



Strategic Annual Report 2019

Is it possible to build an international order
based on free, fair and transparent rules?

Strategic Annual Report 2019
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Message from the President



President, JIIA
Kenichiro Sasae

My name is Kenichiro Sasae, and I have held the post of President of the Japan Institute of International Affairs since June 2018.

In the political realm, nationalism and populism are currently on the rise, domestic division and authoritarian governing methods run rampant, and the values of liberal democracy face increasing challenges. In the field of diplomacy, the “rules-based international order,” that until recently had been functioning despite its incompleteness, is under unprecedented strain. This is due, inter alia, to the spread of unilateralism and certain levels of inadequacy in key international organizations in dealing with these challenges.

Since taking office, I have pursued several new initiatives while keeping in mind the questions “what role should think tanks play in Japan?” and “what are think tanks capable of?”. The first of these has been to provide timely forums for multilateral discussions involving relevant international organizations and government agencies, former executives from these organizations/agencies, practitioners and experts, in light of the fact that the international order is undergoing major changes and countries are confronting extraordinary diplomatic, political and economic circumstances. The second has been to effectively convey the gist of said discussions and the findings of our expert-based research groups in an accessible manner. The third has been to strengthen the financial basis of our organization in order to carry out the above measures.

JIIA conducts a wide range of research activities with the cooperation of experts from various fields. These activities include workshops covering the United States, China, Europe, Russia, the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the world economy, security, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, advanced technology, and territory and history issues.

As part of our efforts to disseminate our research findings, we have decided to publish “The Strategic Annual Report 2019” as the first release of a yearly report that will briefly describe how JIIA perceives the current regional situation, future prospects, and the actions Japan should take.

This report also reflects our research activities and evaluations in each of the above areas. Interested readers may refer to the series of study group reports (the URLs can be found at the end of this report).

I hope this report will help you better understand the international situation.

Strategic Overview

An Overview of the International Situation

The following have surfaced as noteworthy developments that have had an impact on the international order during the period of October 2018 to October 2019.

US-China relations

In terms of impact on the international order, the most noteworthy development has been the flare-up of the US-China rivalry (or strategic competition as it has been framed by key US documents).

The change in the US perception on China had been evident before on the policy level; the National Security Strategy published in December 2017 classified China along with Russia as “revisionist powers” that challenged American power. The January 2018 National Defense Strategy recognized the *reemergence of long-term, strategic competition* by revisionist powers as the central challenge to the US. Vice President Mike Pence’s October 2018 Hudson speech affirmed this change on the political level. In October 2019, Vice President Pence stated that China was a strategic and economic rival and reiterated his criticism of China, disapproving of its behavior in trade

negotiations, its provocative actions in the South and East China Seas, its debt diplomacy, and its repression of human rights and democracy in Hong Kong and Xinjiang Province. There is now bipartisan consensus among Congress, the administration and experts alike, albeit in varying degrees, that China poses a serious challenge to the existing rules-based international order.

China has shown a willingness to make certain concessions to the United States in resolving the trade imbalance, but has not displayed such amenability on issues linked to the survival of the Communist Party’s dictatorial regime, such as subsidies for state-owned enterprises. As a consequence of US backlash, the “Made in China 2025” slogan is rarely mentioned nowadays, but the development goal of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” has held strong. Not only has China made use of advanced technologies to further

enhance its repressive system of internal governance, but it has also rapidly strengthened its military capabilities and persisted in its efforts to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Some argue the current state of the US-China relationship is a revival of the Cold War structure between the US and the Soviet Union that led to the polarization of the international order and call for the containment of China, while others suggest selective engagement (or selective competition), given that containment is inappropriate as well as physically impossible because of US-China economic interdependence.

For Japan, the course it takes in its relations with China is a strategic issue that will greatly influence the country's future. Alarmism regarding China has seen a rapid rise in Japan; this stems from Chinese actions, such as the emphasizing of historical issues since the late 1990s in order to gain political advantage over Japan, and its unilateral efforts to attempt to change the status quo around Japan's Senkaku islands in the East China Sea from the 2000s onwards.

In 2012, the Japanese government led by the Democratic Party was forced to

resort to a national purchase of three of the Senkaku islands in order to thwart a purchase attempt by the governor of Tokyo. China's strong opposition to this move and its subsequent refusal to hold any dialogue with Japan for over two years are still fresh in Japan's memory. In the United States, the hope that China would become a responsible stakeholder in the international community through engagement policies gradually faded. The Trump administration has taken a stance of facing the Chinese challenges head-on, rather than waiting for political and economic reforms.

With its relationship with the US worsening, China is now drawing closer to Japan. A visit by President Xi Jinping is scheduled next spring, and there are calls in Japan to take this opportunity to further strengthen bilateral relations. Needless to say, maintaining a healthy relationship with China, a major regional power, is important for Japan; however, with the drastic shift in US-China relations that could even lead to a realignment of the international order, Japan's future actions require strategic consideration. While strengthening the Japan-US alliance, Japan must pursue a case-by-case approach that combines competition, coexistence and

cooperation in order to attain strategic stability among Japan, US, and China.

Advanced technologies

In the past year, what has been relevant to and equally important as the shift in US-China relations is the direction of the international community in regard to advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and advanced monitoring technology, which are products of disruptive technological innovation. Such advanced technologies are expected not only to be military game-changers but also to be used as diplomatic tools. For example, as value chains become more international in line with the globalization of markets and technological development, a single country can press its competitors to make concessions by restricting access to key technologies that are choke points for their products. The United States has halted some of its semiconductor exports to China; China may follow suit in the future. The US argument for a decoupling with China is based on the assumption of such a situation. There is also the problem that advanced technologies have already begun to be used by authoritarian states to maintain their regimes. Specifically, there are

concerns that systems for influencing public opinion using AI technology and monitoring citizens using biometric technology are not only operating in China, but are also being exported to other authoritarian countries.

International relations over cutting-edge technologies created by these disruptive technological innovations have gone beyond mere economic competition and led to a struggle for hegemony that will shake the international order itself. In other words, with the advance of globalization and the digitalization of society, the US-China power struggle in the field of advanced technologies cannot be confined to competition in the field of pure economics, and may lead to deeper conflicts based on security concerns and differences in fundamental values between liberal democratic systems and authoritarian governance systems.

Under these circumstances, it is highly likely that countries will follow the trajectory of restricting exports and investment, as can already be seen in the concrete steps taken by the US. Japanese companies that have a division of labor system set in place and thus have stronger ties with China than their US counterparts must seriously

consider both the opportunities and risks of continuing their relationship of interdependence with China. The Japanese government will also be forced to opt into selective decoupling.

Challenges to the non-proliferation regime by North Korea and Iran

A third important development is the environment regarding nuclear nonproliferation, including the growth of North Korea's WMD and missile programs and the possible collapse of the Iranian nuclear agreement.

With regard to North Korea's denuclearization, after the North-South Summit in April 2018, the United States and North Korea held a summit meeting in Singapore in June 2018 in which they reaffirmed the principle of "denuclearization". However, at the Hanoi Summit in February 2019, the talks broke down due to differences over the concrete shape of denuclearization. In June of that year, the leaders of the United States and North Korea met again, but the conflict over denuclearization and corresponding measures was not resolved at the October working-level talks. Even after taking the US domestic political situation into consideration, many experts are concerned with the

US posture vis-a-vis North Korea, including the unconventional wisdom of holding summit meetings with North Korea without sufficient prior coordination and the acquiescence to North Korea's repeated test-firing of short- and medium-range missiles. In particular, Japan, which is the US' most important ally in the region and which will be directly affected by North Korea's nuclear armament and missile development, had to be concerned about the prospect.

The United States' withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreement and the subsequent strengthening of sanctions against Iran have not yet resulted in a complete Iranian withdrawal from the agreement. However, they have encouraged the hard-liners in Iran and heightened tensions in the Persian Gulf region. At the same time, the US has not been able to stop Iranian activities it deems problematic, including supporting pro-Iranian organizations in neighboring countries and pursuing missile development. Some have argued that the framework of the nuclear agreement itself should be maintained after certain revisions, but there is no prospect of seeking a solution through negotiations, as Iran has refused to hold

talks with the Trump administration. From the viewpoint of nuclear nonproliferation and regional stability, US allies such as Europe and Japan, which have supported the Iranian nuclear agreement as a provisional although incomplete measure, cannot help but be concerned.

End of the INF Treaty and instability in the nuclear arms control system

Fourth, the nuclear arms control system has been shaken by the end of the INF Treaty between the United States and Russia. The United States withdrew from the INF Treaty, citing of Russia's treaty violations and China's stockpile of hundreds of medium-range missiles. Although the United States has yet to clarify its stance on the New START treaty, which will expire in 2021, it has insisted that China join the nuclear arms control framework as well. However, China, which possesses far fewer nuclear weapons than the United States and Russia, maintains that it will not participate in such a framework unless the United States and Russia drastically reduce their nuclear arsenals.

What lies behind this flailing nuclear arms control situation is a "power transition" in which US power shows

a relative decline, as China emerges and Russia begins to reestablish its presence in the international arena, and competition among major powers is becoming apparent. Under these circumstances, nuclear weapons, once considered unusable, are regaining some relevance. Expectations for nuclear disarmament, which began to grow under the Obama administration, are rapidly dwindling despite the adoption of the Nuclear Weapons Convention that was spearheaded by civil society.

On the other hand, the invalidation of the INF Treaty has serious implications for Japan's security under US extended deterrence. At the time of the conclusion of the INF Treaty in the 1980s, Japan insisted on, and managed to realize, the "double-zero option" eliminating Soviet and US medium-range missiles from Europe and Asia. Today, however, both China and North Korea have medium-range missiles in Northeast Asia. Meanwhile, Japan and the United States do not possess such capabilities, leaving them at a strategic disadvantage. The alliance will have to take new measures to restore strategic balance in the region from the perspective of stabilizing deterrence, such as holding consultations with relevant countries

and considering the deployment of new missiles.

Situation in the Middle East

In the Middle East, countries such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Libya have fallen into a state of civil war due to their vulnerability as nation-states and loss of the ability to govern, and these countries have allowed intervention by other countries, enabling the leapfrogging of armed non-state actors and bringing about a crisis. In addition, the Middle East policy of the Trump administration, which prioritizes strengthening its domestic support base, complicates the situation.

The core of the Trump administration's Middle East policy is to improve relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel, which had deteriorated during the previous administration, and to stabilize the Middle East by forming a coalition to contain Iran. Unfortunately, this US policy cannot be said to be successful.

What Will Happen to the International Order?

How should we assess the impact of international developments over the past year on the international order?

In addition, the withdrawal of US forces from Syria and Turkey's cross-border attacks in Syria have confused the countries concerned in the region and the international community. Meanwhile, the regime of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad has benefitted, as have his supporters Russia and Iran. On the Palestinian issue, the economic portion only of "the deal of the century" was announced in June 2019, but it put emphasis on promoting of relations between Israel and pro-American Arab countries, and shelved any political solution to the Palestinian issue.

While there is growing concern about the Trump administration's future policy toward the Middle East, even traditionally pro-US governments are moving to build relations with Russia, which is increasing its influence in the region. However, Russia's involvement is opportunistic and cannot be expected to lead to stability and form a new order in the Middle East.

The current world order is often described as a "liberal international order". The United States advocates liberal democracy as one of its

fundamental principles. After it gained overwhelming dominance in the international community after World War II, the international order, basically an arena for power politics between nations, came to reflect the ideals of liberalism.

With the collapse of the Cold War structure in the early 1990s, some advanced the theory of “the end of history” on the premise that liberal democracy would be universalized as the ultimate form of government. Since then, however, the international community has moved in a completely different direction. Economic globalization has, while narrowing economic disparities between developed countries and certain developing states, aggravated income inequality in both developed and developing nations. The “squeezing” of the middle class in developed democratic countries has exacerbated distrust for political establishments and worn down societal solidarity, leading to the rise of populism and unilateralism. In the Islamic world and developed countries with Islamic communities, there has been a rise in Islamic fundamentalism and a spread in terrorism, particularly touching those who feel left behind economically.

These recent developments globally have been accelerated by the relative decline in American power and international leadership. Some fear that the “liberal international order” that we have become accustomed to in the post-WWII era is coming to an end.

However, from a broader perspective, it should be recalled that, as the international community rose from the ruins of the First World War in the early 20th century, political leaders presented ideological frameworks such as the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact to restrain overt power politics. After World War II, however, the US’s hegemony led to the development of various international organizations and international norms, including the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions, collective security arrangements such as NATO, regional organizations such as ASEAN, the World Trade Organization that forms the basis of the free trade system, and multilateral treaties on various issues such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In the post-Cold War era of globalization, the international

community has placed greater emphasis on multilateral frameworks in addressing a variety of global issues, including human rights, health and hygiene, humanitarian activities, climate change and sustainable development.

This indicates that the “rules-based international order” is appreciated by the current international community to a considerable extent.

On the other hand, in the current situation in which various global governance methods such as multilateralism are under siege as described above, it is time for political leaders and citizens of all nations to recall that this world order was established over the past century with countless sacrifices and the laborious efforts of their predecessors, and to unite for its reconstruction. ■

The Trump Administration's Foreign Policy – Impacts of Changes in the United States



President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally, Oct. 2019, Minneapolis. (Photo AP/AFLO)

Since its inauguration in January 2017, the Trump administration's America First policy, which seems unhesitant about confronting other parts of the world while paying little attention to the free and open international order it had been leading, has had significant impacts on the international community. The policies of the United States, Japan's sole ally, have played a central role in building and maintaining the free and open international order in the Indo-Pacific region, which has a direct impact on the security environment and stable economic development of Japan. It is hence critical to understand whether or not the Trump administration will

fundamentally change America's role in the international arena, what domestic changes have brought the Trump administration to power in the United States, and how these changes have been and will be manifested in the Trump administration's foreign policy.

