

UPF Osaka, Japan ILC 2021: Session II - Regional Security in East Asia

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Osaka, Japan - The second session of UPF-Japan's July International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) was held on July 11, on the theme, "Threat from China and Regional Security of East Asia." The event, a talk, featured Mr. Shunsuke Uotani, UPF-Japan's secretary general, as the speaker, and was attended by 50 people.

Mr. Uotani began by saying that an increased number of Chinese ships have been traversing Asian waters since 2020, and gave an analysis of China's maritime expansion. Since Richard Nixon's presidency, the U.S. has followed a policy of engagement with China. He added that some believe that if the U.S. actively supported China's economic development, political freedom and even democracy would have come about in the country. However, this postulation has proved to be false: China is now seen as a threat to the security and prosperity of the U.S.

Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific initiative has been supported by the Biden administration and was even welcomed at the 2021 G7 Leader's Summit in the U.K. in June. Mr. Uotani recommended South Korea join the Quad (the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), a strategic dialogue between Australia, India, Japan and the U.S.

Mr. Uotani underlined that the Japan-U.S. alliance is at the heart of Japan's national security. Further, he pointed out that Japan's Self-Defense Forces are now the world's fifth-largest force, with South Korean forces coming in sixth, according to the 2020 Military Strength Ranking compiled by Global Fire Power.

The session concluded with Mr. Uotani remarking that a Japan-ROK (Republic of Korea) defense cooperation could effectively counter the threat from China.