



## Overview of the International Situation and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

### Message to the World at a Turning Point in History - Human Dignity

In order for Japan to ensure its national interests in the diplomatic, security, and economic domains, to prevent crises, and to secure the safety and prosperity of the lives of its citizens, including Japanese nationals living abroad, it is necessary to maintain and develop an international order based on universal values and principles such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as well as to proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment. To this end, Japan needs to advance its foreign policy strategically and flexibly, while grasping trends in international affairs with a clear view and adapting to changes. This chapter outlines a broad overview of the international situation surrounding Japan and the outlook for Japan's diplomacy.

### 1 Overview of the International Situation

Looking at the international situation since the end of the Cold War, the international community is currently at a major turning point in history once again. For some time since the end of the Cold War, a stable international order has expanded throughout the world. Advanced democracies, including the overwhelmingly powerful United States (U.S.) and Japan, took the lead in maintaining and developing an international order based on values and principles such as freedom, democracy, respect for fundamental human rights, and the rule of law. A trend toward international cooperation to enhance fairness, transparency, and predictability of international relations grew stronger. Furthermore, on the premise of such an international order, economic globalization and interdependence have advanced, bringing a certain degree of stability

and economic growth to the international community, including developing countries.

Although globalization has reduced the overall disparities among nations, some countries, such as Least Developed Countries (LDC), have not been able to fully enjoy its benefits. On the other hand, in some developed countries, domestic disparities have rather widened, which has led to political and social tensions and divisions, destabilizing democratic political systems. Furthermore, the rise of emerging and developing countries that developed under the international order described above has led to the diversification of the international community in recent years. Some of these countries, also known as the Global South, are aware of this shift and are seeking greater influence and a stronger voice commensurate with their national power.

In addition, some states are strengthening their military power in a rapid and non-transparent manner, and are becoming more assertive and challenging the existing international order based on their own historical views. There also exists a tendency to “weaponize” economic dependencies to achieve their own political goals. On the other hand, the scope of security has expanded to fields such as ensuring resilience of supply chains for semiconductors and critical minerals, promotion and protection of critical and emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and countering disinformation. Against the backdrop of these changes in the power balance and security environment, competition among nations has become more intense and complex.

Turning to the entire international community, global issues such as climate change, the environment, infectious diseases, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and terrorism and transnational organized

crime remain extremely important. In recent years, informatization and digitization have made these issues more visible and widely recognized throughout the world, but these issues cannot be solved by any one major power alone, and cooperation within the international community is needed more than ever. In addition, economic globalization and interdependence, which have advanced in the post-Cold War world, persistently remain in the era of competition among nations, in which complete decoupling is not possible. These developments show the complexity of the international relations where confrontation, competition, and cooperation are intricately intertwined.

Against this backdrop, Russia launched its aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, shaking the very foundation of the international order that had supported peace, stability, and prosperity in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, in October 2023, the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine has worsened after the terror attacks against Israel by Hamas and others, making the axis of confrontation in the international community more complex. It is difficult to say that the United Nations (UN) is adequately fulfilling the expected functions in face of the crises to which the international community urgently needs to respond, including serious humanitarian crises due to the continuation of conflicts. It is said that some countries, including those in the Global South, have accumulated distrust toward the existing global governance<sup>1</sup> system.

With international relations complexly intertwined today, conflicts in the two regions of Europe and the Middle East are not only problems in themselves, but have also revealed new threats such as cyberattacks and spread of disinformation, thus hampering international cooperation in solving global issues and affecting the stability and prosperity of all regions of the world, including Japan. Under these circumstances, the international situation will enter a critical phase in 2024, in which important elections are scheduled to be held in various parts of the world, from the perspective that

each country's domestic politics and international relations mutually influence one another.

Against this backdrop, the following part explains the major international issues facing the international community.

## (1) Challenge to the Free and Open International Order based on the Rule of Law

With conflicts raging in two of the three regions that have been important to global stability in history — Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia —, the stability of the Indo-Pacific region, including East Asia, is more important than ever.

Russia has been continuing its aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. The act of a permanent member of the UN Security Council blatantly violating the principles of the UN Charter, such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the general prohibition of the use of force, is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of the existing international order, which the international community has built up over a long period of hard work and much sacrifice, and the international community must not allow such an act. Furthermore, Russia has repeatedly threatened Ukraine with its use of nuclear weapons, but the international community must firmly reject Russia's threat of use of nuclear weapons, let alone any use of nuclear weapons.

In 2023, at the G7 Hiroshima Summit hosted by Japan, the leaders of the G7, with the participation of Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, affirmed to continue strong support for Ukraine and severe sanctions against Russia, emphasized that peace cannot be achieved without the withdrawal of Russian troops, and confirmed that they would make every effort to bring peace to Ukraine. The G7 leaders also communicated to the international community their determination to uphold and reinforce the free and open international order based on the rule of law, to protect peace and prosperity, and to realize a world without nuclear

<sup>1</sup> Global Governance: The totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures, and initiatives that provide predictability, stability, and order in dealing with interstate issues in the international community where there is no higher level of government unlike domestic system.

weapons. Currently, some indicate fatigue in support of Ukraine and others point to a relative decline in interest in the situation in Ukraine, coupled with the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. However, the achievement of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, premised on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops, is essential to upholding the rule of law in the international community.

In today's international community, where international relations are intricately intertwined, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in East Asia are not geographically separate and distinct issues. The security of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable, and cooperation with a wide range of like-minded countries, including European countries, the European Union (EU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), is important to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

In fact, in East Asia, including the area surrounding Japan, North Korea has been advancing its nuclear and missile development, including the launches of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-class ballistic missiles. In addition, China has been continuing and intensifying its unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, including the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and has continued and intensified a series of military activities around Japan. The security environment surrounding Japan is as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are also important. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit, the G7 concurred on the importance to convey to China the common concerns of the G7 and call for action as a responsible member of the international community, while working with China on global issues such as climate change, and areas of common interest, and building constructive and stable relations through dialogue.

Against this backdrop, the leaders of Japan and China reaffirmed to comprehensively promote a “Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests” at their summit meeting in November, and confirmed a broad direction of establishing “constructive and stable Japan-China relations.” For ensuring the stability of the Indo-Pacific, cooperation with like-minded countries that share fundamental values, such as Australia, India, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Pacific Islands countries, is also becoming increasingly important.

## (2) Challenges Posed to Global Governance by the Shift in the Power Balance

The international community is witnessing a historic shift in the power balance, as many developing countries have achieved economic development under the stable international order that developed throughout the post-Cold War era. In recent years, the share of developing and emerging economies in the size of the global economy has increased rapidly, with symbolic changes such as India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) overtaking that of the United Kingdom (UK) to become the world's fifth largest in 2023.

Developing and emerging countries, also known as the Global South, are becoming increasingly aware of these changes and tend to have a stronger presence not only in the economic but also in the diplomatic and security spheres. In 2023, the world witnessed moves among the Global South to increase their unity: India, as the G20 Presidency, hosted the “Voice of Global South Summit,” and the expansion of BRICS<sup>2</sup> membership was announced at the BRICS Summit under the chairmanship of South Africa.

The geopolitical position and economic situation of these countries vary from country to country. While some emerging countries are members of the G20,

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<sup>2</sup> BRICS: Term used to refer to Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In this context, at the BRICS Summit in August, BRICS announced the invitation of Argentina, Ethiopia, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (UAE) to become new members (Argentina withdrew its membership application due to a subsequent change of administration.).

there are vulnerable countries that are suffering from various challenges, including poverty, conflicts, terrorism and transnational organized crime, natural disaster, and climate change. Each country has diverse interests and agendas. In recent years, this has been revealed particularly over their response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including their voting attitudes on UN General Assembly resolutions and their reluctance toward sanctions against Russia. It is not appropriate to treat the "Global South" as a single entity, and it is important to engage with each country in a fine-tuned manner, taking into account different needs of each country.

The UN is facing a time of trial as values in the international community become diverse and geopolitical competition between states intensifies. The UN Security Council, which has primary responsibility for peace and security of the international community, has not necessarily been functioning effectively in response to the situation in Ukraine and the Israeli-Palestinian situation due to the exercise of veto by permanent members, and there are growing calls to strengthen UN functions, including UN Security Council reform. Although the UN General Assembly has made various efforts, some say that the confrontation has become even more complex after the deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

While the multilateral frameworks centered on the UN face difficulties, cooperation among allies and like-minded countries such as the G7, Japan-Australia-India-U.S., Japan-U.S.-ROK, is becoming increasingly important. In particular, the G7 has continuously provided broad support for Ukraine and imposed severe sanctions against Russia since the launch of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The G7 Hiroshima Summit also set out strengthening engagement with international partners beyond the G7, including the Global South, and Japan has worked so that its outcomes to be fed into the G20, in which many Global South countries also participate. As it is no longer possible for the international community to converge under a single set of values and principles, Japan needs to take

an inclusive approach that overcomes conflict in values and interests and extend a fine-tuned diplomacy to seek cooperation that is truly needed by each country.

