

JAPAN

The Indispensable Ally, Except in US Academia...

A quiet but looming crisis in US-Japan
relations and a call for action (and funding)

Adam P. Liff



Executive Summary

Despite bipartisan recognition in Washington DC today that the US partnership with Japan is uniquely vital for the United States' efforts to address a wide array of pressing global challenges, at America's "top 100" universities, faculty expertise and course offerings on contemporary US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign/security policy are on the verge of a generational collapse.

A sharp drop-off in Japan foreign policy-related hiring over the past two decades threatens the future pipeline of US-based scholars devoted to both

- providing a deep and nuanced understanding of the US-Japan alliance and Japan's increasingly important role in international affairs, and
- inspiring future leaders of the US-Japan relationship in academia, business, civil society, government, media, and other fields.

The accelerating disappearance of related faculty expertise and opportunities for students is a nationwide trend but is particularly acute in the oft-neglected middle of the country, and especially in so-called "red" and "purple" states.

For those who care about the future of mutual understanding and the long-term health and stability of the US-Japan partnership across all of America, this should be an "all-hands-on-deck" moment.

Financial investments from concerned outside entities and individuals are urgently needed to reverse the tide and to support hiring of faculty, course offerings, research opportunities, and intellectual programming on Japanese foreign policy and US-Japan relations. Three mutually reinforcing lines of effort should take priority:

- new endowments and grants from US and Japanese corporations, foundations, and philanthropists specifically earmarked to support this field
- proactive and creative pooling of resources to maximize impact, e.g., through public-private partnerships
- strategic investment, particularly in those US universities and regions where the marginal impact is likely to be greatest

Introduction

Over the dozen years since then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe [boldly declared](#) during a 2013 visit to Washington DC that “Japan is back,” it has become increasingly common in US foreign policy circles to refer to Japan as America’s “indispensable ally.” Across a diverse array of security, economic, and other policy areas—from shared efforts to counter manifold regional and global challenges posed by China, Russia, and North Korea to the urgent need to create more resilient supply chains—Japan is now widely seen in the nation’s capital as America’s most important partner in Asia, if not the world.

For longstanding advocates of a robust and comprehensive US-Japan partnership, this is welcome news and worthy of celebration. So, too, is its largely bipartisan nature. Indeed, despite the intense partisan divides that characterize so many policy debates in Washington today, there is a near consensus on the US-Japan alliance’s critical importance to the United States.

For instance, during this past April’s swearing-in ceremony of George Glass, President Trump’s new ambassador in Tokyo, Vice President JD Vance [called](#) Japan the United States’ “most important ally, in the most important region in the world at the most important time.” During his own Senate confirmation hearing just a few days earlier, Glass himself [judged](#) Japan to be “our most impactful global partner and ally,” labeled the US-Japan security alliance “the cornerstone of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond,” and highlighted Japan’s status as “the top foreign investor in the United States.”

Such rhetoric from the second Trump administration echoes countless statements from other US foreign policy officials who served in recent administrations of both parties, including Rahm Emanuel, President Biden’s ambassador to Japan. Recognizing Japan’s significance to America and mindful of the essential roles that universities play in cultivating future generations of expertise about, and robust people-to-people ties with, this critical US ally, Ambassador Emanuel even issued [a call](#) directly to US universities during his tenure, stating that “this is the moment... to double down on Japan and Japanese Studies.”

Unfortunately, the exact opposite is happening across US higher education—and has been for many years. Ironically, the problem is particularly acute when it comes to expertise in the very issue areas attracting so much attention from US policymakers: the US-Japan alliance and Japan’s rapidly evolving role in global affairs.

Sadly, just as recognition of Japan’s unique importance has reached a historic peak in Washington, there is an inconspicuous but looming crisis facing the bilateral relationship: the accelerating disappearance at major American research universities of faculty expertise and courses for students focused on contemporary US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy.

To be sure, there has been declining support for Japan studies as a whole across US higher education, so the issue is hardly unique to these specific fields.¹ However, the rapidly expanding array of foreign policy challenges America faces in the Indo-Pacific today, together with the centrality of US-Japan cooperation to effectively address them, makes particularly acute the potential consequences of dwindling opportunities for university students to learn about the US-Japan alliance and Japan's increasingly important global role.

