

3 April 2017

Dear friend,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

On Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) held a public panel discussion event regarding Japan-Australia-U.S. security cooperation in partnership with the Embassy of Japan. The discussion was moderated by the Executive Director of ASPI, Mr Peter Jennings PSM, and the panellists were Associate Professor Ken Jimbo from Keio University (Japan), Mr Brad Glosserman, Executive Director of Pacific Forum CSIS (United States) and Mr Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor of *The Australian* (Australia).

Mr Glosserman began the discussion by stating that the Japan-Australia-U.S. trilateral security dialogue is the gold standard of trilateral cooperation globally, and we are facing a series of multi-level and multi-dimensional threats, which require different responses. Mr Glosserman asserted that we need to strengthen the connections between the spokes of the U.S. hub and spokes alliance system, such as encouraging bilateral connections between Japan and Australia as well as other like-minded countries. Mr Glosserman also mentioned that the U.S. cannot be inward-looking. While there is a growing concern for domestic priorities in the U.S., the majority of Americans believe they cannot afford to turn backs on the world. What Mr Glosserman would like to see is an alliance coordination mechanism with Australia and combine it with the Japan-U.S. and Australia-U.S. ACMs respectively.

Following Mr Glosserman was Associate Professor Jimbo who stated that the dynamic change occurring in the region is about the emerging Asian states. The rest of Asia is also developing its own capabilities. He continued stating that we are now seeing more productive cooperation between countries in the region, which will make significant difference in terms of maritime security, anti-piracy contributions and non-traditional security areas. Associate Professor Jimbo suggested that among the inter-spoke cooperation, Japan and Australia is one of the most important on the various levels of cooperation we have in the region.

Concluding his discussion, Associate Professor Jimbo stated the importance of the connectivity of vital sea lanes, and that Japan, Australia and the U.S. have always had a high stake in securing the freedom of navigation in this region. China and to some extent, Russia have been challenging this notion of connectivity in terms of the rule of law. He also suggested it is important to have the U.S. engaged in the region so that we have a major provider of regional order, yet at the same time we have to encourage regional partners to cultivate their capacity to deal with maritime coercion in the region.

The final speaker was Mr Sheridan who stated that it is sensible to engage with the U.S. and have them involved in the region as well as cooperating closely with our allies like Japan to moderate behaviour. Mr Sheridan also stated that if the Trump administration were to become serious about Southeast Asia, the U.S. will be able to recover their leadership in the region and redevelop the consensus around the rules-based order and territorial integrity.



I believe that it was extremely beneficial for the audience as well as researchers and members of Australian government departments in attendance to gain a deeper understanding of the ways forward as well as the importance of further enhancing security cooperation between Japan, Australia and the U.S. to maintain regional peace and security while observing the existing liberal rules-based order in a period of uncertainty and unpredictability in the Asia-Pacific. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ASPI Executive Director, Mr Peter Jennings and ASPI as well as the three speakers for sharing their expertise and knowledge on trilateral security cooperation and the Asia Pacific region in what was certainly a robust discussion.

In my remarks, I stated that we are witnessing many signs of uncertainty or even a crisis in the Asia-Pacific region. With such uncertainty, unpredictability and heightened risks, it has never been clearer for Japan and Australia to pursue a conscious and concerted effort based on our special strategic partnership as well as to reinforce proactive engagement with the U.S. with the view to enhancing bilateral and trilateral security cooperation.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull have affirmed that Japan and Australia's continued effort to work proactively, alongside the U.S. and other like-minded countries, including India, to maintain the existing rules-based international order and support a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific region. In this context, Prime Minister Turnbull welcomed Japan's focus on greater regional engagement and expressed his appreciation for Prime Minister Abe's briefing on Japan's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', which views the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific as being connected, thus underlining how crucial the peace and stability of the two oceans are to the region.

Yours Sincerely,

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Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia