two countries and present friends and allies with choices of our making, rather than leaving them to the mercy of other nations.

# **APPENDIX A**

19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY SEMINAR**  
March 15-16, 2013  
*J.W. Marriott Hotel • San Francisco, CA*

## **AGENDA**

### **Friday, March 15**

- 3:00PM           **Welcoming Remarks**  
Yoshiji Nogami, JIIA President  
Ralph Cossa, Pacific Forum CSIS President
- 3:15-5:00PM     **Session I: Security Perspectives**  
*Japan Presenter:* Yukio Okamoto  
*US Presenter:* Gordon Flake

In this survey of security outlooks, we compare the two countries' assessment of the regional security environment. Participants will identify top security concerns – broadly defined – and prioritize them. What does each country consider a threat to its security and prosperity? Has this threat perception changed since we last met? In particular, is there greater danger of military conflict in East Asia? Why? President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia now sees Asia as key to its future. What is the impact of this shift? Do the two countries agree on the priority of challenges outside East Asia? While China is part of this discussion, an in-depth assessment of China will be taken up in the next session.

- 6:30- 9:00PM     Reception/Dinner  
**Keynote Address:** Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer

### **Saturday, March 16**

- 9:00-10:15AM   **Session II: Understanding China**  
*US Presenter:* Brad Glosserman  
*Japan Presenter:* Akio Takahara

How does each country characterize or assess Chinese behavior, militarily and diplomatically, in the last year? Has China become more belligerent? If so, why? If not, why has Beijing acted the way it has? How do participants assess Chinese behavior in the South China Sea? Is it different from Chinese behavior regarding the Senkakus? Have our two countries responded properly to these incidents? How can we influence Chinese behavior and decision making? What have been the economic implications and consequences of increased Sino-Japanese tensions? Which side stands to gain or lose the most – politically and economically – from such tensions?

- 10:15-10:30     Break

10:30-12:00      **Session III: Domestic Politics**

**3A [Japanese presenter: Toshihiro Nakayama]:** How do Japanese assess the state of US politics? What has been the impact of US elections on foreign policy? What are the prospects for resolving the gridlock in Washington? How do Japanese assess the new US foreign policy team?

**3B [US presenter: Torkel Patterson]:** How do Americans assess the state of Japanese politics? What has been the impact of the December elections in Japan? What is the meaning and significance of the Osprey protests in Japan?

12:00-1:30PM      Lunch

1:30-3:00PM      **Session IV: The Return of Geoeconomics**

*US Presenter:* Charles Morrison

*Japan Presenter:* Yoshiji Nogami

This session explores each country's understanding of the role of economics in influencing regional dynamics and the institutions that shape economic interactions. Is there a tension between economic relations and security partnerships? How does each country prioritize transpacific institutions with those in its own region (i.e., the ASEAN Plus Three and NAFTA in relation to APEC)? Is there a tension between them? How does each country assess of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), APEC, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership of East Asia (CEPEA), and APEC? Should Japan consider tighter ties to the US as suggested at last year's meeting?

3:00-3:15PM      Break

3:15-5:00PM      **Session V: National Security Policies and Strategic Cooperation**

*Japan Presenter:* Takashi Kawakami

*US Presenter:* Evans Revere

This session focuses on implementation of the two countries' national security policies - the "rebalance" and the National Defense Program Guidelines - and their implications for the alliance. Has the rebalance proceeded as anticipated? What problems have arisen? Has the US deterrent been impacted by regional developments? How? How has Japan implemented "dynamic deterrence?" How have efforts to improve jointness and maneuverability proceeded? What more needs to be done? How does each side assess strategic cooperation and the review of US-Japan defense cooperation, in particular? What could be the new elements for the revised, if any, the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation? What more can be done to make such efforts more effective? Can the two countries agree on a vision for alliance cooperation? What is it? Are there opportunities for trilateral security cooperation with South Korea and US? What limits such cooperation? What can be done to remedy these limitations?



5:00-5:30PM      **Session VI: Wrap up and conclusions**

Final thoughts with special emphasis on how to make the 20<sup>th</sup> seminar a landmark event.

6:30PM            Reception/Dinner at Consul General Hiroshi Inomata's Residence



## **APPENDIX B**

19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
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### **Participant List**

#### **Japan**

Mr. Hiroyuki Akita  
*Nikkei Shinbun*

Prof. Nobumasa Akiyama  
Professor, Hitotubashi University  
Adjunct Fellow, JIIA

Mr. Hideki Asari  
Deputy Director General  
The Japan Institute of International  
Affairs

Mr. Takehiro Funakoshi  
Minister  
Embassy of Japan in ROK

Mr. Junichi Ihara  
Director-General, North American  
Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Keiko Iizuka  
Senior Political Writer  
*Yomiuri-Shinbun*

Consul General Hiroshi Inomata  
Consulate General of Japan  
San Francisco

Mr. Yoshihiro Iseri  
First Secretary  
Embassy of Japan, Washington, DC

Prof. Matake Kamiya  
Professor  
National Defense Academy of Japan

Mr. Yoichi Kato  
National Security Correspondent  
*Asahi-Shimbun*

Prof. Takashi Kawakami  
Professor, Takushoku University

Mr. Kazuo Masuda  
Director, Japan-US Defense Cooperation  
Division, Ministry of Defense

Prof. Toshihiro Nakayama  
Professor, Aoyama Gakuin University  
Adjunct Fellow, JIIA

Mr. Hiroyuki Namazu  
Director, Japan-US Security Treaty  
Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador Yoshiji Nogami  
President  
The Japan Institute of International  
Affairs

Mr. Yukio Okamoto  
Senior Fellow, Center for International  
Studies, Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology

Mr. Atsuo Suzuki  
Defense Councilor (Deputy Director  
General), Ministry of Defense

Prof. Akio Takahara  
Professor, University of Tokyo  
Adjunct Fellow, JIIA

Mr. Nobushige Takamizawa  
President  
National Institute for Defense Studies

Mr. Shigeo Yamada  
Minister, Political Section  
Embassy of Japan, Washington, D.C.