The bottom line up front: The extraordinary collapse over the past two decades of the hiring of experts on Japanese foreign policy at major U.S. universities makes clear that outside financial investment and support are urgently needed to have any hope of reversing the tide. Unless US and Japanese foundations, corporations, philanthropists, and others who value mutual understanding and a strong bilateral partnership at all levels of government and society surge investments now, current trends may soon be irreversible.

Left unaddressed, the huge number of students who graduate from a major US research university that does not regularly offer even a single course on contemporary US-Japan relations or Japanese foreign policy—already the vast majority—will increase. And the already minuscule pipeline of graduate students devoted to understanding the bilateral alliance or Japan's important global roles beyond it—i.e., the future professors, policymakers, journalists, and business, civil society, and other opinion leaders—will further atrophy. When one reflects on the leading lights of the US-Japan relationship over the past generation who have been responsible for elevating this crucial partnership to its current peak—many of whom have as their origin story a class, mentor, or other experience during college or graduate school—the consequences of inaction today for the next generation are potentially profound.

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This report has two primary objectives: (1) to sound the alarm and raise public awareness of this unfortunate situation, and (2) to catalyze a broader bilateral discussion both within and outside academia about how best to address it. The remainder of its analysis is divided into three sections. The first section provides a rough overview of the current state of the field of Japanese foreign and security policy at America's "top 100" universities, drawing particular attention to the consequences of the precipitous drop-off in junior faculty hiring over the past two decades. The second section explains why the accelerating disappearance of faculty expertise, coursework, and opportunities for students focused on contemporary US-Japan relations and Japan's role in the world matters in a "big picture" sense. The final section recommends several lines of effort and investment for concerned actors to take to begin to reverse the tide.

1. For example, a famous multidisciplinary panel at the US-based Association of Asian Studies' 2019 conference was forebodingly titled "[The Death of Japan Studies](#)."

1. The Accelerating Disappearance of Japan Foreign Policy Expertise at the “Top 100” US Universities

According to my informal 2023–2024 survey of faculty expertise and course offerings at America’s so-called “top 100 national universities,”² the vast majority of these institutions—more than four in five—already do not regularly offer a single course on contemporary Japanese foreign policy or US-Japan relations. Still more lack faculty who regularly teach on these issues and have both the specific knowledge base and the long-term, stable employment necessary to provide the mentorship essential to training future generations of experts.

What is worse, long-term hiring trends mean that if current trends are not reversed expeditiously, an already bad situation will deteriorate significantly in the coming years. Most notably, many of the leading experts on Japanese foreign policy and US-Japan relations who received their first academic jobs during the heady days of Japan’s “economic miracle” and the decade-plus following—individuals that in ways large and small helped elevate the US-Japan relationship from the trade and other frictions of the 1970s–1990s to its current peak and whose positions, research, and other activities were often supported at least to some extent by outside philanthropic gifts—have recently retired or are likely to do so in the not-too-distant future. Put simply, the already small coterie of US-based professors with deep expertise on contemporary US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy is on course to shrink dramatically over the next decade or so.

The reasons for this unfortunate state of affairs today are manifold. But the most direct cause is the dramatic collapse of hiring at major US research universities of scholars with primary expertise on contemporary US-Japan relations or Japanese foreign and security policy. The trend across the three-decade period on which my informal survey focused (1994–2024) speaks for itself:

- Between 1994 and 2004, at least **12 experts** on Japanese foreign policy were hired into “tenure-track” (TT) junior faculty positions at the aforementioned “top 100” US universities.
- Between 2005 and 2014, **only 5 such experts** were hired into TT junior faculty positions at these universities. (Notably, only 1 scholar among this group was hired after 2009).

2. As an imperfect but objective standard for highlighting key trends at America’s most influential research universities with graduate and professional degree programs, this study bases its analysis on those institutions listed in *US News & World Report’s* 2023 ranking of the “top 100 national universities.” (The latest ranking is [viewable here](#).) These universities are of course not representative of all US higher education—indeed, America boasts many other excellent institutions, including other universities and world-class liberal arts colleges, that are excluded from this list. However, the universities included in this ranking, generally speaking, disproportionately account for the most research production and educate the largest number of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, including both future scholars and future leaders in other fields pursuing advanced degrees at professional schools of public policy, law, business, etc.

- Between 2015 and 2024, **zero such experts** were hired into TT junior faculty positions at these universities.³

The number of Japanese foreign policy experts based at these universities has actually shrunk even faster than these already sobering junior hiring trends suggest. In fact, nearly half (8) of the aforementioned 17 scholars hired into TT junior faculty positions between 1994 and 2024 no longer teach in America or are no longer based in academia. And most of this subgroup were never replaced.

The net effect of these trends is twofold. First, what has always been a small field has shrunk significantly over the past two decades. Second, the field is now disproportionately senior in both rank and age. A few data points help throw this reality into sharp relief.

At the time of my survey's completion in 2024

- **none** of the aforementioned “top 100” universities employed a junior TT faculty member with primary expertise and/or who regularly teaches on contemporary Japanese foreign policy and/or US-Japan relations (in contrast, in the late 1990s the corresponding number was roughly eight);
- **only one** of these institutions employed a tenured faculty member with such expertise who was under the age of 50; and
- the average age of active faculty in the field of Japanese foreign policy at these universities exceeded 60.⁴

Lastly, although the analysis above highlights a national trend, disaggregating the data reveals another, largely overlooked yet important subnational issue: what limited faculty expertise still exists at these major US research universities is not equally distributed across America.

Rather, the field is overwhelmingly concentrated at a handful of institutions based on the West Coast and along the East Coast’s “Northeast Corridor” (the area between Washington DC and Boston). Put another way, today the vast majority of states in other regions of America have zero major research universities at which students can take a single course on, much less work closely with a faculty member to develop deep expertise in, contemporary US-Japan relations or Japanese foreign and security policy.

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3. After the survey that informs this report was completed in 2024, the author learned of one new TT hire at one of these universities who is set to take up their position in Fall 2025. This was excellent news for the field to be sure, but a far cry from what is needed to reverse the multidecade collapse of hiring reflected in these data.

4. Average age was estimated based on (1) publicly available information about the year each active faculty member received their undergraduate degree, and (2) an imperfect but reasonable assumption that each individual at that time was, on average, 22 years old.

The lost educational, research, mentorship, and other opportunities for many young Americans studying in the US heartland (and especially in “red” and “purple” states⁵) of this geographic maldistribution are significant. So, too, is the potential impact on the diverse voting communities surrounding these universities in terms of their perceptions of the importance of US relations with and economic ties to Japan, the manifold security, economic, and other challenges facing both Washington and Tokyo, and the mutual benefits gained when the two countries work together to address them.

2. Why It Matters Beyond the Academy

Because the current situation has been decades in the making, it will not be easy to reverse it. But left unaddressed, a vicious cycle is likely to worsen in the years ahead, with potentially significant implications for the larger US-Japan relationship across various levels of US government and society. Fewer Japan-focused mentors, course offerings, and opportunities for young Americans to get exposed to Japanese foreign and security policy at major US universities will mean fewer students who are inspired to study abroad, work in Japan after graduation, and/or pursue careers or graduate studies related to this field.

It will also mean fewer graduate students trained to develop deep, nuanced understandings of Japan’s role in the world and the US and Japan’s rapidly evolving political, economic, and security partnership. This, in turn, will lead to fewer PhD students able to compete for the limited number of jobs that exist in US academia—vanishingly few of which these days seriously consider candidates with primary expertise on Japanese foreign policy or US-Japan relations. And

it will mean even fewer scholars with deep expertise able to advise policymakers or push back against the various misleading narratives that permeate contemporary discourse.

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The already severe “pipeline problem” at the junior level is further exacerbated by the fact that there is a widespread recognition within the field of the dearth of job opportunities in US academia today—especially in the field of Japanese foreign policy. That means that young, would-be future experts are often discouraged from pursuing an academic career, from developing deep knowledge of contemporary US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy, or from both.

Supporting Japan studies in academia—and not only in the foreign policy space—is essential

5. In the vernacular of US domestic politics, “red states” are those states whose voters tend to support the Republican Party. Those whose voters tend to support the Democratic Party are referred to as “blue states.” “Purple states” are those where support for the two parties is closely balanced—often called “swing states” or “battleground states,” since election outcomes there can go either way.

for keeping a pipeline of expertise on Japan and the US-Japan partnership flowing across all of America, within and beyond the academy, including in government, business, and civil society. Indeed, many of the major shapers of US-Japan relations since the 1990s were first inspired to pursue such a path due to a course, mentor, study abroad program, or some other formative experience related to Japan during their time as a student. These include, but are by no means limited to, university-based scholars who also brought their expertise directly into government service or who regularly advise policymakers from the outside.

