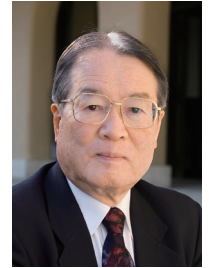


Japan's Foreign Diplomacy & Security Strategy, & Its External Economic Strategy in Relation to the Taiwan Crisis



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Conflicts & the International Order

The peace and security of international society is maintained by order based on international law. In regard to such international law, in order to prevent the recurrence of a global-scale war, after World War I the League of Nations Convention was concluded and the League of Nations (LON) established. However, since the LON Convention had not formulated effective sanction measures against countries that violated the Convention and waged war, it is thought that Adolf Hitler found loopholes in it and was emboldened to dissolve Czechoslovakia and proceed with his invasion of Poland, the latter step sparking World War II.

The Charter of the United Nations, concluded after WWII, focused on compensating for this defect in the LON Charter and established necessary measures based on the Resolutions of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in regard to acts that ran the risk of disturbing the maintenance of the peace and security of international society. However, in these UNSC Resolutions, the right to veto by permanent member countries was recognized. In his recent invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin, aware that sanctions based on the UN Charter do not have efficacy, determined to use force. This defect in international law for the purpose of maintaining the peace and security of international society was clarified also in the Soviet Union's military invasion of many countries in Eastern Europe during the Cold War period, and this loophole was revealed once again in the Ukraine war.

There was an interval of 39 years between the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean War, and one of 57 years between the Crimean War and World War I, totaling 96 years. Thereafter, there were 21 years between WWI and WWII, and 77 years between WWII and the current Ukraine war, giving a total of 98 years. As shown in both these examples, a war with the characteristic of demarcating global order occurs around once every 100 years, centered on Europe.

In Europe, there is a growing feeling of concern about the risk that the Ukraine conflict could develop into a world war. Reform of the UNSC is not progressing, and as the probability of the use of nuclear weapons increases, this risk is becoming a more realistic possibility. From around the time when one year had passed since the start of the Ukraine war, with this growing sense of risk, the public desire for the reopening of peace negotiations has been increasingly expressed. Moreover, recently in the United States, in regard to its support for Ukraine, since the US has become embroiled in

disastrous wars in the past such as the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War, there have been concerns that it might again fall into the same kind of situation in Ukraine. Meanwhile, there are also concerns that, although US support for Ukraine might be understandable, the realities of the US economy suggest that financial reconstruction should be carried out instead, and there should be more emphasis on national interests such as preventing the flow of immigration. In this regard, victory in the Ukraine war, along with responses to the Taiwan crisis, would be taken as an indication of the US commitment to its allies; but at the same time many people object to this stance, holding the view that efforts to maintain international order through strong engagement by the US simply match US national interests.

In any event, in the present war, there are fundamental discrepancies in the stances of Russia and Ukraine in talks aimed at a ceasefire. Even if the time comes for a reopening of ceasefire talks, it will be the state that dominates militarily that will have the advantage in such talks, and so both Ukraine and Russia feel they must first win the war to be in the superior position. This is the background to whether the fighting continues or even worsens in intensity.

Maintaining International Order by Rule of Law

The Cold War began after WWII, around 1947, and continued for almost half a century until it came to an end in 1990-1991. For about 15 years after the end of the East-West Cold War, a US-led unipolar world continued. However, from 2006 to 2008, this unipolarity started to change, in particular due to situations in the Middle East. During this time, Russia continued to experience suffering in its attempts to rebuild the state post-Cold War, but brought two Chechnya wars to an end in about 2009 and slowly regained its position as a major nation. In 2010, China overtook Japan to become the No. 2 global economy, and since then its dramatic progress and national ambitions have come to be seen as a threat to the US.

