



US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative

The US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative is a forum for bilateral dialogue, networking, and development of joint recommendations involving a wide range of policy and technical specialists (in and out of gov't) to stimulate new alliance connections across foreign, security, and technology policy areas. Established by Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA in 2021, the goal is to help improve the alliance and how it serves shared interests, preparing it for emerging challenges in an increasingly complex and dynamic geostrategic environment. The Initiative includes two overlapping lines of effort: Foreign & Security Policy; and Technology & Innovation Connections.

VISION

A more capable and connected US-Japan alliance, better positioned to leverage the bilateral relationship for mutual benefit in support of common interests.

MISSION

This initiative aspires to become a trusted, valued, and well-recognized forum for sustained dialogue involving new bilateral networks and talents, as the alliance adapts to global developments. Focusing on the inter-section of diplomacy, security cooperation, and technology policy coordination, the Initiative will be non-partisan, well-informed, policy-focused, and action-oriented (i.e., developing practical policy recommendations). It supplements the work of policy makers and business leaders in both countries working to keep the alliance relevant to each nation's strategy for security and prosperity.

SAMPLE TOPICS FOR DIALOGUE AND RESEARCH

The initiative is exploring such policy issues as:

- Leveraging alliance talents and coordinating policies to enhance their economic security, covering such areas as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, export controls, and countering economic coercion;
- Expanding alliance cooperation in areas of scientific research, space exploration, telecommunications infrastructure, and international standard setting;
- Adapting alliance security roles, missions, capabilities, and C2 arrangements to meet growing defense challenges in Northeast Asia and the East China Sea; and
- Protecting freedom of navigation and marine resources in the Indo-Pacific.

DISTINCT BUT INTEGRATED

Staffed by a dedicated team led by Sr. Director Jim Schoff, and with committed financial support from the Nippon Foundation for multiple years, the initiative is both distinct from traditional Sasakawa USA programming yet can be integrated at times with Sasakawa USA and Sasakawa Peace Foundation when mutually desired for efficiency and impact. Moreover, the US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative is open to partnering with other US- and Japan-based think tanks and non-profits pursuing similar goals in order to maximize collective productivity and effectiveness. More information available on the NEXT Alliance [webpage](#) at [Sasakawa USA](#).

INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Organizing bilateral Track 1.5 policy roundtables on emerging alliance challenges (i.e., involving both government and private sector/academic participants), supplemented by archival research and policy maker interviews.
- Publishing not-for-attribution roundtable and workshop reports, non-resident scholar articles, and NEXT Alliance Initiative policy recommendations.
- Convening two “NEXT Alliance Conferences” annually (one for each line of effort) involving bilateral policy briefings, a 2-day workshop, and concluding public symposium.
- Hosting a paid undergraduate intern each summer.
- Producing interactive tools to assist alliance managers.
- Publishing bi-monthly the “Alliance Digest”: a US-Japan only news digest highlighting notable alliance (or alliance-related) news of the previous two weeks.

CONTACT

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Mr. James L. Schoff is senior director of the “US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative” at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA in Washington, DC. Previously, Schoff was a senior fellow and director of the Japan Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for nine years, following two years as senior adviser for East Asia policy at the US Office of the Secretary of Defense. At the Department of Defense, he supported strategic planning and policy development for security cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea. Schoff’s career spans over thirty years working in the fields of business, education, government, and the non-profit sector, all related to Japan, East Asia, and the U.S.-Japan alliance. Schoff has

written extensively on East Asian security, foreign policy, and emerging technology issues. Sample publications include: “[Modernizing US-Japan Command & Control Relationships for New Challenges](#)” (Sasakawa USA, 2023), “[China and the New Role for Economic Security in the US-Japan Alliance](#)” (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2022), “[US-Japan Technology Policy Coordination: Balancing Technonationalism With a Globalized World](#),” (Carnegie, 2020), and [Uncommon Alliance for the Common Good: The United States and Japan after the Cold War](#) (Carnegie, 2017).



Dr. Satoshiro Akimoto is Chairman of the Board and President of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, joining the organization in January 2019. Akimoto brings to Sasakawa USA extensive experience in the areas of business, research, intellectual dialogue, and student exchanges between Japan and the United States. Akimoto’s career has included roles at Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsubishi International Corporation, Hughes Electronics, DirecTV Japan, Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, Japan Society, Keidanren USA, and Mt. Fuji Dialogue.

About Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

Sasakawa USA is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization located in Washington, D.C. dedicated to deepening the understanding of and strengthening the relationship between the United States and Japan for the benefit of a free and open international community. Its activities primarily focus on security and diplomacy, through exchanges, dialogue, analysis, publications, and networking.

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