

ISC

International Student Conferences

SYMPOSIUM

2014

The KASC/JASC Symposium on U.S.- Korea-Japan Trilateral Partnership

On January 30, 2014, International Student Conferences (ISC) hosted its second trilateral symposium in Washington, DC: The Second JASC-KASC Trilateral Symposium: Advancing Trust in the U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateral Partnership. The purpose of this symposium was to create an environment in which university students were able to speak openly about current sensitive issues and share their ideas on how young leaders in the three countries can work to build stronger personal ties in order to better understand one another. Hosted and moderated by the student Executive Committee members of ISC's two flagship programs, Japan-America Student Conference (JASC) and Korea-America Student Conference (KASC), this year's symposium included two panels, a keynote speaker, and a lunch networking reception. The first panel was titled "Historical Controversies and Security", and featured speakers Dr. Victor Cha and Dr. Mike Green; the second panel was titled "Women in Society", and featured Ms. Chiyo Kobayashi and Ms. Florence Lee as the panel speakers. Mr. Glen S. Fukushima, Vice Chairman of ISC Board of Directors and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress provided the keynote speech. After the sym-



Mike Green speaks with moderators Robert DeVico and Pramodh Ganapathy take notes

posium, JASC and KASC student leaders attended a closed-door meeting with Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Mr. Daniel Russel.

Panel 1: Historical Controversies and Security

Moderated by JASC Executive Committee member Pramodh Ganapathy and KASC Executive Committee member Robert DeVico, the Historical Controversies and Security Panel featured panelists Dr. Victor Cha and Dr. Mike Green, and examined how history has influenced current relations and future prospects of cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and Korea.

The panel opened discussing various roles the U.S. plays in resolving historical grievance between South Korea and Japan. The panelists agreed that the role of the U.S. is to counsel behind the scenes and listen to both sides, thereby not jeopardizing the close relationship it has with both nations. Dr. Green elaborated further, saying that the U.S. government cannot publically appear divided among the issues between Japan and Korea because they are allies with both countries. Doing so could lead to a deterioration of U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea relations. He noted that in order to improve trilateral relations, the US, Korea, and Japan must focus on their common purposes and goals: the rise of China in East Asia, the potential nuclear threat from North Korea, and the involvement of East Asian nations in the development overseas, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

It quickly became clear that this kind of diplomacy is very complex and delicate. Dr. Cha and Dr. Green asked the audience who would stand to win and lose from a “bad” relationship between Japan and Korea? The answer was that only China and nationalists in Korea and Japan benefit from this tension while the U.S. has nothing to gain because of its good relationships with Japan and Korea.

The panel also discussed how historical issues have influenced students, and how young leaders can help make a more positive impact on the next generation. Dr. Cha emphasized how in the U.S. K-12 education system, there is a lack of focus



Moderator Pramodh Ganapathy hears Victor Cha's response



Victor Cha listens to the moderator's question

on historical or current events in East Asia: the focus is on American and Western European history. He did point to newer trends in increased Asian language programs along with non-Western history requirements at the collegiate level, which is enabling more young leaders to learn about East Asian in more depth. With that being said, both panelists stressed how different the circumstances are for students in Korea and Japan. Most perceptions about their country's history in both Japan and Korea are passed down through family stories. Older generations pass down how they remember the history of their country, based on their personal experiences or the experiences of their parents. Unlike here in the U.S., students in Japan and Korea are “taught to the test”, that is to say their schooling focuses on how to memorize answers for entrance exams. This focus on the test answers can inhibit the students' ability to debate and truly explore and express their own ideas and emotions.

In summary, both Dr. Cha and Dr. Green emphasized that leaders in both countries would want to, and are willing to improve their relationship. Both agreed that a setting such as this symposium is the perfect way to get young people involved and talking about controversial issues, and that even though it is in a smaller scale, it reflects a positive step towards a more peaceful region.

Panel 2: Women in Society Panel

Moderated by JASC Executive Committee member Sharon Lu and KASC Korean Executive Committee member HyeHee Kang, this panel focused on the role women play in social, political, and economic sectors of the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. Panel Speakers Chiyo Kobayashi and Florence Lee began by expanding on their own personal experiences. Ms. Lee immigrated to Boston when she was 14, and she was one of the first Koreans in that area to immigrate. She expressed her gratitude of having been raised in an open-minded family that encouraged her to become a news reporter over entering into a more traditional career for women at that time, such as a flight attendant or bank teller. Ms. Lee said she was fortunate enough to not have experienced the glass ceiling in all the years that she has worked here in the U.S. Ms. Kobayashi, likewise, explained that she came from a supportive, open-minded family that encouraged



Panel 2 featured Chiyo Kobayashi and Florence Lee

her to leave her hometown, a small fishing town, for a school in Tokyo. It was not typical to leave their small towns to pursue further education. She went to a women's college in Japan that stressed the importance of learning English, and similarly to Ms. Lee, she said that she has not experienced the glass ceiling in the U.S. Ms. Lee expanded on this thought by noting that Korea and Japan are respectively 108th and 101st out of 135 countries when it comes to gender inequality. Ms. Kobayashi discussed that there are not enough females in managerial positions in Japan, and although many women do work, it takes them a long time to get any kind of promotion. Both countries are working to improve the working environment for women by creating laws and incentives to corporations. Ms. Lee stressed that tax and financial incentives for companies are being used to hire women, and although there has been a pledge to start 1.6 million jobs in Korea, not much has been done yet. The gender inequalities in the two countries arise from long held cultural traditions of the female stereotype.