In 2014, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and China's incursions into the South China Sea occurred at the same time, and since this time there has been a strategic battle between the US and China/Russia, focusing on differing values and national systems. Although the US, which emphasizes democratic values, along with its allies and friendly nations comprise slightly less than half the world's countries, the countries of the global south, comprising China and Russia along with emerging and developing economies,

with their authoritarian or hegemonic regimes, now make up slightly more than half of the world's countries. The battle between these two groups of nations has been brought into the Ukraine conflict, and their strategic confrontation has become even more obvious. Although the Ukraine war has not yet become a global conflict, it is steadily developing the character of a proxy war in the fight between these two groups.

At the same time, no matter what happens in Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific region is facing another crisis, namely the realization of the Taiwan crisis scenario. If a war is sparked by China's attempt to reunite with Taiwan, it would not only have historical significance but would also bring the major powers to a crossroads, possibly resulting in the end of the battle between them. In any case, whether it be the Ukraine war or the Taiwan crisis, power-based domination spreads confusion and does not alter the fact that a world will arise in which international order does not hold.

For us to maintain an international order that strictly follows the rule of law, we should reconfirm that this is the key to bringing peace and stability to international society.¹ In a society based on the rule of law, the values of freedom and democracy are the themes that should be most emphasized, but it is not possible for such values to become the standard for building an international order.

Meanwhile, in countries that implement control based on authoritarianism or despotism, there is disgust at seeing freedom and democracy used as justifications for conducting interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that since the Cold War era these countries have received some kind of support from Russia or China, while in contrast they have had no support at all from countries in the West. A certain African diplomat is said to have remarked at the UN, "If Ukraine was an African country, I wonder if there would have been this level of support from countries in the West." After the invasion of Ukraine, in the implementation of the UNSC Resolution to condemn Russia, 52 countries of the world did not agree, including 26 of the African countries, about half of them (141 countries agreed).

In fact, from the second half of the 2010s on, there has been a gradual reduction in the number of countries with democratic systems, and it is no exaggeration to say that democratic systems are facing a crisis.² The US has held two democracy summits, inviting more than 100 global leaders to promote the importance of democracy.³ But simply claiming the importance of democracy does not by itself enable the building of international order.

Authoritarian and despotic countries such as China and Russia

exert pressure on other nations of the global south, criticize power-based changes in present conditions such as the Ukraine war and the development of nuclear missiles by North Korea, and do not agree with the UNSC Resolutions to impose sanctions. Furthermore, China and Russia, in order to continue the Ukraine conflict, provide mutual support, expand military access and infrastructure in the countries of the Middle East, the Gulf, Africa and Central and South America, and use political and economic intimidation and pressure against democratic countries. This is further increasing the instability of not only Ukraine but also the balance within various regions of the world. However, this is neither a new Cold War nor an increasingly multi-polarized world. Multinationalism based on the rule of law is a concept that expresses reality. With this multinationalism as a background, we must further develop the recovery of order based on the rule of law for international peace and prosperity.

For the time being, there is no sign of any country or organ that could take the lead in mediating ceasefire discussions for the Ukraine war. The UN, Turkey, NATO, etc. cannot fill this role. Looking at the Russia-China summit meeting that took place in March, even though its results may be unclear, there are now more countries that think China itself is a major nation that could influence Russia, and visits to China by Western leaders have started. From this viewpoint, we should pin our hopes on China and have it be a mediator. This could bring about a separation for the advanced Western-side countries (decoupling). Firming up the unity and cohesiveness of Western countries was the biggest topic of discussion at the Hiroshima Summit in May 2023 of the G7 advanced nations (including, apart from the members, seven participants from eight outreach countries and organizations that were also invited). However, although it may depend on the course of future battles, in the end it is likely that there will be no other method than having the US act as a mediator to resolve matters.

