

"Japan's decisions at history's turning point"
Friday, 13 January, 2023
KISHIDA Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan

0. Introduction

Dr. Kent Calder, Director of the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to address you today. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to Dean Steinberg and Dr. Calder for their tremendous contributions thus far to the development of Japan-U.S. relations. I am greatly honored to be invited to speak at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, which has a long tradition of academic excellence. Indeed, I am truly moved to be standing here on this podium.

The late Edwin Reischauer, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan and the namesake of the Institute of East Asian Studies, where the Japan studies program is based, was appointed to Japan in 1961. From the time of his appointment, Ambassador Reischauer kept close contacts with various Japanese political and business leaders, including the late Prime Minister IKEDA Hayato. Ambassador Reischauer was the source of inspiration for numerous individuals in the Japanese political and business circles. It is therefore humbling for me to be speaking in front of all of you at SAIS, where there is a Center dedicated to the late Ambassador.

In that year of 1961, I was just a four-year old child. Two years later, our family embarked on a new life in New York City where we lived for the next several years. At that time, I could never have foreseen that I would be giving a speech six decades later as Japan's Prime Minister in the United States at this very academic institute, where the legacy of Dr. Reischauer is honored. Back then, no one imagined that so many American people would be enjoying sushi and karaoke inside the Beltway. On top of that, I couldn't imagine a day when people across the United States would be excited about Japanese anime and manga, and, what's more, Japanese baseball players. Of course, let's not forget about sake. Personally speaking, I have to say this is what matters to me most. I bet Dr. Reischauer would be surprised to see what is taking place here on the other side of the Pacific.

1. Three Key Points

Now, I have three key messages to deliver to you in my speech today.

First, the international community is at a historic turning point. The free, open, and stable international order that we have dedicated ourselves to upholding is now in grave danger.

Second, Japan is resolved to proactively create peace and prosperity and a free and open order worldwide.

Third, in the course of undertaking such efforts, Japan and the United States, as the most important ally and closest of friends, need to engage in further strengthening our bond.

I am convinced that our bilateral cooperation will certainly bring about a better future for coming generations.

2. My Two Major Decisions in 2022

In 2022, I made two major decisions in Japan's foreign and security policy.

One is the shift in our policy toward Russia in response to its aggression against Ukraine. Another is the shift in Japan's postwar security policy by formulating the three key documents at the end of last year: the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program. They were both very heavy decisions with consequential impacts on the future of Japan and the world. I believe that these decisions were right for our nation and beyond around the globe.

(1) Japan's Decisions following Russia's Aggression against Ukraine

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has marked the complete end of the post-Cold War world. It has come to light that globalization and interdependence alone cannot serve as a guarantor for peace and development across the globe.

Witnessing this aggression, I thought to myself:

This is a moment that will transform history.

This is a critical moment, in fact, a moment of truth for Japan.

The future of the international community rests on how we respond to this aggression.

If we let this unilateral change of the status quo by force go unchallenged, it will happen elsewhere in the world, including Asia.

It is Japan that must rise to this challenge to take action to defend our freedom and democracy.

With this in mind, Japan decided to make a major shift in our existing policy toward Russia and then put in place strict sanctions against Russia. We were also among the first in providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Our nation is the sole representative of Asia in the G7. Japan's participation in the measures against Russia transformed the fight against Russia's aggression against Ukraine from a Trans-Atlantic one to a global one. In this sense, it was a consequential decision with significance for the international community in my view.

(2) Japan's Decisions for a Major Shift in Our Security Policy

The major transformation in Japan's security policy, including the formulation of the three new documents such as the National Security Strategy and the other key defense documents at the end of last year, is also guided by the same worldview. Due to the ongoing major shift in the balance of power across the globe, nations are now once again competing fiercely, and the world is now entering an era where we are witnessing a complex intertwining of cooperation and division.

The year 2022 marked the 70th anniversary of the entry into force of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1952. Today, both Japan and the United States are facing a severe and complex security environment as never before in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific since the end of WWII. In addition to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we are observing an increasingly clear trend in countries and regions around Japan: reinforcement of nuclear and missile capabilities, rapid acceleration of military buildups, and attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force.

