

Ambassador Kusaka's Message No.59

*Japan-U.S.-Australia relations and the Indo-Pacific Symposium at the Perth USAsia Centre*

16 March 2018

Dear Friends,

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> of March, I attended a symposium hosted by the Perth USAsia Centre on Japan-U.S.-Australia relations and the Indo-Pacific. Featuring close to 30 speakers from countries such as Japan, Australia, India and the U.S., the symposium consisted of high-quality discussions regarding the Indo-Pacific region, Japan's role and leadership capabilities in the region, cooperation between Japan, Australia, India and the U.S., ASEAN, and the importance of regional infrastructure development. I was delighted to be joined by my counterpart, Mr Richard Court, the Ambassador of Australia to Japan. In our keynote addresses, we gave a comprehensive introduction to our respective nation's Indo-Pacific policies. It was a privilege to be able to speak among the many prominent experts on the day.



Delivering my opening speech

In my keynote address, I began by reading a message from the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr Taro Kono, stating; *In order to promote the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, it is critically important to cooperate with the U.S., which is Japan's ally, and Australia, which is Japan's Special Strategic Partner. On the occasion of President Trump's visit to Japan in November last year, as well as Prime Minister Turnbull's visit this January, we agreed to collaborate and cooperate to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Japan, Australia and the U.S. are important friends and partners connected by a shared future. In addition to renewing our determination to strengthen our cooperation and collaboration, we seek to ensure a free and open international order.*

While on the topic of the Indo-Pacific, I stressed that at its core, the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy is about how we achieve prosperity and how we share prosperity in a peaceful international environment based on the rule of law. To advance this strategy, cooperation from India and ASEAN member countries is vital on top of the Japan-U.S., Japan-Australia, and Japan-U.S.-Australia frameworks.



Ambassador Court delivering an opening speech

Ambassador Court spoke of the importance of Prime Minister Turnbull's visit to Japan in January for the Japan-Australia relationship. In closing the symposium, Perth USAsia Centre CEO, Mr Gordon Flake commented that 10 years ago he could not have predicted the discussions surrounding the Indo-Pacific concept would become this topical and current.



(from left ) Mr Flake, Ambassador Court, myself and Mr Varghese

While continuing to strengthen the concept of the Indo-Pacific with countries concerned, I believe that the active discussions by the many prominent experts at this symposium will be a good starting point to elevate and implement this concept. I greatly appreciate the efforts of Mr Flake in bringing everyone together for this symposium as well as the significant input by diverse speakers from Japan, Australia, the U.S., India and ASEAN countries. As it is vital to reflect the outcomes of this symposium in the implementation of the Indo-Pacific strategy, I endeavour to

continue discussions on this topic with experts around Australia as well as with you, readers of my Ambassador's Message.

[\(Full text of my opening speech\)](#)

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia