



JUMP presents

The Importance of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance

Date & Time:

Wednesday, September 23, 2026, 12:40 – 13:30 EDT

Venue:

Mahan Hall, Decatur Road, Annapolis, MD 21402 (Building 106)

Welcome Remarks:

Colonel Eric Reid (USMC), Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, U.S. Naval Academy

JUMP Introduction:

Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, President & Chairman, Sasakawa USA; Director of JUMP

Keynote Introduction:

Captain Tomoya Kawamura (JMSDF), Naval Attache, Embassy of Japan

Keynote Remarks: “Taiwan Crisis and the Japan-U.S. Alliance”

Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano (JMSDF, Ret.), former Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, Japan Self-Defense Forces

Commentary:

Mr. Richard Pera, Country Director for Japan, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy

Agenda

12:40	Welcome Remarks by Col Reid
12:42	JUMP Introduction by Dr. Akimoto
12:45	Keynote Introduction by CAPT Kawamura
12:47	Keynote Remarks by ADM Kawano
13:02	Commentary by Mr. Pera
13:04	Q&A discussion moderated by Col Reid
13:29	Closing Remarks by Col Reid
13:30	Conclusion of JUMP event

JUMP is made possible by financial support from the Embassy of Japan. This material is distributed by Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA on behalf of the Embassy of Japan. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC



Speaker Biographies (in order of appearance)



Colonel Eric Reid (USMC) is the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the U.S. Naval Academy. He enlisted in the Navy in 1992 and attended the Naval Academy Preparatory School, earning an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1997 with an honors degree in History. He is an infantry officer.

From 1998 to 2001, he commanded an 81mm mortar platoon and an anti-armor platoon and deployed as a weapons company Executive Officer for a unit deployment to Okinawa, Japan and a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) deployment to the Mediterranean Sea. Following his first Fleet Marine Force (FMF) tour, he was an instructor at The Basic School and Infantry Officer Course from 2001 to 2004 before attending resident Expeditionary Warfare School.

He returned to the FMF in 2005 to command Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned as *aide-de-camp* to the Commander, U.S. Marine Forces Central Command / Commanding General I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in 2007 and 2008. Following that assignment, he returned to deploy as the Battalion Landing Team 3/1 Operations Officer on the 31st MEU in 2008.

In 2009, he attended resident Army Command & General Staff College before spending a year as a Congressional Fellow in the House of Representatives in 2010. In 2011, he reported to U.S. Central Command as the Afghanistan and Pakistan policy officer within the J-5. He later deployed as a NATO campaign planner in Kabul, Afghanistan before returning to Central Command to assume duties as the Strategic Analysis Branch Chief.

In 2014, he returned to the FMF as the Deputy G-3 at 2d Marine Division prior to commanding 1st Battalion, 2d Marines in 2015 and 2016. He was a 2016-17 National Security Affairs Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. From March 2017 to March 2019, he served as a special assistant to the Secretary of Defense. He was the 2019-2020 Commandant of the Marine Corps senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. From June 2020 through June 2022, he was the III MEF G-5.

From June 2022 through June 2024, he served as the Manpower Plans, Programs, and Budget Branch Head within Marine Corps Manpower & Reserve Affairs. Colonel Reid assumed the duties as the Senior Marine Representative and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Naval Academy in June 2024.

Colonel Reid holds master's degrees from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Boston University, Kansas State University, and the Army Command & General Staff College. He is a graduate of the MIT Seminar XXI program.



Dr. Satoshihiro Akimoto is chairman and president of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. He is also a contributing writer for *The Japan Times*, an associate fellow for the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and a contributing writer for the Okazaki Institute in Tokyo.

Dr. Akimoto received his PhD in sociology and an MA in East Asian studies from Harvard University, a certificate of Russian studies from Leningrad State University, and a BA in law from Keio University.