### (3) Impacts of Economic Globalization and Continuing Interdependence

Despite the above-mentioned situation, the global economic network that developed during the post-Cold War era continues to support growth as the common foundation of the international community, and the global interdependence is further deepening against the background of economic development of emerging countries, technological innovation and increased human exchange.

In particular, food and energy supply shortages have hit the world, particularly the most vulnerable countries, and the vulnerabilities of the global supply chains have been revealed due to COVID-19 and Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In addition, some countries attempt to expand their own interests and power by leveraging economic dependencies and their own large markets as tools for coercion. This shows that in an era when complete decoupling is no longer possible, economic globalization and interdependence can bring not only positive aspects of growth and prosperity, but also security threats. Challenges such as theft of intellectual property and sensitive technologies, and development finance that ignores other countries' debt sustainability have also been identified, and the scope of security has expanded to include the fields of economy, and critical and emerging technologies.

In light of such demands of today, at the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Japan set up a specific session on economic security for the first time on the agenda of the G7 Summit. During the Summit, the G7 leaders affirmed that the G7 will be united in responding to issues such as enhancing resilience of supply chains and critical infrastructure, strengthening responses to non-market policy and practices and economic coercion, as well as appropriately managing critical and emerging technologies.

In order to counter economic coercion and unfair

trade practices and to expand the free and fair international economic order, it is also becoming increasingly important to maintain and strengthen the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, and to create new rules adapted to the times. Integrating social and environmental sustainability into the economy is also a need of the times, and it is necessary to address the environment, human rights, and gender equality with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in mind, while aiming for economic growth. In response to these global challenges, there have been calls for reform of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), including the World Bank, particularly from the countries of the Global South.

#### (4) New Challenges Posed by Complex Global Issues and Science and Technology

There are a number of global challenges that commonly threaten humanity, including climate change, environmental pollution, international health challenges, including infectious diseases, and poverty. In particular, as extreme weather events and natural disasters, such as heavy rains, floods, droughts, and wildfires, are becoming severe and more frequent in recent years, the impact of climate change is more and more seriously recognized. In addition, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other factors have created and exacerbated further crises, such as food and energy shortages, a growing number of refugees, including internally displaced persons, thus creating further humanitarian crisis. In 2023, the international community marked the half-way point to the deadline of achieving SDGs. Nevertheless, international cooperation to achieve SDGs faces major challenges as the international community becomes increasingly divided and confrontational.

As the international community faces complex crises, there is a renewed focus on "human dignity" as the common starting point of humanity, which no one

can doubt, that human life and dignity are of paramount importance, in order to lead the world toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation. Furthermore, women and girls in particular have been seriously affected in armed clashes, including in Ukraine and the Middle East. The perspectives of Women, Peace and Security (WPS), the foundational concept that the international community has a better chance to achieve sustained peace by having women actively participate as leaders in conflict resolution, reconstruction and peacebuilding while also protecting and helping women and girls, has renewed emphasis placed on it.

Turning to scientific and technological developments, technological innovations such as the fifth-generation mobile communications systems (5G), the Internet of Things (IoT), quantum technology and others have brought about substantive and irreversible changes in society and daily life, while the development of social media has ushered in an era where geographically distant places are instantly connected through information. Digitalization and information technology have improved the convenience of human life and facilitated cross-border communication, while global issues such as climate change have become more visible. In particular, while Artificial Intelligence (AI), which has developed rapidly in recent years, provides us with the opportunity to transform human society for the better, security risks such as cyberattacks and information manipulation, including the spread of disinformation, have been identified, particularly for advanced AI systems, including generative AI. Such technological advances are also directly linked to national competitiveness leading to moves to strengthen military power as dual-use military and civilian technology, and democracy itself is being put to the test as the formation of confirmation bias<sup>3</sup> through social media has made it more difficult to form public opinion based on correct information and sound debate.

Against this background, at the G7 Hiroshima

<sup>3</sup> Confirmation bias: Refers to the tendency, when testing a hypothesis, to have a bias for selecting information that supports the hypothesis from among many pieces of information, and to devalue or ignore information that does not support the hypothesis. (Source: imidas)

Summit, the G7 launched the “Hiroshima AI Process” to discuss the international governance of generative AI, and in December agreed on the “Hiroshima AI Process Comprehensive Policy Framework” that comprehensively sets out the rules to be followed by relevant actors for the first time globally. The AI Safety Summit was also held in the UK in November, where discussions were held on international cooperation on AI safety assessment.