I am serving as the Prime Minister at this juncture of history's turning point and amidst a national crisis for Japan. I have a mission to firmly defend our nation and the Japanese people. With this determination, and for the sake of reinforcing our diplomatic capabilities to ensure international peace and security, I made the decision to transform our postwar security policy in order to first bolster our own foundation by implementing the following:

- making the level of our budget, for both the fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities and complementary initiatives, reach 2% of the current GDP,
- possessing counterstrike capabilities,
- improving response capabilities in the field of cybersecurity and

- stepping up our defense posture in the Southwest region of Japan

This is a clear testament to Japan's strong resolve vis-a-vis the United States and the rest of the global community. In particular, this decision will also bring benefits to the security of the entire Indo-Pacific region, including Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean.

I am convinced that this decision represents one of the most historically critical milestones for strengthening the alliance, following such precedents as the conclusion of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty by Prime Minister YOSHIDA Shigeru, the revision of the Treaty by Prime Minister KISHI Nobusuke, and the Legislation for Peace and Security by Prime Minister ABE Shinzo.

As you are all aware, Japan's postwar status of a peace loving nation has not changed in the slightest. The values of freedom and democracy are ingrained into the identity of the Japanese people. Our foreign policy also remains unchanged; we strive to prosper not at the expense of other countries, but together with them. Japan will continue to be a "model citizen" of the world.

I will further double down on our diplomatic efforts this year, building on the achievements from the previous year. I am also resolved to make the most realistic judgements, bearing in mind what is called for in this era, and am resolved to carry forward a "realism diplomacy for a new era".

Furthermore, let me reaffirm the two points, bridging what has changed and what has not changed, which I mentioned previously at the press conference on the occasion of the release of the National Security Strategy on December 16 last year; namely, the realistic view that diplomacy needs to be backed by defense capabilities and that reinforcing defense capabilities will also lead to persuasiveness in carrying out our diplomatic efforts, as well as the importance of the will of each and every citizen to proactively defend the country as precisely evidenced by the Ukrainian people at this moment in time. As I just outlined, Japan is going through considerable evolutions while always striving to harmonize the ideal and the reality. Going forward, you should be able to consider Japan as an even more reliable partner for all of you.

3. Addressing Future Challenges

Next, allow me to move to discuss the challenges ahead.

Let me now lay out three key points.

First, strengthening the unity of like-minded countries, especially the G7.

Second, relations with those referred to as "the Global South."

Third, relations with China, which is the most central challenge for both Japan and the United States.

I believe that the response to these three elements are essential to mapping out a vision for the next international order that awaits beyond the current world situation which is now in transition.

(1) Strengthening the Unity of Like-minded countries, especially the G7

Now that the world is becoming increasingly divided and chaotic, what is crucial is "who we are": the G7 is tied together on the basis of common values, and this is the group having functioned most effectively in the aftermath of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

We need to rally together first to maintain international peace and to resolve global economic crises such as energy and food, and other global challenges including health and climate change. In particular, it is absolutely imperative for Japan, the United States, and Europe to stand united in managing our respective relationship with China. Japan's concept of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," known as FOIP, has gained support from many like-minded countries, including the members of the G7.

In May, I will be hosting the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. As the Presidency, I will demonstrate the G7's determination with a weight that reflects the historical significance:

- to resolutely reject Russia's ongoing armed aggression, threats by nuclear weapons, and attempts to overthrow the international order,
- to give unwavering support to Ukraine,
- not to accept any unilateral changes to the status quo by force in any region, and
- to firmly preserve the rule of law and a free and open international order.

In addition, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, and as the Prime Minister from Hiroshima, I will put forward our pledge to the world at the G7 Hiroshima Summit that the scourge of nuclear weapons must never be allowed to happen again. I will also send a robust message that the G7 will advance realistic and practical efforts without sacrificing deterrence in the midst of the severe security environment. To this end, I believe that the only realistic path is to revive the momentum for nuclear disarmament and maintain and strengthen the NPT regime. I attended the NPT Review Conference last summer and presented the "Hiroshima

Action Plan" as the first step toward a realistic roadmap which would take us from "the reality" of the harsh security environment to the "ideal" of a world without nuclear weapons.

For us to make progress on this issue, a relationship of trust with our ally, the United States, is essential. To this end, I will also be working closely in concert with President Biden.