Captain Tomoya Kawamura (JMSDF) currently serves as Naval and Assistant Defense Attaché at the Embassy of Japan, a position he assumed in February 2026. He began his military career in 2007 when he joined the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) as an Officer Candidate. His military specialty is that of a Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) of the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft. He has been stationed at VP-2 (Hachinohe Air Base) and VP-5 (Naha Air Base) as an aviator, served as an instructor at the Officer Candidate School, and worked as a staff officer at the Joint Staff Office. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the National Defense Academy and a Master of Arts in

National Security from the U.S. Naval War College.

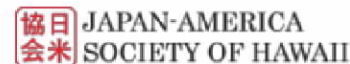


Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano (JMSDF, Ret.) served as the 5th Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, Japan Self-Defense Forces from October 14, 2014, until his retirement on April 1, 2019. A graduate of the National Defense Academy with a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, Admiral Kawano was commissioned as a surface warfare officer in 1979. He earned a Master's degree in international relations from Tsukuba University in 1990. He is also a graduate of the Command and Staff Course at the U.S. Naval War College.

Admiral Kawano's career as a surface warfare officer includes assignments aboard JS Haruna, JS Shirane, and JS Ōyodo as Commanding Officer from August 1992 to August 1993. His fleet command assignments include Commander, Escort Division 3; Commander, Escort Flotilla 3; Commander, Mine Warfare Force; Commander, Fleet Escort Force; and Commander in Chief, Self-Defense Fleet, prior to assuming his previous post as Chief of Staff, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force on July 26, 2012. Some of the most notable responsibilities he has held ashore are Director General, Administration Department MSO; Director General, Operations and Plans Department MSO; and Vice Chief of Staff, Joint Staff. Admiral Kawano is also a Member of the Board of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA.



Mr. Richard R. Pera is the Country Director for Japan in the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Policy. As part of a team, Rich Pera supports senior Department of War (DoW) officials in providing oversight and strategic direction of the U.S.-Japan Alliance. In this capacity, he primarily advises leadership on force posture, exercises, and issues under the Status of Forces Agreement. Rich joined DoW as a John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellow. He has held positions focused on outer space, the Middle East, and special operations. He also completed a detail assignment to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Prior to federal service, Rich managed a university's global health program, led congressional relations for a think tank, and coordinated policy for a U.S. Senate campaign in Alaska. He earned a M.A. in Security Studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in Political Science from Kenyon College. Rich's upbringing in a Navy family – including tours in Gaeta, Italy and Paris, France – sparked an enduring passion for defense policy and international affairs. He is deeply grateful to pursue both as a civil servant.



JAPAN US MILITARY PROGRAM

JUMP Honolulu

Friday, May 29, 2026

Official Residence of the Consul General of Japan in Honolulu

- 5:45 PM **Music Performance by Japan Training Squadron Band**
- 6:00 PM **Opening Remarks by Ms. Reyna Kaneko**
President, Japan-America Society of Hawaii
- Welcome Remarks by Consul General Hideaki Chotoku**
Consul General of Japan in Honolulu
- Welcome Remarks by Dr. Satohiro Akimoto**
Director of JUMP; Chairman & President, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA
- Keynote by Lt. Gen. Joel B. Vowell (USA)**
Deputy Commanding General for U.S. Army Pacific
- Keynote by RADM Toshiyuki Hirata (JMSDF)**
Director General, Operations and Plans Department, Maritime Staff Office
- Toast by RADM Ryoko Azuma (JMSDF)**
Commanding Officer, Japan Training Squadron
- 6:30 PM **Dinner**
- 7:00 PM **Entertainment by Japan Training Squadron**
Taiko and Band Performance
- 7:50 PM **Closing Remarks by Ms. Karen Knudsen**
Chair, Japan-America Society of Hawaii

The Japan US Military Program (JUMP) is a partnership between Sasakawa USA and the Embassy of Japan that enables U.S. military personnel and veterans to engage with the Japan-U.S. alliance and contribute to strengthening mutual understanding between the two nations through high-level dialogue with alliance leaders. JUMP is made possible by financial support from the Embassy of Japan. To learn more about JUMP, please visit <https://www.jumpprogram.org>.