That peace and development in the international community now cannot be achieved solely through the development of globalization and interdependence is evident in Russia’s protracted aggression against Ukraine and the rapid deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian situation. At the same time, cross-border international cooperation and the active use of science and technology, and innovation are essential to overcome the common global challenges of humanity. The international community needs to overcome differences in values and interests and promote international cooperation while appropriately addressing the risks posed by technology, with an emphasis on cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and youth.

## 2 Outlook for Japan’s Diplomacy

While Russia’s aggression against Ukraine is continuing and the existing international order is under serious challenges, the international community is diversifying with the rise of emerging and developing countries, known as the “Global South.” Against this backdrop, multilateralism centered on UN faces even greater difficulties. On the other hand, there are a host of global issues including climate change and new threats such as cyberattacks and information manipulation, including spread of disinformation, which need to be addressed beyond borders and values, thus calling for cooperation among nations more than ever before.

Japan must seize the tide of major changes in the international community at this turning point in

history, to ensure the peace, security, and prosperity of its own country and people and proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment by maintaining and strengthening the international order based on values and principles such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. To this end, Japan needs to develop a diplomacy that places the most fundamental value of “human dignity” at its center and leads the world toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation.

Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of World War II, contributing to peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the international community, and working to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. It has also developed a fine-tuned diplomacy with all countries, respecting the diversity of each country, discussing common issues from the same perspective, and providing support that is truly needed by the other party. Furthermore, Japan as a flag-bearer of free trade has promoted a rules-based free and fair economic order under a multilateral trading system. At the same time, Japan has cooperated with developing countries based on the principle of human security and addressed global issues, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through capacity building support and other measures. It has also actively contributed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and international peacebuilding efforts.

The trust and expectations that Japan has gained in the world through these efforts is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy today. As the world reaches a turning point in history, Japan will continue to conduct diplomacy based on the following basic policies: (1) firmly protecting Japan’s national interests, (2) enhancing Japan’s presence in the world, (3) listening to the voices of the people, and conducting diplomacy that is understood and supported by the people. Japan itself, facing the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, will also steadily

implement the National Security Strategy to ensure the safety and prosperity of its people's lives and to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

As critical elections are scheduled to be held in various parts of the world in 2024, international affairs are expected to enter a critical phase, including in Ukraine and the Middle East. Against this backdrop, Japan will host important international meetings such as the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10) and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Ministerial Meeting. As this year also marks the "70th anniversary of Japan's International Cooperation," Japan will take this opportunity to actively communicate the significance of and prospects for Official Development Assistance (ODA), one of its most important diplomatic tools, to deepen public understanding. Japan works closely with the international community to take the lead in resolving the mounting issues facing the international community.

### **(1) Maintain and Strengthen a Free and Open International Order based on the Rule of Law**

The rule of law is the foundation of peace and prosperity for all nations. Japan will continue to comprehensively pursue a diplomacy based on dialogue and cooperation to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

#### **(a) Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" based on the Rule of Law**

The realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" based on the rule of law is one of the top priorities of Japanese diplomacy. In March, Prime Minister Kishida, during his visit to India, delivered a policy speech entitled "the Future of the Indo-Pacific—Japan's New Plan for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'—'Together with India, as an Indispensable Partner,'" announcing Japan's new plan for FOIP. In this speech, he clearly stated that Japan will attach great importance on "rulemaking through dialogue," "equal partnership

among nations," and an approach focusing on "people," while maintaining the core principles of defending "freedom" and "the rule of law" and respecting "diversity," "inclusiveness," and "openness."

In the new plan, Japan set forth the new "four pillars" of cooperation for FOIP to address new challenges that have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine among others. The first pillar is to emphasize the rule of law as the way to address the most fundamental issue of defending peace. The second pillar is to promote realistic and practical cooperation in an Indo-Pacific way, incorporating a wide range of areas into FOIP, such as climate change, food security, global health and cybersecurity. The third pillar is to pursue economic growth in a way that benefits everyone by strengthening a multi-layered connectivity. The fourth pillar is to extend efforts for security and safe use of the "Sea" to the "Air."

In expanding cooperation for FOIP, it is also important to promote more strategic and effective use of ODA. Specifically, Japan will create attractive menus that leverage Japan's strength, proactively propose Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative and promote the public-private-partnership, thus enabling to respond to the needs of each country.

#### **(b) Cooperation with Allies and Like-minded Countries**

Cooperation with allies and like-minded countries is essential for promotion of a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

The G7 Hiroshima Summit, held at a time when the international community was at a turning point in history, reaffirmed the unwavering unity of the G7, following discussions focused on upholding a free and open international order based on the rule of law as a key perspective. At the Hiroshima Summit, the leaders of the G7, the invited countries and Ukraine discussed world peace and stability, and shared recognition of the importance of upholding a free and open international order based on the rule of law and the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and

territorial integrity.