In any case, in addition to efforts by the G7, it is encouraging that countries that respect the rule of law, and cooperative relationships such as alliances and relationships based on security concerns, typified by NATO and the US-Japan and the US-Japan-South Korea relationships (and also by other groups such as the four-country QUAD group of the US, Japan, Australia, and India, and the 12U2 Group of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the US) are advancing. There should be greater emphasis on closely advancing these kinds of alliance relationships and relationships of like-minded countries as a whole.

Further, in regard to reform of the UNSC, while genuinely

accepting the necessity for this, there is a need to deepen discussions on concrete measures, including electing member countries from Africa and Central and South America. However, until a new composition of these types of international relationships can be constructed, for some time we must first safely overcome both the Ukraine war, which exerts a decisive influence on multinationalism, and a Taiwan emergency that might occur after that. We are living in a period when facing these issues is our historical destiny.

Rivalry Among Superpowers Provoked by Ukraine War

I would like to briefly touch on the impact the Ukraine war is having on relationships among major nations, without delving into details. While it is clear that the war was initiated by Putin, there are various perspectives and no consensus on the background and reasons behind it. Putin's true motives remain unclear, but some argue that, at the least, it is not Russia that is in the wrong and that instead the responsibility lies with the US, the European Union, and NATO.

To summarize the arguments mentioned in the introduction: (1) Putin harbors deep resentment akin to a delusion that the US conspired to bring down the Soviet Union during the Cold War, leaving Russia as just an ordinary major nation afterward, (2) Russia has a motive to overcome its one-sided territorial crisis perception, fueled by the expansion of NATO towards Russia's borders, leading to a sense of threat from the West, and (3) Russia's actions are based on a distorted historical perspective, suggesting that Ukraine is historically and ethnically under Russian dominion. In particular, it is a misconception that the cause of the Ukraine conflict can be attributed to the US; this is a delusion arising from Russia's anti-American worldview and historical perspective.

The outcome of the Ukraine war is unpredictable, but certain aspects are clear at the moment: 1) Major power relations have turned into a strategic confrontation between the US and China/Russia, with the war serving as a proxy conflict for this struggle. 2) Diplomatic relations between the US-Russia and the US-China have reached a state of near-rupture, with little meaningful dialogue taking place. 3) China attempted to persuade Russia to engage in peace negotiations, but Russia insisted that the US bears all responsibility and requested support and assistance from China, which China declined, citing the need to avoid becoming a target of economic

sanctions. 4) In other words, China finds itself in a dilemma where it does not wish to see Russia lose the Ukraine war, but also does not want to provide support that could lead to economic sanctions against itself, as Russia's defeat would allow the US to withdraw from Europe and potentially create a disadvantageous situation for China regarding the Taiwan issue. 5) In any event, the global-scale conflict situation, involving a mix of military and non-military aspects, is becoming increasingly intense.

If proceedings in the China-Russia summit held on March 20-21, 2023 took place as described above, both Chinese and Russian leaders seem to be solitary dictators without appropriate domestic advisors to offer sound counsel. It is also possible that China engaged in the summit merely to probe Russia's actual intentions. Some speculate that China might have pretended to recommend peace talks with Russia, knowing Russia's true intentions, in order to receive positive international recognition. This would raise questions about why a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson publicly stated that President Xi Jinping intended to promote peace talks with Russia from a fair standpoint. Considering the subsequent visits of European leaders to China after the China-Russia summit, one cannot entirely dismiss these speculations as incorrect.

Impact of Ukraine War

Returning to the course of the Ukraine war, it is natural that the US, with the cooperation of its European allies, is focusing on the conflict and seeking to bring victory to Ukraine. That is, one of the aims of the war is to lower Russia's military capability to the extent that it cannot invade neighboring European countries again. For China, it is desirable to exhaust the US as much as possible in the Ukraine war. China seeks to avoid becoming a common enemy of the US along with Russia and so opposes Russia's use of nuclear weapons, while also wanting to prevent Russia from losing the Ukraine war. Consequently, even though it is difficult for China to secure the sovereignty of Ukraine or the withdrawal of Russian forces, while it advocates for peace talks and seeks international empathy, including from developing countries, it also provides dual-use components that can be used in the private sector as well as militarily, semiconductors, major equipment, drones, and other generic goods to Russia, within the scope not subject to economic sanctions, sometimes via a third country. Simultaneously, China purchases large quantities of cheap oil and natural gas from Russia and finds profits by exporting a substantial amount of consumer

goods to Russia. As a result, it can be said that, regardless of the outcome of the Ukraine conflict, without its heavy dependence on China, Russia would now be unable to exist.