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Sasakawa USA Newsletter May Highlights



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Included in this issue of the newsletter:

- Message from Sasakawa USA's Chairman Satohiro Akimoto

May Activities

- U.S.-Japan Integrated Security Dialogue: Diet Delegation Visits Silicon Valley and Washington
- Networking the Neighbors of the Philippine Sea: Palau Conference
- Japan US Military Program (JUMP): JUMP Honolulu

External Engagements

- Shanti Shoji Speaks on Panel "Beyond 1325@25: Strategies to Advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in a Shifting Geopolitical Landscape"

Message from Sasakawa USA's Chairman Satohiro Akimoto



Sasakawa USA convened a three-day conference entitled “Networking the Neighbors of the Philippine Sea,” held from May 18 to May 20 in Palau. The conference was designed to achieve three principal objectives: to cultivate new relationships among countries in and around the Philippine Sea, to enhance shared understanding of strategically significant issues affecting the region, and to generate innovative ideas for coordinated action aimed at advancing common diplomatic and economic interests.

Sasakawa USA undertook this initiative in recognition that the countries bordering the Philippine Sea share critical strategic interests, yet remain insufficiently integrated to fully leverage their collective diplomatic and economic resources. While strong bilateral ties exist, exemplified by the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, and minilateral cooperation is beginning to take shape, as seen in coordination among the United States, Japan, and the Philippines, further progress is needed to advance peace, stability, prosperity, and the rule of law through broader networks of cooperation among like-minded states. Such collaboration among countries in and around the Philippine Sea has important strategic significance for this vital body of water and the broader region, as framed by the First and Second Island Chains.

Sasakawa USA wishes to express our sincere appreciation to Hon. Surangel Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, for his alignment with and support of Sasakawa USA’s vision for the conference. In particular, gratitude is extended for his keynote remarks at the opening night reception, despite his scheduled departure immediately afterward to the United States to attend the U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s 145th commencement. We also wish to acknowledge National Security Coordinator Jennifer Anson for her encouragement of this initiative and for her collaboration with Brian Harding, Senior Fellow (non-resident) at Sasakawa USA, whose contributions were instrumental in bringing this conference to fruition.

On the final day of the conference, Sasakawa USA organized a half-day visit to Peleliu Island for conference participants. The island was the site of an intense and devastating battle fought between September 15 and November 27, 1944, involving the U.S. 1st Marine Division, the 81st Infantry Division, and supporting units, as well as Japan’s 14th Infantry Division, the 49th Mixed Brigade, and additional forces. The visit to these former battlefields, where so many lives were lost in horrific ways, was a solemn reminder of the enormous human cost of military conflict. It also highlighted the remarkable progress the United States and Japan have made in forging a strong and enduring security alliance following World War II, as well as the importance of preventing such tragedies from recurring and ensuring a free and secure region.

Photo: Participants of the Networking the Neighbors of the Philippine Sea conference at the welcome dinner with President Surangel Whipps Jr.

May Activities

U.S.-Japan Integrated Security Dialogue: Diet Delegation Visits Silicon Valley and Washington



From May 3 to May 8, Sasakawa USA hosted a delegation of one former and four active members of the National Diet of Japan for the 2026 Integrated Security Dialogue. Led by Hon. Akira Amari, former secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party, this year's delegation visited both Silicon Valley, CA and Washington, DC for meetings with a thematic focus on AI and technological innovation. In Silicon Valley, the delegation visited several companies in the AI, semiconductor, and other critical tech sectors. For the Washington portion, the group met with bipartisan members of Congress, government officials, and policy experts to deepen their understanding of key strategic issues facing the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Photo (left to right): Dr. Satohiro Akimoto; Hon. Karen Makishima, Ph.D.; Hon. Taku Otsuka; Hon. Akira Amari; Hon. Taro Honda; Hon. Miki Yamada