(2) Relations with those Referred to as "the Global South"

Relations with those referred to as "the Global South" offer us important challenges and opportunities. A world emerging after the current period of transition will not see a converged single set of values, as was generally viewed in the era of globalization. The world is diverse, and as a practical matter, comparatively speaking, we are observing the rise of national powers of countries with diverging characteristics. Many of them are boosting confidence in their own economic development and are seeking a greater voice on the global stage. We cannot have our values imposed as they are. Meanwhile, those nations themselves do not have a clear and unified vision either.

We need to be more committed to our values, and at the same time, when engaging with the Global South, we need to remain humble while putting aside preconceptions and then have a firm understanding of their respective historical and cultural backgrounds. On that basis, there is a greater imperative for us to share the principle that the international community is not where the strong overwhelm the weak, but rather that it should be driven by rules, not by force.

Guided by this view, let me underscore the point that cooperation on serious issues such as energy, food, climate change and health, which each cannot be resolved without our joint cooperative efforts, and a balance of having a voice and bearing responsibility will both be essential in creating the next international order.

With that in mind, ever since taking office as the Prime Minister, I have consistently undertaken efforts to advance Japan's relations with the Global South. Even if we walk on a path which we believe to be right, if the Global South, holding integral places in the international arena, turn their back, we will find ourselves in the minority and unable to resolve mounting policy issues.

Among them, Southeast Asian countries are the closest and most crucial partners for Japan. A "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", FOIP, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-

Pacific, AOIP, resonate with each other. I will be soon upgrading the vision of a FOIP. I will also host the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo around December this year. I hope to demonstrate that Japan's ties with Southeast Asian countries constitute a core element of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, even in the face of the drastically changing international community.

Let me also note the importance of the relationship with India. India is this year's G20 Presidency and a partner with shared fundamental values and strategic interests. India is expected to surpass China's population and stands as the world's largest democracy. We will further enhance the "Japan-India Special Strategic Global Partnership", forged between our two countries, and continue to work together in pursuit of a FOIP.

Furthermore, Japan will move forward with our diplomatic engagements with the regions of South Asia, Pacific Island countries, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the significance of strengthening the functions of the United Nations, including Security Council reform. Today, trust in the UN is at risk due to Russia's aggression. Japan is taking up a two-year term on the Security Council as a non-permanent member starting this month. We will engage in taking on efforts to materialize the movement for Security Council reform, on which President Biden himself delivered a powerful statement at the UN headquarters, as well as to further strengthen the General Assembly, where all nations are represented.

(3) Relations with China

Next is China. There are various possibilities along with numerous challenges and concerns, between China and Japan, China and the United States, and China and the world. The most fundamental issue is that China has some visions and claims on the international order that diverge from ours and that we can never accept.

In the National Security Strategy, I described the challenge posed by China as one that "Japan should respond with its comprehensive national power and in cooperation with its allies, like-minded countries and others". China needs to make a strategic decision that it will abide by the established international rules and that it cannot and will not change the international order in ways that are contrary to these rules. Efforts to achieve will need to be long-lasting. Along the way, we will never allow any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force, and we will reinforce our deterrence. With that ensured, we then hope to contribute to ensuring international

peace and stability, including in the Indo-Pacific region, together with China, and cooperate on shared challenges. Thus, we need to manage our relationship peacefully. This is the key to determining a success or failure of statesmanship in this era.

Last November, I held a meeting with President Xi Jinping. There, I expressed my concern about the situation in the East China Sea including the Senkaku Islands and China's military activities such as its launch of ballistic missiles into the waters near Japan including our Exclusive Economic Zone last August. It is of greater significance that we say what needs to be said to China at the highest possible level, including at the Leaders' level. As I just mentioned earlier, in order to reach a common understanding with China on the state of the international order, we will firmly maintain and assert our position and strongly call for China's responsible actions, while at the same time continuing dialogue including on issues of concern and cooperating on matters of common interests. I believe that both sides need to make efforts to build such a constructive and stable relationship.

4. Future Goals of Japan-U.S. Relations

With respect to all that I just mentioned, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the anchor. I am encouraged by the U.S. National Security Strategy, a powerful demonstration of America's leadership and commitment to the world. The commitment of the United States to the world, and especially to the increasingly important Indo-Pacific region in terms of international politics, is vital. I am confident that we can succeed by cooperating together.