Nor is it only those who will (or would) focus their careers specifically on Japan who are negatively affected by the field's accelerating disappearance. At least some understanding of Japan is increasingly important for any young person pursuing a career in US foreign policy more generally, be they focused on US-China relations, international trade and investment, or the manifold functional issues that increasingly permeate the US national security discourse (e.g., AI, space, cybersecurity, supply chains) and in which opportunities for deeper US-Japan collaboration are manifold.

Lastly, universities also function as important platforms for civic education and policy debates beyond the academy. They can host lectures and conferences open to surrounding communities and serve as incubators for the fact-based expert analysis necessary to counter an increasingly fractious and noisy public discourse rife with mis/disinformation. More indirectly but no less significantly, safeguarding future expertise on US-Japan relations and Japan's role in the world is essential for a well-informed US electorate. In an era of hyper-politicization and deepening skepticism in some communities of the continued value of US global leadership, treaty alliances, free trade and foreign investment, and even democracy itself, the implications for US-Japan relations of a future in which new generations of Americans are unaware of Japan's significance for the United States—to say nothing of Tokyo's important contributions to international peace, stability, and prosperity more broadly—are potentially profound.

3. Recommendations: An Urgent Call for Action and Funding

For those who care about mutual understanding and the long-term vitality of the “indispensable” US-Japan partnership, this should be an “all-hands-on-deck” moment. In attempting to reverse the tide, there are three mutually reinforcing lines of effort that should take priority: surging new funding into the field, pooling resources through public-private partnerships and other innovative approaches, and ensuring that investments are strategically implemented to ensure maximum impact.

A. New endowments and grants from US and Japanese corporations, foundations, and philanthropists

Corporations and business leaders benefit to the tune of billions of dollars annually from close

and politically stable US-Japan relations at the national, state, and local level. If even a small fraction of those beneficiaries would endow US university-based faculty positions, centers, or programs to support research, teaching, and intellectual events on US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy, the effect on the field would be transformative.

Large endowments to expand the number of faculty positions earmarked specifically for experts on Japan's foreign policy or to establish related research centers and initiatives would have the largest, most direct, and most sustainable impact. One could envision, for example, the establishment of new endowed chairs or institutes for Japanese foreign policy and US-Japan relations at major universities across the United States, with a priority placed on regions where no such endowment currently exists.

Permanent endowments serve as potent force multipliers and are far more impactful over the long-term than project-specific, short-term grants. The annual returns that endowments produce provide a perpetual floor—rather than a ceiling—of financial support upon which entrepreneurial faculty and administrators can build even further. Designed and executed well, large gifts to universities would provide significant benefits for students through new faculty hiring and course offerings, public event series, academic workshops, and fellowships and scholarships for study and research.

One example of this model was the Government of Japan's [2016 gift of US\\$5 million](#) to the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, which was specifically tailored to support "the study of Japan as a major global power" by endowing (1) a new chair/professorship with expertise specifically on the "politics, diplomacy, security, and global affairs of Japan," and (2) a [Centre for the Study of Global Japan](#) for that endowed chair to lead. Within three years, Toronto had successfully hired one of the top US experts on Japanese foreign policy. Since 2019, this endowment has had a profound impact on the field by facilitating not only Japan-focused research at Toronto but also course offerings, mentorship opportunities for students, and various workshops and public-facing events open to the surrounding community. Toronto is now a critical "hub" for the field and provides a regular venue for robust discussions on "global Japan," Canada-Japan relations, and many other related scholarly and policy questions.

That said, multimillion-dollar gifts are of course not the only way for potential benefactors to have a significant and positive impact. Smaller endowments or grants could be used to help support new or existing initiatives in the areas of US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy. Such initiatives could include one or more of the following types of programs:

- **Visiting speaker series**—funds to facilitate a steady flow of experts to a university campus for the purpose of regularly exposing students, faculty, and community members to current research and policy issues affecting US-Japan relations (one model being the seminar series at Harvard University's [Program on US-Japan Relations](#)). Because they rely primarily on visiting experts invited to campus from the outside, such series can succeed even at universities without a Japan foreign policy expert among their faculty.
- **Regional visiting speaker "circuits"**—funds to incentivize colleagues at geographically proximate universities to work together to invite experts to speak at several campuses

over a multi-day trip. This approach would maximize efficiencies by allowing multiple institutions to split the cost of bringing a scholar or former policymaker (or small groups thereof) to their campuses. For example, a fund could be established to facilitate “speaking tours” to a group of universities based in a single metropolitan area/region, such as greater Atlanta or Chicago. Major expenses—e.g., a trans-Pacific flight for speakers from Japan—would be shared by multiple universities.