Networking the Neighbors of the Philippine Sea: Palau Conference



From May 18 - 20, Sasakawa USA hosted a three-day conference in Palau as a part of the Networking the Neighbors of the Philippine Sea project. The conference welcomed around 30 officials from the U.S. (The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; Washington, DC; Guam), Japan, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, the Philippines, and Taiwan, to discuss opportunities for security cooperation, as well as to strengthen networks and cooperation among like-minded neighbors. A report about the findings and recommendations from the conference will be published by Sasakawa USA in late 2026. This will be followed by a series of roll-out events in several capitals of the conference participants.

Photo (left to right): Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, President Surangel Whipps Jr., Mr. Brian Harding

Japan US Military Program (JUMP): JUMP Honolulu



On May 29, Sasakawa USA held a Japan US Military Program (JUMP) event in Honolulu, HI, in partnership with the Embassy of Japan, the Japan-America Society of Hawaii, and the Consulate-General of Japan in Honolulu. LTG Joel B. Vowell (USA), deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Pacific, and RADM Toshiyuki Hirata (JMSDF), director general of the Maritime Staff Office's Operations and Plans Department, shared keynote remarks at the event highlighting the enduring strength and importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance in the Indo-Pacific. Additional remarks were made by Mr. Hideaki Chotoku, consul-general of Japan in Honolulu; RADM Ryoko Azuma, commanding officer of the Japan Training Squadron; Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, chairman and president of Sasakawa USA; Ms. Reyna Kaneko, president of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii; and Ms. Karen Knudsen, chair of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii.

JUMP Honolulu was held to mark a port visit at Pearl Harbor by the Japan Training Squadron, an annual training mission for newly commissioned officers of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force that develops their experience at sea and allows them to work alongside partners from countries around the world. Over 200 people attended JUMP Honolulu, primarily U.S. and Japanese servicemembers as well as invited guests from the local community. Musical performances were given by the Japan Training Squadron's band and taiko drum group, deepening cultural ties by playing music from both Japan and the U.S.

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Photo (left - right): Ms. Shanti Shoji, Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, Ms. Karen Knudsen, Ms. Reyna Kaneko, Hon. Hideaki Chotoku. LTG Joel B. Vowell (USA), RADM Toshiyuki Hirata (JMSDF). Photo by Tony Grillo.

External Engagements

Shanti Shoji Speaks on Panel "Beyond 1325@25: Strategies to Advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in a Shifting Geopolitical Landscape"

On May 12, director of programs Shanti Shoji spoke on the panel, "Beyond 1325@25: Strategies to Advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in a Shifting Geopolitical Landscape," hosted by Women in International Security (WIIS) and New Lines Institute. The panel served as a launch event for a recently published policy brief that shares insights from the 1325@25 Conference which convened scholars, practitioners, and global experts to reflect upon the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and explore opportunities to further advance implementation.



In addition to Ms. Shoji, speakers included Dr. Lauren Van Metre, president and CEO, WIIS; Ms. Nisha Singh, senior global policy and advocacy manager, Women for Women International; Ms. Tazreen Hussain, co-founder, WPS Collective; and Ms. Kallie Mitchell, program head and analyst, gender policy portfolio, New Lines Institute. The discussion was moderated by Ms. Mahathi Ayyagari, Howard S. Brembeck Women, Peace and Security fellow, WIIS. Through their remarks, panelists examined the importance of civil society leadership, locally rooted messaging, and cross-border coalitions, especially as traditional state-level WPS implementation faces challenges in today's geopolitical landscape. Ms. Shoji highlighted best practices on WPS within the Indo-Pacific context, including examples of localization of the agenda into regional cooperation frameworks such as ASEAN's Regional Action Plan, as well as Japan's initiatives to apply WPS into domestic disaster risk reduction efforts and transportation infrastructure. The panelists engaged in a Q&A with the audience following their remarks.

Photo: Ms. Shanti Shoji

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