

Geopolitics in 2022

By Naoyuki Haraoka

Geopolitics determines the prospects for the world economy. The US-China decoupling has developed into a conflict between democracy and authoritarianism, and consequently global supply chains now face a risk of disruption. However, it is meanwhile true that the economy also seriously impacts geopolitics. The expansion of inequalities provokes social divides among many countries and this social incoherence can destabilize a country's politics and eventually lead to a global geopolitical crisis. In our world today, politics and the economy are closely interconnected and so we need to understand political economy in addressing any policy issue. We look at these issues here in our cover story in such a holistic manner.

We start with an interview with Prof. Adam Tooze, a distinguished historian at Columbia University, who says capitalism has been at a turning point since the financial crisis in 2008 and this trend, exacerbated by the pandemic, is a source of the geopolitical crisis today. Democracy and capitalism are the locomotives of peace and prosperity, but when the basis of capitalism is eroded by widening inequalities, democracy faces a challenge. Today's geopolitical challenges can be seen in this context. They are of a structural nature, and should thus be analyzed from a long-term perspective, which historians are well placed to do.

Prof. Yasushi Watanabe, an expert on American

politics and society, takes a critical look at democracy in the United States in an interview with *Japan SPOTLIGHT*, while Dr. Sota Kato, one of our Editorial Committee members, provides material on political trends in developed nations. On the arguments surrounding the advantages and disadvantages of democracy and authoritarianism, Prof. Masaaki Higashijima's article stresses the utility of democracy even during the pandemic, which authoritarian regimes have reputedly dealt with better than democratic systems.

We have highlights of specific geopolitical challenges, such as Taiwan being under the threat of war against China discussed by Dr. Yasuhiro Matsuda, and two hot topics in the US – cybersecurity and Afghanistan – are introduced by Mr. Robert Shields and Mr. Peter E. Paraschos respectively. On the US-China “cold war”, Prof. Shin Chang's article suggests that US sanctions against Chinese companies would not work well under globalization, as the two nations' economic interdependency could not be decoupled by any artificial measures. Prof. Toshifumi Kokubun, meanwhile, emphasizes in his article that such a “cold war” could be favorable for economic security for businesses, as continued efforts for sophisticated rule-making on high-technology products would work well in avoiding a hot war.

(Brief Introductions)**COVER STORY 1**

Interview with Adam Tooze, Kathryn & Shelby Cullom Davis
Professor of History, Department of History, Columbia
University

An Historian's Views on Present Geopolitics & Geoeconomics

By *Japan SPOTLIGHT*

Rule-making efforts for a more cohesive global regime would be most useful in resolving the conflict between democratic systems and authoritarian regimes from a long-term perspective.

COVER STORY 2

Interview with Dr. Yasushi Watanabe, Professor of the Faculty of
Environment & Information Studies (Shonan Fujisawa), Keio
University

What Is Caucasian Nationalism, a Key Feature of American Politics?

By *Japan SPOTLIGHT*

Millennials could save the world from rising nationalism in due course. They understand better the merits of globalization than any older generation.

COVER STORY 3

Post-Coronavirus Populism & Japanese Politics (Part 1)

By Sota Kato

Any political movement creating its own “enemies” and attacking them with emotion will not easily disappear these days, and Japan is no exception. His argument continues in the next issue.

COVER STORY 4

Does Democracy Need Renewal? Socio-Economic Consequences of Democratic Politics

By Masaaki Higashijima

Though democracy is an “unfinished revolution” in need of incessant renewal, it has led us to a more desirable society and economy.

COVER STORY 5

Will a Taiwan Emergency Happen? Analyzing the Challenges Facing China

By Yasuhiro Matsuda

The possibility of a Taiwan-China war is slim, but we are in the midst of long-term strategic competition between the US and China. If we do not respond properly, tragedy awaits.



COVER STORY 6

Cybersecurity in the Early Days of the Biden Administration

By Robert Shields

It is not known whether the Biden administration's cybersecurity policies will be successful or not. But as the cyber threat landscape continuously evolves, Biden must quickly adapt his policy approaches to address it.

COVER STORY 7

Afghanistan: Endless Chaos & the Threat to Global Order

By Peter E. Paraschos

A significant degree of pessimism attaches to the general outlook for the stability of Afghanistan, as the Taliban's ability to stabilize the country is viewed with skepticism.

COVER STORY 8

High-Tech Industrialization of the Chinese Manufacturing Industry & the Future Direction of the US-China Cold War

By Shin Chang

An economically interdependent relationship has the power to deter military conflict, and thus it is expected that the US-China "cold war" will not lead to a military conflict in the short term.

COVER STORY 9

Management that Embodies Sophisticated Rules & Democracy as Keys to Economic Security

By Toshifumi Kokubun

It is necessary for Japanese businesses to earn profits in prolonging the US-China "cold war" by developing sophisticated rules on competition between democratic systems and authoritarian regimes.

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