

11th Japan-Singapore Symposium

25 – 26 April 2016 • Tokyo, Japan

Organised by
The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)
and
Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), National University of Singapore

PRESS RELEASE

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The 11th Japan-Singapore Symposium (JSS), a two-day meeting for individuals of both countries to exchange views on issues of mutual interest, concluded today in Tokyo, Japan. The symposium took place as Japan and Singapore marked their 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, which were established on 26 April 1966.

There were a total of 33 policymakers, academics, business leaders and media representatives in the Japanese and Singapore delegations. They attended the closed-door meeting on 25 April. Altogether, around 70 individuals from both delegations and other members of the public and private sectors attended the public forum today in Tokyo.

Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr **Vivian BALAKRISHNAN**, who is on a four-day introductory visit to Japan that began on 24 April, delivered a keynote address at the public forum, as did Mr **Seiji KIHARA**, Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The co-chairmen of the 11th JSS were Ambassador **Yoshiji NOGAMI**, President of The Japan Institute of International Affairs and Professor **Tommy KOH**, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore.

In their opening remarks at the closed-door session, both Ambassador Nogami and Professor Koh described 2016 as an important juncture in the Japan-Singapore relationship, with both countries celebrating their 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. In the last 50 years, Japan and Singapore have enjoyed robust political, business, cultural, defence and people-to-people ties. Professor Koh also expressed his sympathies to Japan over the recent earthquakes that hit Kumamoto prefecture in the southern island of Kyushu in mid-April, saying that this tempered the "joyous occasion" of the 11th JSS. He added that the Singapore government had offered its support to Japan for ongoing disaster relief operations.

There were two sessions during the closed-door meeting:

a) In Session I: Security Outlook in the Asia-Pacific: Roles of Maritime Nations, presentations were made by Mr Tetsuo **KOTANI**, Senior Research Fellow, JIIA, and Associate Professor Robert **BECKMAN**, Director, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore (NUS).

The discussants were:

Mr Takeshi **OSUGA**, Deputy Director-General, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Japan;

Professor Akio **TAKAHARA**, Faculty of Law, University of Tokyo and Adjunct Fellow, JIIA;

Dr William **CHOONG**, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Security, The International Institute for Strategic Studies;

Associate Professor Bhubindar **SINGH**, Coordinator, Regional Security Architecture Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

The delegates agreed that freedom of navigation and oversight are important to all countries in the region that are dependent on trade. They also urged all countries to observe the rule of law in their conduct with each other at sea.

They paid particular attention to the need to comply with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They also agreed that when disputes occur, they should be settled peacefully by negotiations, or if not, then by international diplomatic and legal channels. This would ensure peace, security and stability in the region.

b) In Session II: Economic Outlook and Prospects of Regional Integration in Asia, the discussion was led by Professor **TAN Khee Giap**, Co-Director, Asia Competitiveness Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS and Chairman, Singapore National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation and Professor **Shujiro URATA** of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University.

The discussants were:

Ms **Yuriko KOIKE** Member of Japan's House of Representatives;

Mr **Terence HENG**, Senior Vice President, Investment and Asset Management, North Asia and New Markets, Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd;

Mr **Hajime TAKATA**, Managing Executive Officer, Mizuho Research Institute;

Mr **LEE Yong Chye**, Senior Vice President, Equities Department, GIC Asset Management

The delegates agreed that Japan and Singapore are two trading nations that have thrived in an international trading system that is open and liberal. They observed that there are trends in the West which are opposed to globalisation and free trade.

Japan and Singapore should resist such trends and continue to champion the virtue of globalisation and free trade and investment. To this end, Japan and Singapore should support the different initiatives to liberalise trade and to promote regional 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).

The Singapore delegates drew the attention of their Japanese colleagues to the many new opportunities which the completion of the AEC would offer them. They also agreed that Japan and Singapore should support the early ratification of the TPP. At the same time, they should also support the completion of the RCEP, which complements the TPP. The achievement of the FTAAP will be the final goal, as envisaged by the APEC Leaders agreement in Bogor, Indonesia.

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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. In 2016, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Japan and Singapore, both countries announced that the JSS would become an annual event.

About The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)

The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), founded in 1959, is a private, nonpartisan policy think-tank focused on foreign affairs and security issues. In addition to a wide range of research projects, the institute promotes dialogues and joint studies with other institutions and experts at home and abroad, examines Japanese foreign policy and makes proposals to the government, and disseminates information on international relations to the public. The institute, together with a large network of affiliated scholars, aims to serve as an indispensable resource on international affairs in a complex world.

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