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Mr. Strobe Talbott (President, Brookings Institution, USA)

I'm proud to have known and admired Yoichi Funabashi for several decades, including as a member of the Brookings community in years past. I knew him first when I was journalist and he had already established himself as a world-renowned star in that profession. As for RJIF, he was not just "present at the creation" – he was one of its creators. He has shown himself to be a master builder of a superb institution. At a time when think tanks play an ever more important role as guardians of fact based research and advocates for civil discourse, organizations like the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation are increasingly vital. I commend Yoichi and his colleagues at RJIF for their commitment to renewing Japan in the aftermath of the tragic events of March 2011 and for the high caliber of the research that it has generated.

Dr. Richard Haass (President, Council on Foreign Relations [CFR], USA)

I write to congratulate my esteemed colleague Yoichi Funabashi on the fifth-year anniversary of the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation. RJIF produces thoughtful, authoritative, and creative work examining ways for Japan to strengthen its politics and economy and face the new challenges of the 21st century. It is essential that the United States and Japan continue to work closely together, and the important role that organizations such as RJIF play in building the intellectual foundation for such cooperation cannot be overemphasized. I and we here at the Council on Foreign Relations look forward to working together in the years to come.

Dr. John Chipman (Director-General and Chief Executive, International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], UK)

The RJIF, in five short years, owing to the intellectual energy and international network of its founder Funabashi-San, has quickly established itself as an important forum in Japan to examine how the nation can meet the challenges of the world it faces. Think tanks are not easily built in Japan, where traditional structures have limited the space for independent policy thinking and advice. The IISS, as a truly global think tank based in the UK, welcomes the fact that the RJIF has filled a necessary gap in the Japanese national market and is delighted to congratulate it on its amazing fifth year anniversary.

Dr. Fred Bergsten (Founding Director and Senior Fellow and Director Emeritus, Peterson Institute for International Economics [PIIE], USA)

When I created the Institute for International Economics (now Peterson Institute for International Economics) in 1981, I immediately searched for parties in the other major countries to help address the global issues that were our own central mission. At that time, no country was more important to the world economy and to the United States than Japan. But there was a crucial problem: Japan, for all its enormous intellectual resources, possessed no independent and high-quality research institution that could play the needed role in bringing a Japanese (and indeed Asian) perspective to the international debate. I therefore turned to several individual Japanese experts, foremost among them Yoichi Funabashi, who prepared two path-breaking studies for my own institute. During his tenure there, we frequently discussed the imperative of creating a truly independent think tank in

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Japan (and I always believe that Yoichi Funabashi was the right person to take on that task).

The Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation responds to that challenge. At a time when both Japan itself and the world economy face greater challenges than at any time in the past 70 years, the Foundation offers an enormously valuable asset both to the people of its own country and to all citizens of the world. Its unique ability to tackle issues of all types, and to integrate domestic and international considerations, enables it to make valuable contributions on many fronts.

It is a great honor and privilege for me to congratulate the Foundation, and its Chairman Yoichi Funabashi, on this fifth anniversary and to extend best wishes for its even greater success in the future I am delighted to welcome RJIF to the circle of top think tanks in the world!

Dr. Jessica Mathews (Former President and Distinguished Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA)

For the decade during which I helped lead the environmental think tank, World Resources Institute, and the eighteen years I served as President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, I have been aware of a paradox around Japan. Japan is rightly known for its expert government civil servants. Yet, as compared to other leading nations, or to its own strengths in government, Japan's non-governmental sector, especially its think tank community, has been weak. So I particularly welcomed the founding of RJIF under Yoichi Funabashi's visionary leadership. In just five years it has made a real contribution and I look forward to much more to come.

Mr. Jean Marie Guehenno (President and CEO, International Crisis Group)

On behalf of the International Crisis Group, I would like to congratulate RJIF, and our former Crisis Group Board Member Yoichi Funabashi, on your success in strengthening Japan's leadership in advancing peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Your stream of substantive publications will have a long-term impact, weaving together critical but too-often sealed-off disciplines like crisis management, disinflation, demographics, ideology, nuclear safety, military-military engagement and more. The 2011 tsunami and Fukushima nuclear disaster were truly calamitous events. But in five short years, you have shown how a terrible crisis can be turned into an opportunity for positive change.

Dr. Chan Heng Chee (Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore)

I warmly congratulate the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation on its 5th Anniversary. The Foundation established following the unimaginable devastation of the earthquake and tsunami off the Pacific coast of Tohoku in 2011 has as its objective the reinvigoration of Japanese society and people through new ideas, new strategies, networking and leadership. Its commitment to globalisation, to reach out to the world to be part of a global intellectual network and to take part in discussions about a 'new world order', is important and welcome. At a time when the voices of anti-globalisation are on the rise and power shifts are taking place, Japan as a global economic leader and an advocate for the open global trading system and a peaceful balanced regional order needs to be heard.

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Dr. Orville Schell (Arthur Ross Director, Center on U.S.-China Relations, Asia Society)

As the architecture of the existing Asian order - indeed the entire global order - comes under ever greater challenge from rising authoritarian powers and destabilizing populist movements in democratic countries, there is a crying need for thoughtful, temperate and resolved global actors. In Asia, Japan alone holds just such promise. And thus it is of immense political importance not only to the Japanese people, but to the United States and world as well that the Japanese democratic enterprise remain both strong and involved in the fabric of world politics. To do that, it must strive constantly to remain ever more innovative, outward looking, and well-governed. And here civil society organizations like the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation play an absolutely essential catalytic role.

Of course, such non-governmental organizations are only as good as their leaders. However, in Yoichi Funabashi the Foundation fortunately has found an incomparable Chairman. Funabashi is a man who, although deeply steeped in Japanese culture, media and politics, is also someone completely comfortable, and extremely well-respected, in the international world outside of Japan. This offers the Foundation a rare ongoing opportunity to be of real consequence not only to Japan itself, but to the US-Japan alliance and the whole perilously balance global order.

Dr. Joseph Nye (University Distinguished Service Professor, Harvard University)

I want to congratulate RJIF on its 5th anniversary. I have known and worked with Yoichi Funabashi since he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard in 1975, and throughout his distinguished career he has taught me a great deal about Japan and US-Japan relations. Japan has a crucial role to play in preserving democratic principles and maintaining an open liberal international order. At a time when rising populism and erratic political leadership in the US and Europe is creating global uncertainty and encouraging authoritarian states, the role of Japan and the work of RJIF becomes more important than ever.

Ms. Irene Hirano Inouye (President, U.S.-Japan Council, USA)

I would like to congratulate Mr. Yoichi Funabashi and his colleagues on the fifth-year anniversary of the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation. The U.S.-Japan Council (USJC) has had the honor and privilege of partnering with the RJIF to launch the Silicon Valley Japan Platform (SVJP). SVJP connects the technological dynamism of Silicon Valley with opportunities for economic revitalization in Japan. USJC was proud to showcase SVJP's accomplishments and future prospects at our 2016 Annual Conference. Through the TOMODACHI Initiative, we also share RJIF's commitment to rebuild the Tohoku region. Through our partnership, we look forward to building stronger U.S.-Japan relations.