Firstly, the foreign and security policies of the Trump administration that are of such vital importance to Japan were devised at the initiative of Secretary of State Pompeo, former National Security Advisor Bolton, and former Secretary of Defense Mattis, with the National Security Strategy (NSS2017) released in December 2017 formulated with

significant involvement from former National Security Advisor McMaster. The direction set by all these foreign and security policy experts was not the “populist nationalism” led mainly by former Chief Strategist Bannon, who supported President Trump in the last presidential campaign, but rather the traditional hardline conservatism of the Republican Party, which is now widely understood as “principled realism” or realism based on principles. This direction of principled realism should be welcomed as it is conducive to maintaining an international order based on the rule of law, as shown in the concerted policies of Japan and the United States, for example, regarding the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiatives.

At the same time, however, this principled realism shows a strong emphasis on a competitive and dualistic worldview putting America’s interests first in all cases, which has led some to point out that power politics have now been revived. Where the current approach decisively differs from the great power rivalry between the United States and the USSR in the Cold War era, however, is that foreign policy is determined not by ideological values but by the Trump

administration’s ad hoc interpretation of what could benefit its national interests. The Trump administration’s basic stance on foreign policy, in other words, is to restructure its foreign relations to put American interests at the very center at all times. Competition here is not based on ideology but rather on means involving power and pressure to secure the stronger position needed for the United States to realize its own national interests.

Attention should be paid to its China policy in this regard. The Trump administration has drastically changed US foreign policy toward China. NSS2017 clearly defined China as a revisionist country that challenges American power, influence and interests, and undermines American security and prosperity. A speech by Vice President Pence in October 2018 at a think tank in Washington, DC symbolized the Trump administration’s hardline policy toward China, harshly criticizing Chinese behavior in the international arena. In addition, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Travel Act in March 2018 to facilitate mutual visits by high-ranking officials of the United States and Taiwan, thereby strengthening its involvement in Taiwan. Congress has also intensified

its criticism of China over the Tibet and Uighur issues. Furthermore, as seen in the passage of the August 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, which bans US government purchases of products from five Chinese companies, including Huawei Technologies (Huawei) and Zhongxun(ZTE), and the December 2018 Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, which promotes the sale of defense equipment to Taiwan, Congress is going along with the administration in a bipartisan manner, taking a whole-of-government approach to impose stern measures on China on various fronts. While passage of the bill requires the approval of the Senate and the signature of President Trump, the House in October 2019 passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which requires the United States to verify every year whether China is observing the “one country, two systems” formula that guarantees a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong. Again, however, the Trump administration’s hardline policies toward China that are not based on ideology or values are susceptible to pressure from President Trump’s insistence in reducing the bilateral trade deficit and could be used as a bargaining chip in trade negotiations with China at any time. In other words, the hardline

policies of the Trump administration toward China do not give any answers to major post-Cold War questions of how the United States will incorporate China into the international community, and what form the international community should take. It makes prediction of future trends in the international situation even more difficult.



The trade negotiations at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Feb. 2019, Beijing. (Photo Reuters/AFLO)

Secondly, the unpredictability of the Trump administration’s foreign policy persists. The administration has, for instance, abruptly accepted summit meetings with North Korea while abandoning its nuclear agreement with Iran. In addition to its policy toward China, the basic principles of its foreign and security policies are elusive and their predictability remains low. In particular, America’s policy toward North Korea’s denuclearization is not yet clear, even after the US-North Korea summit talks held in Hanoi in June 2018 and Singapore

in February 2019. Even worse, President Trump's de facto acceptance of North Korea's launches of short-range ballistic missiles after the two summit meetings raises serious concerns for its regional ally Japan. Behind this elusiveness and unpredictability of the Trump administration's foreign policy, there lies the conflict between populism and elitism in the administration. President Trump won the 2016 presidential election from a populist stance that differed from so-called foreign policy experts, even denying the value of NATO in America's foreign policy. After taking office at the White House, however, he was viewed to have compromised with, or been incorporated into, "the establishment" to some extent by appointing James Mattis, a foreign and security policy expert, as Secretary of Defense. As mentioned earlier, although his position regarding the Japan-US alliance, including the policy on a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), is close to that of the conventional diplomatic and security establishments, he still undeniably has populist tendencies, as evidenced by his dismissal of Mattis as Secretary of Defense and his sudden announcement of the withdrawal of US forces from Syria, although the latter was subsequently revised partially.

Stated another way, President Trump, who is seeking reelection in the 2020 presidential election, could swing back to a populist position, and Japan needs to carefully watch whether the administration's foreign policy might fall victim to populism. In particular with regard to economic and trade policies that directly affect the interests of the American voters, extra attention should be paid not only to the tariffs on steel and aluminum already imposed on imports from Japan but also to the possible imposition of tariffs on automobile imports despite the agreement reached in September 2019 between the two countries, as President Trump has been more persistent in materializing his populist election pledges than anyone had expected. Japan must therefore continue to appropriately remind the Trump administration of the value of the alliance and the importance of maintaining a free and fair trade/economic system.

It is also important to note that the dismissal of Bolton from the post of National Security Advisor has given growing impetus to the noninterventionists in US foreign and security policy circles who claim that the diplomatic and security

establishments' support for the use of military power has been forcing the United States to fight endless wars. This noninterventionist tendency was already evident in the Obama administration, and it is reasonable to assume that noninterventionism is now an idea widely shared by the American electorate left or right. Even think tanks with policy experts are beginning to see a movement to unite both left and right noninterventionist movements. The Quincy Institute, a noninterventionist think tank, was founded after the Trump administration's inauguration and funded both by left-leaning and right-leaning billionaires, including the liberal George Soros and the conservative Koch brothers. With these facts in mind, close attention should be paid to how the conflict between America First and US internationalism plays out in forming the United States' foreign policy.

On the domestic policy front, the Trump administration succeeded in appointing conservative judges not only to the Supreme Court but also in the federal judiciary, including appellate and district courts. It also enacted a tax cut that it deems its greatest achievement. These, along with a strong economy, have

given President Trump a solid support base. While the results of the 2018 midterm elections followed a historical pattern, the come-from-behind victory in the House of Representatives that gave the Democratic Party a majority was a major blow to the scandal-ridden Trump administration. This was tempered, however, by the fact that the Republicans did not suffer a crushing defeat in the Senate and maintained their majority. Although numerous clashes with Democrats are expected in Congress, especially in the House, it may be said that the conclusions of Special Counsel Mueller's March 2019 report on "Russia-Gate" concerning Russian intervention in the 2016 US presidential election were not the worst outcome for the president. In the run-up to the 2020 presidential election, there have also been allegations raised since the summer of 2019 that he made requests to Ukraine for intervention in the coming presidential election, and the possibility of his dismissal based on a conviction at an impeachment trial, which has dogged President Trump since his inauguration, has not disappeared. If crucial evidence emerges during the impeachment proceedings, the president could expect to lose a number of his supporters although, considering

the balance of Congress, the possibility of impeachment is not yet that great at this point. To the contrary, the Democratic Party could face difficulties, in battleground states critical for the 2020 elections if the party leans too progressive in its political agenda in the midst of serious political polarization. In all, the nomination of the Democratic candidate and the outcome of the 2020 presidential election are still very much up in the air.

Finally, the relationship between Japan and the United States has developed fairly smoothly despite initial concerns following the inauguration of President Trump. At the summit meeting held in February 2017, for example, the leaders of the two countries confirmed that the Japan-US alliance is the cornerstone of peace, prosperity and freedom in the region. At the same time, they also confirmed that the United States would defend Japan with its nuclear and conventional forces, and that Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty, which stipulates the United States' obligation to defend Japan, applies to the Senkaku Islands. In addition, at a joint press conference, President Trump expressed his gratitude to Japan for hosting US forces. These statements represent a

complete retraction of remarks he made during the 2016 presidential campaign. There have since been repeated summit meetings and telephone conversations between the two leaders that have maintained good relations, as seen, for example, in President Trump's May 2019 visit to Japan as its first state guest in the Reiwa era. Prime Minister Abe has built a particularly close personal relationship with President Trump that has itself become a valuable asset for Japan. While there are some instances in which Japanese and American policies part ways, as seen in the US' withdrawal from TPP negotiations and its imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum, Japan must continue its efforts to maintain a strong relationship with the United States, supporting a win-win policy for both countries and the free and open international order, by taking into account the overall trends in the United States in both the public and private sectors, while leveraging the close relationship established by Prime Minister Abe with President Trump. ■

China's Foreign Policy and Other Countries' China Policies



The 40th anniversary of China's reform at the Great Hall of the People, Dec. 2018, Beijing. (Photo Xinhua/AFLO)

On October 1, 2019, China marked 70 years since Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). At the ceremony, Xi Jinping, President of China and General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, reiterated that the Chinese people are on the brink of achieving "the great rejuvenation" around the centenary anniversary of the founding of the PRC. It is true that China's economic and military power continues to grow at a faster pace than "developed countries". Although the pace of its economic growth has slowed in recent years, China will continue to

drive changes in the power structure of the international community.

However, it is also true that, especially over the past few years, various problems that could hinder China's progress toward "the great rejuvenation" have become apparent. The first is relations with the United States; friction between the two countries in areas such as trade and science and technology is developing into a full-scale, long-term confrontation over hegemony in the international community. In addition, many Asian and European countries have criticized the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI), which is the linchpin of Xi's foreign

policy. Domestically, there are said to be many voices of dissatisfaction and doubt within the party over Xi's tendency toward dictatorship and the deterioration of relations with the United States. Some observers say the economy has already lost a lot of its momentum and the growth rate is slowing down well below official statistics (6%-6.5%). Recently, large-scale demonstrations by Hong Kong residents, triggered by a proposed bill amending the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, have begun to show rejection of the Communist Party's rule in Hong Kong itself. Failure by the Communist Party to take appropriate measures may lead to a situation where the stability of the mainland's system would be negatively impacted.

With these lofty goals and destabilizing factors, where is China heading now? How does this trend affect the existing international order?

One of the most important factors in China's domestic politics and foreign policy is the stability of the current administration, especially the power of the General Secretary of the Communist Party. General Secretary Xi Jinping succeeded in promoting a large number of his followers to the leadership group

after the 19th Party Congress in 2017, and his power base can be evaluated as stable for the time being. On the other hand, it is true that the aggressive behavior that the Xi administration has consistently adopted has created friction with many countries, and this may be one of the factors that will potentially destabilize his power base.

Relations with society are, of course, an important factor in ensuring the stability of power. Under the Xi administration, there has been a strong push to strengthen ideological control and control over the media. As a result, anti-establishment public opinion in domestic politics has been tightly contained and, in diplomacy, control by the government over the nationalistic public discourse has increased.

Another factor that cannot be overlooked in assessing Xi's power is his relationship with the military. Since taking office as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi has clearly strengthened his grip on the military through a large-scale reform of the military structure carried out before the 19th Party Congress. The reform primarily seems to be aimed at strengthening the military's ability

to wage war, while further analysis is needed before it can be fully evaluated.

How is China's foreign policy actually expressed? Relations with the United States have reached a major turning point. During the "Beidaihe Conference" in the summer of 2018, Xi and his aides were reportedly criticized for worsening relations with the United States. The Xi administration is trying hard to manage relations with the United States by refraining from mentioning "Made in China 2025". On the other hand, some complained about Xi making too many concessions to the United States in trade negotiations and, around May this year, the administration turned to a hardline stance in the negotiations. In October, due in part to the domestic political considerations of the Trump administration, the first deal was concluded, but it is not certain that further progress will be made. In this way, China's foreign policy toward the United States is based on a delicate domestic balance and is expected to fluctuate within a certain range.

Under these circumstances, relations with Japan have clearly improved, particularly since the mutual visits by their leaders in 2018. Contributing factors behind this are the strengthening

of the Xi administration's power base, the slowdown of the Chinese economy, the deterioration of US-China relations, and the improvement of the Chinese public's perception of Japan. On the other hand, most of the security and confidence-building issues between Japan and China remain unresolved.



The Belt and Road Forum, April 2019, Yanqi Lake venue.
(Photo AP/AFLO)

The Xi administration's foreign policy is symbolized by the BRI. A notable trend is the diversification of business in recent years away from traditional infrastructure investments. The current situation surrounding China is quite different from the time the concept was formulated. Domestically, foreign exchange reserves and excess production capacity have both declined, while, externally, the conflict with the Trump administration has surfaced. Under these circumstances, some adjustments have been made since the initial plan. A case in point is the fact that the China has

started to refer to a “high-quality BRI” since the 2019 Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, where loans to emerging countries were criticized as being “debt traps”. It can be seen that the high-quality infrastructure investment and the four conditions for cooperation for BRI that Japan advocates – openness, transparency, economic profitability, and fiscal soundness of the host country – have had a certain influence on the direction of China’s policy. In addition to its domestic policy banks, China co-finances various projects through multiple funding sources, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB). However, China tends to independently finance the construction of strategically important infrastructure in developing countries.

How have foreign countries reacted to China’s domestic situation and foreign policy in recent years?

Since the beginning of the second year of the Trump administration, the US government has been exhibiting a strong wariness about China’s foreign policy as a whole. China was defined as a “revisionist power” and it was asserted that “the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition” with such

countries is a “central challenge” to the security and prosperity of the United States. In recent years, this attitude has led the United States to exclude Huawei Technologies in connection with the “5G” next-generation communications standard and label China a “currency manipulator”, while the “trade war” with China has begun to show signs of developing into a full-fledged “economic war”.

In contrast to the US-China relationship, the China-Russia relationship has seen improvement. President Xi and President Putin have met nearly 30 times, and the relationship between the two countries was upgraded to a “comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination” in June 2019. This partnership is not limited to the domains of politics and economy; it aims to also further cooperation security-wise, including military technology and cybertechnology. It is said that discussions are being held about deepening cooperation in missile defense. It goes without saying that behind these developments are the two countries’ relationships with the United States.

