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Fumio Kishida: What's Next for Japan's New Leader?

As Japan's Likely Next Prime Minister Prepares to Take the Helm, a Panel of Experts Will Examine His Priorities and Challenges, and Implications for U.S.-Japan Relations

Wednesday, October 13, 8:00–8:45 am EDT



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New York, NY (October 1, 2021)—Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga stepped down at the end of September after just a year in office, forcing the selection of a new Liberal Democratic Party head. With the recent election of Fumio Kishida as the new LDP leader, Japan has effectively chosen its next prime minister. What are Kishida's priorities, and how will he address the COVID-19 situation and Japan's stagnant economy? How will this affect U.S.-Japan relations? In this free live webinar—key insiders

Heizo Takenaka, Professor Emeritus at Keio University, and **Joshua W. Walker**, President & CEO of Japan Society with moderator **Ramona Handel-Bajema**, Chief Programming Officer, Japan Society—will provide their insights into Japan’s new leader, the implications of the general election in November, and what it means for U.S.-Japan relations.

Agenda, Schedule, Tour Details:

8:00-8:45 am Discussion and Q&A

Admission: This is a free event, with advance registration required. Please register [here](#), Box Office at 212-715-1258 or email boxoffice@japansociety.org. Registrants will receive a link to access the live webinar one day before the event.

Participant Bios:

Heizo Takenaka (Speaker) is a professor emeritus at Keio University in Japan. And was formerly Minister for Economic and Fiscal policy etc (2001-2006). In his capacity as an economist and as part of his social activities, he also serves on several advisory boards and committees including: Member of the Policy Council under Suga Administration; Director, Academyhills and Outside Director, Orix Corporation and Outside Director, SBI Holdings Inc. He was named to the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum in 2007. Professor Takenaka’s research interest is in economic policy.

Joshua W. Walker, Ph.D. (Speaker) became President & CEO of Japan Society in December 2019. Previously, he worked at Eurasia Group, the world's leading political risk analysis firm, where he served as global head of strategic initiatives and Japan in the Office of the President. Prior to that, he was CEO and president of the USA Pavilion of the 2017 World Expo in Astana, Kazakhstan; founding dean of the APCO Institute; and senior vice president of global programs at APCO Worldwide, a leading global strategic communications firm based in Washington, D.C. Before joining the private sector, he worked in numerous roles at various U.S. government agencies, including the State Department and the Defense Department. He is Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, and professor of Leadership and the American presidency at George Mason University and the Reagan Foundation. He was also Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and co-founded the Yale Journal of International Affairs. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond, a master's degree from Yale University, and a doctorate from Princeton University. Dr. Walker grew up in Japan where his parents still serve as missionaries, came to the United States when he was 18, and is bicultural and bilingual.

Dr. Ramona Handel-Bajema, Ph.D. (Moderator) joined Japan Society as Chief Program Officer in June 2021. She holds a Ph.D. in Modern Japanese History from Columbia University’s East Asian Languages and Culture department. Ramona was affiliated with Waseda University from 2008 to 2009 as a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science fellow. Ramona served as Global Director, See to Earn Program for the social enterprise VisionSpring, where she oversaw teams in India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam and worked with multinational brands to provide eyeglasses for factory workers. Prior to joining VisionSpring, Ramona was AmeriCares Country Director for Japan from 2011 through 2015, overseeing \$9 million in funding for disaster relief programs following the March 11, 2011 triple disaster in northeastern Japan. Based in Sendai, Miyagi prefecture, Ramona worked with more than 100 local partners and oversaw 200 grants for the emergency and recovery periods with a focus on psychosocial care, rebuilding facilities for people with disabilities, distribution of emergency relief goods, and grassroots-based community directed initiatives. Ramona also holds a Masters of Arts degree in

international relations with a specialization on Japan Studies from the Johns Hopkins Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies and a Bachelor of Arts from University of California, Berkeley, in Asian Studies with a focus on Japanese History. In 2021, her book, *Art Across Borders: Japanese Artists in the United States before World War II* will be released by MerwinAsia Publishers.

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.

This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50th anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

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