



Visiting U.S. Program for Think of Okinawa's Future in the United States (TOFU) Program Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 The “Think of Okinawa's Future in the U.S.” (TOFU) Program sends high school students, university students, and vocational school students, who will lead the future of Okinawa, to the U.S. to improve their English skills and provide them with educational opportunities to learn about various fields in English through opinion exchanges, various observations, and other activities with relevant parties. By having participants look at the Japan-U.S. alliance from a global perspective and reaffirm its significance based on various real-life experiences in the U.S., the main objective of this program is to develop human resources in Okinawa who will be active in the international community, while strengthening the foundation of Japan's foreign policy with deepening the US-Japan alliance as its main pillar.

【Participants】 Total: 22 high school students, university students, and vocational school students from Okinawa who can actively disseminate information on Japan's diplomatic stance, Japan's strengths and attractions, etc.

【Locations】 Tokyo / District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) / New York City, New York

2. Program Schedule

■ Online Pre-study Program :

Feb. 23 (Fri) Pre-departure orientation

■ Outbound Program :

Mar. 19 (Tue) Orientation, Courtesy Call, Opinion Exchange, Courtesy Call, Opinion Exchange, Courtesy Call

【Orientation】

【Courtesy Call】

Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo: Mr. John D. Nylin

Deputy Commander, United States Forces Japan: Brigadier General Mr. George B. Rowell IV

Deputy Director General, North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Mr. MIYAMOTO Shingo

【Opinion Exchange】 Young staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

【Courtesy Call】 Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs: Mr. HOSAKA Yasushi

【Opinion Exchange】 Deputy Director-General / Deputy Assistant Minister: Mr. MIYAMOTO Shingo

【Courtesy Call】 Chief Cabinet Secretary: Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa

Mar. 20 (Wed) Departure, Arrival, Observation, Opinion Exchange

Departure from Haneda Airport, Arrival at Washington Dulles International Airport

【Observation】 Lincoln Memorial (National Mall)

【Opinion Exchange】 Counselor Congressional Affairs Section Embassy of Japan: Mr. TERAO Takeru and young embassy staff

Mar. 21 (Thu) Courtesy Call, Observation, School Exchange, Opinion Exchange, Courtesy Call

【Courtesy Call】 Acting Principal Director, East Asia Security of the Department of Defense (DOD): Ms. Jessica Cox

【Observation】 Department of Defense Tour

【School Exchange】 Columbia Heights Educational Campus (CHEC) Bell Multicultural High School

【Opinion Exchange】 Counsellor Political Section: Mr. NIHO Tomonori

【Workshop】 Team-building (Laurasian Institution)

【Courtesy Call】 Ambassador of Japan to the United States of America: Mr. YAMADA Shigeo

Mar. 22 (Fri) Courtesy Call, Observation, Courtesy Call, Workshop, Courtesy Call

【Courtesy Call】 U.S. Congresswoman: Ms. Jill Tokuda

【Courtesy Call】 Staffers of Senator Mazie Hirono's office

【Observation】 U.S. Capitol

【Courtesy Call】 Deputy Assistant Secretary of the State Department East Asia and Pacific Bureau: Ms. Camille Dawson

【Workshop】 Role-playing game on U.S.-Japan relations (State Department's Japan Desk)

【Courtesy Call】 Senior fellow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): Mr. Nicholas Szechenyi

Mar. 23 (Sat) School Visit, Travel

【School Visit】 Georgetown University

Travel from the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) to New York

Mar. 24 (Sun) Observation, Workshop

【Observation】 Staten Island Ferry/ Statue of Liberty

【Observation】 National September 11 Memorial

【Observation】 Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum

【Observation】 Times Square

【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

Mar. 25 (Mon) Courtesy Call, Observation,

【Courtesy Call】

Ambassador, Consul-General of Consulate General of Japan, New York : Mr. MORI Mikio

President of the Japanese American Association of NY Inc.: Mr. SATO Koji

Executive Vice President US-Japan Council: Mr. Frederick Katayama

【Courtesy Call】 Under-Secretary-General in NY and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,
Office for Disarmament Affairs: Mr. NAKAMITSU Izumi

【Courtesy Call】 Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of
Japan to the UN: Mr. YAMAZAKI Kazuyuki

【Observation】 UN Headquarters Tour

Mar. 26 (Tue) Departure

Departure from John F. Kennedy International Airport

Mar. 27 (Wed) Arrival

Arrival at Haneda Airport

3. Program Photos



March 19 【Courtesy Call】 Minister-Counselor for
Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo:
Mr. John D. Nylin / Deputy Commander, United
States Forces Japan: Brigadier General Mr.
George B. Rowell IV / Deputy Director General,
North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs: Mr. MIYAMOTO Shingo