Yet beneath the surface, Russia remains wary of China; this is due to security

concerns caused by China's rise and the shift in the power balance. For example, Russia's strategy to have intermediate-range nuclear forces even if it violates the INF Treaty may have been related to its intention to eliminate its asymmetry with China in this field. Although China recognizes this Russian wariness, it has put on display a harmonious relationship between the two countries because of strategic necessity. Regarding economic relations, numerous initiatives have been launched; however, as the economic benefits for China are not necessarily large, the projects have not seen concrete progress.

China-DPRK relations are also seeing close cooperation, at least on a superficial level. Relations between China and the DPRK had deteriorated from the first half of 2017 but, in early 2018, when Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, mentioned "denuclearization" and when preparations were underway for the US-DPRK summit meetings, Kim visited Xi in Beijing in March of that same year. Since then, Chairman Kim has visited China four times as of October 2019, and in June 2019, President Xi visited Pyongyang for the first time. Nevertheless, the

development of China-DPRK relations is still a dependent variable for US-DPRK relations. The DPRK does not want China to intervene excessively in the process of establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and the current China-DPRK "honeymoon" is not guaranteed to hold.

Among the countries involved in the disputes over sovereignty in the South China Sea, the Philippines under the Duterte administration has adopted a conciliatory policy toward China. Contributing factors behind this are the Philippines' policy of placing the stabilization of domestic security and economic development at the top of the "security" agenda, China's stance of responding positively to such a posture, and the Philippines government's perception that US involvement in South China Sea issues is passive. On the other hand, Vietnam tends to show more clearly its wariness of China on the South China Sea issue. On the economic front, although China's direct investment in Vietnam has increased sharply due to the US-China trade war since the beginning of 2019, there is a strong inclination to avoid excessive dependence on China.

India's relations with China had worsened from the middle of 2016, due in part to the military confrontation on the Doklam plateau. Since April 18, however, India, which like China has a huge trade surplus with the United States, has been inclined to ease its confrontation with China as the US-China trade war rages in the background. After the United States removed India from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) in June 2019, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in that same month, criticized the move as unilateralism and protectionism while avoiding mentioning the US by name, and confirmed cooperation with China. However, strategic mistrust still underlies India's view of China.

Since 2018, Australia's relations with China have been deteriorating to the point where they are said to be the worst since the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Behind this is the growing awareness among universities and research institutes that China is using its financial power to spread its influence, which has heightened the threat of its "sharp power". Under these circumstances,

the current administration has taken a tough stance on "interference" from China with its August 2018 decision to virtually exclude Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE from its 5G networks.

The trend of worsening relations with China is also seen in Europe. The "EU-China – A strategic outlook" released by the European Commission in March 2019 strongly reflected the EU's mistrust of China and positioned China not only as a partner but also as a "systemic rival". There is concern that the "16 + 1" framework established in 2012 between China and 16 Central and Eastern European countries may be a Chinese ploy to divide Europe, and there is growing concern about the penetration of China's political influence through economic means. On the other hand, in response to Xi's visit to Europe in March 2019, some countries, including Italy and Luxembourg, have announced their intention to deepen their cooperation with China on BRI.

Given these circumstances, it is expected that the risk of destabilization of the international order will increase over a relatively long period of time. The rise of China and the confrontation between

the United States and China are now long-term trends. Even if trade friction, which has captured the attention of the Trump administration, is alleviated, there will still be a wide gap between the two countries in terms of governing models and values, as evidenced by Vice President Mike Pence's October 2018 speech. As China continues to declare its goal of increasing its wealth and military strength, there is a risk that it will intensify its confrontation with the United States in the future. Furthermore, this could develop into a wider struggle for hegemony between the United States and China.

Other countries are increasingly wary of China because of political and security concerns, even though they need the economic benefits that relations with China bring. Many democracies, including Japan, are concerned that China will export its governing model, which relies on surveillance and coercion, and seek to establish its own sphere of influence by strengthening its ties with authoritarian states. Other neighboring countries are also apprehensive about the excessive expansion of China's influence, while maintaining good relations with China on the surface. China has stressed that no matter how it might develop, it will never threaten any other country

or seek any sphere of influence, but its explanations and actions are not convincing.

The confrontation between the United States and China is making the latter draw closer to Japan, which at this moment has a positive effect on Japan-China relations. However, if the United States starts to seek Japan's cooperation in various ways in its policy of pressuring China, Japan could be placed in a dilemma between the United States and China. Needless to say, the Japan-US alliance remains the linchpin of Japan's diplomacy. On the other hand, there might be some room to deepen Japan-China cooperation on issues common to Japan's vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" and China's BRI (for example, strengthening regional connectivity), with the condition that China ensures the recipient countries' financial soundness, openness, transparency, and economic efficiency. At the same time, it is important for Japan to monitor the perceptions and policies of other countries toward China and to pursue coordinated policies with these countries if they match Japan's national interests. In doing so, it is necessary to urge China, as a key member of the international community, to act in line with the principle of maintaining the liberal international order. ■

What is the “Axis” for a New Order on the Korean Peninsula?



President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the Summit Meeting, Feb. 2019, Hanoi. (Photo AP/AFLO)

In November 2017, North Korea declared the completion of its nuclear force and took a substantial step toward “dialogue mode.” In April of the following year, it announced a voluntary moratorium of nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests and the abandonment of its nuclear test site. With this as a turning point, the situation on the Korean Peninsula began to transform rapidly as other countries with various motives became involved. The South Korean government under President Moon Jae-in, which was inaugurated in 2017 under a banner of peaceful coexistence and co-prosperity with North Korea, broke the ice. North-South contact resumed in

the wake of North Korea’s participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018 and resulted in the first North-South summit in 11 years at Panmunjom in April of the same year. In addition, seeking to simultaneously advance denuclearization and establish a peace regime, the South Korean government focused on mediation between the United States and North Korea and, in March, it obtained a promise from both the United States and North Korea via a special envoy to attend the first-ever summit between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of

North Korea, turned to active summit diplomacy and made a surprise visit to Beijing as his first overseas trip at the end of March, immediately after the agreement on a US-North Korea summit. At that time, Chairman Kim Jong-un secured China's support for the US-DPRK summit while seeking understanding of North Korea's position that the denuclearization process be phased in.

The US-DPRK summit meeting was held in Singapore in June, and the two leaders confirmed the direction of a new US-DPRK relationship, a peace regime, and denuclearization. In the run-up to the US-DPRK summit, there were further mediation efforts by the ROK government through another North-South summit in Panmunjom and support by China through a China-DPRK summit in Dalian, both held in May 2018.

However, the broad and vague agreement between the leaders of the United States and North Korea did not bridge the gap between the two countries on the details of the denuclearization process and, in the course of the high-level talks held afterward, differences over specific measures for denuclearization surfaced. Under such circumstances,

South Korea stepped in for the third time and attempted to expand its role from “mediator” to “arbitrator”. By making an overarching agreement with North Korea at the North-South summit in September that included easing military tensions, deepening cooperation and reaffirming the DPRK's denuclearization, South Korea aimed to advance North-South relations and use it as a springboard for US-DPRK dialogue. However, the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and the denuclearization of North Korea were essentially issues to be discussed between the United States and North Korea and, since the United States, Japan and other countries concerned maintained a cautious stance within the framework of international economic sanctions on North Korea, South Korea faced limitations in using economic cooperation as leverage in advancing inter-Korean relations.

The second US-DPRK summit meeting (Hanoi) was held in February 2019, but the meeting ended in failure due to differences of opinion between North Korea, which insisted on a drastic relaxation of economic sanctions in exchange for the abandonment of the Nyongbyon nuclear site alone, and the United States, which insisted on

the abandonment of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – including chemical and biological weapons – and missile-related facilities.

Since then, North Korea has continued to employ its two-pronged tactic of lauding President Trump personally and criticizing the US government in an attempt to win concessions from the United States. Moreover, while carefully calculating the tolerance of the United States, it has repeatedly conducted test launches of short-range ballistic missiles, new multiple rocket launchers, and SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles) (a total of 12 launches between May and October 2019), and is trying to apply both hard and soft pressure toward its own self-imposed deadline of year's end. On the other hand, China and Russia are moving closer to North Korea, out of concern that tensions might return and with the intention of using their influence over North Korea as a diplomatic card (a Russia-North Korea summit meeting was held in April 2019, and China-DPRK summit meetings were held in January and June 2019).

Since the Singapore summit, the United States has maintained its policy of

reducing the scale of its regular US-ROK joint military exercises, and has continued to express its intention to carry on with dialogue by taking the position that it does not regard North Korea's launch of short-range ballistic missiles as a problem. It is thought that President Trump's calculations on establishing diplomatic legacy and using this to influence domestic politics are behind this.



North Korea test-fired a “super-large multiple rocket launcher” at an undisclosed location, Oct. 2019. (Photo KNS/KCNA/AFP/AFLO)

President Trump and Chairman Kim again met on the northern side of Panmunjom at the end of June 2019, and the resumption of talks was announced. However, at the Stockholm working-level talks held in October, the dispute over denuclearization measures and incentives did not seem to be settled.

Needless to say, the process of denuclearizing a country requires more than 10 years even if it proceeds smoothly.

It is inevitable that negotiations between the United States and North Korea, which harbor deep mutual distrust, will take a long time. It is all the more true because there seems to be a wide gap in perceptions of denuclearization between the US and DPRK. What is genuinely needed today, therefore, is for the countries concerned to reconcile their respective visions of the regional order with the denuclearization of North Korea as the first step.

Furthermore, when considering concrete measures for denuclearization, we should not forget the fact that comprehensive multilateral agreements including concrete denuclearization measures, such as Joint Statement 9.19 (2005) and Joint Statement 2.13 (2007) at the six-party talks, have already been reached. Despite such agreements, the disputes over procedures and interpretations of declaration, verification, and reward eventually allowed North Korea to buy time to improve its nuclear and missile capabilities.

Based on this lesson, it should be reaffirmed that the most important precondition for a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula is North Korea's denuclearization, namely “final and fully verified denuclearization

(FFVD)”, and this has to be shared among the countries concerned. In addition, to attain FFVD, North Korea's nuclear inventory of existing nuclear weapons and related facilities must be declared and identified. Only under such conditions should what is widely known as phased denuclearization and compensation measures be discussed.

In addition to the denuclearization issue, it is necessary to solve not only the ICBM issue, which the United States is particularly concerned about, but also the issue of short-range and medium-range missiles, which pose a greater threat to neighboring countries, as a package. Only when these perceptions are shared by the countries concerned will North Korea realize the need to shift from the tactic it has employed since the Agreed Framework (1994) to buy time and to make its possession of nuclear weapons a fait accompli.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of existing economic sanctions against North Korea must be ensured in order to elicit a sincere response from the North. The recent revelation of North Korea's illicit import and export “network” indicates that sanctions will not be fully effective until import and export control systems are shared among the

countries concerned. Strengthening export and import controls on strategic and nuclear-related materials will contribute not only to resolving North Korea issues but also to maintaining the regional and international orders as international public goods. We urge all countries concerned to agree on this point and work together to improve their capabilities.

The Japan-US-ROK trilateral framework is particularly important for Japan in considering the formation of an order on the Korean Peninsula with the denuclearization of North Korea as a starting point. The greater the gap between neighboring countries, the freer the hand North Korea will have and, if the independent action of one country to secure leverage on North Korea hinders a coordinated response among the countries concerned, denuclearization will be further delayed. Japan for its part opposes any easing of sanctions before North Korea takes concrete action to denuclearize and Japan must make efforts so that the US and ROK share this posture. In order to respond to the missile threat posed by North Korea, it is essential for Japan and South Korea to cooperate in supporting the actions of the US military, and to maintain the link between their respective alliances

with the United States. The Japan-ROK General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) is a symbol of such linkage and must be maintained regardless of Japan-ROK bilateral relations.

Only when the process of denuclearization proceeds and tensions are eased under this premise can Japan become involved in the “bright future after denuclearization” that President Trump has dangled before North Korea. Negotiations on the pending bilateral issues between Japan and North Korea may then be incorporated into the process. At the same time, however, it may be necessary to quietly start discussing the risks in the event of failed negotiations on denuclearizing North Korea and restricting its missiles, including a deterrent regime led by the United States and Japan.

While there are some outstanding issues between Japan and South Korea at present, it is necessary to calmly resolve each issue, bearing in mind the major developments on the Korean Peninsula and the importance of cooperation among Japan, the United States, and South Korea. ■

The Changing International Order in the Indo-Pacific and Japan's Choice



Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) destroyers participate in a drill off the coast of Brunei, June 2019. (Photo AP/AFLO)

In 2019, Japan faces a challenging security environment. In Northeast Asia, a mountain of issues remain to be tackled, including North Korea's nuclear and missile development, China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea, the management of the Japan-US alliance, tensions between Japan and South Korea, and diplomatic negotiations with Russia over the Northern Territories. With a wider perspective that extends beyond Northeast Asia, we observe tectonic shifts taking place in the international order. Appropriately understanding the changes surrounding the existing international order, envisioning an ideal

international order, and acting toward its realization will be crucial for the future of Japan.

As part of its proactive effort to establish an international order, Japan has been promoting the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" concept since 2016. At the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) held in Kenya in August 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe clearly declared that Japan would maintain and strengthen the rules-based international order, stating that Japan would shoulder "responsibility to nurture and enrich the interactions between the Pacific and

Indian Oceans, and between Asia and Africa, as a place where freedom, the rule of law and the market economy are respected, without force or coercion". During the past three years, Japan has actively promoted capacity building, joint training, and infrastructure development in wide-ranging areas of Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, the Pacific island countries, and Africa, and strategically disseminated these ideas. In parallel with Japan's efforts, the concept of the Indo-Pacific has been adopted in the diplomatic documents of many countries, including Australia, India, Indonesia and France. The United States has also embraced this concept and renamed the US Pacific Command "the US Indo-Pacific Command" in May of 2018. Washington has taken additional steps in pursuit of the concept, and the Department of Defense published the "Indo-Pacific Strategy Report" in June 2019. The quadrilateral dialogue framework among Japan, the United States, Australia and India, which had dissipated in 2007 shortly after it was created, has been resumed, and the first foreign ministers' meeting of the four countries was held on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019. In response to these developments, the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which had been reluctant to use the Indo-Pacific concept, announced its "Indo-Pacific Outlook" in May 2019. The concept of the Indo-Pacific region, which had been used only in discussions among intellectuals, has now become a regional concept with policy significance comparable to that of East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region more broadly in the foreign policy of each country.

