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Foreign Influence
Transparency
Initiative

JAPAN'S INFLUENCE IN AMERICA



**CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

Advancing a peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

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About the Center for International Policy

The Center for International Policy (CIP) is an independent nonprofit center for research, public education and advocacy on U.S. foreign policy. CIP works to make a peaceful, just and sustainable world the central pursuit of U.S. foreign policy. CIP was founded in 1975 in the wake of the Vietnam War by former diplomats and peace activists who sought to reorient U.S. foreign policy to advance international cooperation as the primary vehicle for solving global challenges and promoting human rights. Today, we bring diverse voices to bear on key foreign policy decisions and make the evidence-based case for why and how the United States must redefine the concept of national security in the 21st century.

About the Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative

While investigations into Russian influence in the 2016 election regularly garner front-page headlines, there is a half-billion-dollar foreign influence industry working to shape U.S. foreign policy every single day that remains largely unknown to the public. The Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative is working to change that anonymity through transparency promotion, investigative research, and public education.

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Report cover image is "[President Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe](#)" taken by Shealah Craighead. The image is license under Public Domain and was accessed from the [White House Flickr Account](#).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative (FITI), a program of the Center for International Policy, analyzed every Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Supplemental Statement filed in 2019 by firms working on behalf of clients in Japan. After this analysis we found:

- 51 different firms served as Japan's registered foreign agents in the United States;
- Reported spending of nearly \$32 million by Japan on FARA registered firms;
- 3,209 political activities done on behalf of Japan by those firms;
- Japanese foreign agents contacted 45% (240 members) of Congress' offices;
- At least 2,241 campaign contributions from those firms, totaling more than \$2.65 million;
- 22 members of Congress received campaign contributions from firms that had contacted their offices on behalf of Japan;
- 10 cases in which a contact and contribution to a member of Congress occurred in the same month.

INTRODUCTION

The Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) has become a salient talking point with the rise of foreign interference as a prominent United States (U.S.) election issue. The law is meant to increase transparency for the American people so that foreign propaganda can be spotted and judged accordingly. Historically however, FARA has been under-enforced, leaving the public in the dark as to how foreign operations affect U.S. policy or opinions. While China and Russia receive the brunt of the attention for foreign influence activities, the highest spending nations, like Japan, fly under the radar.

In this report we provide a comprehensive look into Japan's massive influence operation in the U.S., through rigorous analysis of all FARA-registered firms that worked on behalf of interests in Japan in 2019.

Japan's influence operations in the U.S. are especially worthy of attention now, as both the Trump and incoming Biden Administration have emphasized a tough stance on China, putting Japan in an uncomfortable position between their most important security partner (the U.S.) and their leading trading partner (China).¹ The tension is now marked even further by the unexpected departure of Japan's longest serving Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe. Prime

1. Jagannath Panda, "Abe's Policy Vis-à-Vis China Demands Strategic Caution," Asia Times, August 11, 2020, <https://asiatimes.com/2020/08/abes-policy-vis-a-vis-china-demands-strategic-caution/>.

Minister Abe was the first foreign leader to meet with President-elect Trump in 2016,² which many speculate has helped it to avoid paying further compensation thus far for American troops housed in Japan and America's characteristic punitive trade deals.³ The dynamic has fueled U.S. defense purchases⁴ as the Abe government, against long-standing popular sentiment,⁵ long pushed for a constitutional revision to allow for an outward Japanese military force (expanding the definition of the Self-Defense Force as mandated in post-WWII agreements).⁶ Despite the peaceful constitution, Japan ranks in the top ten largest military spenders in the world.⁷ Individual prefectures, specifically Okinawa where the majority of U.S. bases are staged, are left to lobby against U.S. militarization at odds with the defense-eager Japanese national government. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration has already asked Japan to quadruple its contributions toward the 54,000 U.S. troops in Japan - half of them based in Okinawa — from the \$2 billion Japan already pays.⁸

As tensions rise with China, Japan's defense budget has also increased. The U.S. is the largest arms exporter to Japan and has alliance commitments. If a confrontation arose, it would be U.S. weapons and likely soldiers fighting along with Japanese forces. There are those who wish to play up these tensions and the likelihood of war while continuing to invest in weapons systems and an already bloated military. For example, a recently released House Republican China Task Force report underscores U.S. budgetary increases at "a minimum three to five percent real growth in the defense budget per year in order to deter and defeat the PLA" [China's People's Liberation Army]⁹. This kind of rhetoric allows the Japanese government to push for further Indo-Pacific defense resources, despite the fact that Japanese popular sentiment has long stood against militarization especially where the U.S. military footprint is strongest.¹⁰

2. Jeremy Diamond and Emiko Jozuka, "Trump and Japan's Abe Meet for 'very Candid Discussion' in New York," CNN, November 18, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/17/politics/abe-trump-japan-meeting/>.

3. Motoko Rich, "Shinzo Abe, Japan's Longest-Serving Prime Minister, Resigns Because of Illness," *The New York Times*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/world/asia/shinzo-abe-resign-japan.html>.

4. "Japan Government Approves Eighth Straight Defense Spending Hike to Record High," CNBC, December 20, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/12/20/japan-government-approves-eighth-straight-defense-spending-hike.html>.

5. "Public Attitudes on Revision," CFR, n.d., <https://www.cfr.org/japan-constitution/public-attitudes-on-revision>.

6. Bill Powell, "Japan Rethinks Its Pacifist Constitution, Alarming Its Neighbors," *Newsweek*, Jul 9, 2014, <https://www.newsweek.com/2014/07/18/japan-rethinks-its-pacifist-constitution-alarming-its-neighbors-257704.html>.

7. Nan Tian Alexandria Kuimova et al., "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019" (SIPRI, April 2020, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs_2020_04_milex_0_0.pdf).

8. Lara Seligman and Robbie Gramer, "Trump Asks Tokyo to Quadruple Payments for U.S. Troops in Japan," *Foreign Policy*, November 15, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/15/trump-asks-tokyo-quadruple-payments-us-troops-japan/>.

9. Chairman Michael McCaul, "China Task Force Report" (U.S. House of Representatives, September 2020), <https://gop-foreignaffairs.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CHINA-TASK-FORCE-REPORT-FINAL-9.30.20.pdf>.

10. Simon Denyer and Akiko Kashiwagi, "In Japan's Okinawa, Voters Deliver a Resounding 'No' to New U.S. Military Base,"

Specifically, the Okinawa Prefecture stands firmly against the U.S. bases and further construction in the region, due to further reductions in residents' quality of life and anti-military views stemming from a long history of Japanese and U.S. occupation.¹¹ The planned relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma within Okinawa foments backlash toward both the U.S. and Tokyo. In a 2019 referendum, 70% of voters in Okinawa opposed the relocation, but still, the Prefecture stated in their registered informational with the Department of Justice (DOJ), "the Japanese government has repeated its position... and expressed its disinterest in a three-party dialogue among Okinawa, Japan and the United States."¹²

While the defense industry lobbies Congress to the tune of over \$20 million each election cycle in order to promote their business,¹³ Japan and other foreign governments also make their mark. They employ firms adept at creating inroads to policy and politicians to accomplish their goals - avenues not available to ordinary citizens. As one public affairs firm representing the Embassy of Japan boasts, lobbyists know how to find "ways to gain influence with members of Congress" and "how to push legislation through the system."¹⁴

Fighting for economic and national security, Japan's lobbying under FARA is marked by divergent interests and uncoordinated communication and, in the case of defense, clashing messages between Tokyo's priorities and the Okinawa Prefecture's fight to reduce the U.S. military's presence on their soil. While FITI's previous reporting has largely focused on monolithic government forces with relatively clear objectives, Japanese lobbying is more diverse - at once promoting baseball culture and internally conflicting Indo-Pacific strategies. With Abe's resignation and a markedly shifting Japanese government attitude toward greater control over and expenditure in weapons systems,¹⁵ recent FARA activities show that Japan is as active and concerned as ever regarding U.S. policy from the granular level to grand strategy.

