The Japanese elections of 2007 and 2009 brought about the most significant political change in postwar Japan since the formation of the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955. The elections saw a collapse of the LDP that had ruled Japan for almost the entirety of the postwar period, and the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) gained control of both houses of parliament (Diet). The elections appeared to mark the consolidation of a new era of genuine competitive electoral politics in Japan, potentially leading to a stable two-party system. The DPJ came into power in the fall of 2009 promising to revolutionize Japanese policy making and diminish the authority of the government bureaucracy in favor of a greater role for elected politicians and a cabinet-led system of governance.

A year later, the winds of change seem to have lost much of their momentum. The DPJ’s string of electoral victories came to a quick end in the Upper House vote of 2010. Prior to the election, Prime Minister Hatoyama was forced to step down in favor of Naoto Kan after the government proved ineffectual in forging clear and cohesive policies in both domestic and foreign arenas. The LDP, along with new conservative groupings, has stepped back from the brink of self-destruction.

The future of politics in Japan is now highly uncertain with numerous possible outcomes. When it comes to political change in Japan, are recent events a case of one step forward, one step back? Alternatively, is the 2010 election simply a temporary setback in what will become either a period of DPJ dominance or a period of genuine party competition? Or, are we still in a period of flux, in which further realignment and possibly even grand coalition making between the LDP and DPJ may continue to shake up the system?

Moreover, even if the events of 2007 and 2009 really did usher in a new party system, what sorts of changes are we looking at? Will the system be focused on genuine two-party competition, or will small parties help decide future governments? And what do these changes really mean in terms of government policy-making in Japan?

This conference follows in the footsteps of our successful conference on political change in Japan in 2007 at Stanford University that produced an edited volume – Political Change in Japan. We again hope to bring together both junior and senior academic specialists on Japanese politics and policymaking to take stock of the state of political change after genuine party alternation has occurred. The conference will examine the impact of change on parties and politics and on key areas of governance.
Friday, February 4

8:30a.m. – Breakfast and registration

8:50a.m. – Phillip Lipscy – Welcoming remarks

9:00a.m.  
*Party Politics in Japan*, Michael Armacost – Moderator

Kay Shimizu – *Electoral Consequences of Structural Change: Explaining the LDP’s Decline*
Ethan Scheiner – *The Evolution of Japan’s Party System – Consolidation or Realignment?*
Steven Reed – *Dilemmas for Third Parties in Japan’s Two-Party System*

11:00a.m. – 11:15a.m.    Break

11:15a.m. – 12:30p.m.   Discussion

12:30p.m. – 1:30p.m.    
*Lunch*

1:30p.m.  
*Politics and Governance*, Benjamin Self, Moderator

Tobias Harris – *Administrative Reform Under the DPJ: Progress and Problems in Building a Westminster System*
Alisa Gaunder – *Women in Politics – Is There an Impact on Policy and Governance?*
Llewelyn Hughes – *Delegation in Japanese Politics: Evidence from Japanese Oil Policy*

3:00p.m. – 3:15p.m.    
*Break*

3:15p.m. – 4:30p.m.  
Discussion

6:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.    
*Participants’ dinner, Spalti, 417 California Avenue Palo Alto*

Saturday, February 5

8:30a.m. – Continental breakfast

9:00a.m.  
*Politics and International Policy*, Phillip Lipscy, Moderator

Benjamin Self & Leif-Eric Easley – *The Gravity of Japan’s Political Center: Party Realignment and the Weight of U.S. Alliance Politics*
Daniel Sneider – *The New Asianism: Foreign Policy under the DPJ*

Discussion

11:00a.m. – 11:15a.m.    
*Break*

11:15a.m.    
*Politics and Domestic Policy*, Daniel Sneider, Moderator

Linda Hasunuma – *Continuity and Change? Local Governments and Finances Under the DPJ*
Kenji Kushida – *Japan’s Strategic IT Policy in a Post-LDP World: Between Particularism and Pork, Redux*