Both agreed that tackling the problem of gender inequality requires both a top down and bottom up approach. Companies must be open to hiring and promoting women, but at the same time, women must show dedication and a drive to move up. Both view gender equality as a societal issue in which everyone needs to work together. They both showed hope and excitement that the younger generation may be able to create change, and deconstruct these long-held stereotypes.

Keynote Speech by Glen S. Fukushima

As the Symposium's keynote speaker, Mr. Glen S. Fukushima, ISC Board of Directors Vice Chairman and Senior Fellow at the Center for American



Moderator Pramodh Ganapathy hears Victor Cha's response

her to leave her hometown, a small fishing town, for a school in Tokyo. It was not typical to leave their small towns to pursue further education. She went to a women's college in Japan that stressed the importance of learning English, and similarly to Ms. Lee, she said that she has not experienced the glass ceiling in the U.S.

Although both speakers said that they were fortunate enough to not experience much gender discrimination during their careers here in the U.S., they agreed that gender inequality is very promi-



Glen S. Fukushima gives the keynote speech

Progress, provided remarks about his own JASC experience, the importance of global education and experience, and the need for continued discussion between the young leaders of the U.S., Japan, and Korea. Specifically, Mr. Fukushima spoke about four aspects of his JASC experience that helped shape his distinguished career in government and business: knowledge, experience, network, and friendship. He shared that his JASC experience provided cultural knowledge and international experience that proved crucial in succeeding later in his career. For example, JASC's small group discussions called Roundtables, which often went very late into the night with an intense exchange of opinions and arguments, were very similar to the trade negotiations that he was tasked to lead as Deputy Assistant United States Trade Representative. He also mentioned that the JASC alumni network and friendship he fostered during JASC has become a tremendous personal and professional asset. However, he added, the fifth aspect – probably the most important – that changed his life was that he met his wife, Sakie T. Fukushima, during JASC.

State Department Closed-Door Meeting: Assistant Secretary Daniel R. Russel

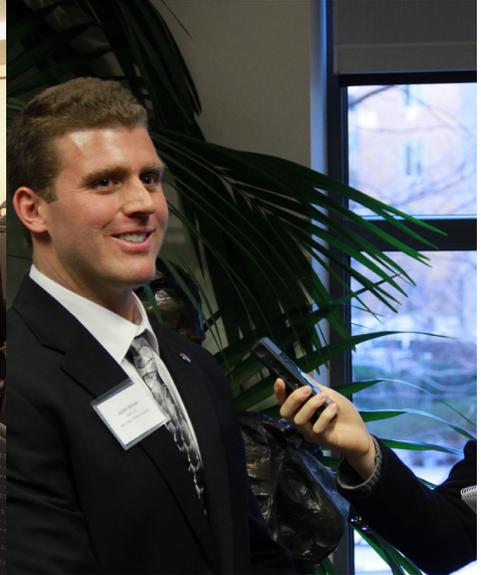
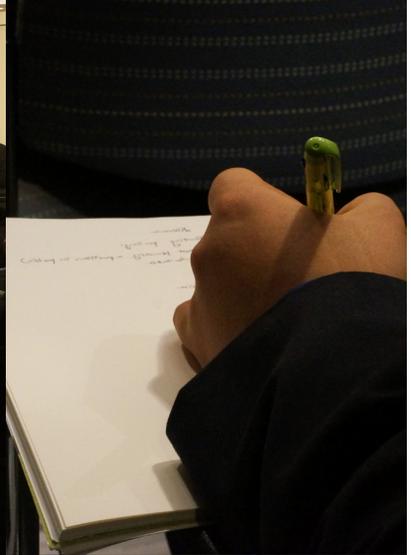
After the 2014 JASC-KASC Joint Symposium had concluded, the JASC and KASC student had

an off-the-record meeting with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Daniel R. Russel. Previously, Mr. Russel served as the Special Assistant to the President and National Security Staff Senior Director for Asian Affairs. He helped devise President Obama's strategic rebalance to the Asia Pacific Region. His focus included efforts to strengthen alliances, deepen U.S. engagement with multilateral organizations, and expand cooperation with emerging power in the region.

After a frank discussion on the U.S. interest in the region, U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea relations, the student leaders got a sense that much of Mr. Russel's work – and the mission of State Department – directly corresponds with those of JASC and KASC: to promote peace by furthering mutual understanding, friendship and trust, JASC and KASC do this through an intensive one-month student interchange.



Assistant Secretary Russel addresses the Executive Committee members



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