So why has the concept of the Indo-Pacific spread so quickly and prevalently? The reason for this is twofold: (1) the emergence of challenges posed by revisionist forces to the existing international order and (2) the heightened wariness of those who prefer maintaining the status quo and upholding the rules-based order. This dynamism can be seen in three key areas: maritime security, connectivity, and fundamental values.

First, in the area of maritime security, traditional security issues have reemerged in the South and East China seas as well as the Indian Ocean region (IOR). In the South China Sea (SCS) in particular, China's expansionist moves have been apparent since 2012. As of 2019, China is transforming reclaimed

artificial features into military bases. While an arbitral award based on Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was issued in July 2016, which completely rejects China's excessive claim of historical rights based on the "Nine-Dash Line" and points out legal problems regarding the construction of artificial islands in the Spratly Islands, China claims that the arbitration is invalid and a mere piece of paper with no meaning. From the perspective of maintaining the rules-based maritime order, China's current actions are challenges to the whole of maritime law and order, which defines the rights and obligations of states. Needless to say, non-traditional security issues such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief for maritime accidents, anti-piracy measures, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction still remain. Therefore, international cooperation at sea and the improvement of each country's ability to monitor circumstances (Maritime Domain Awareness: MDA) are important issues in maintaining the maritime order.

As for connectivity, China's plan for a regional economic bloc – the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – poses

challenges to existing infrastructure investment standards and loan terms. On the one hand, the BRI could be beneficial to the regional economy by activating economic exchanges and economic connectivity between China and the central and western parts of the Eurasian continent and the countries bordering the Indian and Pacific oceans through infrastructure. On the other hand, there remain concerns over "debt traps" in which China assumes excessive debts and acquires long-term port management rights in return, as well as the geopolitical and military use of that infrastructure. In addition, new investment banks have emerged, such as the New Development Bank established by the BRICS countries and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). It is unclear at this stage whether these new initiatives will replace the existing development banks but, at least for the next 10 years, development norms and organizations in which emerging countries have a greater influence will coexist alongside such institutions as the Bretton Woods regime and the Asian Development Bank, which was led primarily by Japan.

Finally, there is the challenge to liberal value systems such as democracy, basic

human rights, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. At the end of the Cold War, the debate over ideology at one time seemed to have come to a conclusion as “the end of history” was declared. Yet there is not necessarily a sufficient system of cooperation among countries to address serious cross-border human rights issues such as terrorism, religious oppression and refugees in the Indo-Pacific region, where there are countries with diverse political systems, cultures and histories. In addition, technological development has not necessarily led to improved access to information and more free speech activities by citizens. Instead, there have been moves in some countries that run counter to democracy, such as the strengthening of state control over information and the imposition of greater censorship. Furthermore, the fact that the principle of the rule of law is being challenged not by great power politics but by parochial national interest is one of the most serious problems for Japan, which maintains that all disputes be resolved according to international law. The challenges have included not only China’s assertiveness in the SCS, but decisions by US leaders to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and the TPP as well as disparaging remarks about international organizations.

All together, they have become one of the forces destabilizing the existing international order composed of international law and organizations.



Subi Reef at the Spratly group of islands in the South China Sea (Photo Reuters/AFLO)

How should Japan deal with these issues related to the international order? As mentioned earlier, the FOIP concept addresses a wide range of issues based on a sense of urgency about Japan’s principle of maintaining a rules-based international order. With regard to maritime security, Japan is steadily strengthening cooperation with the United States, Australia, India, and other maritime nations in Southeast Asia to protect the freedom of navigation in key sea lanes of communications. Specifically, Japan has conducted multiple bilateral and multilateral joint exercises and patrols with the aim of improving interoperability. Tokyo has also provided both hardware and software support to countries around

the SCS and the Indian Ocean to build MDA capabilities, including enhancing regional coast guard capacities, and supplying patrol vessels and personnel training. In recent years, security cooperation with India has been particularly advanced. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's regular participation in the Malabar Exercise since 2016, as well as the bilateral joint exercises held in the Andaman Sea in May 2019, aim to improve the tactical skills of both navies through anti-submarine warfare and tactical exercises.

In the area of connectivity, Japan advocates "high-quality infrastructure" and aims to offer infrastructure that is resilient in the long term and leads to recipient countries' autonomous development. In addition to promoting its own high-quality infrastructure, it is also pursuing joint development with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and others, as exemplified by Papua New Guinea's electrification project. In addition, while seeking room to cooperate with China's infrastructure financing, Japan is urging China to ensure that the BRI meets such requirements as fiscal soundness, openness, transparency, and economic

viability. In order to further reduce the risk that the host country will fall into a "debt trap", or that these four conditions will not be met by China, Japan should consider inviting China to participate in the Paris Club and assisting the host country in formulating investment acceptance criteria in cooperation with other countries. Finally, Japan has encouraged regional countries to gradually accept liberal values while taking into consideration the unique history and circumstances of each country, without imposing so-called universal values unilaterally. In order to achieve this goal, Japan has been pursuing balanced diplomacy combining political, security and economic cooperation with countries having different political systems.

There is no doubt that the key to maintaining the existing international order lies in the future course of China, which has achieved rapid economic growth in the first 20 years of the 21st century and is now becoming a colossal military power, and the actions of the United States as a status quo power. Yet, the two behemoths are already in strategic competition. For instance, the current Sino-US trade war and the pressure placed on Chinese companies

over 5G are not simply economic issues but reflect geopolitical competition between the two for technological hegemony. In this context, Japan, as an ally of the United States, needs to think about ways to elicit not only the physical presence of US forces but also a constructive attitude toward maintaining order from the US administration while imposing costs on China for attempts to change the status quo and incentivizing rule-abiding behaviors.

To this end, it is increasingly important to build a system of cooperation among small and medium-sized states in the Indo-Pacific that want to avoid choosing either the United States or China. This is because no country can establish and maintain an international order on its own and, as US-China relations become increasingly antagonistic, other Asian countries (the rest of Asia) that are expected to achieve economic development will become increasingly important. While placing the security and economic cooperation networks of the US's allies at the center, Japan will need to proactively cooperate with countries in the Indo-Pacific Region irrespective of their sizes and different political systems and help them acquire

more resilience from the coercion and pressure of major powers, thereby putting the principle of the rule of law into practice. As a maritime nation, Japan needs to see the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” region not only as an ideal but also as a “sine qua non” for the stability and prosperity of the country, and to formulate specific diplomatic policies to realize this goal. ■

Putin's Russia and its Foreign Policy



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the International Economic Forum (SPIEF), June 2019, Sankt Petersburg. (Photo Reuters/AFLO)

Thirty years have passed since the end of the Cold War. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the global status of the Russian Federation has remained one of the major issues in the post-Cold War world order. On the whole, however, we must say that the West has not succeeded in establishing amicable relations with Russia. Leaving aside the question of whether we can describe the 2014 Ukrainian crisis as part of a new Cold War, it goes without saying that Russia is one of the factors that has destabilized the current liberal international order. While strengthening its assertiveness under the Putin administration, Russia has a weak

economic base and a peculiar presence in the international community, due in part to its “quasi-alliance” relationship with the emerging superpower China.

Putin has remained in power for 20 years since first inaugurated in 2000 (from 2008 to 2012 he ran a “tandem” government with President Medvedev), and it is true that he implemented political and economic liberalization and overcame the chaos that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and managed the economy through stable, vertical control and the development of energy resources.

During the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, Putin annexed Crimea and Russia was subjected to international sanctions, including expulsion from the G8. At the same time, in a world becoming increasingly multipolar in security and other areas, Russia continues to hold an important position as part of Eurasia, together with such emerging superpowers as China and India. From Japan's point of view, Russia is not only a neighboring country with which Japan has a territorial issue, but is also one directly linked to Japan's security, as seen in its efforts to gain a new foothold in a region stretching from the Arctic Ocean to the Indo-Pacific Ocean through its "Pivot to the East" policy.

How has Putin's Russia evolved politically and economically? What is Putin's foreign policy? What impact will it have on the international order, the East Asian region and Japan?

The Putin administration today is supported by an elite group centered on the executive branch comprising the "Siloviki", made up mainly of officials from the military ministries, and a "liberal" faction. The former is also dominant in the energy sector. In recent years, the Putin administration has been actively promoting the

replacement of local government heads and the appointment of young people to central government posts, and the power balance between the Siloviki and the liberals is changing. It is believed that Putin himself is trying to test potential successors by watching the performance of young people in these positions. With Putin's approval ratings declining and mass protests against the government appearing at the local level, the Putin administration is nervous about local governance. The rise of young people entrusted with local governance and being "put to the test" will be the key to the future of Putin's regime.

It is widely known that the Russian economy is linked to oil prices. The challenge for the Putin administration is how to minimize the impact of oil price fluctuations on the economy and build a robust industrial structure. Accordingly, the current administration's economic policy is based on a contractionary fiscal policy and is supported by advisers who aspire to "liberal" economic policies. At the same time, there is a tendency to emphasize the role of the state and to promote state intervention in specific strategic industries. Adding to these basic policies are others formulated in response to changes in the international environment

following the annexation of Crimea. In other words, sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union after the annexation of Crimea have compelled Russia to implement a “forced import substitution” policy and to approach “Eastern countries” such as China and Turkey to obtain funding and export destinations for its natural resources. In the energy sector, which accounts for an important part of the Russian economy, the “Pivot to the East” is accelerating. However, these measures have not been sufficient to revive the Russian economy, which has been in a low-growth mode recently. Dissatisfaction among the Russian people is rising steadily, as shown by the sluggishness in real income growth and increasing consumer debt. The Putin administration’s implicit social contract that barter sausages for political freedom is beginning to collapse. We should pay attention to how these cracks will affect domestic politics.



Russian dissenters at a demonstration, Sep. 2019, Moscow.
(Photo AFP/AFLO)

The geopolitical characteristics of Eurasia, where Russia is located, vary greatly depending on its relations with Europe and the United States, with the former Soviet republics and the countries of the Middle East, and with Japan, China, and other Asian countries. These factors define Putin’s basic foreign and security policies.

Russia’s relations with the United States and Europe have not fully recovered from the confrontation that followed the Ukrainian crisis. From the Russian point of view, the perception of Russia within the US establishment, regardless of party, is a very unfavorable one, and it is unlikely that the United States will soften its policy toward Russia in the future. Even in areas such as arms control where the United States and Russia were thought to be able to cooperate, disagreements between the two countries are conspicuous, as seen in the invalidation of the INF Treaty. It would be desirable for Russia to construct a new arms control framework that would include emerging China, India and Iran, but such a proposal would not be easily accepted by either the United States or emerging regional powers and, therefore, it would be difficult to find a good starting point for a dialogue with the United States. In its

relations with Europe, Russia has been trying to influence those who oppose the EU establishment to lessen the adverse impact on Russia by disrupting coordination among EU countries, while some European countries, such as Italy and France, have been trying to mend their relations with Russia. Russia seems intent on “reintegration into the international community” through these efforts.

It is extremely important for Russia to build stable relations with the former Soviet republics in Central Asia and with countries in the Middle East. This is because some regions in Central Asia have been shaken by international terrorism and drug pollution. Political and economic stability in Central Asian countries is desirable in preventing these problems from spreading to Russia. Good relations with Middle Eastern countries are also necessary in stabilizing the prices of energy resources, which are Russia’s main exports. Russia is seeking regional stability by reintegrating the former Soviet bloc both politically and economically through such frameworks as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The reintegration of the former Soviet bloc is also extremely

important from the viewpoint of restraining China, which has been expanding its influence in Central Asia through its “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI).

One of Putin’s most important policies is the “Pivot to the East” policy, which aims to strengthen relations with Asian countries that are gaining in economic and political weight. In recent years, Russia has concluded FTAs with Vietnam and Singapore, thereby steadily building a foothold in Asia. The “Pivot to the East” policy itself had been in place before relations with Europe and the United States deteriorated, but the Ukrainian crisis gave support to Russia’s eastward orientation. In particular, its approach to China has become more important for restraining the United States. In September 2019, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Russia and established a “comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership” that showed both at home and abroad that Sino-Russian relations constitute a “quasi-alliance”. On the other hand, there is the view that there are certain limits to the strengthening of China-Russia relations. While China and Russia are stage-managing a honeymoon through initiatives such as “Pivot to the East” and BRI, Russia is

still wary of China's "Ice Silk Road" initiative. It has also been pointed out that Russia's intention to possess intermediate-range nuclear weapons even in violation of the INF Treaty was to eliminate the asymmetry between China and Russia. Regardless of the reality surrounding the Russo-Chinese "quasi-alliance", as Russia's approaches to China gain momentum, Japan's position vis-à-vis Russia is changing. In the past, some Russian experts viewed Japan as a counterbalance to China, but now they think that, with no sign of improvement in US-Russia relations, the increasingly confrontational atmosphere between the United States and China has put Japan-Russia relations on the back-burner.

In addition to these basic policies, a priority on national interests and opportunism are also factors shaping Putin's foreign and security policies. The annexation of Crimea, triggered by the Ukrainian crisis, and intervention in the Middle East (Syria), in which the US presence has declined, can be described as opportunistic responses that give priority to their own interests and respond to the situation at hand. Today, Russia is neither able nor willing to establish the kind of international

order that existed during the Cold War. However, Russia's influence as a global actor remains significant, and its "opportunistic" behavior, coupled with the decline in US influence under the Trump administration, has a non-negligible impact on the international order.