12:35p.m. – 1:35p.m.  
Lunch & Discussion

1:35p.m.    
*Conclusion, Brief publication discussion*
Discussants

**Michael Armacost**, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University  
**Amy Catalinac**, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Government, Harvard University  
**Robert Eberhart**, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University  
**Thomas Fingar**, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University  
**Shigeo Hirano**, Department of Political Science, Columbia University  
**Ellis Krauss**, School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego  
**Gene Park**, Department of Political Science, Baruch College, City University of New York  
**T.J. Pempel**, Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley  
**David Straub**, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University  
**Michael Thies**, Department of Politics, University of California, Los Angeles  
**Steven Vogel**, Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley
Kay Shimizu has been assisting research concerning the emerging elections and grassroots politics in the PRC since 1999 with Stanford University’s Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. She’s also currently working on three papers: “Taxation and Representation in Rural China, On Competitiveness”, “How Voters Differentiate Candidates,” and “Credit Allocation and Public Finance in China, 1978-2005”.


Ethan Scheiner is on the faculty of the department of political science at the University of California, Davis. His research focuses on Japanese politics and general issues surrounding democratic representation. He received a B.A. in politics in 1991 at the University of California, Santa Cruz, an M.A. in political science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1994, and a Ph.D. in political science at Duke University in 2001. He has been a postdoctoral fellow in the Program on U.S.-Japan Relations at Harvard University (2001-02), and a postdoctoral fellow at the Stanford Institute for International Studies (2002-2004).


He has recently completed a manuscript (with co-author Robert G. Moser), Rethinking the Effects of Electoral Systems: Mixed Systems and the Conditioning Effect of Political Context. In addition, he has recently begun a new project with Steven Reed and Michael Thies on the recent changes in party and electoral politics in Japan.

Steven Reed is professor of modern government at Chuo University in Japan, where all of his classes are taught in Japanese. His major areas of research are parties, elections, electoral systems, and Japanese politics. He recently co-edited “Political Change in Japan: Electoral Behavior, Party Realignment, and the Koizumi Reforms” (Brookings, 2009) with Kenneth Mori McElwain and Kay Shimizu. He has published in the British Journal of Political Science, the American Journal of Political Science, the Journal of Japanese Studies, Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Party Politics, Electoral Studies and several Japanese journals.

Kenneth Mori McElwain is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He received his Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University, where he specialized in contemporary Japanese politics. McElwain’s research focuses on the comparative politics of institutional design. His current book manuscript examines how partisan actors manipulate electoral rules, and how those tactics can help unpopular governments stay in power. Other research topics include the organizational principles of political parties and the procedural complexity of constitutional amendments. McElwain was a co-organizer of the 2007 Stanford Conference on Japanese Politics and co-edited the resulting book, “Political Change in Japan”.
Tobias Harris is an analyst of Japanese politics and foreign policy. Author of the blog Observing Japan, his writing has appeared in the Far Eastern Economic Review, the Wall Street Journal Asia, Foreign Policy, the New Republic, and the Japan Times. His blog posts also appear in Japanese at Newsweek Japan’s website.

He has appeared as a commentator on CNBC Asia, Bloomberg, the BBC, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Record TV Brazil, and Al Jazeera English, and has appeared on NPR (US) and ABC radio (Australia). From October 2006 until July 2007, Harris worked as a private secretary to Keiichiro Asao, a member of the Upper House of the Japanese Diet and a former senior official in the Democratic Party of Japan.

A Ph.D. student in political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tobias holds a BA (summa cum laude) in politics and history from Brandeis University and an M.Phil in international relations from the University of Cambridge.

Alisa Gaunder is associate professor of political science at Southwestern University. Her research focuses on comparative politics with a secondary concentration in East Asian politics. Within East Asia, Gaunder focuses on the domestic policy making process in Japan. In particular, she is interested in when and why politicians pass political reform and the role of political leadership in the policy making process.


She has received an ASIANetwork Freeman Faculty/Student Collaborative Research Grant, 2005-2006, Mundy Faculty Fellowship 2005-2006, Cullen Research Grants 2003-2007 and the Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor, University of California, Berkeley, 1999. She earned her B.A. at Washington University and both her M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley.

Llewelyn Hughes is currently assistant professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University. His research focuses on the international and comparative political economy of energy markets, and the political economy of climate change. He also has interests in institutional theory.