March 19 【Opinion Exchange】 Young staff at the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



March 19 【Courtesy Call】 Parliamentary Vice-
Minister for Foreign Affairs: Mr. HOSAKA
Yasushi

【Opinion Exchange,】 Deputy Director-General
/ Deputy Assistant Minister: Mr. MIYAMOTO
Shingo



March 19 【Courtesy Call】 Chief Cabinet
Secretary: Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa



March 20 【 Observation 】 Lincoln Memorial
(National Mall)



March 20 【 Opinion Exchange 】 Counselor
Congressional Affairs Section Embassy of
Japan: Mr. TERAU Takeru and young embassy
staff



March 21 【 Courtesy Call 】 Acting Principal
Director, East Asia Security of the Department of
Defense (DOD): Ms. Jessica Cox



March 21 【 School Exchange 】 Columbia
Heights Educational Campus (CHEC) Bell
Multicultural High School



March 21 【 Opinion Exchange 】 Counsellor
Political Section: Mr. NIHO Tomonori



March 21 【 Courtesy Call 】 Ambassador of Japan
to the United States of America: Mr. YAMADA
Shigeo



March 22【Courtesy Call】U.S. Congresswoman:
Ms. Jill Tokuda



March 22 【Workshop】 Role-playing game on
U.S.-Japan relations (State Department's Japan
Desk)



March 22 【Courtesy Call】 Senior fellow of the
Center for Strategic and International Studies
(CSIS): Mr. Nicholas Szechenyi

March 23 【School Visit】 Georgetown University



March 24 【Observation】 Staten Island Ferry/
Statue of Liberty

March 24 【Observation】 National September 11
Memorial



March 24 【Observation】 Intrepid Sea, Air &
Space Museum

March 24 【Observation】 Times Square



March 25 【Courtesy Call】 Ambassador, Consul-General of Consulate General of Japan, New York : Mr. MORI Mikio / President of the Japanese American Association of NY Inc.: Mr. SATO Koji / Executive Vice President US-Japan Council: Mr. Frederick Katayama	March 25 【Courtesy Call】 Under-Secretary-General in NY and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Office for Disarmament Affairs : Mr. NAKAMITSU Izumi
	
March 25 【Courtesy Call】 Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN: Mr. YAMAZAKI Kazuyuki	March 25 【Observation】 UN Headquarters Tour

4. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student

In the diplomat simulation, I was able to experience firsthand the importance of human relations. I was also able to get a concrete idea of what a diplomat does and what it is like to be a diplomat. This hands-on experience and listening to the diplomat's stories gave me an opportunity to reflect on military base issues, world affairs, and Japan in a more proactive manner.

◆ High School Student

U.S. Congresswoman Ms. Jill Tokuda's talk did not only enlighten us about the security of Japan and the U.S., but also gave us a deeper understanding of what is needed for women to be active in society. In Japan, the percentage of women in the Diet and the percentage of women in management positions is still low, so it was very enlightening to hear from Ms. Jill Tokuda, who is a woman and an active congresswoman.

During the tour of the United Nations Headquarters, we were guided in English and visited exhibits and locations where official talks actually take place. The tour was easy to understand because a representative from a cooperating organization translated the explanations into Japanese and added extra explanations. I was able to actually see the inside of the United Nations, which is a large global organization we've all heard of, and this experience has made it easier for me to see the UN as something familiar when I hear about it in the news in the future.

◆ University Student

I was able to hear directly from people in different positions involved in diplomacy between Japan

and the U.S. These were people I would not normally have the opportunity to meet living in Japan, and I was able to directly ask them questions that I myself had been wondering about. Not only that, but the buildings we visited and the facilities we toured were also not easily accessible places, and just by seeing and visiting them, I was able to broaden my perspective and am now more interested in diplomacy.

◆ **University Student**

Since I was able to talk with government officials involved in Japan-U.S. diplomacy and security, I think I was able to gain a better insight into these issues and a better understanding of the base issues of Okinawa. I believe that this will be useful for the U.S. and Okinawa, as well as the Japanese government and Okinawa, to reach a consensus. By learning what aspects are non-negotiable, for what reasons the bases should be in a concentrated area, and what aspects should be taken into consideration to come up with alternatives, we can share our knowledge with the people of Okinawa and thereby contribute to resolving the base issues.

◆ **University Student**

I personally wanted to ask about the Taiwan contingency, which is a major concern with the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, so it was very informative to be able to ask questions to Counselor Takeru Terao, who was very familiar with the situation in Russia. It was also great to hear deeper insights from someone who has been involved in Japanese diplomacy for so many years. I also learned a lot from him when I asked him why he chose a career as a diplomat.