For Russia, Japan is positioned not only as a negotiation partner for the long-standing territorial issue, but also as an important piece in its "Pivot to the East" diplomacy, which aims to deepen relations with neighboring countries by leveraging the development of the Russian Far East, Eastern Siberia, and the Arctic region. In the increasingly important Indo-Pacific region, what weight should Japan give to its relations with Russia, a Eurasian power with abundant natural resources? As the strategic value of the Arctic region increases in line with climate change, how does Japan position Russia in its foreign policy? Despite good personal relations between the leaders of Japan and Russia, there is no sign of a solution to the territorial dispute. On the other hand, cooperation with Russia is indispensable for the stability of the Northeast Asian region, and it is important to come up with effective

cooperation measures with Russia for global issues such as international terrorism, drug pollution, and climate change. Based on this recognition, and in light of the fact that today's good Japan-Russia relations have become a valuable asset for Japanese diplomacy, it will be necessary once again to reconsider from a strategic perspective what Russia is to Japan and what role Russia can play. ■

Europe in Turmoil and the Future of Japan-EU Cooperation



(Photo Reuters/AFLO)

In the 21st century, Europe has continuously experienced serious crises – the European economic crisis after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, a spate of terrorist attacks by extremists, a massive influx of refugees and the rise of far-right populist forces, and Brexit – and these problems are interrelated and complex. Meanwhile, the liberal international order has been threatened by the inclination of the United States toward a unilateralist foreign policy, the new rise of a dictatorial China, and the ambition of authoritarian Russia to regain power. It is of vital importance

to understand the problems of Europe, which has maintained the liberal international order together with Japan, in considering how both can cooperate to uphold it.

One of the first things to emphasize is that the EU, despite its many problems, is gaining solid support. In a 2018 poll that asked whether their country's accession to the EU was beneficial, an average of nearly 70% of people in 28 EU member states answered that it was in their interests. This is the highest figure since 1983. The support for the single currency, the euro, is also growing. In a 2018 survey, 64% of respondents gave a

positive assessment of the euro's impact on their country's economy. This is the highest figure since the introduction of the euro in 2002. In addition, Eurosceptics and far-right populist parties, who have advocated anti-EU policies, have become less vocal about withdrawal from the EU and the euro. Instead, they have switched their stance to one of pursuing internal reforms while staying in the EU. In the European Parliament elections held in June 2019, voter turnout was up for the first time in a quarter-century, surpassing 50%. Behind this were active campaigns by young people, urban dwellers, ecologists and other EU supporters who felt worried about the future of the EU.

Thus, the once-whispered collapse of the EU, its "existential crisis," is now a thing of the past. What now characterizes Europe is not a choice between the EU and sovereignty but a tug-of-war between integration and disintegration, in which those who seek "more Europe" and those who seek "less Europe" struggle with each other.

Although the EU has avoided its "existential crisis," it is not without problems. Internally, several serious problems remain unresolved. Those

problems include: the failure of the member states to cooperate on the admission of refugees and intra-regional free movement; economic stagnation in CEE and Southern European countries and economic disparities among member states; dissatisfaction with EU elites and establishments and the rise of populist forces. Hungary and Poland, whose governments have become increasingly authoritarian, have moved toward manipulating the courts, the media and even their constitutions in the government's favor. These moves cast doubt on the core values of the EU, such as freedom and the rule of law. Externally, since the inauguration of the Trump administration, the tension between the United States and Europe, particularly between the US and Germany, has been at the forefront. Since the end of World War II, European countries have maintained their order on the basis of a multilateral economic, political and security network centered on the EU and NATO, backed up by the United States. However, with its "America First" policy, the Trump administration has taken a skeptical stance on multilateralism. The differences in attitudes toward the US among member states have led to internal confrontations within the

EU and have obstructed the EU from coordinating among member states on its security and foreign policy.

Brexit has recently received the most attention in the EU. Over many years, there was a gap in perceptions of the EU between the UK and continental Europe. The 2016 EU referendum led the UK to exit the EU, albeit by a narrow margin, against the backdrop of a national craving for sovereignty against EU intervention, opposition to large-scale immigration and refugee flows, and the decline of the middle class and widening economic gaps. As of the end of October 2019, the UK's request for a three-month extension to the Brexit process was approved, making it unpredictable to the very end how it will unfold. It is a certainty that the cleavage between and within public opinion and Parliament, which has so far deeply muddied Brexit, cannot be cured by the three-month extension. Even if a formal agreement is reached, social and political turmoil will continue. Yet, it should be noted that the Brexit deal could be a vital issue for the UK, but not necessarily for the EU. Brexit is a blow to the EU. However, this crisis for the UK will not necessarily turn into a crisis for the EU.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the Manchester Central convention complex, Sep. 2019, Manchester.
(Photo AFP/AFLO)

For Japan, Europe and the EU may seem a little distant. However, Europe is a rare partner for Japan that maintains the same principles and values, such as liberal democracy and open market economies. The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which entered into force in February 2019, showed a strong normative link between the two actors in this dimension. The EPA is an agreement that creates a free trade area accounting for about 30% of world GDP and 40% of world trade. It is a clear message sent by Japan and the EU that they oppose protectionism and unilateral action and support free and open economies and multilateralism. The SPA provides a legal basis for strengthening strategic cooperation between Japan and the EU, which share values and principles such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. The SPA calls for

comprehensive cooperation in fifty fields, including politics and security. Through these agreements, we can expect Japan-EU relations to become ever closer. Japan-EU relations are good, and their potential is significant.

In recent years, there has been progress in security cooperation between Japan and Europe, mainly at the bilateral level with the UK and France, which are deepening their engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. The UK, which regards Japan as its closest partner in Asia, concluded the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in 2017, following the United States and Australia. The ACSA enabled the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the British Army to share supplies and transportation services, including ammunition and equipment, and Japan and the UK have held joint exercises every year since then. The ACSA with France also came into effect in June 2019. When President Macron visited Japan that month, the Roadmap on Japan-France Cooperation was unveiled, in which the emphasis was put on the strengthening of Indo-Pacific cooperation, including the establishment of a Japan-France Comprehensive Maritime Dialogue, and the deepening of security and defense cooperation.

Meanwhile, at the EU level, Japan-EU security cooperation has not substantially progressed. At the time of the SPA negotiations with Japan, the EU proposed to conclude a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) that would enable the SDF to further cooperate under the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) mission. However, this proposal was not realized, as the Japanese side believed that a track record of concrete cooperative missions, such as patrol missions in the Indo-Pacific region, should be built first before the conclusion of the framework.

Although Europe has gradually deepened its engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, the linchpin of its security is still NATO, and its alliance with the US. However, Europe's relationship with the US is under strain due to the Trump administration. In response to the Trump administration's demands for more burden-sharing by European allies and its insistence that NATO is outdated and obsolete, France and Germany often take the lead in highlighting the need for Europe to pursue its own defense cooperation and integration. The need for "European strategic autonomy" (ESA) has been stressed, alongside moves such as

the establishment of the “European Intervention Initiative” in June 2018 and a call for creating a European army. However, there has been a divergence of views among the EU member states, fearing that such a move might invite a backlash or withdrawal from the US, and the EU has yet to take concerted action. Delicate wheeling and dealing will continue between member states and the US over the extent of Europe’s strategic autonomy. How NATO will steer relations with the Trump administration will be an important reference point not only for European countries but also for Japan, whose security heavily relies on its alliance with the US.

In addition to security cooperation, further cooperation between Japan and the EU is expected in the area of connectivity strategies, including infrastructure development. Japan has been promoting the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) initiative since 2016. In 2018, the EU came out with the European Connectivity Strategy for Asia, whose values and principles are similar to those proclaimed in the FOIP. In September 2019, Japan and the EU signed an ambitious deal on infrastructure development between Asia and Europe. The deal repeatedly stressed the importance of ensuring

the sustainability and quality of infrastructure development, intended as a joint effort to restrain China, which has deepened its strategic engagement in CEE countries through the Belt and Road Initiative. The EU and Japan are expected to further cooperate toward the common goal of building sustainable and high-quality connectivity through various cooperative ventures, such as infrastructure capacity building and security cooperation, maritime resource and waste management, and third-country market cooperation.

At a time when the US-China rivalry is increasingly taking on the appearance of a power struggle for hegemony, it is difficult for Japan and Europe to assume global leadership alone. Rather, it is precisely at such a time that Japan and the EU, which seek cooperation through rules rather than power, must act to strengthen their strategic partnership that creates an order conducive to the common economic and security interests of many countries and encourages their cooperation to resolve global issues. Otherwise, the principles of a rules-based international order and high-quality infrastructure would be hollowed out in a power-game between major powers. ■

The Middle East: Intensifying Competition for Hegemony over a New Regional Order



The Wailing Wall, Sep. 2017, the Old City of Jerusalem (Photo by Mari Nukii)

Since the “Arab Spring” there has been a continuing power vacuum in the Middle East at three levels: national, regional and international. At the national level, countries such as Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq have fallen into a state of civil war due to their weak cohesiveness as nation-states and their inability to govern, allowing other countries to intervene and armed non-state actors to run rampant. On the other hand, certain states exempt from civil war have become more authoritarian, neglecting to solve the fundamental problems raised by the “Arab Spring.” A power vacuum has also occurred at the regional level as countries in the Middle East prioritize their own interests rather than

fulfill their responsibility to establish an order for the entire region. What makes these crises even more serious is the Middle East policy of US President Donald Trump, who places top priority on strengthening his domestic support base.

The Trump administration’s policy toward the Middle East is characterized by its efforts to improve relations with pro-US partners such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, which had deteriorated during the Obama administration, and to form a “coalition to contain Iran” with these two countries as its pillars. The US administration believes that its policy can stabilize the region.

President Trump apparently wants to withdraw US troops from the Middle East in the near future so that the security of the region can be shouldered by pro-US countries. Having chosen the Middle East as his first overseas destination after taking office in May 2017, he agreed to sell \$110 billion in weapons to Saudi Arabia, and stopped by the Jewish holy site of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem as the first incumbent US president to visit Israel. In December, the Trump administration formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, pleasing its support base of Christian evangelicals in the United States and the Netanyahu government in Israel.

In May 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the Iranian nuclear agreement and, in May 2019, it imposed a total embargo on Iranian oil imports and dispatched aircraft carriers and bombers to the Middle East. On June 20, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps shot down US drones over the Persian Gulf. A sequence of events, including attacks on oil tankers and facilities, pushed the United States and Iran to the brink of war. The United States has called on other countries to join a “Maritime Security Initiative” (a coalition of the willing) to ensure

the safety of navigation in the Persian Gulf, but only a few countries officially supported the idea. On the other hand, Iran, judging the possibility of a military attack by the United States to be low, has refused to hold talks with President Trump, and is showing signs of reducing its obligations under the Iranian nuclear agreement and resuming nuclear development on the grounds that it has not received any economic rewards.

The prevailing view is that the Trump administration’s policy of maximum pressure toward Iran has been unsuccessful, not only because it has been unable to change Iran’s behavior (support for pro-Iran organizations, mainly Shiites in neighboring countries, and missile development), but also because it encourages hardliners in Iran who insist on nuclear development. Hence, it has not received sufficient international support. While the Obama and Trump administrations share in common the perception of a threat from Iran’s growing influence and an inclination toward withdrawal from the Middle East, they differ in tactics (the Obama administration’s engagement policy and the Trump administration’s containment policy). Even if a US administration seeks to withdraw from the Middle East, it

will be unable to renounce its anti-Iran policy in consideration of the strategic importance of the Middle East, including energy supply and terrorism issues, as well as the “special relationship” with Israel. This contradiction has forced the US administration to engage in conflict in the Middle East.

President Trump’s policy of withdrawing US troops from Syria and tolerating Turkey’s cross-border attacks on Kurds in Syria have confused the countries concerned in the region and the international community, and benefited the Assad regime and its allies Russia and Iran. Many in the United States oppose Trump’s decision, saying it would betray the Kurdish militia (YPG) that has cooperated with the US military in the war against the Islamic State (IS) and allow IS to resurge. However, President Trump does not seem interested in Syria, which does not have much oil and which offers few opportunities for arms sales.

On October 27, President Trump announced that US special operations forces had killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib. It has been reported that this operation, which was carried out based

on information from Kurdish groups and the Iraqi government, had the cooperation of Russia (which opened its airspace to US forces), the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad, and Turkey. The killing of Baghdadi is thought to have a certain effect in containing domestic and international criticism of the withdrawal of US troops from Syria, as well as in impressing the public with the “end of the fight against the Islamic State”. However, there has been no change in the US government’s decision to abandon its involvement in war-ravaged Syria, around 6 million of whose citizens are refugees, and to leave its fate in the hands of Iran as well as Russia and Turkey.

On the other hand, Israel, wary of Iran’s military consolidation and the expansion of logistical support routes into the Mediterranean, has repeatedly launched attacks on suspected Iranian military bases in Syria. Should a major military conflict break out between the two countries, the international community may have to face the worst possible scenario of Israel remotely attacking the Iranian mainland and Iran fighting back, resulting in exchanges of ballistic missiles between the two.



Tehran's Former U.S. Embassy, Feb. 2014.
(Photo by Mari Nukii)

In June 2019, President Trump announced his “deal of the century” aimed at resolving the Palestinian problem, but only in the economic arena. Although the ostensible intention was to promote relations between Israel and pro-US Arab countries, the political resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was shelved and the fundamental principles of international law as well as the opinions of the Palestinian side were completely ignored. As a result, many Palestinians are disappointed, thinking that the international community has abandoned a two-state solution. Since 1993, Japan has provided \$1.9 billion in assistance to the Palestinian Authority to support a two-state solution for the coexistence and co-prosperity of Israel and the future independent Palestinian state. These projects include the development of the Jericho

Agricultural Industrial Park (JAIP), tourism development projects, and improvements to Palestinian refugee camps. The Japanese government has made efforts to enhance the Palestinian Authority’s governance functions through grassroots assistance, such as improving residents’ self-governance capacity and fostering small and medium-sized enterprises. These projects aim to cultivate regional cooperation, economic independence and mutual trust with neighboring countries such as Israel and Jordan, and with international donor bodies and countries in Asia. This Japanese-style assistance system, which places importance on the participation of local residents, has not been as flashy or high-profile as the “deal of the century” but it has been highly praised for empowering the weak. It would be advisable for the Japanese government to continue its steady support by involving private companies and individuals interested in contributing to society alongside the countries and organizations concerned in order to prevent the radicalization of Palestinian youth who are desperate due to their political and economic stagnation.