Hughes received his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He also holds a Masters degree from the Graduate School of Law and Politics at the University of Tokyo. He has received research support from the Smith Richardson Foundation, MIT Laboratory for Energy and Environment, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Sigur Center for Asian Studies, and the George Washington University Center for International Business. He has been a visiting fellow at Université Paris Dauphine, Japan Business Federation (Keidanren), and the Japan Institute for Energy Economics.

Prior to his current position, Hughes was research fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Harvard University. From 1997-2000 he was employed as international aide and interpreter to Ozawa Ichiro, a senior politician in the Democratic Party of Japan. He is trained as a simultaneous and consecutive interpreter in the Japanese language.
Robert Weiner joined the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School in September 2007. His research and teaching focus on Japanese and East Asian politics, political parties and elections, democratic institution-building and design, game theory and general research methods.


Weiner earned his Ph.D. in political science at the University of California at Berkeley, was an assistant professor in the government department of Cornell University for three years before joining NPS. He has held research fellowships at Harvard University’s Program on U.S.-Japan Relations and Stanford University’s Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, and visiting researcher positions in the Law Department of Keio University (Tokyo) with support from fellowships from the Japanese Ministry of Education and the Japan Foundation.

Benjamin Self is the inaugural Takahashi Fellow in Japanese Studies at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. Prior to joining the Center in September 2008, Self was at the Henry L. Stimson Center as a senior associate working on Japanese security policy beginning in 1998. While at the Stimson Center, he directed projects on Japan-China relations, fostering security cooperation between the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the PRC, Japan’s Nuclear Option, and Confidence-Building Measures. Self has also carried out research and writing in areas such as nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, ballistic missile defense, Taiwan’s security, Northeast Asian security dynamics, the domestic politics of Japanese defense policy, and Japan’s global security role.

Self earned his undergraduate degree in political science at Stanford University in 1988, and an M.A. in Japan Studies and international economics from Johns Hopkins University, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. While there, he was a Reischauer Center Summer Intern at the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS) in Tokyo. He later worked in the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and was a visiting research fellow at Keio University on a Fulbright grant from 1996 until 1998.

Leif-Eric Easley is the 2010-11 northeast asian history fellow at Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. Easley completed his Ph.D. at Harvard University’s department of government in 2010, specializing in East Asian international relations. His dissertation presents a theory of national identity perceptions, bilateral trust between governments, and patterns of security cooperation, based on extensive fieldwork in Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing.

Easley completed his B.A. in political science with a minor in mathematics at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he graduated summa cum laude and senior of the year with a thesis on “Theater Missile Defense in Asia”. He was a long-time affiliate of the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations (HPAIR) and was Japan area editor for the Harvard Asia Quarterly. He served as a teaching fellow at Harvard in the subjects of Asian international relations and American foreign policy and was advisor for a senior thesis on historical memory and foreign policy in Asia. He was also a visiting scholar at Yonsei University and the University of Southern California’s Korean Studies Institute.
Daniel Sneider is the associate director for research at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University. He currently directs the center’s project on Nationalism and Regionalism and the Divided Memories and Reconciliation project, a three-year comparative study of the formation of historical memory in East Asia. His own research is focused on current U.S. foreign and national security policy in Asia, including work on a diplomatic history of the building of the United States Cold War alliances in Northeast Asia.

Sneider was a 2005-06 Pantech fellow at the Center, and the former foreign affairs columnist of the San Jose Mercury News. His twice-weekly column on foreign affairs, looking at international issues and national security from a West Coast perspective, was syndicated nationally on the Knight Ridder Tribune wire service, reaching about 400 newspapers in North America. He has appeared as a foreign affairs commentator on the Lehrer News Hour and on National Public Radio.

Sneider is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the West Coast affiliate of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is also a member of the Institute of Current World Affairs. Sneider holds an MA in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard (1985) and a BA in East Asian History from Columbia (1973).

Phillip Lipscy is a center fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, an assistant professor of political science at Stanford University and a specialist on East Asian political economy and international relations. His fields of research include Japanese politics, U.S.-Japan relations, international and comparative political economy, international security, and regional cooperation in East and South East Asia.

