

Focus: The 2022 Midterm Elections and the Future of the United States (Summary)

Essay: The Crisis in the International Order and Trends in the US

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The post-World War II international political order is currently undergoing a major upheaval. The cornerstone principle of that order is that no country should attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force.

Russia has invaded Ukraine and is literally attempting to change the status quo by force. China is also trying to undermine the international order quite unilaterally. The fact that China is not squarely criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine also amplifies the seriousness of the situation.

Under these circumstances, the question is to what extent the US will exercise its leadership to maintain the post-World War II international order.

The results of the November 2022 midterm elections did not necessarily change the Biden administration's course, and of greater concern is the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. If former President Trump or a politician with similar foreign policy views to Trump is elected president, there is a possibility that the US will back down on its stance supporting an international order based on the rule of law in opposition to Russia and China.

1 How to View the 2022 US Midterm Elections

Takayuki Nishiyama (Professor, Faculty of Law, Department of Political Science, Seikei University)

The US midterm elections of 2022 were important in that not only evaluations of congressional representatives and state governors but also the nature of the US as a country and the meaning of democratic politics were called into question. An underlying reason the Democrats fought well against the general expectation of Republican dominance was the diversification of voters' concerns, such as the growing number of people who consider the issue of abortion as the most important issue following the US Supreme Court's decision denying a Constitutional right to abortion. Another significant factor was the increase in the number of pro-Trump candidates within the Republican Party, resulting in the election being structured as a "Trump vs. Biden" race like the 2020 presidential election. The internal circumstances and strategies of the two major parties also influenced the outcome of the elections. The Democrats were able to win the support of moderate voters by curbing their Sandersian leftist populist tendencies. The Republicans, on the other hand, were unable to increase their number of seats in the midterm elections as a result of Trump-leaning candidates sweeping the primaries.

2 The Increasing Significance of Intra-Party Compromise: Prospects for the 118th US Congress

Hiroshi Okayama (Professor, Faculty of Law, Keio University)

As the 118th US Congress convened in January 2023, the House of Representatives failed to decide on the Speaker until the fifth day of the session due to defections from among the far-right members of the Republican majority. Drawing on the confusion thereby created as a window into the partisan

and ideological configuration of the new Congress, this essay offers an outlook on legislative agendas and how members will tackle them. In recent years, the ideological polarization and balance between the two political parties have induced majority party leadership in each chamber to take the initiative in pushing legislation more aggressively. In this new legislative process, the fate of ideologically moderate bills adopted in the Senate with bipartisan support is often determined by their acceptance in the more partisan House. Because of this, intra-party agreement among House Republicans will likely hold the key to successful legislation in the 118th Congress, above and beyond the inter-party Senate compromises that were crucial in the preceding Congress.

3 The Prospects of Donald Trump and His Supporters in the Republican Party: An Analysis of Funding Sources in the Congressional Primaries

Ayako Hiramatsu (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, The University of Tokyo)

Donald Trump actively participated in the 2022 congressional elections by endorsing his own slate of Republican candidates. The nearly 200 congressional candidates whom Trump approved can be categorized into one of four groups: revenge, vacancy, takeover, and retention. Among these groups, there were significant differences in the candidates' relationships with Trump, the opponents they challenged in their campaigns, and the ratios of election victories. The political action committee sponsored by Trump gave only limited campaign donations to the endorsed candidates; the major funding sources for the primary election campaigns of Trump's congressional candidates were committees established by two prominent conservative organizations, the crypto-currency industry and the Freedom Caucus. One of the reasons behind the Republican Party's failure to recast itself after Trump left the White House in 2021 is arguably their financial reliance on interest groups and other organizations formed outside of the party.

4 The Ruling Repudiating a Right to Abortion and the Midterm Elections: The Repercussions for American Society and International Politics

Saho Matsumoto (Professor, Department of International Liberal Arts, College of International Relations, Nihon University)

In late June 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that recognized a woman's right to abortion and rejected the idea that such a right was guaranteed under the Constitution, allowing each US state to ban abortion under its own state laws. More than half (26) of the states have newly enacted tighter restrictions, bans, or penalties on abortion, and the number of such states is increasing. The Democratic Party unexpectedly fared well in the midterm elections that took place under these circumstances, and it is believed that voters who felt threatened by the criminalization of abortion supported the Democrats. This paper examines this with a focus on Hispanics, whose population is growing remarkably, especially in the South, and who could be an important voting bloc in the 2024 presidential election. Over 70% of Hispanics are Catholic, which is a different denomination from the Christian evangelicals who supported President Trump's administration, but they should share the same religious position on abortion. However, 70% of Hispanics are in favor of legalizing abortion, and this paper will discuss the controversies surrounding abortion, contraception, and LGBT within the Catholic Church in the US and what implications this has now and in the future for domestic politics, elections, and even international affairs.

5 Continuation of the US Posture toward China and Russia: US Security Policy in the Second Half of the Biden Administration

Matake Kamiya (Professor, National Defense Academy of Japan)

The Biden administration's strong policy responses to the security challenges posed by China and Russia, as outlined in its "National Security Strategy," are likely to continue after the midterm elections. This is because, although recent discussions of US politics have highlighted the partisan divisions between Democrats and Republicans, there is exceptionally broad agreement between the two parties on the issues of China and Russia, as exemplified by the bipartisan establishment of the "Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party" in the House of Representatives in January of this year as well as the consistent bipartisan support for Ukraine in the face of Russia's invasion. The fact that public opinion is in favor of strong responses by the United States to China and Russia lends support to bipartisan responses. However, US public interest in the challenges posed by China and Russia is actually quite low, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that public opinion will shift in future and give rise to partisan conflict over these issues. While it is reassuring for Japan and the rest of the world that the US is likely to maintain its current stance toward China and Russia, this cannot be taken for granted.