While the United States is attempting to scale back its involvement in the Middle East, Russian influence is increasing. Not only anti-American countries such as Iran and Syria but also traditionally pro-American countries such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, and Turkey are willing to build amicable relations with Russia, fearing the Trump administration's unreliable policies and retreat from the Middle East. A member of NATO, Turkey decided to purchase and deploy the S-400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia in 2019, despite objections from the United States. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also begun procuring new weapons from Moscow, as well as purchasing large amounts of weapons from Washington.

Israel, which is concerned about Iran's move to construct bases in Syria, including the Golan Heights near the border with Israel, has asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to check Iran. Russia seems to be taking advantage of the decline of US power in the Middle East to increase its international presence and use "the Middle East card" as a means to counter the United States. However, its involvement is still opportunistic in nature and Russia does not necessarily intend to take on

an active and responsible role in the stabilization and establishment of a new order in the region.

Aside from tensions between pro-US forces and anti-US (pro-Iran) forces, the power game of Turkey and Qatar versus Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt is defining intraregional relations. From around 2010, a struggle for supremacy between the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa began to surface. Behind this is the fact that in recent years, as the conflict between Iran and the United States and their allies (especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE) in the Persian Gulf has escalated, the "Red Sea Shift" has been accelerating as both oil suppliers and shippers seek out a safe energy transport route.

In 2015, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began intervening militarily in Yemen by setting up bases in Djibouti and subsequently Eritrea and Somaliland. As a consequence of these developments, some African countries are wary of the incursion of outside forces, while others are actively seeking to build relationships in order to extract assistance by taking advantage of the competition among countries. There are also examples that have contributed

to peace to a certain extent. Ethiopia dramatically restored its relations with Eritrea in 2018, as a result of a consensus on concerns and interests among China, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Ethiopia. The Red Sea and the Horn of Africa are transportation and logistics nodes that connect Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. They are also important chokepoints for maritime trade and energy transportation in the world economy. Despite their geopolitical importance, the absence of a multilateral framework to manage security in the region has in some ways escalated the competition for hegemony. In future, the Japanese government will need to formulate a strategy and an international framework for cooperation to protect energy supply routes and freedom of navigation with a comprehensive perspective that links the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea under the concept of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.■

Building a Sustainable Socioeconomic System and Restructuring Economic Global Governance



The T20 summit meeting, May 2019, Tokyo. (Photo T20 Japan 2019)

Globalization has brought enormous wealth to the world as a whole, and the economic gap between developed and emerging countries has narrowed rapidly. On the other hand, the shift of the center of economic gravity to emerging economies has become more apparent since the global financial crisis, and dissatisfaction over intensifying competition with emerging economies, including the relocation of production bases overseas, has increased. In addition, the income gap has been widening in many countries due to the shock caused by the financial crisis in 2008 and the disparity of wage levels between skilled and unskilled workers driven by technological progress.

Today, due in part to the negative aspects of globalization, we witness unprecedented distrust in politics and increasingly eroding social cohesion, leading to the rise of populism, protectionism and unilateralism as global trends. In particular, the United States is changing its long-established role in supporting the post-World War II liberal international order, and this has disrupted global governance and multilateralism. Furthermore, the rise of China and other emerging countries as well as the development of the digital economy require reforms to existing frameworks for economic global governance such as the WTO to address new issues.

Despite slowing global economic growth, globalization and technological innovation are expected to make irreversible progress, and the structural risks posed by anti-globalism will continue to exist globally to a certain extent.

Widening disparities are inextricably linked to divisions caused by immigration, race, and culture, to name but a few factors. Growing demands for protection by the state from those alarmed at their loss of social status and for the right to self-determination by those left out of the rapid economic and social changes caused by globalization offer fertile ground for anti-global populism. There are at least two important conditions to be met at the domestic level in supporting globalization. The first is to mitigate the negative economic and social impacts of globalization by strengthening redistribution functions and expanding investment in human resources for education. Second, in order for domestic politics to function in a sound manner, it is necessary to ensure sound policy planning and execution through the participation of diverse stakeholders in policy formation, public diplomacy and other means of forming a consensus among the general public,

as well as strengthening institutional capacity.

There is mounting awareness around the world that balancing growth with economic and social development is necessary. The “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” adopted by the United Nations emphasize an approach that addresses issues in an integrated manner, bearing in mind the relevance of social, economic, and environmental issues. In recent years, sustainable and inclusive growth has been an important issue for the G20, and there has been active discussion on the virtuous cycle of growth and distribution, human investment, responses to climate change, and pursuit of the SDGs. At the Osaka G20 Summit, leaders confirmed efforts to address the problem of ocean plastic waste and promote universal healthcare coverage (UHC). In recent years, environment, society and governance (ESG) investment and SDGs have been attracting increasing attention in the private sector. ESG investment is based on the practical reasoning that corporations upholding social responsibility initiatives involving the environment and employment can have positive effects on corporate and

shareholder value over the medium to long term. While there are reservations about the accuracy and correlation of data, high ESG scores tend to lead to high stock prices.

How to maintain multilateralism and promote international cooperation is another important issue. As mentioned above, without the resolution of issues such as widening income disparities and immigration, domestic politics tends to lean toward populism and protectionism, making it difficult to support multilateralism. It is essential that political and administrative institutions function soundly to address domestic challenges. Multilateralism works to empower domestic institutions (e.g., capacity building for developing countries), and thus it is important to strengthen core capacity through international cooperation. Even under the prevailing unilateralism, there are areas where multilateral cooperation is essential, among them such urgent global issues as climate change and global health. In the areas of climate change and global health, there is a degree of resilience despite the influence of unilateralism. In summary, (1) multilateralism with multiple layers (support from the United

Nations system, economic fora such as the G7/G20, international financial institutions, private corporations, and voluntary groups of countries), (2) a transnational network of private organizations, experts and local governments, and (3) the framing of securitization (recognition as a security issue leads to domestic political support) are important factors to enhance the resilience of multilateralism.

The US-China trade war between the world's two largest economies is intensifying. The United States is increasing its pressure on China by raising tariffs and by negotiating over China's unfair trade practices and industrial subsidies for high-tech industries under "Made in China 2025". Addressing the US-China trade war, which overshadows the global economy, is an urgent task. It is a matter of great concern for the multilateral trade system, which has the WTO at its core, that the United States disregards WTO procedures by unilaterally imposing tariffs or trade sanctions under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (security clause) and Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 (sanction clause for unfair trade) and refusing to reappoint a member of the Appellate

Body for dispute settlement procedures. At the same time, China's economic activity cannot be fully addressed by existing WTO rules, and WTO reform is desperately needed. Therefore, it is essential that China undertake its own domestic structural reforms to break through this phase, especially by reviewing state-directed industrial subsidies and high-tech management policies and by further liberalizing trade and investment, creating a level playing field for foreign companies to expand their business in China, in order to hasten the transition from state capitalism to a market economy. However, due to the need to maintain its current domestic system, it is unrealistic to expect China to voluntarily implement such reforms. It is important for Japan to work closely with the United States, Europe, and other interested countries to encourage WTO reform and rule-making that will effectively convince China to implement market reforms.

From a constructive perspective, China's Belt and Road initiative (BRI) supports the development of infrastructure and the strengthening of connectivity in emerging economies, and accelerates the growth of the regional economy through trade and investment. However, there is

growing friction with recipient countries over geopolitical and military concerns, the behavior of Chinese companies on environmental, safety, and employment issues, and debt sustainability. In his speech at the 2nd BRI Summit Forum in April 2019, President Xi Jinping stated that BRI projects need to be operated in line with international standards and with respect for the laws and regulations of each country, and he also stressed the need to ensure debt sustainability. While the BRI's recalibrated approach is noteworthy and welcome, implementation should be verified. China should enhance transparency by disclosing data on debt by joining the Paris Club and also by making sure the projects are carried out in accordance with international standards, such as those set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). To maintain positive relations with Japan, China needs to undertake BRI initiatives based on the values and principles set forth in the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" initiative. Such efforts would include the promotion of "high-quality infrastructure". "The G20 Principles for High-Quality Infrastructure Investment" was adopted at a meeting

of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors, and efforts to expand the high-quality infrastructure standards are being pursued in such contexts as the partnership between Japan and the European Union (EU). In addition, cooperation among multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and private-sector cooperation between Japan and China in third countries, should also be promoted. It is essential that these joint projects with China be guided by principles such as openness, transparency, economic viability, and fiscal sustainability.



The headquarters building of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Beijing. (Photo Imaginechina/AFLO)

Based on the above discussions, the following policy recommendations are presented. First, Japan should continue to endorse discussions on redistribution, human capital investment, and

environmental policies that contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth at international economic fora such as the G7/G20. Japan should also support efforts to enhance corporate social roles by promoting discussions and policies on global corporate governance. Second, with a view to strengthen rules-based, free and open economic and global governance, Japan should step up its participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and conclude negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (RCEP) at an early date, maintain the WTO dispute settlement function and advance WTO reform, and promote rule-making such as digital trade governance and artificial intelligence principles through the G7/G20. Furthermore, Japan should advocate the setting of international standards by expanding partnerships in developing “high-quality infrastructure” and cooperating with China’s BRI within the framework of international standards. If China supports FOIP in this process, FOIP and BRI can be compatible to some extent, and a mutually beneficial Japan-China relationship will move forward.■

A New Security Strategy for Addressing Challenges in the Turbulent International Order



President Trump boards JMSDF helicopter carrier Kaga along with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, May 2019.
(Photo Yomiuri Shimbun/AFLO)

The post-World War II international order, which was formed under the leadership of the United States, was based on the premise that all nations, large and small, should abide by international law and spread liberal values such as individual freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and free trade. In recent years, however, countries discontented with the existing international order, such as China and Russia, have been trying to create an environment favorable to authoritarian regimes by unilaterally changing or denying internationally established norms and systems.

The Trump administration, under the banner of “America First,” has chosen to strategically compete with China and Russia, viewing them as “revisionist states” that challenge the existing international order. At the same time, the Trump administration has placed greater priority on protecting its own interests rather than on maintaining the existing order, and has called for correcting trade imbalances and increasing burdens on its allies. In particular, the Trump administration’s policy of valuing the contributions of its allies from a financial perspective is a serious issue that could undermine the credibility of the Japan-US alliance.

China has declared that it will aim to become a strong nation by the middle of this century. Based on its “Belt and Road Initiative,” China has focused on the development of ports in coastal countries in the Indian Ocean and Pacific island countries, while at the same time providing huge amounts of unrepayable aid to developing countries, creating unequal diplomatic relations between the debtor countries and China. China is also developing infrastructure such as 5G, submarine cables, and satellite positioning technology, extending its influence by expanding its own e-commerce network, and exporting a digital surveillance social model using facial recognition technology to other authoritarian countries, creating an order that is incompatible with the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific. While China’s anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the East and South China seas have already become a real threat, China has been using government ships, fishing boats, and marine militias to create a gray-zone situation without leading up to war and to continue trying to change borders.

North Korea has leapfrogged its nuclear missile capabilities, combined with its traditional heavy weapons

and special operations capabilities, to become a serious threat in Northeast Asia. Dialogue between North Korea and the United States has not led to the denuclearization of North Korea, and it continues to develop new short- and intermediate-range missiles while continuing to evade sanctions through ship-to-ship transfer of prohibited goods. Thus, the future of denuclearization is unpredictable.

Russia has been strengthening its nuclear and conventional forces in the Far East, and is working to militarize the Northern Territories by deploying anti-ship missiles. In addition to military cooperation and joint exercises, Russia and China have begun to cooperate in operational areas, such as joint patrols of strategic bombers. Meanwhile, negotiations on a peace treaty between Japan and Russia have made little progress, and Russia opposes the deployment of Japan’s Aegis Ashore systems.

China and the United States are investing in the development of cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and automation, as well as in efforts to use them for military

purposes. Military competition between the two countries over cyberwarfare, anti-satellite weapons, electronic warfare capabilities, and hypersonic weapons is accelerating. These “game-changer technologies” will alter the future of warfare and affect the military balance in East Asia.



A Russian TU-95 bomber flies over East China Sea, July 23, 2019. (Photo the Joint Staff Office of the Defense Ministry of Japan /Reuters/AFLO)

Despite the above-mentioned deterioration of the international environment, the government of Japan continues to view the current 2013 National Security Strategy as “appropriate.” However, the alliance policy of the Trump administration and the expansion of China’s influence have greatly changed since the initial assessment, and a review of this strategy is essential. In doing so, the following points should be emphasized.

With China disrupting the international order and the United States giving top

priority to its own interests, Japan should strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations, ASEAN, India, the EU, and others in order to maintain a rules-based international order and promote the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the international community in order to counter changes in the status quo by authoritarian regimes. It is also necessary to oppose protectionism and address the challenges brought about by globalization through the G7, the Group of 20 and APEC. With regard to the suppression of individual rights by authoritarian states, the government should continue to seek further actions together with the international community. In addition, it is necessary to deepen Japan’s contributions to international peace cooperation activities from Self-Defense Forces (SDF) dispatches, as done heretofore, to support for capacity building such as the provision of equipment and training to developing countries and for the building of a security framework so that these capabilities can be used efficiently.