Lipscy is an expert on bargaining over unbalanced representation in international organizations such as the United Nations Security Council, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank. His existing work addresses a wide range of topics such as the use of secrecy in international policy making, the effect of domestic politics on trade, and Japanese responses to the asian financial crisis. His most recent research examines the political and economic factors that facilitate energy efficient policy making.

Lipscy obtained his Ph.D. in political science at Harvard University. He received his M.A. in international policy studies and a B.A. in economics and political science at Stanford University. Lipscy has been affiliated with the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies and Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, The Institute for Global and International Studies at The George Washington University, the RAND Corporation, and the Institute for International Policy Studies in Tokyo.

Linda Hasunuma received her Ph.D. in comparative politics from the University of California, Los Angeles in July of 2010. Her dissertation used an institutional analysis to explain recent changes to the structure and finances of local governments in Japan. She linked changes in the political incentives and politics at the national level to accompanying changes in local governments and their finances. She is now an assistant professor in the Department of Government at Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania. Her current research projects include a book chapter on the Komeito’s policy impact while in coalition with the LDP, and a project on the British coalition government’s decentralization reforms.
Kenji Kushida is a 2010-2011 Walter H. Shorenstein postdoctoral fellow at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California Berkeley, and was a graduate research associate at the Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy. Kushida earned an M.A. in East Asian studies from Stanford University, and B.A.s in Economics and East Asian studies from Stanford University.

Kushida’s research interests are in the interactions between politics, policies, and markets, with specializations in information technology, multinational corporations, and East Asia, particularly Japan. His dissertation analyzes the political strategies of foreign multinational corporations in Japan. Recent publications explore topics such as how the information technology-enabled transformation of service activities transforms traditional political dynamics, and political economic analyses of Japan and South Korea’s broadband and mobile industries. Ongoing projects include an analysis of how the rapidly developing cloud computing technologies reopens political debates surrounding privacy and security in different ways across diverse economies, an exploration of the mechanisms of institutional change in Japan’s political economy in the 2000s, and further work on the effects of foreign multinational corporations in reshaping Japan’s model of capitalism.

Discussants listed alphabetically

Michael Armacost has been at Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center since 2002 as the as Shorenstein Distinguished Fellow. In the interval between 1995 and 2002, Armacost served as president of Washington D.C’s Brookings Institution, the nation’s oldest think tank and a leader in research on politics, government, international affairs, economics, and public policy. Previously, during his twenty-four year government career, Armacost served, among other positions, as undersecretary of state for political affairs and as ambassador to Japan and the Philippines.

Armacost began his career in academia, as a professor of government at Pomona College. In 1969, he was awarded a White House Fellowship, and was assigned to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of State. Following a stint on the State Department policy planning and coordination staff, he became a special assistant to the U.S. ambassador in Tokyo from 1972-74, his first foreign diplomatic post. Thereafter, he held senior Asian affairs and international security posts in the State Department, Defense Department, and the National Security Council. From 1982 to 1984, he served as U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, and was a key force in helping the country undergo a nonviolent transition to democracy. In 1989, President George Bush tapped him to become ambassador to Japan, considered one of the most important and sensitive U.S. diplomatic posts abroad.

Amy Catalinac is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Government at Harvard University. Her dissertation seeks to explain the dramatic shift in attention to foreign and national security policy by conservative Japanese politicians in the late 1990s. Utilizing a new collection of 7,528 candidate election manifestos and a statistical topic model new to political science, she shows that the shift is a product of changing electoral strategies. Catalinac earned her B.A. Hons (First Class) in political science and Japanese at Victoria University of Wellington in 2003. Between 2000 and 2001 and 2002 and 2004 she studied International Relations at the University of Tokyo, and was an intern at the LDP. She is interested in the effects of political and electoral institutions on policy outcomes more broadly.
Robert Eberhart is a fellow at Stanford’s Program on Regions of Innovation and Entrepreneurship where he leads the Stanford Project on Japanese Entrepreneurship (STAJE). His research focuses on comparative corporate governance of growth companies with special emphasis on Japan and the role of Japanese institutions in fostering entrepreneurship. His papers include topics such as corporate governance, entrepreneurship in Japan and institutional ideas of innovation. He is a member of the American Economic Association, the International Society for New Institutional Economics, is a member of the board of advisors to Japan’s Global Entrepreneurship Week, and an advisor to Japan’s Board of Director’s Training Institute. He serves as an academic advisor to the American Chamber of Commerce’s Task Force on New Growth Strategies and is a frequent speaker and guest lecturer in various programs at Stanford and in Japan. He presents seminars to diverse institutions such as: the Japan Venture Capital Association, the US Embassy in Japan, Stanford’s US-Asia Technology Management Center, Asia Pacific Student Entrepreneurs Society at Stanford, the Entrepreneur Association of Tokyo, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, and academic presentations of his own research on Japanese corporate governance and entrepreneurship. He also lectures in classes on Japanese business and entrepreneurship at Stanford University and Berkeley.

