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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Okinawa & U.S.-Japan Security Alliance in Critical Times

This Live Webinar Explores the Crucial role Okinawa has Played in U.S.-Japan Security Relations, Serving Both Japanese and American Strategic Interests

Wednesday, June 8th, 7–8 pm EST



New York, NY (May 18, 2022)—As part of *Okinawa in Focus*, a special year-long series commemorating the 50-year anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan from the United States, this webinar explores the crucial role Okinawa has played in U.S.-Japan security relations, serving both Japanese and American strategic interests. Due to the islands' geo-strategic location, Okinawa is host to a significant number of U.S. military bases in Japan that maintain peace and security in the region. What is Okinawa's role in the U.S.-Japan security relationship? Will it remain a strategically important hub? As the war in Ukraine brings an historic spotlight on the importance of strengthening geopolitical alliances and strategic interests across the globe, our U.S.-Japan security experts discuss the current geopolitical situation, Okinawa's significance today, and its future role in U.S.-Japan relations.

Video Message:

The Honorable Yasuhiro “Denny” Tamaki, Governor, Okinawa Prefecture

Speakers:

Masaaki Gabe, Emeritus Professor, The University of the Ryukyus

Sheila A. Smith, John E. Merow Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Moderator:

Joshua W. Walker, Ph.D., President & CEO, Japan Society

Agenda:

7-8 pm Video Message, Discussion and Q&A Session

Program Details:

This is a free event, with advance [registration](#) required. The program will be live streamed through YouTube, and registrants will receive the viewing link by email the day before the event. Participants can submit questions through YouTube during the live stream.

Participant Bios:

Professor Masaaki Gabe is a specialist in international politics, having previously taught courses on International Relations, including U.S.-Japan relations at several universities. He is a native Okinawan. He studied at Keio University in Tokyo, Japan, and completed his Ph. D. in Asian Studies in 1983. Furthermore, he served as Special Assistant to the Ambassador at the Japanese Embassy in Manila, Philippines from 1985-1986. After joining the University of the Ryukyus, he expanded his academic work to focus on security studies. He received the US-Japan Friendship grant, conducting research at the Sigur Center at George Washington University, and publishing his work on how the Okinawa Reversion was carried out in 1972. In addition, Gabe published numerous works on U.S.-Japan relations and East Asia's security issue from a politico-military standpoint. He was Director of International Institute for Okinawan Studies at the University of the Ryukyus from 2010-2013, and a board member of the Japan Association of International Relations in 2013-2014. He devoted a year of sabbatical leave in 2014-2015 to research and publish on the Okinawa Reversion based on archival records from both governments. Furthermore, he was appointed as Emeritus Professor at the University of the Ryukyus in March 2020. His new book entitled *U. S. Military Transformation in the Northeast Asia: Focusing on Korean Peninsula and Japan* (in Japanese with co-author) will come out this summer.

Sheila A. Smith is John E. Merow senior fellow for Asia-Pacific studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). An expert on Japanese politics and foreign policy, she is the author of *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power*, *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China* (released in Japanese as 日中 親愛なる宿敵: 変容する日本政治と対中政策), and *Japan's New Politics and the U.S.-Japan Alliance*. She is also the author of the CFR interactive guide *Constitutional Change in Japan*. Smith is a regular contributor to the CFR blog *Asia Unbound* and a frequent contributor to major media outlets in the United States and Asia. Smith joined CFR from the East-West Center in 2007, where she directed a multinational research team in a cross-national study of the domestic politics of the U.S. military presence in Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. She was a visiting scholar at Keio University in 2007-08, where she researched Japan's foreign policy towards China, supported by the Abe Fellowship. Smith has been a visiting researcher at two leading Japanese foreign

and security policy think tanks, the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the Research Institute for Peace and Security, and at the University of Tokyo and the University of the Ryukyus. Smith is chair of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission (JUSFC) and the U.S. advisors to the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), a binational advisory panel of government officials and private-sector members. She teaches as an adjunct professor at the Asian studies department of Georgetown University and serves on the board of its *Journal of Asian Affairs*. She also serves on the advisory committee for the U.S.-Japan Network for the Future program of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation. Smith earned her MA and PhD from the political science department at Columbia University.

Moderator:

Joshua W. Walker, Ph.D., is President and CEO of Japan Society and has held positions of leadership at Eurasia Group, the USA Pavilion of the 2017 World Expo, the APCO Institute and APCO Worldwide. He has served in the State Department and the Defense Department; is a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress; co-founded the Yale Journal of International Affairs; and attended the University of Richmond, Yale and Princeton Universities.

Presented with support from Citi, Deloitte, Mizuho Financial Group, and Toyota Motors North America.

About the Business & Policy Program

The Business & Policy Program hosts public and invitation-only programs for the international business and policy community about the people and issues that define U.S.-Japan relations in a regional and global context. Formerly known as the Corporate Program, the Business & Policy Program offers unparalleled access to international business and policy leaders and in-depth networking opportunities for the senior executives, policymakers, academics, journalists, and other opinion leaders comprising the Program member audience. Each year, more than 4,000 executives participate in conferences, lectures, symposia, and receptions recognized as invaluable for helping Americans, Japanese, and others from Asia and around the world better grasp the financial, business, and policy challenges that affect Japan and the U.S.

About Japan Society

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan more fully. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

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