As for Japan-Australia-India-U.S.(Quad), in chairing the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2024, Japan will further promote practical cooperation which truly benefits countries in the region toward the realization of FOIP.

As Japan-ROK relations get back on track and continue to improve, cooperation among Japan, the U.S. and the ROK is also making steady progress. Based on the outcome of the Japan-U.S.-ROK Summit at Camp David (U.S.) in August and other meetings, three countries will show that the Japan-U.S.-ROK cooperation is contributing to peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, since the security of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable, Japan will also strengthen cooperation with European countries, the EU, and NATO.

### (c) Response to Aggression against Ukraine

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundations of the international order. In addition, threats by Russia of nuclear weapon use, let alone its use, are inadmissible. Japan will continue to strongly promote sanctions against Russia and support for Ukraine in cooperation with the international community, including the G7, to stop Russia's aggression and to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Furthermore, based on the outcome of the Japan-Ukraine Conference for Promotion of Economic Growth and Reconstruction held on February 19, 2024, which was attended by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal of Ukraine, Japan will continue to advance efforts to further strongly promote the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine through public-private cooperation.

## (2) Dealing with Security Challenges

As Japan faces the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, Japan will

protect its territory, territorial waters and airspace, as well as the lives and property of its citizens through diplomacy.

### (a) Japan's Own Efforts

The National Security Strategy identifies diplomatic capabilities as the first element in forging Japan's overall national security. While linking diplomatic capabilities and defense capabilities, Japan will organically and effectively link its strong economy, advanced technological capabilities, and the various aspects of its soft power, such as rich culture, to pursue a comprehensive diplomatic and security policy. In addition, Japan will steadily carry out the newly established Official Security Assistance (OSA) and actively work to promote cybersecurity and economic security.

In response to international information warfare in the cognitive domain through information manipulation, including spread of disinformation, Japan will gather and analyze information from various perspectives, carry out strategic communication, while building and strengthening its information security infrastructure.

### (b) Strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy and security, and the foundation of the peace and prosperity in Indo-Pacific region. Japan and the U.S. will further strengthen deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, sustain and strengthen credibility and resilience of extended deterrence<sup>4</sup>, and optimize the response capabilities of U.S. forces in Japan. Japan will also promote efforts to mitigate impact on local communities through efforts of expeditiously relocating Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to Henoko while maintaining the stable presence of U.S. forces in Japan.

Furthermore, Japan and the U.S. will continue to expand and deepen cooperation in the economic field from a strategic perspective, including based on the

<sup>4</sup> Providing deterrence that a country possesses to its allies and partners.



discussions at the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Japan-U.S. Economic Policy Consultative Committee (the Economic “2+2”) held in November.

### (c) Strengthening Cooperation with Allies and Like-minded Countries

In order to strengthen deterrence, it is also important to build and expand multilayered networks among allies and like-minded countries, in addition to the Japan-U.S. Alliance. To this end, while utilizing frameworks such as the Japan-U.S.-ROK and Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan will strengthen security cooperation with Australia, India, the ROK, European countries, ASEAN countries, Canada, NATO, the EU, Pacific Islands countries, and others.

With Australia, the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement entered into force in August and joint exercises have been held under it. The two countries have been continuing to steadily strengthen and expand cooperation in the field of security to ensure peace and prosperity in Indo-Pacific region.

With European countries, the EU and NATO, Japan has been strengthening security cooperation based on the recognition that the security of Euro-Atlantic and of Indo-Pacific regions are inseparable. European countries, including the EU and NATO, are increasing their interest in the Indo-Pacific, and against this backdrop, Foreign Minister Hayashi attended a NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in April, and in July, Prime Minister Kishida attended a NATO summit. In October, the Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement entered into force and in December, Japan, the UK and Italy signed the Convention on the Establishment of the “Global Combat Air Programme — GCAP International Government Organisation.” Japan will continue to promote concrete cooperation with European countries, the EU and NATO to expand their engagement to the Indo-Pacific.

## (3) Exploring New Frontiers of Economic Diplomacy

In these times of increasing severity and complexity,

in order to demonstrate Japan's presence to the world with its strong and resilient economic power, Japan will develop new frontiers in economic diplomacy, emphasizing public-private partnerships and involving all stakeholders including startups. Japan must incorporate the growth of developing and emerging countries, known as the “Global South” to grow its own economy strongly. Japan will promote fine-tuned and strategic economic diplomacy, taking into account the challenges and characteristics of the various regions.

### (a) Maintenance and Expansion of a Rules-based Free and Fair Economic Order

There are many issues to be addressed, including the World Trade Organization (WTO) reform to further strengthen the multilateral trading system, maintaining the high standards of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), ensuring implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in a transparent manner, achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the region through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), and international rule-making in areas involving new challenges such as AI and Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT).

Against this backdrop, the year 2024 marks the 60th anniversary since Japan joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Japan will chair the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) in May 2024. Japan will seize this opportunity to show its strong leadership toward the maintenance and expansion of a rules-based free and fair economic order, while working closely with its ally and like-minded countries.

### (b) Efforts on Economic Security

As the scope of national security is expanding to the fields of economy, ensuring self-reliance of economy, and advantages and indispensability of technology, in other words economic security is also one of the important pillars of diplomacy in the new era. In order to ensure Japan's economic security, Japan will further

strengthen its efforts to address economic security issues, including supply chain resilience and addressing economic coercion, by further strengthening coordination with its ally and like-minded countries, utilizing ODA, and cooperating closely between the public and private sectors.

#### (c) Linkage and Integration between Social and

##### Environmental Sustainability and the Economy

We now live in an era in which it is necessary to aim for linkage and integration between social and environmental sustainability and the economy. It is necessary that Japan will direct its efforts to realizing a virtuous circle: through the active promotion of SDGs, such as environment, human rights, and gender equality, by the corporate side, Japan will realize economic growth in a way that benefits society.

Specifically, Japan will involve various entities, including the private sector, to implement development cooperation. In particular, Japan will implement the Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative by using its advantages and ODA that mobilizes private-sector funds, which will achieve high-quality growth in developing countries and at the same time lead to Japan's growth. In addition, in actively encouraging Japanese companies to expand their overseas operations and increase exports of Japanese food products, its diplomatic missions overseas will provide strong backup for Japanese companies expanded locally. Furthermore, in order to boost productivity and growth of the Japanese economy, it is essential to attract high-quality human resources, advanced technology, and abundant funds from abroad to create innovation and employment. From this perspective, Japan will actively promote direct investment in Japan through its diplomatic missions overseas.

Furthermore, it is also important to actively utilize soft power, such as attractive Japanese culture, science and technology, and innovation.

Japan will work vigorously for the success of the 2025 World Exposition (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan) and the International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan, which are important opportunities to demonstrate Japan's strong and resilient economic strength.

Japan will further promote understanding of Japan and strategic communication, including through the "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0" announced at the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in December. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) will continue to play a steadfast role toward the inscription of the "Sado Island Gold Mine" on the World Heritage List, while explaining its outstanding value as a cultural heritage to the international community and engaging in in-depth discussions with the relevant countries.

Regarding the safety of the discharge of ALPS treated water<sup>5</sup> into the sea, Japan will maintain close coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and provide detailed explanation both domestically and internationally, based on scientific evidence in a highly transparent manner.

## (4) Relations with Neighboring Countries and others

In order to maintain peace and prosperity in Japan and the region, Japan will build stable relations with our neighboring countries, while dealing head-on with difficult issues.

#### (a) Japan-China Relations

While there are various possibilities between Japan and China, there are a number of challenges and concerns, such as unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, which include the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and a series of military activities by China, including those coordinated between China and

<sup>5</sup> ALPS treated water is water which is processed by devices such as ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) to ensure that the radioactive materials other than tritium surely meet the regulatory standards for safety. ALPS treated water is then sufficiently diluted so that the concentrations of the radioactive materials including tritium will be far below the regulatory standards for safety, and then finally discharged into the sea.

Russia. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are also important. Japan is also seriously concerned about the human rights situation in China and the situation in Hong Kong.

At the same time, both Japan and China have a significant responsibility for the peace and prosperity of the region and the international community. While comprehensively promoting a “Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests,” Japan will firmly maintain and assert its position and strongly request responsible actions by China, while at the same time continue to engage in dialogue including on issues of concern and cooperate on matters of common interest. It is important that both Japan and China make efforts to build such “constructive and stable relationship.”

#### (b) Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) Relations

Japan will continue to communicate closely with the ROK, an important neighboring country, at various levels in order to broaden coordination and cooperation in a wider range of fields and to work together as partners to pave the way for a new era of the Japan-ROK bilateral relations.

Given the severe security environment in Indo-Pacific, close cooperation between the two countries is necessary now more than ever. As Japan-ROK relations get back on track and continue to improve, both countries will also further enhance coordination on global issues.

Takeshima is an inherent territory of Japan in light of historical facts and based on international law. Japan will deal with the issue in a resolute manner based on this consistent position.

#### (c) Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation

From a broad perspective, Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation is important for regional and global peace and prosperity. Building on the discussions at the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November, which was held for the first time in about four years, Japan will support the ROK's efforts as the Presidency to hold a Trilateral Summit at

the earliest convenient time.

#### (d) Japan-Russia Relations

Japan-Russia relations remain to be in a difficult situation due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, but Japan will firmly maintain its policy of concluding a peace treaty through the resolution of the Northern Territories issue. At the same time, Japan will appropriately deal with issues that need to be addressed by Japan and Russia as neighbors, such as those related to fishing and other economic activities as well as maritime safety, from the perspective of what is in Japan's national interests in its overall diplomacy.

In addition, the resumption of the Four-Island exchange program and the others is one of the highest priorities in Japan-Russia relations. Japan will continue to strongly urge Russia to resume such programs, with particular emphasis now on the Visits to the graves.

#### (e) North Korea

Regarding North Korea, Japan seeks to normalize its relations with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past.

In particular, with the aging of the families of abductees, the abductions issue is a humanitarian and time sensitive issue with no time to spare. Japan will boldly take every possible action to realize the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date.

North Korea's launches of ballistic missile pose a grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security. It threatens peace and security in the region and the international community. It is totally unacceptable.

While ensuring the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, Japan will continue to call for the complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missiles programs, cooperating with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK.

## (5) Regional Diplomacy Issues

Emerging and developing countries, known as the Global South, are rapidly increasing their voices, and the power balance in the world changes dramatically. In order to lead the international community toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation, and to work together to create solutions to various challenges that faces the international community, it is important to engage with each country and region in a fine-tuned manner, taking into account their circumstances and characteristics, through an approach that emphasizes diversity and inclusiveness.

The stability and prosperity of ASEAN, which is the key of the Indo-Pacific, is extremely important for Japan and the entire Indo-Pacific region. Japan will further strengthen the relations with ASEAN countries by steadily implementing the new vision of cooperation for the next 50 years and a wide range of concrete cooperation which were set out at the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation held in December.

India is an important partner in the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),” that shares fundamental values and strategic interests. Japan and India, both democratic countries in Asia, share a great responsibility for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and the world. As division and confrontation deepen in the world, Japan and India, both of which have a solid democratic history with different cultural and historical backgrounds from European countries and the U.S., can play a significant role. Against this background, both Japan and India will further deepen cooperation in a range of fields, including economy, security, people-to-people exchanges, etc., under the “Special Strategic and Global Partnership.”

Southwest Asia, including India, is a strategically important region located at a key point along the sea lanes of communication linking Japan with the Middle East and Africa. This region, with a population of approximately 1.9 billion and high economic growth rates, is an attractive market and production base for Japanese companies. The countries in Southwest Asia

and Japan have longstanding friendly ties, and over the years, Japan has deepened its engagement with the countries in the region in a wide range of areas, including security, economy, economic cooperation, and people-to-people exchange. Based on this foundation, Japan will further deepen its relations with the countries in Southwest Asia, which are important partners in maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

The Pacific Islands region is a very important region from the perspective of realizing FOIP. Based on the outcome of the Ministerial Interim Meeting of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) held in February 2024, Japan will robustly support the development of Pacific Islands countries and their unity, respecting the needs of each country, through the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10) in July 2024 and bilateral dialogues, in cooperation with like-minded countries.

The Middle East is one of the major sources of energy supply for the international community, and Japan depends on the region for about 90% of its crude oil imports. Therefore, peace and stability in the region, including the safety of navigation, are extremely important for energy security as well as the stability and growth of the global economy including Japan. On the other hand, the region has historically faced various conflicts and disputes. Tense and unstable situations as well as severe humanitarian conditions still persist. In recent years, a shift toward improved relations in the region had been observed, including the normalization of diplomatic relations between Israel and some Arab countries, but a series of developments triggered by terror attacks against Israel by Hamas and others in October has brought regional instability back to the fore over the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Japan is an ally of the U.S., and also has traditionally enjoyed good relations with countries in the Middle East. Toward maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law, including in the Middle East, Japan will proactively engage in diplomatic efforts to contribute to easing tensions

and stabilizing the situation in the Middle East in close cooperation with the countries concerned, while taking into consideration the issues of concern and needs for each country through various dialogue frameworks such as the “Japan-Arab Political Dialogue” and the “Japan-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)<sup>6</sup> Foreign Ministers’ Meeting.”

Africa, which is expected to account for a quarter of the world’s population by 2050, is a young and hopeful continent with great potential for dynamic growth. For over 30 years since the launch of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, Japan has been making efforts based on the spirit of supporting African-led development. The TICAD Ministerial Meeting will be held in Tokyo in 2024 and TICAD 9 will be held in Yokohama in 2025. Japan will continue to further deepen Japan-Africa relations by addressing various issues together with African countries through the TICAD process among others.

Many Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) countries share values and principles such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law with Japan and are important partners with a strong presence in the international arena. This region is also rich in mineral and energy, which are important for decarbonization, as well as food resources, and are becoming increasingly important in terms of supply chain resilience and ensuring economic security. Furthermore, the Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) communities, numbering approximately 3.1 million in the LAC region, are the foundation of the traditional friendly relations between Japan and the LAC countries. In 2024, the world’s attention will be on LAC with Brazil hosting the G20 and Peru hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), while the year marks Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024 between Japan and Caribbean countries. Japan will seize these opportunities to further strengthen the relationship with LAC countries.

The countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, while having close historical and economic ties with Russia, have been greatly affected by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Japan will promote cooperation as a partner in maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law, while also utilizing frameworks such as the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue.

## (6) Cooperation for Global Issues

The world is facing a host of global issues, such as climate change, the environment, food and energy, global health including infectious diseases, population, refugees and the sustainable use of the oceans, it is necessary for us to work together to address these issues.

To this end, it is becoming increasingly important for the UN to fulfill its primary role. Japan will lead the efforts to strengthen the UN functions, including Security Council reform. In March 2024, Japan will assume the presidency of the Security Council, and engage in active discussions with other countries on important issues facing the international community.

In September 2024, the UN Summit of the Future will take place. That will be an occasion to strengthen strong and effective multilateralism with the UN at its core for the coming decades, and Japan will take a leading role to return to the starting point of “human dignity,” to promote the rule of law, and to forge “human-centered international cooperation” based on the principle of human security. Japan will also actively contribute to international efforts to comprehensively achieve SDGs by the year 2030. In addition, Japan will promote efforts to enable Japanese nationals to play even more active roles as staff members in international organizations.

At the same time, Japan will actively promote the realization of a world without nuclear weapons, human rights diplomacy in its own way, peacebuilding, and measures to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime. In particular, with regard to nuclear

<sup>6</sup> Gulf Cooperation Council: Established in 1981 by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. The purpose is to coordinate, integrate, and collaborate among participating countries in all areas, including defense and economics.

disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan will continue and strengthen its realistic and practical efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons by implementing measures one by one under the “Hiroshima Action Plan,”<sup>7</sup> while having the “G7 Leader’s Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament” issued at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May as a solid platform. Specifically, Japan will build on its efforts toward effective nuclear disarmament measures, such as enhancing the transparency of nuclear arsenals, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). In addition, through efforts such as the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP),<sup>8</sup> Japan will promote efforts to increase international momentum for nuclear disarmament and move step by step closer toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, Japan will strongly promote and emphasize the importance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as one of its major foreign policies. To this end, a taskforce was established under the Foreign

Minister in January 2024. Japan will continue to promote WPS using all the tools at our disposal, including ODA.

## (7) Strengthening of Comprehensive Foreign and Consular Policy Implementation Structure

Personnel is a key asset to diplomacy. In order to achieve steady results in the above-mentioned activities, it is essential to strengthen the comprehensive foreign and consular policy implementation structure.

To this end, MOFA will take steps to improve the working environment and the livelihood of its overseas staff members, strengthen personnel structure, improve financial basis, promote digital transformation (DX) and workstyle reforms, and fundamentally enhance the diplomatic and consular implementation structure. In preparation for an emergency, MOFA will promote the strengthening of diplomatic missions overseas and enhance their readiness to respond to crises, including the protection of Japanese nationals, in a timely and agile manner, including personnel structure.

<sup>7</sup> This was proposed by Prime Minister Kishida at the Tenth NPT Review Conference held in August 2022. As the first step of a realistic road map which would take us from “the reality” of the harsh security environment to the “ideal” of a world without nuclear weapons, Japan would simultaneously engage in nuclear risk reduction and take the following five actions: (1) a shared recognition on the importance of continuing the record of non-use of nuclear weapons, (2) enhancing transparency, (3) maintaining the decreasing trend of the global nuclear stockpile, (4) securing nuclear non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and (5) encouraging visits to the affected communities by international leaders and others.

<sup>8</sup> An international meeting of which Prime Minister Kishida announced the launch in his policy speech in January 2022. The meeting brings together intellectuals and both incumbent and former political leaders from both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states to discuss a concrete pathway toward a world without nuclear weapons. In 2023, the second meeting was held in Tokyo in April and the third in Nagasaki in December.