To better understand this complicated mix of Japanese influence in America, the Foreign In-

The Washington Post, February 24, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-japans-okinawa-voters-deliver-a-resounding-no-to-new-us-military-base/2019/02/24/95283a46-3858-11e9-b786-d6abcbcd212a_story.html.

11. For example, see: Kyodo. "Court Awards Record Damages for U.S. Noise Pollution at Kadena Air Base." *The Japan Times*, February 23, 2017. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/23/national/crime-legal/japanese-government-ordered-pay-record-damages-u-s-base-noise-suit/#.Xczfki2ZNQI>; for historical grievances see: Isao, Nakazato. "Okinawa as an Intersection of Colonialisms: Toward Creating a Place Open to and Interconnecting with Asia." *International Critical Thought* 3, no. 2 (June 1, 2013): 183-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21598282.2013.787275>.

12. Okinawa Prefectural Government, "FRF-Related Recent Developments in Okinawa," FARA Informational Materials (Foreign Agents Registration Act, July 29, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6332-Informational-Materials-20190729-6.pdf>.

13. "Defense," Open Secrets, n.d., <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=D>.

14. "Who We Are," Comeau & Company, n.d., <https://comeaucompany.com/about-us>.

15. Tom Corben, "Japan Rethinks Its Approach to Arms Deals With the United States," *The Diplomat*, August 19, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/japan-rethinks-its-approach-to-arms-deals-with-the-united-states/>.

fluence Transparency Initiative at the Center for International Policy analyzed all 2019 FARA Supplemental Statements filed by firms representing foreign principals in Japan. From this analysis we found:

- 51 different firms served as Japan's registered foreign agents in the U.S.;
- Nearly \$32 million of reported spending by Japan on FARA registered firms;
- 3,209 political activities conducted on behalf of Japan by those firms;
- Offices of 240 members of Congress (nearly half of all members) contacted by Japanese foreign agents
- At least 2,241 U.S. campaign contributions from those firms, totaling more than \$2.65 million;
- 22 members of Congress received campaign contributions from firms that had contacted their offices on behalf of Japan;
- 10 cases in which a contact and contribution to a member of Congress occurred in the same month.

The remainder of the report focuses on political activities conducted by lobbying firms and Japanese stakeholders toward Congress, the Executive Branch, states, businesses, the media, and think tanks. The report then highlights how defense decisions are shaped by Japan's U.S. lobbyists, especially regarding U.S. defense activities in Japan. Thereafter, the report looks at political contributions made by lobbying firms. It then concludes with recommendations as to how to improve transparency and enforcement of FARA so that the public can be aware of and assess how the U.S. government is influenced by outside interests.

Beyond what that we tracked through FARA, the Japanese employed significant influence operations through a variety of other avenues.¹⁶ These examples of Japanese influence extend beyond the scope of our analysis, but are mentioned here to provide an idea of the breadth of Japanese influence in the United States. One such avenue is through the use of foundations (often tied to Japanese corporations or individuals), like the Sasakawa Foundation.¹⁷ These foundations operate programs and grants that encourage U.S.-Japan collaboration on topics ranging from trade to culture, and foster future leadership within the United States. Another avenue of influence for Japan comes from congressional trainings and visits to Japan. The "US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program" organized by the Japan Center for International Exchange is one example.¹⁸ This program orchestrated a 2017 U.S. Congressional Delegation to Japan where two American congressmen visited Japan and met with Japa-

16. Kingston, Jeff. "The Japan Lobby and Public Diplomacy." *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Japan Focus, 14, no. 9, May 1, 2016: 1–27. <https://apjif.org/2016/09/Kingston.html>.

17. "Japan-U.S. Program," Sasakawa Peace Foundation, n.d., <https://www.spf.org/en/programs/jpus/>.

18. "2017 US Congressional Delegation to Japan," Japan Center for International Exchange, n.d., <https://www.jcie.org/programs/political-exchange-programs/us-japan-parliamentary-exchange/2017-pep-congress-delegation/>.

nese officials, including then Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and Foreign Minister Taro Kono.

They also target education and business. Since 2014 Japan has been one of the top foreign funders of U.S. colleges and universities, having donated more than \$655 million, according to the Department of Education.¹⁹ Businesses in Japan and their American subsidiaries also spend tens of millions of dollars every year on lobbying in the U.S. For example, in 2019 Honda reported spending \$2.63 million²⁰ and Toyota spent \$7.3 million on lobbying.²¹ All of this was reported under the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), not FARA, as there is an exemption under FARA for foreign principals engaged in purely commercial activities. Data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics shows that Japanese firms or subsidiaries in the U.S. reported lobbying spending of more than \$37 million under the LDA in 2019.²² The LDA, notably, affords significantly less transparency about lobbying activities than FARA. In fact, it provides little more information than top-line spending numbers. Thus, this report focuses on and analyzes FARA registrants representing interests in Japan.

FARA supplemental statements cover a six month reporting period, but can be filed by the firms on their own timelines. As FARA does not have a standard reporting period, these results represent all supplemental statements filed in 2019, but activities and political contributions may have occurred throughout 2018 as well. Likewise, some late 2019 activities were filed in 2020 and are thus not within the scope of this analysis.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Under FARA, all activities conducted by the firms on behalf of Japanese clients must be recorded and reported at regular intervals to the Department of Justice. The statute has a rather expansive definition of “political activities,” which includes anything that will “influence any agency or official of the government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to . . . the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or with reference to the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party.”²³ The definition serves to

19. “Foreign Gift and Contract Report,” Federal Student Aid, n.d., <https://studentaid.gov/data-center/school/foreign-gifts>.

20. “Honda Motor Co,” Open Secrets, n.d., <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/honda-motor-co/summary?id=D000042345>.

21. “Toyota Motor Corp,” Open Secrets, n.d., <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/toyota-motor-corp/summary?id=D000030495>.

22. This data was provided to the authors via email. More information on Japan’s LDA registrants is available from the Center for Responsive Politics at www.opensecrets.org.

23. “Title 22 - Foreign Relations and Intercourse,” § 601-672 (n.d.), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2009-title22/pdf/USCODE-2009-title22-chap11-subchapII.pdf>.

cover a broad swath of activities FARA registrants conduct on behalf of their foreign clients, including lobbying, public relations, media outreach, and public sector engagement. It also includes multiple types of interactions, including in-person meetings, phone calls, texts, and emails. Ideally then, the reported political activities should give the U.S. government and its people awareness as to what objectives foreign governments like Japan are paying registrants to pursue in America.

Unfortunately, many firms choose to only disclose certain types of communication, or give such sparse details that a “degree of specificity necessary to permit meaningful public evaluation of each of the significant steps taken by a registrant to achieve the purposes of the agency relation,”²⁴ as FARA intends, is impossible. Despite the limitations, we documented an extraordinarily active Japanese influence operation during this period, and recorded over 3,200 distinct contacts based on registered 2019 filings.

