



日本国際交流センター

JAPAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program

2019 Delegation to the United States

SEPTEMBER 2019

ON SEPTEMBER 17–20, JCIE’s 30th delegation of Diet members visited the United States. Representing both the ruling and opposition parties, the parliamentarians traveled together with a JCIE study team comprised of Japanese experts on democratic governance for a series of high-level meetings and roundtables in Washington DC. The group met with more than 50 American and Japanese leaders to exchange views on US-Japan relations, as well as to explore the potential for greater cooperation in support of democratization in Asia. The exchange was part of a project that JCIE began in 2018 on “Expanding Support for Democratic Governance.”

While in the United States, the delegates met with seven Congressional members and a diverse array of senior government officials and NGO leaders to exchange views on US-Japan security and trade issues and to discuss lessons learned by US institutions engaged with democracy assistance. Toward the end of the week, they were also featured as speakers at the fifth Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Seminar, hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations, where they discussed the theme of the program, “Japan in the World: Sustaining Democracy,” and talked more broadly about Japan’s domestic political situation.



Diet members with Rep. David Price, Rep. Adrian Smith, and Rep. Bill Flores from the House Democratic Partnership



Senator Cory Gardner discusses US-Japan relations and the future of Asia with the delegation

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Domestic Politics in the US and Japan

Members of the delegation understandably were curious about the views of those they met in Washington DC on the current US political situation, what might happen in the upcoming 2020 election, and expectations for new US legislation. The response from those looking in from the outside—journalists, policy experts at think tanks, and Japanese business leaders—was largely one of uncertainty over the direction of US policy moving forward. Although the trip took place one week before Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced an impeachment inquiry, it was already clear that partisan divisions and the upcoming election meant significant Congressional action would be unlikely until after 2020. This was emphasized during a lunch with journalists, including two former JCIE Journalism Fellows, who felt the only legislation expected before the end of the year might be the ratification of the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA).

On the other hand, there was also interest from the US side in Japan’s own domestic political situation, and whether a strong opposition will emerge once Prime Minister Abe’s term potentially comes to an end in 2021. These topics rose to the forefront at the Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Seminar during a session on the state of Japanese politics. In general, there was a feeling that Japan’s politics seem much healthier, although there was also some concern about the weakness of Japan’s opposition parties.



National Endowment for Democracy President Carl Gershman explains how the United States supports democratic governance

PARTICIPANTS

Hon. Toshiko Abe, Member, House of Representatives (Liberal Democratic Party–LDP)

Dr. Takako Hikotani, Professor, Columbia University

Dr. Maiko Ichihara, Associate Professor, Hitotsubashi University

Hon. Shu Sakurai, Member, House of Representatives (Constitutional Democratic Party)

Dr. Kaori Shoji, Professor in American Politics, Gakushuin University Faculty of Law

Hon. Hiromi Takase, Member, House of Councillors (Komeito)

Amb. Yukio Takasu, Special Advisor on Human Security to the UN Secretary General; former UN Under-Secretary General for Management; former Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations

Hon. Keisuke Tsumura, Member, House of Representatives (Democratic Party for the People)

Hon. Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi, Member, House of Representatives (LDP)

Mr. James Gannon, Executive Director, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)

Dr. Atsuko Yokobori Geiger, Fellow, JCIE/USA

Ms. Hideko Katsumata, Executive Director & COO, JCIE/Japan

Mr. Stephen McHugh, Assistant Program Officer, JCIE/USA

US-Japan Cooperation in Asia

The trip came at a time of serious protests and civil unrest in Hong Kong, showcasing the seeming collapse of the one country, two systems principle. As such, Hong Kong and the influence of China’s Belt and Road Initiative were a frequent topic of discussion, offering a reminder that a strong US-Japan relationship will be vital in curbing China’s influence. There was a great deal of praise for Japan’s role in developing the concept of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP), which has been adopted as official policy in both Japan and the United States, demonstrating that, despite some conflicts over trade issues and America’s withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the two countries are still important partners in the region.

The message the delegation heard on US foreign policy was that, President Trump’s fiery rhetoric notwithstanding, there is still more continuity

than is commonly acknowledged. Of course, there are some exceptions to this, such as the administration’s approach to Iran, but overall there has been significant bipartisan agreement over issues such as how to handle China and the need for stability in foreign assistance. The group witnessed this bipartisan approach firsthand when five members of the House Democratic Partnership (HDP)—from both sides of the aisle—met with the delegation to discuss their work.