- **Academic workshops**—funds to help ensure the field’s sustainability by providing opportunities for junior scholars and graduate students to gather at a university to network and receive critical feedback on works-in-progress from prominent and up-and-coming experts. (One example was a 2024 conference on Japan and the Geopolitics and Business of the Indo-Pacific at the University of California San Diego.)
- **Graduate fellowships**—funds to help universities with resident experts recruit graduate students interested in developing deep expertise in Japanese foreign policy. Fellowships and other forms of financial support, especially at the MA or PhD level, can not only make graduate study possible for students who otherwise could not afford it, but also make it easier for students to focus on their studies rather than devoting significant hours to outside work to support themselves financially. To achieve even greater benefit, such fellowships could include tuition support that is explicitly linked to a Japanese foreign-policy-focused research assistantship with the student’s advisor.
- **Undergraduate and graduate student research travel grants**—funds for students to pursue several weeks of intensive research in Japan.
- **“Dream mentor” stipends/honoraria**—funds to incentivize prominent experts to serve on the advising committee of a PhD student who is interested in Japanese foreign policy but enrolled at a different university that lacks a resident expert.
- **“Crash course” workshops on Japanese politics, foreign policy, and the US-Japan alliance for professionals and students**—funds to provide intensive 2- or 3-day workshops run by a leading Japan expert or group of experts to introduce professionals and/or students to major issues in Japanese politics and foreign policy. These sessions would offer a time- and cost-effective venue for a diverse array of professionals (e.g., policymakers, military officers, business leaders, journalists, professionals being posted to Japan, etc.), as well as scholars and graduate students. (Models for this sort of intensive training workshop, although not themselves Japan-specific, include the [Summer Training Workshop on the Relationship between National Security and Technology in China](#) at the University of California San Diego, which focuses on graduate students, scholars, and professionals, or the graduate student-centered [Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy](#) at Cornell University.)

B. Creative pooling of resources, especially through more public-private partnerships

Recent successes in other related fields offer a few models that the Japanese and US governments, foundations, philanthropists, and business and alumni organizations may wish

to emulate. In particular, an expansion of public-private partnership approaches could help complement and amplify the nationwide impact of the critically important leadership and financial support provided by the Japan Foundation, the Japanese government, and several individual philanthropists and private foundations (e.g., Tadashi Yanai's [extraordinary \\$31 million gift](#) last year to support Japanese humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles).

For example, over the past decade-plus, the South Korean government-affiliated Korea Foundation (KF) has become extraordinarily proactive in providing and facilitating large endowments that are collectively responsible for scores of new Korea-focused professorships—over 100 in the United States to date, including two dozen in the oft-neglected Midwest and 11 in the South⁶—and university-based Korea research institutes. KF sometimes acts alone. In other cases, it partners with major Korean multinational corporations, other organizations, and/or philanthropists (e.g., university alumni) to pool resources.

The aggregate impact of KF-led donation efforts on the field of Korean studies at major US universities has been, in a word, transformative. To offer the one case-in-point with which I am most familiar, over the past decade multiple large external gifts to my home institution, Indiana University's (IU) [Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies](#), have enabled the establishment of (1) three new and endowed Korea-related faculty lines, including an endowment to sustain a senior-rank "Korea Foundation Professor," and (2) a new Institute for Korean Studies that organizes frequent intellectual and cultural events on campus, offers fellowships to Korea-focused MA students, and runs an undergraduate research program, inter alia. Similar stories about the recent invigoration of Korean studies can be told at many universities across the United States, both on the coasts and throughout "Middle America."

C. Strategic investment, particularly where marginal impact will be greatest

Especially when resources are scarce, it is important to invest strategically and efficiently—i.e., to support teaching, research, and programming on Japanese foreign policy and US-Japan relations at universities where each investment is likely to have the greatest marginal impact on students, surrounding communities, and the wider field.