In order to strengthen its own defense capabilities, Japan should steadily build a “multidimensional integrated defense force” that effectively fuses capabilities

in all areas, including space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum. At the same time, a Joint Operations Command should be established to further strengthen SDF integration. Given the possibility that the SDF's missile defense system could be nullified by further upgrading of the DPRK's missile capabilities, it is necessary to consider new countermeasures, such as directed energy weapons, boost phase interception, and preemptive attacks with hypersonic weapons. In addition, Japan and the United States should constantly update their flexible deterrence options and joint plans in order to strengthen command and control and operational coordination between the SDF and the US Indo-Pacific Command, and to appropriately respond to the expansion of conflicts from peacetime to gray-zone situations and armed attack situations. Along with the steady realignment of US forces, Japan should promote the joint use of bases and facilities, expand US military access to Japanese civilian facilities, maximize operational cooperation based on the "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation" and strive to rectify the asymmetry of the alliance. In addition, in the wake of the expiration of the Intermediate-

Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Japan and the United States should undertake bilateral consultations on the joint development and deployment of new intermediate-range missiles.

Stable relations between Japan and China are indispensable to the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, and Japan should build a "mutually beneficial strategic relationship" in every field, including security, from a broad medium- to long-term perspective. Meanwhile, as the United States competes strategically with China, Japan needs to take a pragmatic approach to China's growing power and revisionist activities. As China's economic growth slows, Japan should also consider adopting a cost-imposing strategy in which China pursues more open economic policies and gains broader benefits by diverting resources from military expansion to social and civilian uses. Furthermore, in addition to strengthening the capabilities of the Japan Coast Guard, Japan should establish a system to respond appropriately to hybrid warfare in gray-zone situations and armed attack situations. With tensions mounting in the Taiwan Strait, the strategic importance of a democratic Taiwan

should be reassessed, and security cooperation with Taiwan corresponding to developments in China-Taiwan relations and US-Taiwan relations should be pursued in addition to the promotion of pragmatic economic and human resources exchanges.

To achieve a “free and open Indo-Pacific”, Japan should strengthen its presence in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region, maintain the cooperative framework among Japan, the United States, Australia, and India (QUAD), and strengthen its partnerships with the United Kingdom, the core of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) and the UK-USA Agreement (Five Eyes), and with France, which has territory in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, Japan should promote the development of high-quality infrastructure aimed at expanding connectivity that generates active flows of people and goods, and should propose alternative measures for the “debt traps” in the region and provide financial support to countries already suffering from debt to China. In this regard, it is important to steer China’s aid to the international level through practical third-country economic cooperation in talks

with China, while at the same time urging China, as a creditor nation, to implement relief measures in line with the standards of developed countries, including China’s participation in the Paris Club.

Japan should strengthen international cooperation to transform North Korea’s strategic ability to favorably negotiate on nuclear weapons into a strategic liability that leads the country to bankruptcy by maintaining maximum pressure and preventing loopholes in sanctions, including through tighter enforcement of ship-to-ship transfers – in collaboration with its international partners – and the deportation of North Korean workers overseas until North Korea responds with genuine denuclearization. In addition, Japan, the United States and South Korea should deepen cooperation on missile defense, antisubmarine warfare, proliferation prevention and noncombatant rescue operations. Furthermore, Japan, the United States and the ROK should strengthen their cooperation toward the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula in the event of progress in denuclearization, in which they should reaffirm their shared recognition of the role and

importance of US Forces Korea. On the other hand, in order to build Japan-North Korea relations based on the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan-North Korea dialogue should be promoted alongside progress in US-North Korea negotiations.

While the peace treaty and territorial negotiations between Japan and Russia need to be continued tenaciously, it should be recognized that the strengthening of Japan-Russia relations, in the context of the major strategic relationships among the United States, China, and Russia, has a limited impact on Sino-Russian relations, and Japan should make it clear that economic cooperation cannot be pursued if Russia continues its militarization of the Northern Territories and provocative actions in areas surrounding Japan. Japan also strongly urges Russia to play a constructive role in dealing with North Korea, Syria, Iran and Ukraine.

The foundations that support Japan's defense capabilities have become so fragile that they cannot be ignored any longer. For example, given that China's defense spending has increased nearly 15-fold over the past 30 years and is now more than three times that of Japan, it

is clear that a slight increase will not be sufficient for Japan to maintain its true independence and ensure its own security and prosperity. In light of this situation, it is necessary to make serious efforts to strengthen Japan's technological and financial bases and to work out necessary technological innovation and defense expenditures from the perspective of investment in the future.

In order to strengthen the defense industry infrastructure that supports Japan's defense capabilities, the defense industry should concentrate its resources on the technical fields and infrastructure that must be maintained in order to enhance the capabilities of domestically-produced defense equipment. At the same time, the defense industry should be reorganized to establish stronger companies and business entities, and the infrastructure for the development and manufacture of higher-performance defense equipment and the fostering of international competitiveness should be developed. It is also necessary to promote the transfer of defense equipment by utilizing the framework of the Three Principles on the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Materials to expand markets and reduce

equipment prices.

Based on the trends in the defense technology environment, Japan should develop a system to ascertain, protect, and foster advanced technologies developed in Japan, and draw up a roadmap to introduce them to the Ministry of Defense and the SDF. In line with Japan's demographic trends, the government should also utilize cutting-edge technologies to cope with the labor shortages caused by the declining birthrate. Furthermore, from the perspective of realizing more efficient defense spending, the government should review investment in large vessels, short-range aircraft, and fixed platforms that are vulnerable in modern warfare, and also utilize unmanned systems that conduct autonomous operations using artificial intelligence under human control. ■

Japan and Post-INF Nuclear Arms Control /Non-Proliferation



The Defense Department conducted a flight test of a conventionally configured ground-launched cruise missile, Aug. 2019, San Nicolas Island, Calif. (Photo Scott Howe/Department of Defense/UPI/AFLO)

Ten years have passed since US President Barack Obama called for a “world without nuclear weapons” in April 2009. However, after short-term progress and a surge in momentum, nuclear arms control and non-proliferation gradually turned sour.

Among the negative trends for nuclear arms control in 2019 was the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which had a significant impact on the international community. The INF Treaty has been regarded as one of the symbols of nuclear arms control; it was signed in 1987 by US President Ronald

Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, who shared the ideal of eliminating nuclear weapons and the recognition that there is no winner in a nuclear war and such a war must thus never be fought, and it obliged the US and the USSR to reduce their nuclear arsenals under strict verification measures, including on-site inspections, for the first time in history. The United States argues that its withdrawal from this historic treaty was in response to Russia’s noncompliance with the treaty through the clandestine testing and deployment of 9M729 ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCM) as well as China’s possession of hundreds of

intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles.

In addition, the United States has yet to clarify its policy on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which will expire in February 2021. If the treaty expires without any extension or successor treaty, US-Russian bilateral nuclear arms control, which has been in place since the Cold War era for maintaining strategic stability, will end after nearly half a century. Washington proposes that not only the United States and Russia but also China join the framework of nuclear arms control. Beijing, however, has not changed its stance that it will not participate in a nuclear weapons reduction process unless the United States and Russia, which together hold 90% of the world's nuclear weapons, drastically reduce their nuclear arsenals first.

Regarding nuclear non-proliferation, tensions over the Iranian nuclear issue have increased since the United States pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018 and re-imposed and steadily expanded economic sanctions on Iran. In response, Iran has gradually extended its partial suspension of JCPOA implementation

since July 2019. The situation with respect to the North Korean nuclear issue has also deteriorated from the positive atmosphere at the North-South Korean/US-North Korean summit meetings in 2018. The second US-North Korean summit meeting in Hanoi in February 2019 ended without any results, and the working-level talks in October were reported to have broken down. Pyongyang has not yet made a strategic decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons program.



A meeting of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Jul. 2019, Vienna. (Photo Xinhua/AFLO)

The worsening of the nuclear situation also cast a dark shadow on the third Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2020 Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The US-Russian, US-Chinese and US-Iranian confrontations were brought to the PrepCom, where the respective parties criticized each other. The widening rift over nuclear disarmament

has become more pronounced between the non-nuclear-weapon states that had led the way in formulating the Treaty on the Prevention of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the nuclear-armed states and their allies that had opposed it.

The situation surrounding nuclear arms control and non-proliferation is unlikely to improve, at least in the near future, because the ongoing challenges arise from the faltering international system. In the power transition stemming from the re-emergence of China and the resurgence of Russia, rivalry over the international/regional order surfaces as great power/geopolitical competition. The nuclear-armed states, their allies and countries of proliferation concern that are involved in this competition have reaffirmed the political and military value of nuclear weapons for their national security, and become extremely cautious about accepting and strengthening nuclear arms control and non-proliferation that would oblige them to reduce their nuclear arsenals or to regulate their activities. Arms control and non-proliferation are oriented toward maintaining the status quo, in which the balance of power at the time they are enacted is fixed through quantitative and qualitative restrictions

on military power and the manner in which it is used. Where there is a high degree of uncertainty and instability regarding the prospects for the future balance of power among the major powers, and where intense competition is taking place over its maintenance and revision, there will be little incentive for the major powers to accept institutional restrictions on their nuclear weapons and policies.

In addition, changes in the balance of power have shaken the existing institutional foundations for nuclear arms control and non-proliferation, which were established under the bipolar structure of the Cold War era and maintained under US leadership during the unipolar moment after the end of the Cold War. The current US retreat from US-Russian nuclear arms control is partly due to the great power competition with China, which has rapidly modernized its military forces, including nuclear weapons. In the meantime, Russia has not concealed its reluctance to further reduce its nuclear arsenal, looking ahead to competition with the United States over spheres of influence and seeking to maintain its status as a nuclear superpower.

The passive attitudes of nuclear-weapon states toward nuclear arms control have also negatively affected the NPT regime. Despite the highly discriminative nature of the NPT regime, which divides the international community into five nuclear-weapon states and other non-nuclear-weapon states and which prohibits the acquisition of nuclear weapons by only the latter, it has achieved near-universality. This is partly because the “three pillars of the NPT” – nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and nuclear disarmament – are incorporated into the NPT regime to alleviate this discriminative nature. In particular, non-nuclear-weapon states emphasize the importance of nuclear disarmament. Their strong frustration with the impasse on this issue made many non-nuclear-weapon states and civil society decide to establish the TPNW in order to create a norm for the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, even though nuclear-armed states and their allies were highly unlikely to participate.

Given their absence, the TPNW would not be an alternative to the NPT as a framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, at least in the short and medium term. Nor can the

collapse of the NPT be expected for the time being. Once an international regime has been established, it has been argued that, even if the distribution of power and the structure of interests among the participating countries were to change, it would not be easily terminated because significant changes or termination impose a heavy burden on the participating countries; the legitimacy of regimes and the practice of adherence have been established through the acceptance of principles, norms and rules by the participating countries, and constraints such as the cost and criticism of deviant behavior would increase. However, it cannot be ruled out that the collapse of one of the “three pillars of the NPT” may weaken the cohesiveness and legitimacy of the NPT regime, and that actions that violate the principles, norms and rules of the NPT regime will increase in future using this as a pretext or as a result of a deterioration in the security environment.

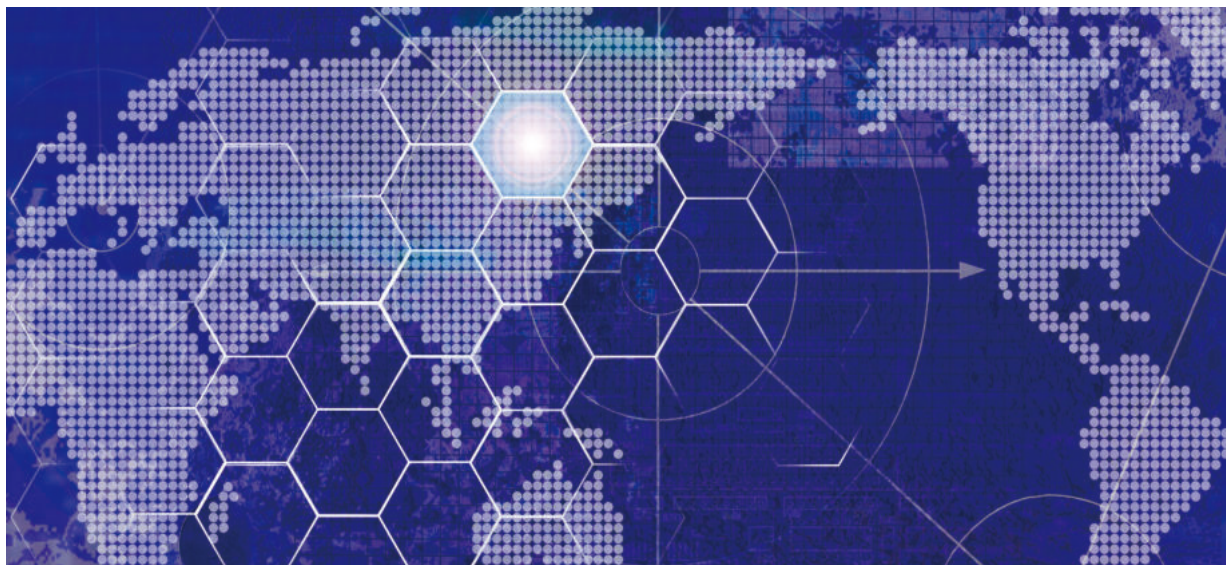
Northeast Asia is the region with the greatest degree of instability and uncertainty surrounding nuclear issues, placing Japan at a critical strategic crossroads. The touchstone will be Japan’s policy planning on deterrence

as well as disarmament and non-proliferation in the “post-INF Treaty period.” While Japan and the United States do not possess land-based intermediate-range missiles, North Korea and China have acquired hundreds of such missiles respectively and enhanced them both quantitatively and qualitatively, posing potential and tangible threats to Japan’s security. In addition, China’s anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capability – in which intermediate-range missiles play an important role – has also been strengthened, eroding the superiority of the Japan-US alliance at the regional level. The Japan-US alliance needs to strengthen its deterrence capabilities, and careful and urgent consideration must be given to whether ground-launched intermediate-range missiles could be an option, what their advantages and challenges are, and whether there are alternatives, taking into account the situation after the demise of the INF Treaty.