At the summit meeting earlier today, President Biden and I confirmed that our national security strategies are aligned with each other. We also reiterated our strong commitment to promoting a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," and then concurred to further strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

We have presented our vision and strategy. Looking ahead to the coming months in 2023, we will be entering a phase of taking action and materializing, through following up in such fora as the Security Consultative Committee "2+2" and the Economic Policy Consultative Committee, "Economic '2+2'" launched last year together with the President.

Japan will further broaden and bolster areas of cooperation with the United States.

Economic security is a case in point. Vulnerabilities in our supply chain are coming to the fore, and new challenges such as pursuit of national interests through coercive

measures are on the rise. We have a greater need to deepen our bilateral cooperation. Partnering in such areas as semiconductors and energy is also "key".

Additionally, science and technology will be the greatest key factor to overcoming the hardships at hand and to setting out the course of the world in the times ahead. In collaboration with the United States and other like-minded countries, Japan will work to establish a major fund amounting to 50 billion yen with a view to enhancing international joint research and human resource development for young researchers, and work to launch the "Global Startup Campus Initiative" that will serve as a core center for international brain circulation. Through mutual exchanges and research cooperation between outstanding talents in the field of science and technology of our two nations, Japan hopes to carve out the frontier of the next generation, create new markets, and then generate values that will usher in the new era.

We place emphasis on Japan-U.S. space cooperation as well. Japan will further press ahead with space cooperation, which has entered a new era thanks to the Artemis Project.

That said, let me stress that it is the "people" who actually make these Japan-U.S. cooperative projects possible. The friendships between the people of our two nations sustain the robust alliance. Students, athletes, businesspersons, scholars, U.S. military personnel, Japanese Americans, and others are all models to our wide-ranging bond. I was a long-time baseball player from a young age. I know that the successes of Shohei OHTANI and other Japanese MLB players are not "only" thanks to their individual efforts. They also owe their successes to the accomplishments of their teammates. The same goes for inter-state relations. The partnership between Japan and the United States is indispensable in ensuring international peace and stability. Let us work together so that we can overcome the current turbulent times, and pass on a brighter future for the next generation to enjoy.

At the same time, I will further make strides in our cooperation with India and Australia, including through the Quad that President Biden is also offering leadership. Furthermore, as the first-ever Japanese Prime Minister to have participated in the NATO Summit last year, I will further advance our relations with Europe. Concerning North Korea, it has repeatedly violated UN Security Council Resolutions, especially through its ballistic missile launches that are unprecedented both in their frequency and in their manner. North Korea's nuclear and missile activities pose a clear and serious threat to international peace and stability. In the face of these threats, the security partnership among Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea is becoming increasingly important. I intend to enhance security cooperation among

our three countries. The abductions issue must be also resolved immediately. You may be worried about the relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea, but I intend to resolve the bilateral issues of concern as quickly as possible, to restore sound Japan-ROK relations and then to further promote them.

Now, I have one particular action that I hope the United States will take.

For the United States' engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, economic and trade aspects offer strategic importance. Japan welcomes the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework", IPEF and will work with the United States to make it a success.

Nonetheless, I must say that the core of what creates an economic order in the region is a framework with market access for goods and services. In the Asia-Pacific region, we indeed have such a framework, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP was originally initiated by the United States, and then was eventually launched without U.S. participation. Now, the United Kingdom, China, Taiwan, and others have expressed their intention to join this agreement. Against the backdrop, let me state that the United States' return is of paramount importance. I look forward to working with my American friends and partners on what we can do together to forge a fair economic order in this region so that every one of us can enjoy prosperity.

5. Conclusion

Last but not least, I know that SAIS is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. From my own 35-year experience of marriage, I've come to learn firsthand how ill-advised it can be to forget an anniversary, which can get you into big trouble... Please allow me to sincerely congratulate all of you at SAIS on your long and prosperous history to achieve this commemorative milestone. Congratulations.

As the international community is at a historic turning point, I will continue to make decisions in a decisive manner to resolve the challenges facing our nation and beyond. Japan will boldly move forward, and together with the United States, we will overcome history's turning point and bring about a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

Thank you very much for your attention.