The escalating tensions between Japan and South Korea, which saw Korea withdraw from a bilateral intelligence-sharing pact in August after growing trade tensions, were also on many people’s minds. The message from US government officials about this situation was that, from the US perspective, there was a desire to see the situation resolved as soon as possible. There was a feeling that a strong trilateral relationship between Japan, the US, and South Korea was of key importance for security and trade relations in the region. For example, Senator Cory Gardner spoke about the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which features trilateral cooperation with Japan and Korea as one of the key facets for promoting US security interests in the Indo-Pacific.

Trade in the Aftermath of TPP

Trade relations between Japan and the United States were of course another key topic in discussions. One member of Congress pointed out that trade is often the vehicle for politicians to demonstrate the importance of foreign policy to constituents at home.

Numerous legislators on the US side from both parties expressed their disappointment that the United States had withdrawn from TPP, but added that the way Japan has stepped up in the aftermath of that decision was impressive. Japan’s conclusion of a multi-lateral trade agreement with the European Union was also lauded. The Japanese participants also expressed regret over the US exit from TPP and shared their concern that China may now be looking on with interest at the space left behind in the partnership by the United States.

US-Japan Cooperation on Democracy Support

An underlying theme throughout all of the groups meeting’s was the strong desire to see greater cooperation between Japan and the United States in East Asia in the area of democracy support. US foreign policy organizations pointed out that democracy support should be seen as part of a broader, long-term national security strategy given that stable neighbors equate to a more stable region. Study group members pointed out that Japan is in fact already doing work in support of democratization, although it has not necessarily been described using that terminology. They also noted that the work of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) often covers activities such as technical support for elections or rule of law assistance, both of which JICA’s counterpart in the United States, USAID, would typically consider as falling under the umbrella of democracy assistance.



CSIS Senior Fellow Mike Green makes a point during discussion



Hiroimi Takase speaks at the Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Seminar

US groups emphasized that Japan has been one of the most stable democracies in the East Asia region since the late 1940s and is now seen as a model of democratic success for other Asian countries. US think-tank experts identified some of the comparative advantages Japan might have in this field over the United States. As a parliamentary democracy, Japan offers a different model for democratic governance that is often closer to other countries in East Asia and it has a lot to teach about parliamentary procedure, the establishment of a strong, independent judiciary, and other aspects of democratic governance. In addition, Prime Minister Abe’s emphasis on women’s empowerment might make this a natural area for Japan to focus on funding in other countries. Overall, there was a lot of positivity about Japan’s ability to have a strong impact if it decides to further engage in support for democratization.

The trip featured meetings across the spectrum of governmental, quasi-governmental, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work in this field. The delegation met with board members and top leadership at the National Endowment for Democracy, where it learned how the organization receives funding from Congress and how it is able to act as an umbrella organization for its two core institutes, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). They also met with the presidents of these two institutes to discuss the work they are doing in Asia. Site visits to these organizations as well as to such NGOs as Freedom House inspired the delegation to start thinking about what efforts are needed to build up Japanese expertise on democracy support as well.



Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi speaks at the Council on Foreign Relations



Members of the delegation in front of the White House



Richard Bush, Mireya Solis, and Jonathan Stromseth at The Brookings Institution roundtable on governance in Asia



NDI President Derek Mitchell, IRI President Dan Twining, and senior IRI and NDI staff discuss their work

PROGRAM

Tuesday, September 17

Orientation Lunch

The US Approach to Democracy Assistance

Thomas Carothers, Senior Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Brookings Institution Roundtable on Governance in Asia

Mireya Solis, Philip Knight Chair in Japan Studies, Brookings Institute

Richard Bush, Senior Fellow, Director, Center for East Asia Policy Studies (CEAP), Brookings Institute

Jonathan Stromseth, Lee Kuan Yew Chair in Southeast Asian Studies, Brookings Institute

Dinner with US-Asia Specialists

Emma Chanlett-Avery, Specialist in Asian Affairs, Congressional Research Service

Shihoko Goto, Deputy Director for Goeconomics & Senior Associate for Northeast Asia, Wilson Center

Michael Schiffer, Senior Advisor and Counselor, Senate Foreign Relations Committee; former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia

James Schoff, Senior Fellow, Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Wednesday, September 18

Japanese Business Leader Briefing on US-Japan Relations

Yoichi Mineo, Vice President & General Manager, Marubeni America Corporation

Saori Tsuchiya, General Manager, Government Affairs, Toyota Motor North America

Hiroyuki (Bob) Takai, Senior Vice President & General Manager, Sumitomo Corporation Washington DC office

Center for Strategic & International Studies Discussion on US-Asia Relations

Michael Green, Senior Vice President for Asia and Japan Chair, Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS); former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Asia, National Security Council