■ The Firms

Overall, at least 3,209 contacts were made by the 51 different FARA registered firms representing Japan. The amount of firms and contacts is substantially more than the Emiratis, Qataris, and Saudis as recorded in FITI’s previous reporting.²⁵ We say “at least” because, unfortunately, many FARA registered firms are not fully transparent about the work they do on behalf of foreign powers. Many of the groups working for Japan are no exception, as will be discussed in greater detail in the transparency section of this report. Table 1 shows the top ten firms who reported activities on behalf of Japanese clients. It is important to note that the firms with the most contacts are also those with the most diligent and transparent reporting, an issue covered in depth in a later section. While 51 firms registered as representing Japan under FARA over the course of 2019, only 49 reported receiving payments from Japanese bodies. One of these unpaid firms did not report any work, and the other, Keidanren, said that they carried out work free of charge because the “legislative exchange program will be of benefit to the U.S.-Japan relationship.”²⁶ The remaining firms represented

24. “Title 28, Part 5 Administration and Enforcement of Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” Code of Federal Regulations § 601-672 (n.d.), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2016-title28-vol1/pdf/CFR-2016-title28-vol1-part5.pdf>.

25. The reports can be found here: Freeman, Ben. “*The Emirati Lobby: How the UAE Wins in Washington*.” Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative. Center for International Policy, October 2019. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_cc7f1fad-2f7a497ba5fb159a6756c34a.pdf?index=true; “The Qatar Lobby in Washington.” Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative. Center for International Policy, May 2020. https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_eae58acd2c11459894d8e45fbbe1552d.pdf; “*The Saudi Lobby in 2018*.” Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative. Center for International Policy, April 2019. https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_dbf2bbd2e0d442e1a9d4848bc7c7fb71.pdf.

26. Ippan Shadan Hojin Nippon Keizai Dantai Rengokai, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, January 31, 2019), 5, <https://efile>.

a mix of business and political activities, with many firms cataloging no activities whatsoever, despite being paid large sums for outreach work. Still, the amount of activity recorded in a one year period is staggering.

Table 1: Top Ten Firms in Terms of Activities Reported on Behalf of Japanese Clients in 2019

Firm Name	Contacts Disclosed
Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office Inc.	1,192
Fratelli Group	674
JETRO New York	298
MSLGROUP Americas LLC d/b/a Qorvis	226
Mercury Public Affairs LLC	206
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP	128
Greenfield Law LLC	76
Comeau & Company LLC	72
JETRO Chicago	61
Kobe Trade Information Office	56

The Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office holds the lion's share of reported contacts, at 1,192 - or 37% of all activities claimed in 2019 by firms representing Japan. Half of all Okinawa's contacts were directed at Congress (492), while 38% (448) were directed at undisclosed "Washington DC research and policy groups." The Department of State (67) and the Department of Defense (25) follow behind. The firm's constant activity is no shock given the Okinawan Governor's and its people's strong opposition to the U.S. military bases on the island chain facing the East China Sea, in defiance of the Japanese and U.S. governments' attachment to them. The disparate reporting on behalf of the Okinawa Prefecture is a sign of their diligence and adherence to reporting, often ignored by large firms.

While Okinawa Prefecture recorded the most activities, five other firms also recorded over 100 contacts. The Fratelli Group logged 647 contacts, or one-fifth of all those reported in 2019. The majority of these contacts (584) were directed toward the media, mainly regarding promotion of Japanese culture and on the US-Japan alliance, but also toward schools (i.e. promoting a trip to Japan for the Denver Public School's Asian Education Advisory Council).

fara.gov/docs/6574-Supplemental-Statement-20190305-1.pdf.

Many of the groups representing Japan are tailored shops, like the previously mentioned Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office, and JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) offices, which are smattered across the United States specifically to promote Japanese endeavors. JETRO New York is a US-based firm explicitly formed for the worldwide body that represents Japanese trade and investment initiatives and works in tandem with the government. JETRO Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, and New York are recorded as separate entities in the FARA filings, but as a group filed 456 contacts.

The Japanese central government employed larger firms, like Qorvis, Mercury Public Affairs, and Akin Gump. Qorvis' 226 contacts were all directed at media outlets while representing the Prime Minister's Office, but failed to divulge any detail about what topics the outreach entailed. Lobbying giant Mercury Public Affairs listed 206 contacts on behalf of two Japanese clients. With offices stretching around the globe, Mercury's work for the Consulate General of Japan was more locally focused with only six contacts, all to the New York State Department of Education regarding their approach to teaching about the Sea of Japan (otherwise known as the East Sea to South Koreans).²⁷ Otherwise, Mercury represented the Okinawa Prefecture, who once again directed their attention to Congress, with all 200 contacts to either House or Senate members, with at least 59 of these contacts mentioning defense issues specifically. Akin Gump's contacts focused on Congress and the Chamber of Commerce, largely around trade issues and a lone email to Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-FL) office on cybersecurity while representing Japan's government.

Overall, the lobbying firms include some of the usual suspects, but also employ firms that are tailor-made for Japanese interests. Due to transparency issues and lack of enforcement of FARA, it is safe to assume the over 3,000 contacts in this report represent a floor, not a ceiling, of Japan's influence work in the U.S.

Japan's influence operations also reached into state and local issues. For example, Greenfield Law catered specifically to Japanese-Maryland relations. Still other firms, like Comeau & Company, representing the Embassy of Japan, reached out to think tanks on Indo-Pacific briefings and 'GeoTech' (Geostrategic Technology) issues.

Overall, the lobbying firms include some of the usual suspects, but also employ firms that are tailor-made for Japanese interests. Due to transparency issues and lack of enforcement of FARA, it is safe to assume the over 3,000 contacts in this report represent a floor, not a ceiling, of Japan's influence work in the U.S.

27. Short, John Rennie, and Leah Dubots. "Contesting Place Names: The East Sea/Sea of Japan Naming Issue." *Geographical Review* 0, no. 0 (September 29, 2020): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00167428.2020.1827936>.

■ Organizations Contacted

Congress was the most likely target of Japan's foreign agents, with nearly a third (1,060) of all 3,209 reported contacts by Japan's foreign agents. Otherwise, Japanese-hired firms focused their attention on public relations and narrative shaping, with the media representing over a quarter (834) of all recorded contacts, as shown in Table 2. Still, significant efforts were made with think tanks, private companies, local governments and states, U.S. universities, museums, the Departments of State, and the Pentagon.

Table 2: Top Ten Organizations Contacted Most by Japanese Foreign Agents

Organization Type	Times Contacted
Media	834
U.S. House of Representatives	745
Think Tank	476
Private Company	466
U.S. Senate	315
Department of State	68
Government of Maryland	56
Nonprofit	49
University	26
Department of Defense	25

Congress, the media, and think tanks were heavily contacted, with Congress topping out the list. Firms recorded activities with Congress on behalf of Japan in over 1,000 instances, with the top contacted Congressional offices listed in Table 3. The most common topics centered on trade and defense issues.

Table 3: Top Ten Congressional Offices and Committees Contacted by Japanese Lobbyists

Congressional Office/Committee	Times Contacted
Committee on Foreign Relations	30
Steve Womack (R-AR)	27
Alan Lowenthal (D-CA)	24
Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam)	23
Brian Schatz (D-HI)	22
Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)	21
Austin Scott (R-GA)	21
House Committee on Armed Services	20
James Inhofe (R-OK)	19
Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)	18

After Congress, the media was the most contacted type of entity by Japan's foreign agents, with the top outlets listed in Table 4 below. The most contacted offices were leading main-stream U.S. outlets, although there are numerous contacts to local and niche outlets like Education Week (contacted ten times), Johns Hopkins University Newsletter (four times), and The Trentonian (twice). Many times this outreach was about Japanese delegation visits, and also included topics like defense, cultural events, trade, interviews, and briefing requests with Japanese officials.