Meanwhile, the Ukraine war is seeing greater changes in combat dynamics and surrounding circumstances. Serious issues are growing, including domestic social unrest in areas such as Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus; tactical nuclear deployments by Russia in Belarus; grain export restrictions imposed by Russia on Ukraine; international crimes such as abuse of Ukrainians (including child abduction and mistreatment of prisoners); and attacks on Ukraine's nuclear and electricity facilities, and destruction of dam facilities. Particularly alarming is the tactical nuclear deployment in Belarus.

These escalating factors are triggering cautious responses from Western countries regarding ongoing support for Ukraine, expectations for the resumption of peace negotiations, concerns over Russia's inhumane and criminal acts, efforts for postwar reconstruction, and deep apprehensions about the potential use of nuclear weapons. In particular, as the likelihood of Russia's losing the war grows, the fear of nuclear weapon usage has intensified, leading to growing calls for the resumption of peace talks. However, at the same time this has also become a divisive factor among Western countries.

In any case, the international community must first achieve an end to the Ukraine war. Russia's intentions are strong, and as long as they remain a significant factor behind the conflict, bringing an end to the war will not be an easy task. Some believe that the outcome hinges on Putin's course of action, but the situation is not that straightforward. However, our efforts should be focused not only on ending the war and preventing a major European conflict, but also on reconstruction and advancing the process towards building stability for Europe's future. As a consequence of the Ukraine war, the world's weapon systems have rapidly developed, and Eastern and Central European countries, including Ukraine, have been stockpiling arms.

Furthermore, the economic conditions in these countries are undergoing immense harm due to such factors as the damage wrought by the war, an influx of refugees, and increased military spending. Meanwhile, state relations in Europe are showing signs of complexity and if there is reduced international involvement, the threshold for the use of force may be lowered, making the concentrated stockpiling of military assets and weapons in itself a potential destabilizing factor that needs to be carefully considered. We must try to ensure that such large-scale wars do not recur in

Europe, and achieve conclusions to this end.

Implications of Taiwan Crisis Scenarios

The next concern is the potential crisis surrounding Taiwan and scenarios that may lead to it. If China's attempts to reunify with Taiwan involve the use of force, the consequences would undoubtedly have a profound impact on the international order on a level far surpassing that of the Ukraine war. If China were to lose, it could result in the collapse of both the Chinese Communist Party system and the Xi regime simultaneously. If China nevertheless does not give up on this goal, the question becomes how it plans to achieve it. China would certainly want to avoid disruptions to its economy during any actions related to reunification with Taiwan. China cannot sustain a prolonged operation like the Ukraine war, so it would likely seek a short-term decisive conflict within the limits of its economy to avoid economic sanctions.

At the same time, if the US were to lose, the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region would undergo a significant shift, and the US sphere of influence would retreat to the Second Island Chain in the east, which includes Hawaii and Guam. The US Indo-Pacific strategy would collapse, and not only the regional but also the global credibility of US commitments would be undermined. This would pose a serious threat to the southwest region for Japan, and a unipolar world led by China might emerge.