Nicholas Szechenyi, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Japan Chair, CSIS

US Department of State

Marc Knapper, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Korea and Japan, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State

Jim Heller, Director, Japan Desk, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State

Briefing by Journalists on the Prospects for American Politics

Natalie Andrews, Congressional Reporter, Wall Street Journal

Christian Caryl, International Opinions Editor, The Washington Post; Editor, DemocracyPost Blog

Byron Tau, Justice Department & FBI Reporter, Wall Street Journal

Roundtable Discussion with the US-Japan Congressional Caucus & the House Democracy Partnership

Bill Flores, Member, House of Representatives (R-TX)

Robin Kelly, Member, House of Representatives (D-IL)

David Price, Member, Member, House of Representatives (D-NC); Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development; Co-chair, House Democracy Partnership

Adrian Smith, Member, Member, House of Representatives (R-NE); Co-chair, US-Japan Congressional Caucus

Norma Torres, Member, House of Representatives (D-CA)

Derek Luyten, Executive Director, House Democracy Partnership

Nils Mueller, Staff Director, House Democracy Partnership

Visit to US Senate Gallery & Tour of US Capitol Building

Visit to Japanese-American Memorial

Sunnylands Foundation/NED/JCIE Dinner on US-Japan Cooperation on Democracy

Carl Gershman, President, National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Elizabeth Hoffman, Senior Manager for Government Affairs, NED

David Lane, President, Annenberg Family Trust at Sunnylands; former US Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture

Lynn Lee, Associate Director, NED

Jeffrey Phillips, Policy Director, Annenberg Family Trust at Sunnylands

Raul Ruiz, Member, House of Representatives (D-CA)

Thursday, September 19

2019 Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Seminar at the Council on Foreign Relations

Opening Remarks

Sheila Smith, Senior Fellow for Japan Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

James Gannon, Executive Director, JCIE/USA

Panel 1: Japan's Role in Democracy Promotion

Presider: Sheila Smith

Yukio Takasu, Special Advisor on Human Security to the UN Secretary General; former UN Under-Secretary General for Management; former Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations

Maiko Ichihara, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Law and the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University

Derek Mitchell, President, National Democratic Institute

Panel 2: The State of Japanese Politics

Presider: Sheila Smith

Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi, Member House of Representatives

Keisuke Tsumura, Member, House of Representatives

Shu Sakurai, Member, House of Representatives

Hiromi Takase, Member, House of Councillors

Meeting with Senator Cory Gardner

Cory Gardner, Member, US Senate (R-CO); Chairman, US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity

Briefing by Senior USAID Staff

Kaush Arha, Senior Adviser, Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL)

Meghan Holohan, Program Analyst, PPL

Chris Maloney, Assistant to the Administrator, PPL

Wendy Marshall, Democracy, Governance, Peace, and Security Team Leader, Asia Bureau Technical Services Office.

Tim Meisburger, Director of the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Center of Excellence

Bob Powers, Deputy Assistant Administrator, PPL

Anne Marie Yastishock, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia

Site Visit to Freedom House

Lisa Dickieson, Senior Vice President for Programs, Freedom House

Jon Temin, Director, Africa Programs, Freedom House

David Timberman, Asia Regional Director, Freedom House

Embassy Dinner hosted by Ambassador Shinsuke Sugiyama

Friday, September 20

Supporting Democratic Unity – Discussion with National Endowment for Democracy Leadership and Board Members

Carl Gershman, President, National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Barry Jackson, Strategic Advisor, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck; Managing Director, The Lindsey Group LLC; former Chief of Staff to Speaker John Boehner

Ken Wollack, Director, Commission on Presidential Debates; former President, National Democratic Institute

Senior Staff Briefing on National Endowment for Democracy's Operations

Jodi Herman, Vice-President of Government Relations and Public Affairs

Chris Walker, Vice-President for Studies and Analysis

John Knaus, Senior Director for Asia

Lynn Lee, Associate Director

Wilson Lee, Senior Program Officer, Asia Program

Lunch Discussion: The Work of the US Democracy Institutes

Derek Mitchell, President, National Democratic Institute; former US Ambassador to Myanmar

Daniel Twining, President, International Republican Institute

Rhonda Mays, Deputy Director, Asia Division, International Republican Institute

Manpreet Sing Anand, Regional Director for Asia Pacific, National Democratic Institute

Tour of the National Democratic Institute

Tess Pantow, Administrative Manager for Asia, NDI

Eunice Yoo-Jung Ha, Senior Program Manager for Asia, NDI