Table 4: Top Ten Media Organizations Contacted by Japanese Foreign Agents

Media Outlet	Times Contacted
The Washington Post	37
Associated Press	36
Wall Street Journal	28
POLITICO	26
NPR	25
ABC News	24
The New York Times	22
Reuters	21
USA Today	20
The Hill	19

The third most contacted agency type, think tanks, unfortunately has little to no information on who was potentially influenced, as 444 of the 476 contacts were unreported by the Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office.

Due to the strange redaction of think tanks by Okinawa, most of the contacts are unlisted, dampening the information on think tanks represented in the data. The Okinawa office again, who appears to be sometimes acting in a pass-through capacity for Mercury Public Affairs, refers to any think tank contacts as a broad category of “Washington DC research and policy group” instead of any organization’s name. Likewise, instead of listing individuals they met with, they list “(Policy Expert)” — avoiding listing names, titles, or otherwise identifying information, which considerably limits transparency. Throughout their 1,194 records of political activity over two supplemental statements filed in 2019, they list contacting “(Policy Expert)” 444 times.²⁸ After what little contact was disclosed in regards to think tanks, the Inter-American Dialogue came out on top with five contacts in 2019. These were all conducted by JETRO New York, and seemed to focus on attending events important to Japanese investment in Latin America, reflecting a long-speculated narrative that Japan may be trying

28. See: Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office, Inc. “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended.” FARA Supplemental Statement. U.S. Department of Justice, December 31, 2018. <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6332-Supplemental-Statement-20190131-7.pdf>; “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended.” FARA Supplemental Statement, (U.S. Department of Justice, June 30, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6332-Supplemental-Statement-20190730-8.pdf>.

to counteract China's foothold in the region.²⁹

More contact definitively took place than what was reported in FARA, with think tanks perhaps even less forthcoming about their donors than FARA-filing firms are about their outreach on behalf of foreign governments, as demonstrated in other FITI reporting.³⁰ FITI previously found that from 2014-2018, Japan contributed a considerable \$4,856,774 to American think tanks as the largest East-Asian donor and ranking 11th among all foreign funders.³¹ In the filings examined here, JETRO New York reports think tank interactions not in their activities, but as expenses of outside research and consulting, and the list includes large payments to many think tanks, e.g. \$195,000 to CSIS; \$35,000 to Eurasia Group; \$60,000 to German Marshall Fund; and \$60,000 to Stimson Center, to name just a few.³²

One such "research and consulting" expense in 2019 went to the Howard Baker Forum to the tune of \$140,000 for undisclosed services between two supplemental statements filed by JETRO.³³ The Forum is ostensibly funded by Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, and Berkowitz, P.C., and also happens to host a U.S.-Japan roundtable program. While they promote facts without spin, or 'suggestions' as they refer to it,³⁴ they do not disclose their funding sources. In the meantime, they promote US-Japan defense cooperation and are looking for "opportunities to finance nuclear innovation" in partnership with the Atlantic Council, who also received \$40,000 from JETRO between the two 2019 supplemental statements examined.³⁵ As think tanks are forceful policy influencers, transparency should be paramount especially when receiving funds from foreign governments whose foreign agents they also

29. Katja Levy & Caroline Rose (2019) Are China and Japan rivals in Latin America? A rivalry perception analysis, *The Pacific Review*, 32:5, 898-921, DOI: 10.1080/09512748.2019.1570316

30. Ben Freeman, "U.S. Government and Defense Contractor Funding of America's Top 50 Think Tanks," Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative (Center for International Policy, October 2020), https://3ba8a190-62da-4c98-86d2-893079d87083.usrfiles.com/ugd/3ba8a1_c7e3bfc7723d4021b54cbc145ae3f5eb.pdf.

31. Ben Freeman, "Foreign Funding of Think Tanks in America" (Center for International Policy, January 2020), https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_4f06e99f35d4485b801f8dbfe33b6a3f.pdf.

32. JETRO New York, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, June 30, 2019), 38-45, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/1643-Supplemental-Statement-20190730-35.pdf>; JETRO New York, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, December 31, 2018), 29-41, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/1643-Supplemental-Statement-20190129-33.pdf>.

33. JETRO New York, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," December 31, 2018, 35, 38, 40 <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/1643-Supplemental-Statement-20190129-33.pdf>; JETRO New York, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, June 30, 2019, 34P, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/1643-Supplemental-Statement-20190730-35.pdf>.

34. "About Us: Founding & Purpose," The Howard Baker Forum, n.d., <https://howardbakerforum.org/about-us/>.

35. "SMR VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP," The Howard Baker Forum, 2020, <https://howardbakerforum.org/our-programs/virtual-working-group-on-smrs/>.

work with. Unfortunately, current regulations do not require think tanks to disclose their donors and the FARA unit has not mandated all think tanks contacted by foreign agents be listed in FARA filings.³⁶

While think tanks were not overwhelmingly disclosed, Japanese-contracted lobbying firms also went directly to local levels of government to attempt to sway discourse. For instance, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued updated guidance on giving equal treatment to the name ‘Sea of Japan’ as the “East Sea” (South Korea’s preferred terminology) in August, 2019.³⁷ Two days after publishing the NYSED guidance, Mercury recorded activities with the NYSED regarding the letter. The email from the Consulate of Japan to Mercury stated that “Tokyo is very concerned” about the “dual names” of the sea, and further showed interest in attempting, district by district, to influence the textbooks that New York school children receive. The Japanese Consulate inquired when the next revision would take place for the NY State Board of Regents, and if there would be hearings. Tokyo also asked how many districts were affected by the decision in the meantime, and if NYSED were only allowed to choose from textbooks or also allow documents (presumably to be submitted for consideration by Japan on the sea name).³⁸ This example is illustrative of the resources Japan is willing to expend for influence in the United States, even at very local levels.

■ Defense Activities and U.S. Basing

In addition to individual Congressional offices listed below in Table 5, Japanese lobbyists spent their time heavily contacting the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) - both key agencies regarding U.S.-Japanese defense matters. Notably, the HASC marked up H.R.6613, the Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which provides “increased presence by positioning the right capabilities in key locations in order to respond to adversarial threats in a timely manner,” among other initiatives key to Japanese interests.³⁹ Comeau & Company, representing the Embassy of Japan, had 39 meetings with the subject “Indo-Pacific” across the Senate, House (including the HASC), and think tanks in July and in October 2019, perhaps trying to influence this bill which was introduced

36. Despite a recent announcement by the State Department that all think tanks should declare foreign funding, the statement carries no legal force: R. Pompeo, Secretary of State Michael. “On Transparency and Foreign Funding of U.S. Think Tanks.” U.S. Department of State, October 13, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/on-transparency-and-foreign-funding-of-u-s-think-tanks/>.

37. Young Wilkins, Dr. Kimberly. “Updated Guidance for Sea of Japan/East Sea.” New York State Education Department, August 6, 2019, <http://www.nysed.gov/memo/curriculum-instruction/updated-guidance-sea-japaneast-sea>.

38. “DISSEMINATED BY MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LLC,” FARA Informational Materials (U.S. Department of Justice, September 13, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6170-Informational-Materials-20190923-186.pdf>.

39. Rep. Mac Thornberry, “H.R.6613 - Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative” (2020), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6613/titles>.

in late April 2020. The Okinawa Prefecture also contacted the Country Director of Japan, East Asia Policy, Indo Pacific Security for the Department of Defense in June, 2019, with the description “Information from Okinawa office.” It is impossible to tell if either party was attempting or succeeding in influencing the over \$6 billion dollars allocated for Indo-Pacific defense in the bill.⁴⁰ The Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative also mentions the issue of clustered bases, which they recommend spreading out. It is possible that this section could be referencing the heavily clustered troops and equipment in Okinawa, typically thought of as important to regional deterrence, although there is no indication that the bill would address specific Okinawan grievances.

