

Press Release

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For inquiries:

Miranda Magana

Communications Manager

mmagana@usjapancouncil.org



The U.S.-Japan Council Brings Leaders Together in Honolulu for its 14th Annual Conference

Honolulu, Hawaii— Oct. 23, 2025 — The U.S.-Japan Council (USJC) convened the 14th U.S.-Japan Council Annual Conference in Honolulu on Oct. 15, bringing together nearly 650 leaders from across the United States and Japan. This year's conference, titled "Bilateral Strength in Action: Charting New Paths for Global Peace and Prosperity," explored how significant shifts in leadership and policy priorities are creating new challenges and opportunities for strategic collaboration and meaningful global impact.

Opening Plenary

The Public Symposium opened with remarks from Audrey Yamamoto, President & CEO, U.S.-Japan Council, who underscored the importance of cultivating leaders to carry forward the U.S.-Japan partnership, stating, "With the uncertainty surrounding the direction of global alliances and governance, the U.S.-Japan partnership — one of the most consequential in the world — is more vital than ever before." Building on this foundation of partnership, Norihiko ISHIGURO, Chairman & CEO, JETRO, and Paul Yonamine, Chairman Emeritus, Central Pacific Bank, explored the economic dimension in their session "Strategic Partnerships: A New Era of U.S.-Japan Economic Security." They examined how business and economic partnerships serve as another vital facet of the bilateral relationship, particularly in an era of increasing geopolitical complexity. Addressing how economic security is perceived in Japan, ISHIGURO stated, "In the context of geopolitical risks and the fragmentation of global trade, it is essential for Japan to strengthen supply chains and increase self-reliance."

Lunch Plenary

Norishige Morimoto, Vice President and CTO, IBM Japan, delivered remarks on "From Insight to Impact: Leadership at the Intersection of Technology and Change," sharing insights on emerging digital technologies and their potential applications. "As a leader in the world like this, one should know how to better see the future more clearly to predict what is to come," he said, citing the next advancements in AI as including "AI that can learn better with less data and energy, smaller AI models, and higher energy-efficiency devices including semiconductors and AI chips." The session "Driving Change Together: USJC Leadership Across Generations" brought together Emerging Leaders, Advanced Leaders, and TOMODACHI alumni to reflect on how cross-generational leadership is shaping the future of U.S.-Japan relations. The discussion

emphasized the importance of next-generation voices in bilateral cooperation and the unique strength of the USJC community. "What we do at USJC really well is the people-to-people connections and the ability to walk into a space and make it feel like community," said Kirstin Alm, USJC Emerging Leaders '20 cohort member.

Closing Plenary

As the conference drew to a close, attention turned to the role of regional leadership in fostering peace. Governor Josh Green Hawai'i, and Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki, Hiroshima Prefecture, joined the session "Subnational Power, Global Purpose: Governors Advancing Diplomacy and Peace" moderated by Sachi Hamai, Retired CEO, Los Angeles County. They discussed the critical role of state and prefectural leaders in diplomacy and people-to-people connections, demonstrating how local leadership contributes to international relations. Governor Yuzaki emphasized that "those relationships—'goen'—are really precious, and if you really value them, you will get real payback in the long-term." Building on this theme of meaningful connections, the plenary also highlighted the next-generation TOMODACHI voice Dan Ito, 2022 TOMODACHI Story Jam Alumni, who spoke on the power of civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding. His remarks underscored the life-changing impact of initiatives that bring young leaders together across borders.

The program concluded with a performance of "Peace On Your Wings," underscoring Hawaii's unique role as a bridge for peace and reconciliation between nations, marking 80 years of peace and friendship between the United States and Japan.

Breakout Sessions

Throughout the conference, morning and afternoon breakout sessions explored diverse areas of collaboration, including investment trends, family-owned business legacies, the evolving U.S.-Japan alliance, climate solutions, innovation and workforce development, and cross-border startup ecosystems connecting the United States, Japan and Hawaii. Additional sessions examined economic security amid geopolitical tensions, sustainability initiatives, and building a global, diverse workforce. Speaking on cross-border collaboration and unlocking potential across U.S., Japan, and Hawaii startup ecosystems, Kathy Matsui noted that "the need for solutions is only growing by the day."

The success of this convening reflects the strength of the U.S.-Japan partnership. USJC extends special thanks to our nearly 200 generous sponsors who made this event possible. The collaborative effort of our community continues to strengthen the bonds that make the U.S.-Japan partnership vital for addressing global challenges.

About the U.S.-Japan Council

Founded by Japanese Americans, the U.S.-Japan Council (USJC) is the premier organization dedicated to strengthening U.S.-Japan relations through people-to-people connections. Through the U.S.-Japan Leadership Institute, USJC cultivates an unparalleled pipeline of global leaders and convenes them at the highest levels to address pressing bilateral issues. With members

across the United States and Japan, USJC fosters a vibrant professional and personal network that drives meaningful impact for both nations.