

**Text of the Welcome Speech by Prof. ITO Kenichi, President of GFJ and President of JFIR at Welcome Dinner held in Tokyo on 13 February 2011 in honor of the participants of the “Japan-US Dialogue” of GFJ and the “Japan- US International Workshop” of JFIR**

Dr. Michael GREEN, Prof. KAMIYA Mataka, all other distinguished guests, in my capacity as President of both GFJ (The Global Forum of Japan) and JFIR (The Japan Forum on International Relations), I would like to welcome you all to the “Japan-US Dialogue” of GFJ to be held tomorrow, and to the “Japan-US International Workshop” of JFIR to be held the day after tomorrow.

Though I know my glance at the papers I received in advance of the “Japan-US Dialogue” alone does not qualify me to make a prediction on how the discussions will unfold tomorrow, it is at least predictable that the concept of “smart power” has become all the more important after we witnessed the fall of the Mubarak regime in Egypt yesterday.

In the contemporary context of international politics, domestic and foreign factors are intermingled as it was most dramatically demonstrated in the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. Under such circumstances the role of “smart power” understood to be the best combination of “hard” and “soft” powers is sure to grow.

Particularly for the “Japan-US alliance,” the cornerstone of which is the common value we share, the importance of the correct understanding and flexible exploitation of the concept of “smart power” can be taken for granted. Faced with the pressure of the rising China, which entertains a different value system, I must say the “smart power” is the key concept in addressing ourselves to the future vision of the Japan-US alliance. Let me look forward to the lively and constructive discussions you may have tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

Thank you very much.