Eberhart received a Master’s degree in economics from the University of Michigan after undergraduate studies in finance at Michigan State University. He is pursuing doctoral studies at Stanford’s department of Management Science and Engineering.

Thomas Fingar is the Oksenberg/Rohlen distinguished fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. In 2009, he was the Payne Distinguished Lecturer. From May 2005 through December 2008, he served as the first Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis and, concurrently, as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council.

Fingar served previously as Assistant Secretary of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (2001-2003), Deputy Assistant Secretary for Analysis (1994-2000), Director of the Office of Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific (1989-1994), and Chief of the China Division (1986-1989). Between 1975 and 1986 he held a number of positions at Stanford University, including senior research associate in the Center for International Security and Arms Control. Fingar is a graduate of Cornell University (A.B. in government and history, 1968), and Stanford University (M.A., 1969 and Ph.D., 1977 both in political science).

Shigeo Hirano is assistant professor of political science at Columbia University. He is also a faculty fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, the Applied Statistics Center, a faculty affiliate at the Weatherhead East Asia Institute and the Center for the Study of Development Strategies at Columbia. Hirano received his Ph.D from the Political Economy and Government Program at Harvard University. His research focuses on elections and representation. He is the author of several articles on both Japanese and American politics that have appeared in journals such as the American Journal of Political Science, the Journal of Politics, the Quarterly Journal of Political Science, World Politics, Legislative Studies Quarterly, Electoral Studies and Studies in American Political Development. He is currently starting a new series of projects examining the factors affecting the policy positions taken by Japanese Diet members. He is also working on several on-going projects related to the effect of intra-political party competition on voting and representation in both the United States and Japan. Hirano has held appointments at New York University, Princeton University, the University of Tokyo and Yale University.
Ellis Krauss is a professor at the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University (1973). An expert on postwar Japanese politics and on U.S.-Japan relations, Krauss has authored or co-edited seven books on Japan, including most recently *The Rise and Fall of Japan’s LDP: Political Party Organizations as Institutions* (Cornell University Press, 2010) with Robert Pekkanen, University of Washington, and previously, *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia Pacific* (Stanford University Press, 2004) with T.J. Pempel, University of California, Berkeley, co-editor. He also has published numerous articles in professional political science and Asian studies journals. With Pekkanen and Matthew Shugart he is co-principal investigator of a three-year National Science Foundation grant about the impact of electoral reform on party nomination and appointment practices involving 8 countries (including Japan) and six-subcontractors in the U.S. and EU.

Gene Park is an assistant professor at Baruch College. He specializes in political economy and Japanese politics. He has written extensively on the politics of public finance in Japan including a forthcoming book from Stanford University Press entitled *Spending without Taxation: FILP and the Politics of Public Finance in Japan*. He is currently working on a comparative study of taxation. Prior to arriving at Baruch, he was a Shorenstein Fellow at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC). He also spent two years as a visiting scholar at the Japanese Ministry of Finance's Policy Research Institute. Park received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. He is the recipient of a Fulbright Institute of International Education fellowship. He holds a B.A. in philosophy from Swarthmore College and a Masters of city and regional planning from Berkeley.

