

Keynote Address by H.E. Mr. NISHIMURA Yasutoshi,
Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, ,

at the Special Seminar at the Haas School of Business,
University of California, Berkeley

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Good afternoon to you all. I am NISHIMURA Yasutoshi, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan.

I very much appreciate this valuable opportunity to address you today, and I am truly honored to be here.

I hear that UC Berkeley was founded in 1868. That was a truly pivotal year for Japan.

It was a year of transformation. The Meiji Restoration took place, breaking the 300-year-long isolation of the country, and transitioning Japan to the modern Meiji government.

I understand UC Berkeley to be a university that has produced founders of transformative businesses as well as leaders who spearhead transformational changes in society.

Apple, Intel, eBay, Gap and many other global enterprises were founded by UC Berkeley graduates. These are people who cultivated transformation through their work. The Japanese telecommunications giant Softbank was also founded by a UC Berkeley alum, Mr. SON Masayoshi.

Today, it is startups that give rise to transformational changes and innovations.

The next Apple or Softbank will emerge from among startups. To bring about transformational change, it is essential to have networks among colleagues who share the same thinking. I know that the Haas School and Berkeley SkyDeck have played a role in creating networks among individuals who give rise to these kinds of transformations.

The role of SkyDeck will advance towards a new horizon through cooperation with JETRO. SkyDeck will expand into Japan. SkyDeck has shown penetrating insight by focusing on the fact that Japan is now working to achieve transformation, and by taking the decision to partner with JETRO.

Japan is now working to transform the structure of our society. We are working to achieve further growth by promoting green transformation and digital transformation, regarding challenges such as climate change and digitalization as opportunities for change.

Japan offers a substantial industrial base in a wide spectrum of fields. For example, we have strengths in semiconductor manufacturing equipment and materials, robots, and other industrial fields, as well as components and materials related to quantum technologies.

On this foundation, Japan will proactively lead the creation of new industries. For instance, the automotive industry, an industry in which Japan has been competitive historically, will leverage technological advances to evolve into a “mobility industry” that brings about solutions to social issues while also creating value.

As we create and develop new industries, we will need technological innovation, the forming of bases, and the securing of resources.

The Japanese government is supporting the development of all-solid-state batteries, which hold the key to next-generation electric

vehicles, as well as perovskite next-generation solar cells, while also newly establishing a global center for quantum technologies, and moreover, working to secure the computational resources necessary for developing generative AI.

In this way, as the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, the person charged with overseeing the growth of Japan's economy, I will spearhead Japan's transformation.

I am inspired by two UC Berkeley alums in particular.

The first of these is the late Mr. Norman Mineta, a graduate from here at the Haas School. Mr. Mineta, a second-generation Japanese American, became the first Asian American to serve as a U.S. cabinet secretary and was a historic figure who carved out new possibilities.

The second is U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm. As a U.S. cabinet secretary, she is a colleague leading global transformation and taking on challenges in the field of energy, including hydrogen and next-generation nuclear power. She never fails to inspire me. By the way, she was born in Canada. The fact that Canada-born woman is leading the U.S. as a cabinet member is an example of the U.S. attracting the best and brightest from around the world.

I think these two people are symbolic of UC Berkeley's strength to attract diverse talent. I believe that these diverse individuals from Japan, Canada, and around the world are the driving force of innovation.

On Sunday, I attended the ceremony to launch the Japan Innovation Campus, a business hub newly established in Palo Alto for Japanese startups. I hope to make this hub a central point connecting the startup ecosystems of Japan and the world, where many diverse talents come together, just like in UC Berkeley. Please visit there.

In addition, yesterday we held the Japan-U.S. Economic "2+2" meeting together with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Raimondo and Secretary of State Blinken, where we discussed reinforcing our bilateral economic security. Yesterday was our second such meeting, following up on the one we held last year. Cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in economic security is advancing steadily.

For example, Japan and the U.S. are particularly deepening our cooperation in critical and emerging and sensitive technologies, which will serve as a source generating novel innovations.

Commerce Secretary Raimondo and I have championed this, and concrete cooperation has now gotten underway in such fields as semiconductors, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology. Japan, the U.S., and other like-minded countries will also deepen discussions aimed at building “transparent, resilient and sustainable supply chains” to address economic coercion and non-market practices.

Against a backdrop of uncertainty within the international community, close cooperation between Japan and the United States functions as a “public good bringing stability to the world.” I will advance Japan-U.S. cooperation together with my good American friends.

After this, the signing ceremony for the MOU between JETRO and SkyDeck will be held. This too is emblematic of Japan-U.S. cooperation.

Today, I began my remarks to you talking about the Meiji Restoration that occurred in Japan in 1868, the year UC Berkeley was founded. It was public-spirited young people who led the transformation brought by the Meiji Restoration. I hope that the students here at UC Berkeley become a driving force creating transformational changes to create a new economy and society.

Because time is limited, I will end my remarks to you here, but in the session following this, I hope to introduce Japan's policies and approaches, as time allows.

Thank you very much for listening.