

The Project 2049 Institute, The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), and the Okazaki Institute present:

Japanese Perspectives on the U.S.-Japan Alliance: New Opportunities, Rising Tensions, and the Armitage-Nye Report



(From left to right: Hideaki Kaneda, Sak Sakoda, Randy Schriver, Hideki Asari and Victor Cha)

On October 4, 2012 the Project 2049 Institute, the Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA), and the Okazaki Institute hosted a panel on the future direction for the U.S.-Japan alliance. Three contributors of the third Armitage-Nye report served on the panel, and the discussion included recommendations from the report as well as Japanese perspectives on future allied cooperation.

The first speaker was Vice Admiral (ret.) Hideaki Kaneda. Admiral Kaneda is Director of the Okazaki Institute, a foreign policy think-tank in Japan, and an Adjunct Fellow at JIIA. Admiral Kaneda's comments focused on reviewing and revising Japan's National Defense Policy Guidelines (NDPG), the most fundamental articles in Japan's defense-policymaking. Admiral Kaneda stated that the last NDPG, issued in 2010, called for a more pro-active diplomacy and pioneered the "dynamic defense" concept. He added that Japan's Self Defense Forces (JSDF) in coordination with U.S. Forces should be ready for a broader range of scenarios. In addition to the existing: peacetime, armed attack, and surrounding area scenarios, the U.S. and Japan should

jointly prepare for emergency situations and maritime contingencies. Specifically, the allies can better coordinate on preparedness for contingencies in the Senkaku Islands, South China Sea, Arctic Ocean, Oceania, and the Indian Ocean.

Sak Sakoda, a report contributor and partner at Armitage International, re-affirmed Admiral Kaneda's comments. Additionally, Mr. Sakoda described Operation Tomodachi as a tremendous success in terms of demonstrating allied interoperability, but he also illustrated it as an irony in U.S.-Japan defense collaboration. For example, during Operation Tomodachi, U.S. warships moved JSDF troops in Hokkaido to the afflicted region, and both nations' forces acted to make operational the airfield in Sendai for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. During Operation Tomodachi the prohibitions on collective self-defense were set aside, largely because the national security threat was internal. However, in the direst situations, where tens of thousands of human lives may be at risk, the U.S. and Japan continue to face limits on permissible joint operations.

During the second panel the discussion transitioned from defense to diplomacy. Hideki Asari, the head of JIIA and a career senior diplomat, outlined Japan's engagements in the region. In line with the Armitage-Nye report's tone on China's rise, Mr. Asari casted skepticism over conventional wisdom concerning China's growth trajectory. Mr. Asari argued that China's double-digit growth is over. Furthermore, growing cases of protest, whether coordinated or spontaneous, point to two trends—rising nationalism and growing expectations. So the next Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership will have their hands full in managing economic growth and nationalism, all the while trying to maintain political legitimacy. Therefore, Japan should continue a policy of hedging and engaging with China.

On South Korea, Mr. Asari argued that historical differences should not mar the potentials for stronger bilateral South Korea-Japan relations. Initiatives such as a joint history textbook (2010) should be publicized. Second, historical issues and territorial disputes should be dealt with separately. Seoul and Tokyo share common values and strategic interests in managing a bellicose North Korea and engaging with China, and they should maintain a continuous dialogue on these issues.

Victor Cha, a report contributor, CSIS Korea Chair, and director of Asian Studies at Georgetown University continued on the topic of South Korea-Japan relations. Dr. Cha highlighted that the historical question is an issue that Japan and South Korea are both responsible for solving together. Japan-South Korea tensions re-emerge in a cyclical pattern and bilateral re-engagement will have to wait until national elections pass. In the meantime, Japan and South Korea should maintain track two dialogues. Another potential resolution for historical issues lies in the political norms in both countries. Being conciliatory on these issues costs political leaders votes. Therefore, it is not in the interests of politicians on either side to address the national and historical differences in a conciliatory manner. This stands in sharp contrast to the domestic legitimacy that post-war leaders in Germany received when making apologetic statements for wartime atrocities, which is another area for Japanese and Korean societies should work on.

Randy Schriver, report contributor, president of Project 2049 Institute and partner at Armitage International moderated the event. He took questions from the audience on a range of issues that

included: implications of Shinzo Abe's leadership of the LDP, the future of nuclear energy, and defense budget cuts in both Japan and the United States.

For additional information or questions about the event, please contact Isabella Mroczkowski at mroczkowski@project2049.net.