The term “Okinawa” was mentioned in over a third of all activity descriptions, and many were specific in terms of defense cooperation, like a visit from Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki “updating on Okinawa and base.” Gov. Tamaki previously led an anti-U.S.-base movement before being elected, and was elected on a platform in opposition to the Marine base relocation.⁴¹ The Okinawa Governor met with U.S. government officials, think tanks, and researchers on defense issues, while the NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act) was deliberated, including section 1225 which acknowledges the need to draw down troops in Okinawa,⁴² and the planned relocation of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.⁴³

Meanwhile, “Strengthening U.S.-Japan Relations” is listed 39 times as a contact topic, its main proponent being the Embassy of Japan. The crux of the military relationship physically lies in Okinawa, while the larger relationship is also fueled by billions in arms sales (see below). According to informational filings released by Okinawa Prefecture, over 70% of Japanese land used by the U.S. military is in Okinawa, which only accounts for 0.6% of Japan’s overall territory, and further states that Okinawa itself has never given permission for the Okinawan bases to exist.⁴⁴ America’s reputation has long suffered in Okinawa, and the bases there are extremely unpopular with the local population.⁴⁵ After three decades of opposition to

40. “H.R. 6613: Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative,” H. R. 6613 § (n.d.), <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr6613/text>.

41. Kana Inagaki and Leo Lewis, “Okinawa’s Anger over U.S. Military Bases Stoked by Coronavirus Surge,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-08-21/okinawas-anger-over-u-s-military-bases-stoked-by-coronavirus-surge>.

42. “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020,” S. 1790 § (2019), <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/s1790/BILLS-116s1790rs.pdf>.

43. Okinawa Prefecture Government, “What Okinawa Wants You to Understand about the U.S. Military Bases,” FARA Informational Materials (U.S. Department of Justice, July 27, 2020), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6332-Informational-Materials-20200727-9.pdf>.

44. “U.S. Military Base Issues in Okinawa,” n.d., <https://dc-office.org/basedata>.

45. C. Douglas Lummus, “USMC’s Futenma Replacement Facility in Okinawa Delayed – For How Long?,” *The Diplomat*, January 4, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/usmcs-futenma-replacement-facility-in-okinawa-delayed-for-how-long/>.

the U.S. presence, poor U.S. soldier behavior and recent carelessness around the COVID-19 outbreak⁴⁶ has further heightened long-standing anti-base sentiments. The Okinawan people cite insecurity due to accidents and adversarial targeting of the bases, along with aircraft noise amid other concerns caused by U.S. military activity as reasons for dissent.⁴⁷ Now, it appears Okinawa Prefecture is investing its resources to shape U.S. policy and sympathies away from Okinawan basing as the Japanese Embassy simultaneously pays Beltway firms to counteract that narrative.

In fact, the statistic above regarding U.S. base landmass in Japan comes from none other than Okinawa Prefecture FARA-filed informational materials itself. The U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) cites Okinawan distributed materials in its 2018 report, *The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy*⁴⁸ — and its two authors were contacted a collective 11 times in 2019 by the Okinawa Prefecture lobbying firm, including a face-to-face meeting. CRS appropriately cites the source of the information in the report, however it is notable that Okinawan lobbying effectively made its way into Congressional literature. Yet, mention of Okinawa just scratches the surface when it comes to defense as a topic of Japanese influence.

U.S. Foreign Military Sales to Japan are worth roughly \$11 billion annually, and at least 90% of Japan's defense acquisitions are bought from American firms.⁴⁹ Military and strategic defense alignment was a major reason for activities by Japanese hired firms, especially to Congress. Over 14% (464) of all contacts listed defense as a reason for activities. Defense was counted as part of the contact if either the contact themselves worked as a defense or national security professional or worked within a strictly national security or defense institution. It was also included if the activity description specifically mentioned defense issues, such as discussing U.S. military bases in Japan. The count does not include descriptions that are too vague to tell whether defense was the theme of the activity, and therefore, this number is likely much higher.

The top Congressional offices contacted for defense purposes are demonstrated in Table 5 below.

46. Inagaki and Lewis, "Okinawa's Anger over U.S. Military Bases Stoked by Coronavirus Surge."

47. Hana Kusumoto, "Japanese Residents Awarded \$7 Million over Military Aircraft Noise at Yokota," *Stripes*, June 7, 2019, <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/japanese-residents-awarded-7-million-over-military-aircraft-noise-at-yokota-1.585018>.

48. Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, "The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy" (Congressional Research Service, January 20, 2016), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42645.pdf>.

49. "Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress" (Congressional Research Service, October 19, 2018), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33436/91>.

Table 5: Top Ten Congressional Offices and Committees Contacted by Japanese Lobbyists Regarding Defense

Congressional Office/Committee	Times Contacted Regarding Defense
House Committee on Armed Services	20
Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam)	19
Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)	13
Austin Scott (R-GA)	13
Ed Case (D-HI)	9
Brian Schatz (D-HI)	9
Stephanie Murphy (D-FL)	8
Sanford Bishop (D-GA)	8
James Inhofe (R-OK)	8
Rob Bishop (R-UT)	7

The House and Senate were contacted frequently, with defense mentioned as the reason for contact at least 29% (310) of the 1,060 contacts. The top contacted Congressional offices regarding defense issues by Japanese-contracted firms are listed in Table 3. These contacts are a bipartisan effort, with a mix of Democrat and Republicans represented. Most of the defense contacts were made by Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office, who was advised at their 2018 symposium on the U.S. force posture in Japan that if “Okinawa wants to move the needle on this discussion, it needs to engage the security consensus that exists between the U.S. and Japan.”⁵⁰ The Okinawa office seems to have taken this advice to heart and engaged with Congress in earnest, while Tokyo used more bilateral routes.

The office of Del. Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) was the most contacted politician for defense purposes (19 times) as the representative from Guam who served as a member of the HASC and the U.S.-Japan Caucus before leaving Congress in 2019. As the former Congressional delegate of Guam, Del. Bordallo was a natural ally of Okinawa, supporting a proposed base in Guam that would re-base 4,800 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, and require Japan to take on over a third of the costs (\$3.1 billion).⁵¹ The HASC has been more receptive than their Senate counterparts on the realignment of the Marine Corps, including on funding

50. Okinawa Prefectural D.C. Office, “Material Distributed by Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office,” FARA Informational Materials (Foreign Agents Registration Act, January 30, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6332-Informational-Materials-20190130-5.pdf>.

51. “Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress.”

principal steps without a long-term, detailed strategy,⁵² and Bordallo would have much to gain with the heavy investments and activity that would go into a new base. Del. Bordallo has already literally and figuratively opened the door to foreign funding when it comes to Japan, having been investigated by the House Ethics Committee for charging rent to the Japanese Consulate General on her house in Guam since her term in Congress began, receiving profit from a foreign government.⁵³

The second most contacted official in terms of defense was the office of Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA). He was likely prioritized as a senior member of the HASC, and had taken a trip to Japan in 2017 as part of a HASC delegation focused on U.S.-Japan security cooperation.⁵⁴ The office of Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) was also contacted 13 times regarding defense security as the top ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee and member of the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations.