At the same time, since Northeast Asia is the region where the world’s most intense great power/geopolitical rivalry is foreseen and the development of nuclear weapons and various missile forces, including ground-

launched intermediate-range missiles, is inextricably involved, Japan should contemplate how to develop arms control and non-proliferation measures in order to control and mitigate the negative impacts that nuclear weapons and missiles and their counter-measures may have on regional stability and security, with the same priority as policies on deterrence and counter-measures. Constructing a multilateral framework for countries with asymmetric and diverse capabilities and interests across a wide range of issues presents a conundrum that will take a considerable amount of time to resolve. However, arms control and non-proliferation of intermediate-range missiles in the post-INF Treaty period could indicate the way forward for a new/renewed paradigm of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is therefore an important policy issue that Japan must actively address. ■

Battles over Techno-hegemony: Japan's Course



(Photo AFLO)

With attention focused on advanced technologies in the context of international relations and international security, battles over techno-hegemony have surfaced. The most prominent form of technological competition is the race for simple technological advantage. First, each country considers its technological capabilities to be directly linked to its own security interests and, in a more straightforward manner, views them as sources of hard power and pursues relative technological superiority. Each country expects and/or worries about the disruptive innovations that introduce cutting-edge technologies as game changers in the military domain.

Second, the technological capabilities of a nation do not determine only the superiority or inferiority of its military power. Technology is also used as a diplomatic tool. Some countries can impose constraints on access to critical technology, a choke point for products, and force other countries to make concessions. The internationalization of the value chain and the deepening of interdependence make this kind of statecraft possible. This phenomenon can be called “weaponized interdependence.” China’s pursuit of domestic production of semiconductors is aimed at reducing its dependence on the United States, which has established

a dominant position in global semiconductor production. Third, it has been pointed out that advanced technology combined with artificial intelligence (AI) may be used to support the regimes of authoritarian states. It has been pointed out that voice recognition technology and automatic translation technology equipped with deep learning technology are used to manipulate public opinion, and biometric technologies such as facial recognition technology is used to monitor and suppress people. In addition, it has been noted that these technologies are exported and used abroad, often by authoritarian regimes, to shape public opinion and monitor the public. Advanced technologies backed by the current information technology enables large-scale and rapid circulation of information, while strengthening the control of governments over peoples. It may be said that information and communication technology has played a role in spreading the norm of liberal democracy while proliferating and strengthening authoritarian political models. In the midst of this, competition has begun for technology as a source of soft power and/or sharp power.

Against this backdrop, in the midst of competition for technological superiority, governments are scrambling to engage in research and development (R&D) to produce technological innovation. For example, the essence of AI innovation, as typified by deep learning, lies in foundational technologies, advanced human resources, and good-quality data. Key foundational technologies include computing, algorithms, semiconductors that enable high-performance information processing, and advanced information technologies. Countries are competing for these technologies, talent, and quality data. Moreover, from basic research to social implementation, the boundaries between the military and civilian sectors have become increasingly blurred. In the past, technology development and application were focused on spin-off, the diversion of military technology to civilian industries, and spin-on, the diversion of civilian technology to military use. At present, however, “spin-around” and “civil-military fusion” are being pursued, transcending the boundaries between the military and civilian sectors. It is well known that many advanced technologies have dual-use purposes.

US President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13859 announcing “the American AI Initiative” – the US national strategy on AI – on February 11, 2019. Priority was given to R&D in AI for the purpose of maintaining US leadership in the AI field. In addition, the Defense Innovation Unit (DIUx) of the US Department of Defense (DOD) is making efforts to strengthen cooperation with private high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is continuing its efforts to support R&D by civilian institutions, including foreign universities.

China focuses its attention on fostering high-tech industries, as seen in its “Made in China 2025” plan announced in 2015. Moreover, China’s military R&D appears to be moving from “military-civilian integration” to “military-civilian fusion,” deepening cooperation with the civilian sector. Although the prospects for the Shanghai Stock Exchange’s STAR Market, opened in July 2019, are unclear, the new market does show Beijing’s intention to support high-tech unicorns in the semiconductor material and AI sectors in which it has encouraged domestic production.

In addition, in order to promote open innovation, as exemplified by international joint R&D projects, competition is taking place in the hiring of world-class human resources. In China, high-tech workers from Silicon Valley called *hai-gui* have made great contributions to upgrading China’s advanced technologies. As described above, the flexibility of technology R&D frameworks, the globalization of value chains, and the mobility of highly skilled human resources are advancing, and international interdependence over technology is deepening.

On the other hand, there is a movement to promote decoupling at the technological level. This entails severing technological interconnections to maintain technological superiority. In the US, there is growing concern that China is acquiring advanced US technology through legal and illegal means, such as forced technology transfer, industrial espionage, cyber espionage, joint R&D, personnel exchanges, academic exchanges, and corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&A). The FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed by President Trump in August 2018, included a ban on government agency

procurement of products from five Chinese companies. The Chinese companies targeted by the NDAA were telecommunications equipment giants, surveillance camera manufacturers, and telecommunications equipment manufacturers, all of which are high-tech companies. Overwhelming support for the NDAA in both the Senate and the House indicated that decoupling from China in terms of advanced technology was widely supported in Washington.

One notable tool for decoupling at the technology level is export controls. On November 2018, the US Department of Commerce (DOC) welcomed public comments on the introduction of export controls for emerging technologies. The emerging technologies discussed included biotechnologies, such as synthetic biology and genomic engineering; AI and machine learning, such as deep learning and speech processing; quantum technologies, such as quantum encryption and quantum computing; and advanced surveillance technologies, such as faceprint and voiceprint technologies. All are cutting-edge technologies based on advanced information and communication technology. Furthermore, the US

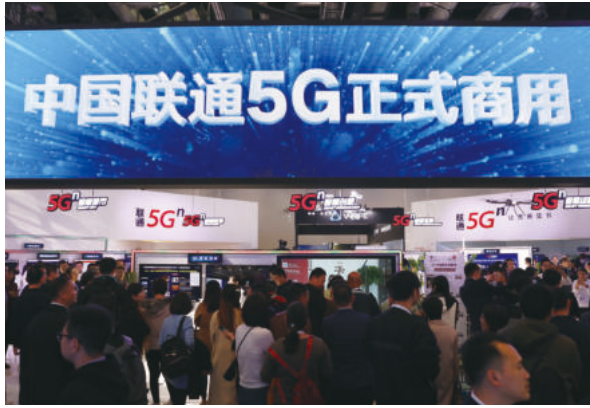
government added major Chinese telecom companies and their affiliates in May and August of this year, as well as Chinese AI-related companies in October, to the list of entities subject to its export controls. As a result of these measures, it has become clear that the scope of US export controls toward China has expanded beyond the conventional aerospace and defense sector to include AI and information and communication technologies.

The control of highly skilled personnel is also attracting attention as a security issue. This is because highly skilled personnel are a key element for technological innovation that creates advanced technologies. Against the backdrop of concerns over the outflow of advanced technologies and highly skilled human resources through foreign direct investment (FDI) and M&A, countries are undertaking to strengthen regulations on inward direct investment for security reasons. The reform of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), authorized under the US Foreign Investment Risk Assessment Modernization Act (FIRRMA), is a typical example. Behind these efforts is the reality that R&D on advanced technologies is

currently being led by the private sector. While there is a need for enormous funds to be obtained from outside for today's R&D, there is also a security requirement to prevent technology outflow through participation in corporate management. These efforts also aim to prevent high-tech startups from being acquired by foreign entities. Furthermore, measures to prevent technology transfers through highly skilled human resources have become evident even as restrictions on entry visas have been tightened. It has recently become clear that Chinese engineers and researchers are severely restricted from entering the US. In this way, policies for technological superiority are intricately intertwined with the opposing vectors of open innovation (interdependence) and decoupling (cutoff).

Another dimension of the battles over techno-hegemony is related to the international order and institutions relevant to technology. The international order and institutions governing technology shape how international technology is developed, used, transferred and managed, and affect the power and interests of individual countries. Therefore, countries are striving to mold the international order

governing technology in line with their own national interests. The Chinese government, for example, has launched the concept of the Digital Silk Road and will focus on developing and expanding the standardization process for the fifth-generation mobile communications system (5G). The leadership of Chinese companies, which are promoting the standardization of 5G on a global scale, is expected to complement the formation of the Digital Silk Road. In the US, in particular, there is growing concern that China will set the international standard for 5G. Cost-competitive Chinese companies will also play active roles in the international market for 5G base stations. Not only emerging Asian and African countries but also advanced European countries may accept 5G base stations from Chinese companies. There is no international consensus on the technological and security implications of China's 5G. Thus, China is focusing on the formation of the Digital Silk Road through the expansion of the 5G standard process and the overseas installation of 5G base stations. The formation of the Digital Silk Road, backed by advanced information and communication technology, will complement China's "Belt and Road" initiative and contribute to the



China Unicom, one of the three major Chinese telecom operators, announces the launch of a 5G service for the public in 50 cities, October 2019. (Photo Imaginechina/AFLO)

The international order and institutions governing technology reflect not only the economic and security interests but also the values and norms of each country. International institutional arrangements are currently being explored in various areas such as cybersecurity, data protection, antitrust, and taxes. For example, the flow of digital data is understood to be directly linked to the economic and security interests of individual countries, and efforts are underway to create an international institution to govern the flow of digital data. The EU established the “General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)” to protect data from a privacy perspective, while in China a domestic law (Cybersecurity Law) was enacted to allow government access to data that could affect national security, the economy, and the lives of the people. The former treats the right

to individual privacy as a fundamental value of society, while the latter positions it as a secondary consideration to social stability. In addition, there is a conflict between those who reject government control and those who place importance on the principle of national sovereignty in the governance of the Internet. The former is advocated by Western countries, while the latter is supported by China and developing countries (G77). In this way, attempts are being made to establish an international order for the management of data flow and Internet governance that have led to conflicts of norms and values concerning digital governance.

Thus, when it comes to international relations concerning technology, there are two different dimensions of competition for techno-hegemony. One is the dimension of technological supremacy, and the other is the dimension of the international order governing technology. However, these dimensions are not mutually exclusive. The powers, interests, and norms surrounding technology in the international community define the international order governing technology. At the same time, the international order and institutions

governing technology influence the power, interests, and norms surrounding technology in each country. Under these circumstances, countries are competing fiercely for techno-hegemony.

Japan now faces a difficult challenge. While Japan has its eyes on China, a large market, it values its alliance with the US as the core of its security policy. At present, however, China's political, economic, and ideological presence in the international community is increasing, while the influence of the United States is declining in relative terms. In addition, some European countries have not determined how to distance themselves from China over issues such as 5G. Countries in Asia and Oceania are also increasing their presence in the international community, and do not always maintain solidarity on these issues. While Australia and New Zealand, which are eyeing the 5G era, vowed to block Chinese participation in 2018, Papua New Guinea authorized Chinese companies to build domestic Internet cables. Many countries in Asia and Africa have adopted China's low-cost, high-performance telecommunications system.

Under these circumstances, attention has been focused on Japan's stance. Industry now has a growing interest in digital transformation (DX). The digital society enabled by advanced information and communication technology is a world where everything is connected online. Japan has strength in sensors, machine tools and robotics, which are indispensable for the Internet of Things (IOT). Japan needs to show its presence in the digital society through technological innovation. Meanwhile, in 2018 the Japanese government changed its operational policy regarding government procurement of telecommunications equipment, and in 2019 it requested private companies and organizations in charge of 14 critical infrastructure fields to refrain from procuring telecommunications equipment that might cause information leakage. It is reported that Japan's review of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law is intended to strengthen regulations on inward FDI for security reasons. Although these measures did not directly refer to any particular country or company, it is generally understood that they are *de facto* measures to exclude Chinese companies. Japan's moves appear to align with those of the US, which has been decoupling

from China in terms of technology. However, Japan's increasing inclination toward technological decoupling from China could also mean a weakening of its technological cooperation with China. There is also a risk that Japan's technological innovation will slow down.

The international order reflects not only the power and interests of each country but also its values and norms. International competition for technological hegemony is both a race for technological superiority and a race to establish the international order governing technology. Japan will have to decide whether to build a value chain system exclusively with members of the liberal international order (LIO) or continue to cooperate and compromise with countries that aspire to other models of international order. In the world of advanced technology, Japan's position in the LIO is being watched. ■

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Hiroshi WATANABE President, Institute for International Monetary Affairs
Shunji YANAI Judge, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

Research Projects

For the overviews of ongoing projects and research outcomes (in Japanese), see our website.

The Trump Administration' s Foreign Policy and Japan-US Relations

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_A-subproj_I_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_US/index.php

China' s Foreign Policy and Other Countries' China Policies

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_A-subproj_II_summary.pdf

The Korean Peninsula in an 'Age of Uncertainty' and Japan' s Foreign / Security Policy

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_B-subproj_II_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_Korean_Peninsula/

Rule of Law in the Indo-Pacific: Japan' s Foreign Policy for Enhancing Global Public Goods

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_D_summary.pdf

Post-Putin Russia

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_B-subproj_III_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_Russia/

Europe in Turbulence

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_A-subproj_III_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_Europe/

Global Risk Studies Group (Middle East & Migration Studies)

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_C-subproj_II_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_Global_Risk/index.php

World Economy

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_C-subproj_I_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/H30_World_Economy/

Bottom-up Review (Security Research)

- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research_pj/h29-31/h29-31_project_B-subproj_I_summary.pdf
- http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/policy_recommendations/2018/181010jpn-security_policy_recommendations.pdf

Center for Disarmament, Sciences and Technology (CDAST)

- <http://www.cpdnp.jp/>