**Japan Observers**

Mr. Takashi Hirai  
Japan-U.S. Security Treaty Division  
North American Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Shinichi Ikawa  
Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation  
Division  
Ministry of Defense

Mr. Kentaro Kaihara  
Counselor, Political Section  
Embassy of Japan Washington, D.C.

Mr. Keisuke Kodama  
Deputy Director, Japan-US Security  
Treaty Division, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs

Mr. Tetsuo Kotani  
Research Fellow  
The Japan Institute of International  
Affairs

Mr. Masayuki Masuda  
Senior Fellow, Northeast Asia Division,  
Regional Studies Department  
National Institute for Defense Studies

Dr. Asuka Matsumoto  
Research Fellow  
The Japan Institute of International  
Affairs

Mr. Kyosuke Matsumoto  
Senior Coordinator  
Japan-US Defense Cooperation Division,  
Ministry of Defense

Mr. Tomohiko Satake  
Fellow, Defense Policy Division, Policy  
Studies Department  
National Institute for Defense Studies

**US**

Ambassador Michael H. Armacost  
Shorenstein Distinguished Fellow  
Asia Pacific Research Center  
Stanford University

Mr. Ralph A. Cossa  
President, Pacific Forum CSIS

Ms. Paige Cottingham-Streater  
Executive Director  
US-Japan Friendship Commission

Mr. L. Gordon Flake  
Executive Director  
The Maureen and Mike Mansfield  
Foundation

Mr. Brad Glosserman  
Executive Director  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Christopher B. Johnstone  
Director for Northeast Asia  
Asian and Pacific Security Affairs  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
(Policy)

Mr. James A. Kelly  
Counselor and President Emeritus  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Marc Knapper  
Director, Office of Japanese Affairs  
US Department of State

Dr. Robert A. Madsen  
Senior Fellow  
MIT Center for International Studies

Dr. Charles E. Morrison  
President  
East-West Center

Mr. Torkel Patterson  
Principal  
Group Pacific Inc.

Mr. Evans J. R. Revere  
Senior Director  
Albright Stonebridge Group

Dr. Brad Roberts  
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense  
Policy  
US Department of Defense

Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer  
Former US Ambassador to Japan

Dr. Amy E. Searight  
Principal Director for East Asia  
Asian & Pacific Security Affairs Office  
of the Secretary of Defense

Ambassador Marc Wall  
Foreign Policy Advisor  
United States Pacific Command

Mr. James P. Zumwalt  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for  
East Asia and Pacific Affairs  
US Department of State

#### **US Observers**

Mr. Peter Ennis  
US Correspondent/Columnist,  
*Weekly Toyo Keizai*  
Writer/Publisher, *Dispatch Japan*

CDR Daniel Fillion, USN  
Japan Country Desk Officer  
Joint Staff J-5 Pentagon

Mr. David W. Hamon  
Distinguished Analyst and Director  
Asia Pacific Project  
Analytic Service (ANSER)

Dr. Richard Katz  
Editor-in-Chief  
*The Oriental Economist Report*

Mr. Dan Sneider  
Associate Director for Research  
Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center  
Stanford University

#### **Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leaders**

##### **Japan**

Dr. Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi  
Resident Vasey Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Akira Igata  
Doctoral Student - Keio University

Mr. Yusuke Ishihara  
Non-Resident SPF Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Kei Koga  
Research Fellow  
The Belfer Center for Science and  
International Affairs, John F. Kennedy  
School of Government, Harvard  
University

Ms. Mihoko Matsubara  
Former Resident SPF Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Ms. Ayako Mie  
Multimedia Journalist  
*The Japan Times*

Dr. Masamichi Minehata  
Research Fellow  
University of Bradford, UK

Ms. Aiko Shimizu  
Student  
University of Pennsylvania Law School

**US**

Ms. Linnea Duvall  
International Relations Specialist  
US Pacific Command

Dr. Leif-Eric Easley  
Assistant Professor, International  
Security and Political Economics  
Division of International Studies  
Ewha University

Mr. Justin Goldman  
Former Resident SPF Research Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. John Hemmings  
Resident WSD- Handa Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Adam Liff  
Ph.D. Candidate - Princeton University

Ms. Jenny Lin  
Resident SPF Fellow  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mr. Vincent Manzo  
Defense and National Security Group  
Fellow  
Center for Strategic and International  
Studies

Mr. Jonathan Miller  
Senior Policy Officer - Asia-Pacific Desk  
Canada Border Services Agency

Mr. Eric Sayers  
Defense Policy Advisor  
Office of Congressman J. Randy Forbes

**Staff**

Ms. Ellise Akazawa  
Public Relations and Outreach  
Coordinator  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Ms. Nicole Forrester  
Director - Young Leaders Program  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Mrs. Christina Hatfield-Mattos  
Conference & Travel Coordinator  
Pacific Forum CSIS

Ms. Brooke Mizuno  
Program Officer  
Pacific Forum CSIS