The Office of Rep. Ed Case (D-HI) was contacted regarding defense nine times, possibly due to his position in both Hawaii and on the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Military Construction. In March 2019 he met with Okinawan government and community leaders during a trip to the island chain about the U.S. military presence,⁵⁵ which is not reported by FARA as the activity did not take place in the United States. The following October, Case and two staffers personally met with Governor Denny Tamaki for “updating on Okinawa and base” according to the filings.⁵⁶

In another instance, Rep. Case’s co-sponsored legislation was sent to committee the day after his office met lobbyists working for the Embassy of Japan. The meeting was described as an “Indo pacific briefing” and took place July 16, 2019.⁵⁷ The very next day, July 17, 2019, the legislation Rep. Case co-sponsored, US HRes127, “Expressing the sense of the House of

52. Chanlett-Avery and E. Rinehart, “The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy.”

53. “Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo” (Office of Congressional Ethics United States House of Representatives, June 2, 2017), https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/OCE%20Report%20and%20Findings_6.pdf.

54. “Rep. Austin Scott Wraps-Up HASC Trip to Enhance Indo-Asian Relationships,” House Website, Congressman Austin Scott, June 6, 2017, <https://austinscott.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/photo-release-rep-austin-scott-wraps-hasc-trip-enhance-indo-asian>.

55. House Website, Congressman Ed Case, n.d., <https://case.house.gov/news/email/show.aspx?ID=UGOKFN4VO7S3M>.

56. Mercury Public Affairs, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, November 30, 2019), 87, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6170-Supplemental-Statement-20191223-14.pdf>; Mercury Public Affairs, LLC. “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended.” FARA Supplemental Statement. U.S. Department of Justice, November 30, 2019. <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6170-Supplemental-Statement-20191223-14.pdf>.

57. Comeau & Company LLC, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, October 31, 2019), 11, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6666-Supplemental-Statement-20191119-1.pdf>.

Representatives on the importance and vitality of the United States alliances with Japan and the Republic of Korea, and our trilateral cooperation in the pursuit of shared interests” was sent to committee. The Resolution had been introduced in early February.⁵⁸

The office of Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), member of the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Defense, was contacted regarding Japanese defense nine times. In 2015, after meeting with former Okinawan Gov. Takeshi Onaga, Schatz vowed to help stop U.S-Japanese plans to relocate U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Henoko within the prefecture.⁵⁹ However, in 2019, he both reaffirmed his commitment⁶⁰ and also expressed skepticism about reconfiguring troops from Japan to Guam.⁶¹ According to an informational released through FARA by Okinawa Prefecture’s D.C. Office, Schatz did not reply to an attempt to meet in person.⁶²

Okinawa’s contacts included Sen. Jim Inhofe, who assumed leadership on the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2018. The Okinawa Office met with his office in September 2019 regarding, among other topics, NDAA Section 1255 which calls for a review of American troop distribution in the Indo-Pacific region and recognizes Japanese administration over the Senkaku Islands, which sit between Okinawa and China.⁶³ Overall, the Japanese show a focus in their contacts on those in positions to affect defense cooperation through targeted contacts at members on defense and budgetary committees that have the power to enact legislation in their favor.

■ Transparency Issues

FARA enforcement has long been lenient on accurate and timely reporting by lobbying firms. As a 2016 DOJ Inspector General’s (IG) audit of FARA found, half of all registrants file Supplemental Statements late, and filing deficiencies run rampant.⁶⁴ Even when prompted

58. “US HRes127,” Bill Track 50, n.d., <https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1067846>.

59. Kyodo, “Hawaii Senator to Help Okinawa Oppose Futenma Transfer,” The Japan Times, May 30, 2015, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/05/30/national/politics-diplomacy/hawaii-senator-to-help-okinawa-oppose-futenma-transfer/>.

60. Jon Letman, “Military Build-up in the Asia-Pacific: An Interview With Hawaii’s Sen. Brian Schatz,” The Diplomat, July 30, 2019, https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/military-build-up-in-the-asia-pacific-an-interview-with-hawaiis-sen-brian-schatz/?fbclid=IwAR1tbL1R9gkWQbxWM2zy4KLzaQf_zTUYbMNMm7zUTWGGQoY7J_0xTovLx90Y.

61. Todd South, “Marine Corps Plan to Relocate from Okinawa to Guam Needs a Review, Commandant Says,” Marine Times, May 3, 2019, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/05/03/marine-corps-relocation-from-okinawa-to-guam-worthy-of-review-commandant-says/>.

62. Okinawa Prefectural Government, “FRF-Related Recent Developments in Okinawa.”

63. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.

64. “Audit of the National Security Division’s Enforcement and Administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act” (Office of the Inspector General, September 2016), <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/a1624.pdf>.

to remedy these shortcomings, the DOJ IG found that registrants “are often unresponsive to FARA Unit requests to update their information.”⁶⁵ In the case of Japan, while several firms listed an array of political and business activities, others were paid large sums without cataloging any contacts whatsoever. For instance, the Daschle Group reported no political activities, despite being paid \$200,000 by the Embassy of Japan for “consulting fees.” The lack of political activities is especially strange for the Daschle Group, given they were founded by Tom Daschle, whose 26 year career in Congress included a tenure as Senate Majority Leader. Daschle formally entered the lobbying circuit in 2016, but had been informally lobbying since his departure from Congress in 2004, utilizing practices now referred to as the “Daschle Loophole.”⁶⁶ He began by representing Japan to promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade negotiations.⁶⁷ In the past, Daschle wrote an op-ed to salvage the abandoned TPP and warned of China’s rise in the absence of American engagement with Asia without disclosing his formal relationship - while promoting trade with his clients in Japan and Taiwan.⁶⁸ It is no surprise then that the Group’s FARA filings are less than forthcoming as well, and their unlisted activities unfortunately cannot be examined.

RSC Services International was similarly paid \$286,985 for “compensation for services rendered” without reporting a single political contact.

Marathon Strategies garnered \$171,177 over the 2019 filing period and listed no political activities or contributions, despite explicitly listing “key influencer/stakeholder mapping and outreach” as one of their services to the Consulate General of Japan.⁶⁹ Its founder, Phil Singer, is well placed for political outreach. Singer is a popular Democratic figure, previously serving on the presidential campaigns of Hillary Clinton and John Kerry as well as spokesman for Sen. Chuck Schumer and campaign adviser for Andrew Cuomo.⁷⁰

Manufactured Imports and Investment Promotion Organization (MIPRO) received \$343,451 across two filings, but failed to list any activities on behalf of MIPRO of Japan, or even a short

65. Ibid.

66. Megan R. Wilson, “Tom Daschle Registers as a Lobbyist,” The Hill, March 29, 2016, <https://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/business-a-lobbying/274569-tom-daschle-registers-as-a-lobbyist>.

67. <https://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/business-a-lobbying/274569-tom-daschle-registers-as-a-lobbyist>

68. Former Sen. Tom Daschle, “Tom Daschle Op-Ed: Report from the Anxiety Filled Asian Pacific,” The Hill, December 5, 2016, <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/foreign-policy/308694-tom-daschle-op-ed-report-from-the-anxiety-filled-asian>.

69. Marathon Strategies, LLC, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, October 31, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6289-Supplemental-Statement-20191201-11.pdf>.

70. Andrew W. Lehren and Dan De Luce, “Foreign Governments Use U.S. Lobbyists to Promote Their Efforts Fighting the Coronavirus Outbreak,” NBC News, April 11, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/foreign-governments-hire-u-s-lobbyists-promote-their-efforts-fighting-n1174836>.

description of what they were paid to accomplish.⁷¹

The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) received funds over their various regional offices, with JETRO New York alone receiving over \$12.3 million for what they describe as “General Purposes.” JETRO New York claimed to list all political activities, but instead opted to mainly list events they attended. Events represented 89% of their contacts, including fashion shows and sake seminars, without disclosing specific contacts made at said events.

These firms are far from unique. Firms representing Japan had rampant transparency issues in their filings. Of the 85 unique filings examined over the 2019 period, only 51 listed contacts or activities. That leaves 40% of firms who failed to disclose their contacts (though several firms who claim to have made no contacts at all are included in this count). Of the remaining 60%, many who listed their activities did not properly describe their work. For instance, the Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office firm described 755 activities - including meetings with Congressional representatives, think tanks, the Department of Defense and more - as simply “Information from Okinawa Office,” leaving meaningful details out.

Similarly, some firms redacted information on their activities, e.g. as Okinawa did for the “(Policy Expert)” they contacted 444 times at the vague “Washington DC research and policy group.” JETRO New York also failed to disclose their think tank contacts, instead listing them as expenses and overwhelmingly choosing not to disclose the specific topic or activity. As mentioned, FITI’s previous reporting uncovered huge amounts of funds flowing from Japan to U.S. think tanks, especially to influential policy shops like the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), the Brookings Institution, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the Hudson Institute to name but a few.⁷² For FARA registered firms to withhold which think tanks were contacted and meeting with lobbyists, while the think tanks also receive funding from Japan, and subsequently writing and testifying to Congress on Japan-related issues could present a considerable conflict of interest.

If lobbying firms fail to report accurately, fully, and timely while representing close, allied nations, it begs the question of how much is hidden from view when they represent dictators, human rights abusers, and non-democratic countries.

71. MIPRO, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, February 28, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/3196-Supplemental-Statement-20190315-28.pdf>; MIPRO of Japan, “Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended,” FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, August 31, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/3196-Supplemental-Statement-20190930-29.pdf>.

72. Freeman, “*Foreign Funding of Think Tanks in America.*”

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The supplemental statements logged under FARA include political contributions the firms made in 2019 while actively employed by Japanese entities. The FARA filings examined in this report were filed in 2019, however these include some contributions and actions from 2018 as well, and some 2019 filings will not have been reported until 2020.

The firms representing Japan and the registered foreign agents working there made over 2,200 political contributions during the report period, which totalled about \$2.66 million.⁷³

The FITI team logged over \$1.73 million in political contributions to an astounding 1,100 campaigns, and an additional \$920,000 that went to PACs where the intended recipient was unclear.

Table 6: Top Ten Recipients of Campaign Contributions from Firms Representing Japan

Recipient	Amount
Ralph Northam (D-VA)	\$30,789
Doug Jones (D-AL)	\$29,750
Mark Warner (D-VA)	\$28,674
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	\$19,166
Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)	\$18,400
Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY)	\$17,345
Rob Portman (R-OH)	\$16,250
Jack Reed (D-RI)	\$15,600
Thom Tillis (R-NC)	\$14,750
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)	\$13,250

The sheer amount of campaign donations by the firms representing Japan is remarkable. The top recipients on the list represent a bipartisan mix of senators, representatives, and a governor. While 51 different firms were registered under FARA and provided information in 2019, 99% of these funds were donated by only nine firms, shown in table 7.

73. This figure includes negative amounts recorded.

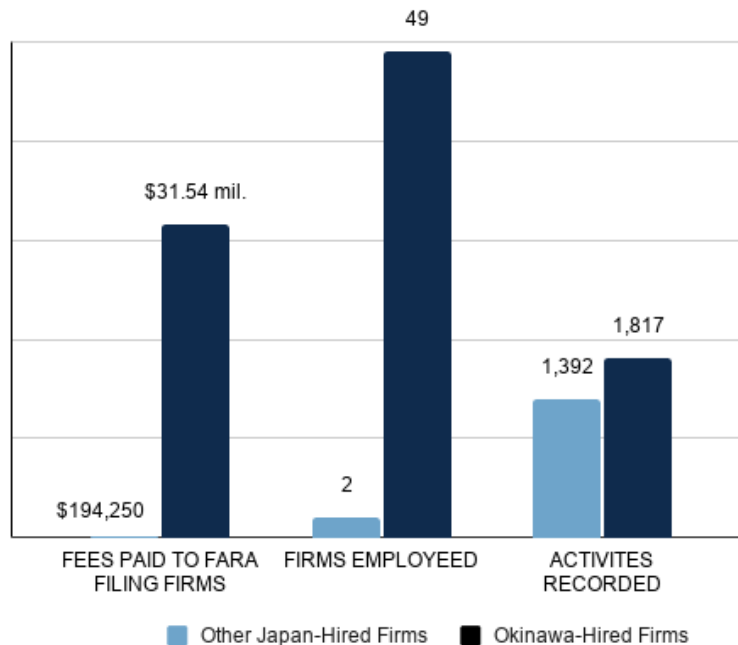
Table 7: Campaign Contributions by FARA Registered Firms Representing Japan

Firm	Total Contributions
McGuireWoods Consulting	\$908,436
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	\$731,756
Greenberg Traurig	\$215,643
Holland & Knight	\$202,519
CGCN	\$193,650
Forbes Tate Partners	\$144,709
Alignment Government Strategies	\$118,071
Daschle Group	\$62,039
Hogan Lovells	\$50,707

The donations were a bipartisan affair, with McGuireWoods and Akin Gump donating widely across the spectrum and representing the majority of donations. They are both large firms which grants them a greater ability to donate and a wider reach than smaller, niche outfits.

There is a disparate connection between contacts and contributions for Japanese firms. While Okinawa Prefecture D.C. Office and the Fratelli Group led by far in contacts, neither have any recorded political contributions. Overall, Okinawa and the central government of Japan collectively logged roughly the same amount of contacts, showing the extent to which Okinawa is attempting to fight the current defense agenda of the U.S. and Japanese governments. However, only two firms represented Okinawa in this time period, as opposed to the rest of Japan's 49 hired firms. Additionally, Okinawa spent less than \$200,000 on lobbying fees to firms, whereas the other Japanese entities spent over \$31.5 million in the one year period examined. See the charts below for the discrepancy between firms hired by Japan as a whole and Okinawa Prefecture in terms of funds versus transparent, reported activities.

Figure 1: Okinawa and Japan FARA Metrics



The discrepancy in the 49 firms hired by Japanese entities, overshadowing Okinawa's two, pays for influence. While not all of the firms representing Japan's government report making contact, overall the moving pieces across the lobbying spectrum allow the Japanese to create inroads by both communicating and receiving insider information on U.S. defense decisions. For instance, the Republican staffed CGCN Group reported making \$164,000 from their contract to provide services for "strategic advice and intelligence gathering" to the Japanese Embassy,⁷⁴ and are also one of the top contributing firms despite the lack of contacts reported.

In terms of political contributions, firms representing Japan spent \$2,654,083 on political contributions, whereas firms representing Okinawa spent \$10,479 (all attributable to lobbying giant Mercury Public Affairs - who also represented the Consulate General of Japan and is counted in both these totals). That means that firms representing the Japanese central government spent 99.9% of all political contributions captured in this report. While it is technically illegal for firms to donate to political candidates on behalf of foreign governments, past FITI reports have demonstrated a troubling connection between donations and political influence on behalf of foreign powers.⁷⁵ All said, the connection between high-donating

74. CGCN Group, "Exhibit B to Registration Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Exhibit B (U.S. Department of Justice, May 24, 2018), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6396-Exhibit-AB-20180524-3.pdf>.