The most serious implication of a Taiwan crisis is that it would not be a proxy war in the way that the Ukraine conflict can be considered a proxy war between the US and Russia, but rather a full-scale war between the US and China, with the high possibility of Russia supporting China and providing military power in the Far East. This means that a war involving three major global powers – the US, China, and Russia – would occur in the East Asian region including the Far East, with Taiwan at the center. In such a scenario, as a US ally Japan would need to provide full support and cooperation for the activities undertaken by the US, or it would be challenging for Japan and the US to achieve a favorable outcome in the Taiwan crisis.⁴

Furthermore, even if the war ultimately ended in a short decisive battle, the years-long preparatory period leading up to that moment could be an unprecedented period of intense hybrid warfare, encompassing information warfare, cyber warfare, space warfare, cognitive warfare, and the utilization of information technology and new cutting-edge technologies. If the lessons from the Ukraine war were utilized to the maximum, the importance of combat capability

and the industrial capacity to support it would no doubt be fully recognized.⁵ The conflict would assume a three-dimensional nature, maximizing the use of land, sea, and air areas. The key factor determining success could well be the ability to conduct complex integrated operations, which would necessitate advanced command and communication capabilities. The results of the conflict would have a significant impact not only on the Indo-Pacific region but also on a wide range of national state relations, diplomatic relations, and the economic development of countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, island regions, and Central and South America.

Considering the above, the ongoing Ukraine war and a potential Taiwan crisis in the future could lead to situations that reshape the course of modern human history. I would like to stress that, in the midst of this potentially major transformative period, this article offers a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the diverse perspectives of experts in numerous fields in order to discover what path we should take and the optimum means of doing so.

References

1. On Jan. 12, 2023, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi hosted a ministerial-level debate on the rule of law at the UNSC (Japan held the presidency). Representatives from 77 countries, including UN Secretary-General António Guterres, participated. In the debate, Hayashi called for solidarity in upholding the rule of law.
2. According to the annual report released by Swedish research institute V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) in March 2023, for the year 2022: a) 32 countries with liberal democratic systems accounted for a population of 1 billion people (13%), and b) 58 countries with democratic systems that have electoral mechanisms accounted for a population of 1.3 billion people (16%) – a total of 90 countries with either liberal democratic or democratic systems with electoral mechanisms accounting for a total population of 2.3 billion people (total: 29%); c) 33 countries have autocratic systems with a population of 2.2 billion people (28%), while d) 56 countries have autocratic systems with electoral mechanisms, with a population of 3.5 billion people (44%) – a total of 89 countries with autocratic systems (representing a total population of 5.7 billion people, 72%), showing an increase in the number of countries with autocratic systems.
3. The Democracy Summit was one of President Joe Biden's election pledges. The first summit was held on Dec. 9-10, 2021, while the second summit took place on March 29-30, 2023, both online. Approximately 110 countries participated in the first summit, and about 120 countries participated in the second. Biden's Democracy Summit Declaration presented during the second summit received support from 73 countries (around 60%). While the US and European countries emphasized the importance of democratic outcomes, there were divisions within the region of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Although the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia were invited to the summit, other countries such as Thailand and Singapore were not. Furthermore, there were discrepancies between the views of the global south countries and the summit's objectives, with the president of Indonesia, for example, expressing concerns that democracy should not be used as a tool of containment.
4. In *The Real China Hands: What Washington Can Learn from its Asian Allies* by Michael Green, chief executive officer at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, the author points out that Japan's options in response to the deteriorating power balance with China are as follows: a) aligning with the emerging power dynamics, b) strengthening national capabilities in response to threats, and c) enhancing alliance relationships. Green suggests that former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's choice of the third option resulted in retaining significant influence in Japan's policies towards China. This observation was made on Nov. 3, 2022, on the website of the US Studies Centre.
5. During his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Roger Zakheim, Washington director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, highlighted some lessons from the Ukraine war, such as a) that combat force capability remains crucial, and b) that industrial capacity could become a vulnerability for the US. This testimony took place on Feb. 15, 2023, as part of discussions on "Global Security Challenges and Strategies".

Article translated from the original Japanese by Jillian Yorke. **JS**

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