

Tenth Japan-Singapore Symposium

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Orchard Hotel Singapore

Organised by
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The Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

(As at 20 November 2014, 6.00pm)

The 10th Japan-Singapore Symposium (JSS), a two-day meeting for individuals of both countries to exchange views on issues of mutual interest, began today in Singapore. Around 30 policymakers, academics and business leaders attended the closed-door meeting today, and a public forum to present highlights from today's discussions will be held tomorrow. Over 100 individuals from the public and private sector and students have signed up to attend the forum.

Mrs **Josephine TEO**, Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Finance and Transport, led the Singapore delegation and delivered a keynote address. Ambassador **Haruhisa TAKEUCHI**, Japan's Ambassador to Singapore, delivered a keynote address on behalf of Mr **Kiuchi MINORU**, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Singapore's Ambassador to Japan, Ambassador **CHIN Siat Yoon** was also present.

The co-chairmen of the 10th JSS are Professor **Tommy KOH**, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, and Ambassador **Yoshiji NOGAMI**, President and Director of The Japan Institute of International Affairs. In their opening remarks, both Professor Koh and Ambassador Nogami noted that Japan and Singapore would mark the 50th anniversary of their establishment of diplomatic relations in 2016. They said they looked forward to Japan and Singapore commemorating the occasion and celebrating their long-standing partnership in a significant way.

There were three sessions during the closed-door meeting:

a) In Session I: Bilateral Relations, the discussion was led by Ambassador **CHEW Tai Soo**, Non-Resident Ambassador to Iran and Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, and Mr **Shigeki TAKIZAKI**, Deputy Director-General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The strong political, business, cultural, defence and people-to-people ties between Japan and Singapore were highlighted. The delegates felt that there was greater scope for the two countries to work together in third countries, both in business and in technical assistance. The continued resonance of Japan's soft power, and how else both countries could further promote people-to-people relations, was also discussed. Delegates called for more arts and cultural exchanges between both countries, and gave suggestions on how Japan and Singapore could raise their relationship to a higher level.

b) In Session II: Major Developments in the Political and Security Landscape of East Asia, the discussion was led by Dr **William CHOONG**, the Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Security at The International Institute for Strategic Studies and Associate Professor **Ken JIMBO** of the Faculty of Policy Management at Keio University. Ambassador **ONG Keng Yong**, Executive Deputy Chairman at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University and Mr **Hiroyuki AKITA**, Editorial and Senior Staff Writer at the Nikkei Shimbun in Japan were the discussants.

The discussion covered developments in the relations between and among the major powers since the last Japan-Singapore Symposium in 2013. The role that ASEAN has played in promoting peace and stability in the region was also emphasised.

c) In Session III: Regional Economic Integration, the discussion was led by Mr **Manu BHASKARAN**, Partner and Member of the Board of Centennial Group Inc, and Professor **Shujiro URATA** of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University. Dr **LAM Peng Er**, Senior Research Fellow of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore, was the discussant.

The discussion focused on the different frameworks for promoting trade and economic integration, such as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). Delegates were of the view that these were complementary and not competing initiatives. They were also of the view that all countries in the region would benefit from freer trade and investment.

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Media Contact:

Lynn Lee
Associate Director (Public Affairs)
Institute of Policy Studies, NUS
lee.lynn@nus.edu.sg
Phone: +65 6516-8380

About The Japan-Singapore Symposium (JSS)

The JSS was launched in 1994 by then-Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Murayama Tomiichi and former Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Goh Chok Tong. It began as a round of talks between Japanese and Singaporean government and business leaders and scholars, focusing on business and economic co-operation and bridge-building between the two countries. Held biennially since 1995, the JSS provides opportunities for representatives of different sectors from both countries to exchange views on issues of mutual interest, and foster closer ties between Japan and Singapore.

About the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 as an independent think-tank to study and generate public policy ideas in Singapore. IPS became an autonomous research centre of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore in 2008. Today, IPS continues to analyse public policy, build bridges between thought leaders, and communicate its findings to a wide audience. The Institute examines issues of critical national interest across a variety of fields, and studies the attitudes and aspirations of Singaporeans through surveys of public perception. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analyses and takes the long-term view in its strategic deliberation and research. For more information about IPS, visit www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips

About the Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc (JFIR)

The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) is a private, non-profit, independent, and non-partisan organisation, which was established for the purpose of encouraging its members and the public at large to study, discuss, exchange and propose ideas on foreign policies and international affairs, thereby enlightening the public in and out of Japan. In doing so, however, JFIR as an institution neither takes nor rejects any specific political positions on these matters. Though JFIR issues from time to time specific policy recommendations on important matters of the day, the responsibility for the contents of the recommendations concerned lies solely with those who sign them. JFIR was founded on March 12, 1987 in Tokyo and was reincorporated on April 1, 2011 as a “public interest foundation” with the authorisation granted by the Prime Minister of Japan in recognition of its achievements. JFIR’s President is Professor Ito Kenichi and its Chairman is Mr Imai Takashi.