75. The reports can be found here: Ben Freeman, "The Saudi Lobby in 2018," Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative (Center for International Policy, April 2019), https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_dbf2bbd2e0d442e1a9d4848bc7c7fb71.pdf; Ben Freeman, "The Qatar Lobby in Washington," Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative (Center for International Policy, May 2020), https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_eae58acd2c11459894d8e45fbbe1552d.pdf; Ben Freeman, "The Emirati Lobby: How the UAE Wins in Washington," Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative (Center for International Policy, October

firms and the Japanese central government places Okinawa's campaign against a well-funded machine that promotes a clear defense tie, using Okinawa as an important piece that is often the physical manifestation of the Japan-U.S. security alliance.

CONNECTING POLITICAL ACTIVITIES TO CONTRIBUTIONS

During the time period analyzed here, firms registered under FARA to represent interests in Japan made at least 42 campaign contributions, totaling just over \$56,267, to members of Congress they had contacted on behalf of their Japanese clients. In all, 22 members of Congress received campaign contributions from firms, or their lobbyists, that had contacted them on behalf of Japanese clients.

This is just a conservative estimate of the flow of money from firms representing interests in Japan to members of Congress they contacted on their foreign clients' behalf. Of the \$2.65 million in campaign contributions we tracked, roughly a third (\$888,260) cannot be traced to individual members

Separately analyzing political activities and campaign contributions made by firms working for principals in Japan is telling, but considering these activities together reveals that lobbyists often make campaign contributions to the exact same members of Congress they contact on behalf of their Japanese clients.

of Congress, as this money was given to PAC's and party organizations like the RNC and DSCC. These organizations can then make contributions to members of Congress that meet with Japan's foreign agents, but we are unable to attribute those contributions to any of the firms mentioned here. This data also only reflects direct campaign contributions made from these agents to members of Congress and does not reflect other fundraising activities like bundling, which allow lobbyists to solicit contributions for candidates from friends, family, or literally anyone else.

Nonetheless, this conservative estimate of the flow of money from Japan's foreign agents to members of Congress they contacted on behalf of Japan is significant. For starters, all of the contributions made to members of Congress by the same firms that had contacted their offices on behalf of interests in Japan came from just two firms: Alignment Government Strategies and Akin Gump.

For Alignment Government Strategies there appears to be a strong correlation between the

2019), https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ba8a1_cc7f1fad2f7a497ba5fb159a6756c34a.pdf?index=true.

offices the firm contacts on behalf of Japan and the campaign donations the firm makes. In fact, of the nine different Congressional offices Alignment reported contacting on behalf of the Embassy of Japan, six received campaign contributions from the firm, according to the firm's FARA filings.⁷⁶ Several of these contacts and contributions also occurred in very close proximity to each other. For example, on March 5, 2019 Alignment called the Chief-of-Staff to Rep. Bill Keating (D-MA) on behalf of the Embassy of Japan. Just thirteen days later the firm made a \$500 contribution to the Congressman's campaign. When Alignment foreign agents working on behalf of Japan met with Ami Bera's (D-CA) Chief-of-Staff on April 1, 2019, the firm had made a \$500 contribution to the "Bera for Congress" campaign just six days prior.

Finally, on September 24, 2019, Alignment, on behalf of the Japanese embassy, met with the Chief of Staff to Senator James Lankford (R-OK), and the very next day the firm made two contributions to the Senator's campaign, according to the firm's FARA filing.⁷⁷ Senator Lankford's interaction is also particularly noteworthy given that the following day, on September 26, 2019, he issued a press release offering glowing praise for a U.S.-Japan trade agreement, explaining that, "opening up the Japanese market for US exports has been a priority of mine since joining the Senate Finance Committee."⁷⁸ As Alignment was rather vague in describing the topic of this meeting, giving a broad umbrella description of all possible topics of their contacts, there is no way of knowing if the trade agreement was actually discussed with Senator Lankford.

There also appeared to be a strong connection between the Congressional offices that Akin Gump contacted and the donations the firm and its foreign agents made to Congressional campaigns. In fact, on nine separate occasions Akin Gump or its foreign agents made contributions to a Congressional campaign within a month of contacting that Member of Congress' office on behalf of Japan. In one case, for example, Akin Gump reported meeting with the Chief-of-Staff to Rep. Jeff Denham "to discuss Japanese International Trade Policy," and made a \$2,500 contribution to Denham's campaign just five days later.⁷⁹ Although he now

76. Align Government Strategies, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, March 31, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6317-Supplemental-Statement-20190430-7.pdf>; Align Government Strategies, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, September 30, 2019), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6317-Supplemental-Statement-20191030-8.pdf>.

77. Align Government Strategies, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," September 30, 2019.

78. "Senator Lankford Statement on US-Japan Trade Agreement," Senate Website, James Lankford, September 26, 2019, <https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-lankford-statement-on-us-japan-trade-agreement->.

79. Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, "Supplemental Statement Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended," FARA Supplemental Statement (U.S. Department of Justice, December 31, 2018), <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/3492-Supplemental-Statement-20190130-31.pdf>.

works at a lobbying firm himself, Denham sat in the U.S.-Japan Caucus, a decisionmaker on trade and foreign direct investments, before losing re-election.

While these are correlations and not definitive connections, the rate at which contacts and contributions align is alarming. It is illegal for any foreign national to make campaign contributions in the U.S. because the foundation of its democracy is threatened if members of Congress are paid to act on behalf of foreign powers. However, under current law, it is perfectly legal for foreign powers to hire U.S. lobbyists that can then make contributions to politicians in the U.S., even those they lobby on behalf of a foreign power.

CONCLUSION

As of September 2020, the Japanese still have 54 active lobbying and public relations firms on their payroll. The Japan lobby has not ceased in its attempts to mold the U.S. political and cultural landscape. The findings in this report have shown that lobbying can shape decisions ranging from seemingly trivial issues, like finding sake on a menu, to the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. Especially prominent is the dynamic between the Japanese central government and the will of the people, specifically in the Okinawa Prefecture. It may be that the Okinawa issue shines through because it is the focus of contrary positions between Tokyo and the Okinawa Prefecture, making it less discreet than other dimensions of Japanese lobbying. As Okinawa attempts to dissuade American military activities from further disrupting their ecosystems, culture, and day-to-day life, the Japanese government fights to protect its most important ally in a region at risk from Chinese and North Korean defense maneuvering - with significantly more funds and power.

The tension manifests in millions of dollars going to lobbying firms and politicians and talking points disseminated around the country, oftentimes without the American people and Congress not fully aware of who is attempting to influence them, and to what ends. The basic requirements of FARA do not allow a full, contextual examination of foreign activities even when strictly adhered to by lobbying firms. Transparency is further damaged by the lack of accurate and timely reporting. This report has demonstrated the wide net cast by Japan in the United States and includes:

- 51 different firms served as Japan's registered foreign agents in the U.S.;
- Reported spending of nearly \$32 million by Japan on FARA registered firms;
- 3,209 political activities done on behalf of Japan by those firms;
- Japanese foreign agents contacted the offices 45% (240 members) of Congress;
- Nearly 2,241 campaign contributions from those firms, totaling more than \$2.65

million;

- 22 members of Congress received campaign contributions from firms that had contacted their offices on behalf of Japan;
- 10 cases in which a contact and contribution to a member of Congress occurred in the same month.

Japan is arming itself quickly amid rising tensions with China. In July 2020, Congress recorded its second largest Foreign Military Sale (FMS) ever notified - \$23.11 billion for 105 F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to Japan. There is another \$20 billion in active government-to-government FMS cases.⁸⁰ The high number of firms, funds flowing through them, political activities conducted, and their interactions, especially regarding defense, show that Japan's intentions are made salient in America each day.

80. Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. "U.S. Security Cooperation With Japan." Fact Sheet. U.S. Department of State, July 9, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-japan/>.



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