

# **US-JAPAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

## **INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM**

### **The Chair of the Board Shirai's Remarks**

Minister Shinoda, distinguished scholars, representatives of partner universities, institutes, and corporations, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the presidents of Keio University, Kyoto University, Ritsumeikan University, The University of Tokyo, and my own university—Waseda—I welcome you to these inaugural events of the US-Japan Research Institute, a new institution whose purpose is simply—and ambitiously—to look “over the horizon” at issues affecting the relationship of our two countries and help train the leaders who will engage them.

The dreams and energies of many individuals, both here and in Japan, have brought us to this moment, and were I to name them all individually I would exhaust both you and the time that's been given me to speak. Their names will become well known to you as the work of the Institute proceeds. For now I wish merely to acknowledge and thank Minister Shinoda and the Embassy staff, who have been exceedingly helpful to us in planning and launching the Institute; the officers of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, whose grant has generously supported today's events; Dr. Truman and Professor Ito, who keynoted today's conference, and Professors Patrick, Fukagawa, and Yoshino, whose illuminating responses helped us unravel the puzzle of today's global economy.

As everyone here is aware, last week the Japanese electorate swept from power a political party that had guided its development for most of the last half century. I mention the vote not to applaud or to condemn it but to say that it marks the end of the “old” times in Japan. And I will add that the establishment of this Institute marks the beginning of the new.

In old times, five of Japan's major universities would not be collaborating in establishing this Institute. They would be competing--competing for every new student, professor, and research dollar. But the times are new. Ours are times in which the ordinary, national purposes of our schools are being challenged by sudden and sweeping global events that form a new if not yet clear higher agenda; times in which knowledge is exploding but our resources are not; times in which boundaries of all kinds—certainly those between universities—are being dissolved by the restless, free movement of people and ideas, and by forms of communication that allow all of our work to be done in “real time.” Thus today our universities take action together, collecting our talents, pooling our resources, and resolving to serve a national need that affects us all.

In old times, our two great countries with their similar structures and shared aims would more or less take one another for granted, secure in their belief that the future would be a mere variant of the past and their alliance could proceed on “automatic pilot.” But the times are new. Pundits everywhere are declaring that Japan has “come of age,” that it must assert anew its independence and loosen its ties with America, that it must look to China and India and to Asia generally to develop its economy, refine its democracy, and anchor its future. The U.S. as well finds the assumptions of its post-War economy and its Cold War diplomacy challenged at every turn and seeks new ways of acting in the world, significantly if not only in Asia. Thus today we establish a forum to probe the dimensions of these changed times, and what they mean for our separate and common futures.

In old times we would not be creating an institute to worry over the future, much less one here in Washington, DC. We would rely on strategies that have served us so well for over fifty years and let the bureaucrats do the job for which they are so well trained. But our times are new. Japan today faces economic pressures unlike any in its recent past, and strains on its social arrangements that have created one of the world’s fairest and most dynamic countries. Many of its problems are shared by the U.S., but some of them, most notably demographic change, impose on it a unique burden. In response Japan must actively cultivate a new political class, one that is not elected simply to distribute societal goods, leaving governance to the professionals, but one that faces up to the new realities before us and weighs policy alternatives with sophistication and courage. Nowhere does this happen better than in Washington, with its intense political culture and its stock of excellent universities, think tanks, and institutes. We can learn much by being part of this city and becoming part of its relentless and endlessly fascinating social and political debates.

So here we gather, clear about the values we have painfully acquired over many years, respectful of the society we have built at home and the alliances we have formed abroad, but all too conscious of the challenges we see before us and concerned for the changes “over the horizon” we cannot yet see but know to be there. In these feelings of pride and apprehension we are joined at the hip with the people of America, with whom we have marched from bitter enmity to fast friendship and with whom we have built ways and institutions that are the envy of the world.

We are determined in our enterprise to ask any question of interest about ourselves and our future, no matter how difficult the research may be or how uncomfortable the answers might make us. We will probe concerns that are not simply academic in nature but reach well into the daily challenges of our businesses and industries, and of our politicians and ordinary citizens. Our aim is to raise our political consciousness in its widest sense and to train leaders who as a matter of course can weigh policy alternatives and engineer change.

We realize we are not the only universities and the only institute focused on issues of Japan and the U.S.; indeed our hope is to join with institutions of like mind and purpose in doing together the projects that would be less well done alone. Together, we hope, we might begin to create for our nations a new age and a new alliance, one that is perhaps more flexible and varied than the one now ending, but one nonetheless that is built on the same values of liberty and enterprise that have served our nations so well and inspired many others now following in our path.

Thank you for your presence here today and for your support in the future.