

# A Shared Future: The KASC/JASC Symposium on U.S.- Korea-Japan Trilateral Partnership

June 6, 2013 - Washington, DC

On June 6th, 2013, International Student Conferences (ISC) hosted a symposium on U.S.-Korea-Japan trilateral partnership. The symposium included two panels, the first on regional security and the second on the economy, and a reception with brief addresses from representatives from the U.S. Department of State, the Korean Embassy, and the Japanese Embassy. The panels were moderated by student leaders of ISC's two annual exchange programs, the Japan-America Student Conference (JASC) and the Korea-America Student Conference (KASC). Questions from the moderators and audience were specifically geared towards the role of youth in the context of regional security and the economy.



*Glen S. Fukushima, JASC 22 & 23 (1970 & 1971) answers a question from the audience during the economic panel*



*The KASC-JASC symposium was ISC's first trilateral initiative in Washington, D.C.*



*Susan Stevenson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Dept of State, addresses guests at the reception*

# Regional Security Panel

Ambassador Thomas Hubbard, Ambassador Kathleen Stephens, and Grew-Bancroft Scholar and alumnus of JASC 2010 & 2011 Kunihiro Shimoji sat on the regional security panel. The panel was moderated by KASC America Executive Committee Chair Tiffany Vang of the College of Saint Benedict and JASC Executive Committee Member Cruz Arroyo of Haverford College. Two focuses of the panel were the impact of history on trilateral relations and the role of youth in improving trilateral partnership.

Panelists were in agreement that history makes U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral strategic relations especially complicated. Particularly, the damaging and often brutal interactions between Japan, Korea, and the U.S. during WWII have left wounds that remain unhealed and are often reopened. Amba-



*Kunihiro Shimoji, JASC 62 & 63 (2010 & 2011) speaks on the regional security panel*

sador Hubbard pointed out that Japanese and Korean policy makers and diplomats often intentionally agitate each other in order to score political points domestically. He went on to make the point that in a trilateral context, the U.S. has and can continue to play an important role in settling such disputes between Japan and Korea when they do arise.

He also introduced the proposition that such historical tensions may be less salient in the minds of younger generations. However, Ambassador Stephens cautioned that although this may be the case, it is also dangerous to, “rely on the clock,” to settle historical disputes. She advocates a proactive approach in acknowledging and healing the wounds of the past. All panelists were in agreement that if the younger generations are to move towards stronger trilateral relations based on strong interpersonal relationships, they would be wise to better understand history, while not being bound by that history. Mr. Shimoji emphasized that understanding must be achieved through listening to other perspectives and recognizing and mitigating one’s own biases.

Panelists were also in agreement that student exchanges can play an important role in improving trilateral relations. Mr. Shimoji mentioned the KASC-JASC meeting in 2010 as an especially meaningful interaction that allowed him to understand Japanese, Korean, and American perspectives. Ambassador Stephens and Ambassador Hubbard agreed that exchanges like JASC and KASC can play an important role in fostering understanding and personal friendships that can ripple outward and positively affect international relations.



*Ambassador Thomas Hubbard speaks on the role of the U.S. in improving Korea-Japan relations*



# Economic Panel

Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and alumnus of JASC 1970 & 1971 Glen S. Fukushima, Vice President for Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Tami Overby, and Researcher at Mitsui and alumnus of JASC 2009 & KASC 2010 & 2011 Jose Pulido sat on the economic panel. The panel was moderated by JASC America Executive Committee Chair Paul Yarabe of Harvard University and KASC Executive Committee Member Marteka Fair of the University of North Carolina. The focus of the panel was the role of youth in the economy.

Panelists were in agreement that youth in the U.S., Japan, and South Korea face a similarly difficult job market. Each panelists shared advice for young job seekers. Both Mr. Fukushima and Ms. Overby vouched for the value of internship experience. Ms. Overby pointed out that the skills, knowledge, and network one will gain from an internship experience will differentiate them from competitors when seeking a job. Mr. Fukushima added that students must develop their ability to adapt to new ways of thinkings in a work setting. Mr. Pulido shared his own experience in job hunting and advised students to focus on relationships and seek a mentor.

In response to a question about under-invested programs in U.S., Korea, and Japan, Mr. Fukushima pointed out the value of a strong liberal arts education. He emphasized the importance of learning how to think critically, logically, and analytically. Ms. Overby added that immigration reform can have a positive impact on the economy. She spoke in support of legislation that would provide green cards for foreign nationals who completed graduate degrees in the U.S.

Panelists also spoke on recent trends in international exchange and trade. Mr. Fukushima cited a number of statistics showing increased insularity of Japanese youth. However, he also made the observation that there seems to be a shift in thinking within large Japanese corporations. He remains hopeful that companies are becoming more open to rewarding international experience as opposed to punishing it. Ms. Overby added that such a change has likely already occurred in South Ko-



*Panelists receive a question from Korean Executive Committee Chair Bokyung Kim, a student at Yonsei University*



*Svetlana Ikononova, JASC 61 (2009), asks a question about lifetime employment in Japan and Korea*



*Marteka Fair of North Carolina University and Paul Yarabe of Harvard University moderate the economic panel*

rea where international experience, including study abroad, is often rewarded with increased opportunities for advancement and greater responsibility in the workplace. All panelists were in agreement that international exchange can be valuable to young professionals' careers and urged students to take part in exchanges such as JASC and KASC.

# Reception

A reception followed the panel discussions with remarks from Ki Hong, Partner, Skadden & Arps, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Stevenson, Minister Masato Ohtaka, Embassy of Japan, and Minister Counselor Hyoung-Chan Choe, Embassy of the Republic of Korea. Each speaker reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the trilateral partnership to ensure peace and economic prosperity.



*Minister Counselor Hyoung-Chan Choe, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, gives an address during the reception*



*Minister Masato Ohtaka, Embassy of Japan, gives an address during the reception*



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[Yonhap News \(Korean\)](#)

[NAFSA Blog \(English\)](#)

[Voice of America \(Korean\)](#)

[MSN Sankei \(Japanese\)](#)

## About JASC and KASC

The Japan-America Student Conference ([JASC](#)) is a student-led exchange program, initiated in 1934 by university students concerned by the breakdown of bilateral relations prior to the Second World War. Today, an equal number of students from the U.S. and Japan are competitively selected each year to spend one summer month together, studying and analyzing Japan-U.S. relations while visiting four diverse regions in the host country. JASC alternates its host country every year, emphasizing the personal connections between two distinct cultures gathered together in one place.



*A roundtable during JASC 63 (2011) in Kyoto, Japan*

The Korea-America Student Conference ([KASC](#)) is a student-led, academic and cultural exchange program launched in 2008 to build closer ties between young leaders in both countries. KASC is relatively new, but the bilateral relationship runs deep. By exploring this relationship on multiple levels (e.g. politics, trade, culture, news media), students will gain knowledge and confidence to discuss, debate, and co-create bilateral and international relations.

A unique feature of both programs is that students organize each conference, working together across the Pacific throughout the academic year. They also host roundtables during the Conference, discussing important issues outside the traditional classroom with other students from across the globe.



*KASC delegates ride the bus during American Orientation of KASC 4 (2011) in San Francisco, CA*



More Information

[www.iscdc.org](http://www.iscdc.org)

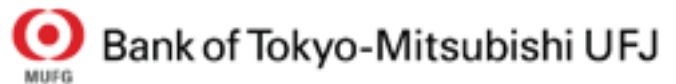


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