It was personally very interesting for me to visit Georgetown University, which is particularly strong in the field of international relations, and I was glad to hear why students my age are studying the field and why they are interested in Japan.

5. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Cooperating Organization**

I had always wanted to be involved in the TOFU Program. It was an honor and a pleasure to be a part of the program and to visit so many unique places, such as the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of State, and the United Nations.

◆ **Observation Destination**

We had unfortunate weather, but we were honored that the KAKEHASHI students were able to enjoy their visit to Georgetown University. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance. We are glad that the students who were fortunate enough to visit Japan (through the inbound program to Japan) were able to give a presentation on their impressions of their visit to the students who came to visit us here in the U.S. as part of this program.

6. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)



March 20, 2024 (Instagram)

After a long 12-hour flight, we are now in Washington, D.C. In the evening we visited the Japanese Embassy in the U.S. I learned so much that I can't describe it all here. World peace is the most important thing.



March 22, 2024 (Instagram)

We visited the PENTAGON, a high school in Columbia Heights, and the embassy of Japan. I learned that America appreciates Okinawa because Okinawa warmly accepted the base and they think Japan-U.S. alliance is very important. At Columbia Heights High School, I couldn't talk to students as much as I wanted to. My new target is to speak English and make friends on my own.

March 22, 2024 (Instagram) This picture is the U.S. Capitol. It was as beautiful as a museum. Today I asked a few questions and learned how to elevate the status of women. Also, I found East Asia is threatened by China. I think Okinawan people should know about the situation around Okinawa. I wanna eat white rice too much.	March 25, 2024 (Instagram) A large building at this location was destroyed by a terrorist organization. In all 2936 people were killed and more than 25000 people were injured.

7. Action Plans for after returning to Japan (excerpt)

2 out of 4 groups gave presentations.

Think of Okinawa's Future in the United States (TOFU) Program (1)	
【Action Plan】 ● Goal	

We who participated in the TOFU Program plan to share our new discoveries and views gained from the KAKEHASHI Outbound Program with our respective communities after we return to Japan. Having learned why the military bases exist in Okinawa, and having seen and learned about certain aspects from both perspectives, we the future generation will consider the opinions for and against the bases and how we can coexist moving forward.

- Content

Utilizing the presentation time available at university, we will inform our peers about the reasons for the existence of U.S. military bases in Okinawa from the perspective of the U.S. - Japan Status of Forces Agreement, including an explanation of the geographical reasoning behind the locations of the bases.

- Purpose

Participating in this program gave us new information that is not broadcast by the two local newspapers or local TV station in Okinawa, and we would like to provide this information to our peers.

- Individual Implementation Plans

- I work part-time with school children and will conduct workshops with local children on the U.S. military base.
- I will propose an exchange between elementary and junior high schools in Ginowan and schools on base during the Ginowan City debrief.
- Talk on U.S. military bases has not come up very often in presentations at my university, so from now on I will actively give presentations that touch on U.S. military bases so that I can hear and disseminate both pro- and anti-base opinions.
- I will participate in existing events organized by the U.S. Consulate General in Okinawa and share what I gain from them with my friends.

- 3-month Plan

- A) We will share our experiences and new perspectives (particularly geopolitical perspectives) by distributing materials in the presentation class at university.
- B) We will distribute post cards to each class with a QR code to a page describing the TOFU Program and what we learned from the program.

- 1-year Plan

- A) We would like to increase the number of places where we can share our experiences from the TOFU Program.
- B) We will actively participate in morning activities held by the U.S. Consulate General in Okinawa and share the opinions of both those who actually work on the bases and the views of our peers regarding the bases.
- C) We will interview U.S. military personnel around our age about why they decided to join the military and about their actual life on the base.

Think of Okinawa's Future in the United States (TOFU) Program (2)



【Action Plan】

- Plan A
During a class on where we have to give a presentation about Okinawa, we will share with the class our experiences from this program on the theme of military bases in Okinawa.
- Plan B
To give students more opportunities to interact with each other in Okinawa, which is one of the easiest places in Japan for international exchange, we will offer summer home-stay programs for elementary and junior high school students.
- Plan C
In order to make the students aware of the KAKEHASHI Project, we plan to go and give classes to junior and senior high school students to encourage them to think about Okinawa, and as an activity, we plan to have them experience how countries talk to each other by playing a diplomat simulation game like the one we did during the program.
- Plan D
To reach a wider audience, and not only youths, we will post information in newspapers and also broadcast it on the radio or make podcasts.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)