

Japan

Improving communication and advancing cooperation

Stimson's Japan program strives to cultivate experts, officials, and scholars within the Japanese government and military who communicate effectively with Washington, and to introduce nuanced analyses of internal developments in Japan to the Washington policy community. We aim to reduce misunderstanding, improve communication, and advance cooperation between the United States and Japan.

STRONG PARTNERSHIP, NEW CHALLENGES

Since 1951, the U.S.-Japan alliance has been a cornerstone of stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Despite the depth of this partnership, a lack of understanding of Japan's policies, institutions, and policymaking process continues to lead to misguided expectations from the U.S. policy establishment, and vice versa. The resulting misunderstandings and tension have undermined the alliance and its supporting industries—from the controversial co-development of Japan's F-2 fighter in the 1980s to long-held U.S. expectations that Japan would shift to a more active posture in the alliance.

An accurate understanding of Japan by the U.S. policymaking community can help sustain a robust and adaptable U.S.-Japan alliance, the importance of which cannot be understated. Defense coordination and partnerships with other countries that share similar values have secured the region since 1945. It is vital for upholding U.S.-Japan strategic superiority amid the shifting geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific. The alliance also fosters opportunities for U.S. companies with Japanese partners in the defense industry, along every part of the supply chain from research and development to product maintenance and upgrades, which encourage broader bilateral partnership.

THROUGH COLLABORATION, UNDERSTANDING

The U.S.-Japan alliance is a living, ongoing partnership, so Stimson focuses on expanding working-level interactions

PROJECTS

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LEADERSHIP

Yuki Tatsumi

Director



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between the U.S. and Japanese defense establishments. We provide key analysis to policymakers who draft the policies that govern the alliance, and we work with experts in the military and the policy community to understand the challenges of the alliance in a historical and contemporary context. Through our engagement with officials, we identify and raise awareness of specific issues—from strategic messaging to the nuts and bolts of alliance interactions—that can lead to misunderstanding and tension.

We prioritize a pragmatic approach, recognizing the sensitive nature of the issues in our portfolio. In closed-door dialogues, we encourage policymakers and thought leaders from both sides to candidly discuss obstacles to alliance communication and cooperation—and to build the personal ties necessary to develop solutions.

The alliance is an overarching mechanism of U.S.-Japan relations, but it is built on a foundation of day-to-day collaboration between colleagues on each side of the Pacific. We work with governments, the policy community, and academia to identify the most promising experts and bring them to Washington to conduct research, create a network of D.C.-based officials and analysts, and advance dialogue between Japan and the United States on shared security concerns. Our growing network of visiting fellows and scholars is the foundation for continuing relationships that will weather future challenges to the alliance.

Our program's unique access to experts and officials in both Washington and Tokyo, and across military bases in the United States and Japan, reflects the trust that these institutions have in the program and its director. Yuki Tatsumi delivers key analysis on an array of issues and has a vision of a sustainable alliance that values fresh ideas, new voices, and collaborative problem-solving.

Contact

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