Beyond the prominent elite universities on the East and West Coasts that typically attract most large gifts and endowments, targeted investments in other US institutions with one or more of the following characteristics are likely to yield particularly meaningful "bang for the buck":

1. flagship public research universities with tens of thousands of enrolled students but that do not typically attract large philanthropic gifts and typically lack sufficient resources (and/or administrative will) to create Japan-specific positions or research centers without outside support

6. Author's notes from a presentation by Korea Foundation President Gheewhan Kim at the KF Korean Studies Forum held in Indianapolis, Indiana on March 12, 2025.

2. the many prominent institutions that today boast an abundance of resources and faculty expertise devoted to contemporary China and/or Korea but that have under-invested in analogous expertise on Japan; presumably, these institutions will already have many students interested in East Asia and thus offer particularly fertile ground for more Japan-related seed funding to bear significant fruit
3. universities that already have robust multidisciplinary East Asian studies departments and/or international affairs and policy schools but lack a faculty member and student-related opportunities focused on Japanese foreign policy
4. major universities in states between the East and West Coasts that are of particular importance for US-Japan relations, such as those states with large amounts of Japanese investment and workers employed by Japanese firms and their suppliers

An advisory committee of experts from within and outside academia—perhaps convened by a US-based foundation—could help direct investments to where their marginal impact will be greatest. Knowledge of the US university landscape—especially in this field—would help potential funders identify what type of support is most needed and where it can be most beneficial. Such a committee could also help preempt the widespread tendency for outside gifts to disproportionately gravitate toward the most prestigious—and often wealthiest—coastal universities. Such institutions of course may be, but are not necessarily, where new investments will have the most transformative effects.

Conclusion: We Are at a Critical Juncture with No Time to Waste

While most would acknowledge the growing real-world importance of what both the current and previous US administrations have called the United States' most important Indo-Pacific partner and ally, the first two decades of this century have witnessed a precipitous drop-off in the value America's "top 100" universities place on teaching and research about contemporary US-Japan relations and Japanese foreign and security policy. As the sobering hiring trends highlighted above throw into sharp relief, that disconnect has worsened significantly over the past decade. Without major outside financial support—and soon—current trends may become irreversible as more faculty positions, course offerings, and opportunities for students disappear, and as the pipeline for future talent further atrophies.

Though a quiet crisis looms, it is an avoidable one.

Though a quiet crisis looms, it is an avoidable one. There remains an extraordinary level of interest in Japan among college students in America, which is something I have witnessed first-hand. If even just a small fraction of the US and Japanese foundations, corporations, business leaders, and philanthropists who care about and benefit from robust and healthy

US-Japan relations at all levels of government and society elected to provide funding to endow faculty positions, research centers, and/or other new initiatives to support research, teaching, and programming on Japanese foreign policy and US-Japan relations, it would be a game-changer.

On the other hand, the costs of inaction would be significant and would extend far beyond academia. Major US research universities are not only the education and training grounds for a disproportionate share of future scholars and leaders across all levels of government, industry, and civil society, they are also the key to giving many young Americans and their surrounding communities exposure to and a familiarity with Japan and its importance for America that most would otherwise lack.

Supporting Japan studies in US academia—and not only in the foreign policy space—is essential to keeping a pipeline of expertise on Japan and the US-Japan partnership flowing across all of America, both within the academy and beyond.

It is past time for new investments and a new generation of corporate leaders and philanthropists to help collectively inspire future generations of educators and experts on contemporary Japanese foreign and security policy and US-Japan relations.

The field stands at a critical juncture. To address this looming crisis, the time to act is now.

The views expressed in this essay are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the United States-Japan Foundation.

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About the United States-Japan Foundation

The United States-Japan Foundation is an independent philanthropic organization working to strengthen bilateral ties and address shared challenges. It empowers next-generation leaders and funds innovative initiatives, catalyzing collaboration and exchanges among stakeholders in search of solutions. In an era characterized by uncertainty and division, the foundation believes that a robust US-Japan relationship is vital to global peace, prosperity, stability, and sustainability in the 21st century. It is committed not just to maintaining that friendship but empowering it for greater good: helping each other address problems and jointly extending that support to friends in the region and around the world. A core part of the foundation's strategy is to bolster civil society in each country, bringing together talent and resources to create a thriving community.

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