T. J. Pempel (Ph.D., Columbia) joined Berkeley’s political science department in July 2001 and served as director of the Institute of East Asian Studies from 2002 until 2006. There he held the Il Han New Chair in Asian Studies. Just prior to coming to Berkeley, he was at the University of Washington at Seattle where he was the Boeing professor of international studies in the Jackson School of International Studies and an adjunct professor in political science. From 1972 to 1991, he was on the faculty at Cornell University; he was also Director of Cornell’s East Asia Program. He has also been a faculty member at the University of Colorado and the University of Wisconsin. Pempel’s research and teaching focus on comparative politics, political economy, contemporary Japan, and Asian regionalism. His recent books include *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Cornell University Press), “Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific” (Stanford University Press), “The Politics of the Asian Economic Crisis, Regime Shift”, “Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy”, and “Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes” (all from Cornell University Press). Earlier books include “Policymaking in Contemporary Japan” (Cornell University Press), “Trading Technology: Europe and Japan in the Middle East” (Praeger), and “Policy and Politics in Japan: Creative Conservatism” (Temple University Press). In addition, he has published over one hundred scholarly articles and chapters in books. Pempel is chair of the working group on Northeast Asian security of CSCAP, is on editorial boards of several professional journals, and serves on various committees of the American Political Science Association, the Association for Asian Studies, and the Social Science Research Council. He is currently doing research on various problems associated with U.S. foreign policy and Asian regionalism.
David Straub was named associate director of the Korean Studies Program at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC) in July 2008. Previously he was a 2007-2008 Pantech fellow at APARC. Straub is currently writing a book on recent U.S.-South Korean relations. He is also a member of the new beginnings policy research group on U.S.-South Korean relations, which is co-sponsored by Shorenstein APARC and the New York-based Korea Society. He also served as acting director of Korean studies program for 2008-09 academic year.

Straub served as head of the political section at the U.S. embassy in Seoul from 1999 to 2002 during popular protests against the U.S., and he played a key working-level role in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear program as the State Department’s Korea country desk director from 2002 to 2004. He also served eight years at the U.S. embassy in Japan. His final assignment was as the State Department’s Japan country desk director from 2004 to 2006, when he was co-leader of the U.S. delegation to talks with Japan on the realignment of the U.S.-Japan alliance and of U.S. military bases in Japan.

After leaving the Department of State, Straub taught U.S.-Korean relations at the Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in the fall of 2006 and at the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) of Seoul National University in spring 2007. He has published a number of papers on U.S.-Korean relations. His foreign languages are Korean, Japanese, and German.

Michael Thies is director of the Paul I. and Hisako Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies and associate professor in the department of political science, University of California, Los Angeles. He brings a specialist’s theoretical knowledge of legislative institutions, electoral systems, and party competition to the study of Japanese politics. He is the author of articles on electoral politics and policy-making in Japan, appearing in such journals as the American Journal of Political Science, Legislative Studies Quarterly, and Comparative Political Studies. His recent work studies the logic of delegation in coalition formation and the electoral foundations of legislative organization. He offers a popular graduate course on political institutions, delegation, and policy-making, and an introductory undergraduate course in comparative politics. He spent 1999-2000 as a national fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

He earned his B.A. in political economy of industrial societies and Japan studies, University of California, Berkeley, his master’s in Pacific international affairs / comparative public policy, Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego, his M.A. in political science, University of California, San Diego and his Ph.D. in political science, University of California, San Diego.

Steven K. Vogel is professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley. He specializes in the political economy of the advanced industrialized nations, especially Japan. He is the author of “Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism” (Cornell, 2006) and co-editor (with Naazneen Barma) of “The Political Economy Reader: Markets as Institutions” (Routledge, 2007). His earlier book, “Freer Markets, More Rules: Regulatory Reform in Advanced Industrial Countries” (Cornell University Press, 1996), won the 1998 Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Prize. He has also edited a volume entitled “U.S.-Japan Relations in a Changing World” (Brookings Institution Press, 2002). He has written extensively on comparative political economy and Japanese politics, industrial policy, trade and defense policy. He has worked as a reporter for the Japan Times in Tokyo and as a freelance journalist in France. He has taught previously at the University of California, Irvine and Harvard University. He has a B.A. from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.