Chapter 1

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In order for Japan to ensure its national interests in the political, diplomatic, security, and economic domains, 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 prevent crises, and proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment, Japan needs to strategically advance its foreign policy while grasping changes and trends in international affairs with clear eyes and adapting to them. 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

The international community is at a turning point in history.

For some time since the end of the Cold War, a free, open, and stable international order has extended throughout the world. Advanced democracies, including the overwhelmingly powerful United States and Japan, took the lead in maintaining and developing an international order based on universal 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.

However, although globalization has reduced disparities among nations around the world as a whole, some countries, such as Least Developed Countries (LDC), have not been able to fully enjoy its benefits. On the other hand, in developed countries, domestic disparities have rather widened, which has led to political and social tensions and divisions. Furthermore, the rise of China and other emerging and developing countries that developed under the international order described above has brought about a shift in the power balance in the international community in recent years, and geopolitical competition among nations has intensified. Some states are strengthening their military power in a rapid and non-transparent manner, and are becoming more assertive and challenging, based on their own historical views and values, to the existing international order. Moreover, in recent years, the scope of security has expanded to challenges such as ensuring the resilience of the semiconductor and rare earths supply chain, the promotion and protection of critical and emerging technologies, cyber security, and countering disinformation.

As the existing free and open international order based on the rule of law is shaken, there is a growing tendency among nations to enhance their overall national power and compete for international influence to achieve their own national interests. In response to this situation, it is difficult to say that the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations have been functioning adequately. The interests of each country have become increasingly complex, making it extremely difficult to find a unified position, and the spirit of international cooperation is diminishing. As a result, polarizing forces are gaining power in the international community, and it is feared that the level of tension and confrontation will increase in the future.

At the same time, global issues such as climate change, the environment, infectious diseases, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and terrorism cannot be solved by any one major power alone, and cooperation by the international community is needed more than ever. The world economy is becoming increasingly globalized and interdependent, and complete decoupling

is no longer possible. Thus, international relations have become a complex situation where confrontation, competition, and cooperation are intricately intertwined.

Against this backdrop, the following part explains the major international issues that have become visible and apparent in 2022.

(1) Russia's Aggression: A Blatant Challenge to the International Order

In February 2022, Russia launched its aggression against Ukraine. The principles of the international community, such as respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the general prohibition of the use of force, were blatantly trampled upon by a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Russia's aggression is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of the existing international order and symbolizes the end of the post-Cold War era. The international community must not allow such an outrageous act. It is extremely important that the international community unite in response to this aggression by Russia in order to deter any further attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force.

Furthermore, Russia's repeated threats of use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine are inadmissible. The threat of use of nuclear weapons, as Russia is doing, let alone the use of nuclear weapons, in any form, must not be tolerated. Humanity must reflect on the weight of its 77-year history of non-use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, it is deeply regrettable that the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in August failed to reach consensus on the final document due to the opposition of one country, Russia.

It has also been noted that Russia is exploiting emerging technologies including cyberattacks and spreading of disinformation to advance its military operations, and has repeatedly violated international law, including attacks on civilians and civilian facilities. Massacres of civilians near Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, such as in Bucha, and attacks against nuclear power plants have also been pointed out. Russia's aggression has also caused problems such as the global food and energy crisis, and has brought multifaceted turmoil to many countries, including developing countries.

On February 23, 2023, a resolution calling for peace in Ukraine was adopted by a majority of 141 votes in favor at the Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly. The resolution clearly states that peace does not mean simply halting hostilities; it must be comprehensive, just and lasting, based on the principles of the UN Charter, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity.

(2) Emerging and Developing Countries with Growing Presence

The presence of emerging and developing countries, also known as the Global South, has been increasing through their responses to the challenges facing the international community in recent years, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The geopolitical position of these countries, their economic situation, and their relations with Russia and China vary from country to country. While some emerging countries, such as India, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkey are members of the G20, there are vulnerable countries that are suffering from various challenges including development, poverty, regional conflicts, terrorism, and natural disasters, such as those in Africa and the Middle East. However, many of these countries share a commonality in that they take a middle ground between the Western countries and Russia by abstaining from voting on resolutions at the UN General Assembly or showing a reluctance to impose sanctions against Russia. These countries have voiced doubts that developed countries are enthusiastic about the European agenda but do not pay enough attention to the challenges they face, or that the developed countries' responses are double standards in the application of universal values. These current conditions indicate that an era is dawning in which it is no longer possible for the international community to converge under a single set of values and principles. On the other hand, in finding solutions to the major challenges facing the international community, it is extremely important to work with as many emerging and developing countries as possible under multilateralism through an inclusive approach that overcomes differences in values and interests. From this perspective, as a developed country, Japan needs to strengthen its involvement in these countries and take a diplomatic stance to seek cooperation that they truly need.

(3) Rebuilding Global Governance[1]

As the international community is reaching a historic turning point, the ideal system of global governance should now be well discussed from the perspective of upholding peace, security, and prosperity of the international community as well as maintaining a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Against this backdrop, the UN is facing a time of trial. The UN Security Council, which has primary responsibility for international peace and security, has not been functioning effectively in response to the aggression against Ukraine by Russia, a permanent member of the Council. Furthermore, North Korea's nuclear development and repeated ballistic missile launches are clear violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, but due to the resistance of China and Russia, including their exercise of veto, neither a new UN Security Council resolution nor even a Presidential Statement has been issued. On the other hand, the UN General Assembly has played a role in demonstrating the collective will of the international community against Russia's aggression by holding the emergency special session based on the "Uniting for Peace" resolution. Six General Assembly resolutions, including the ones condemning Russia, were adopted within one year after the aggression began. In addition, the adoption of a General Assembly resolution that, in effect, requires the vetoing country to be accountable to the UN General Assembly when the UN Security Council fails to exercise its expected responsibilities due to the veto of the permanent member, is part of the efforts by the Member States to strengthen the functions of the UN.

In contrast to the UN, in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, unity and coordination among like-minded countries, including the G7, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union (EU) are remarkable. In particular, the G7 shared a sense of urgency since immediately after the crisis broke out, and has continuously provided broad support for Ukraine and imposed strict sanctions against Russia, holding 11 foreign ministers' meetings and six leaders' meetings, both online and in person, in the year 2022 alone. The importance of the G7, whose presence in the international community was said to be declining in recent years, is now reaffirmed in the face of Russia's aggression, which is a blatant challenge to the rule of law.

On the other hand, the G20, a framework that includes Russia and emerging countries, received attention on how to deal with Russia's aggression. At the G20 Bali Summit, hosted by Indonesia in November, the Leaders' Declaration was adopted, agreeing on the language, "Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine" included after rigorous coordination, thanks to the leadership of President Joko Widodo. The phrase "strongly condemned the war in Ukraine" was carried over to the subsequent APEC Leaders' Declaration hosted by Thailand.

A move to rebuild global governance on global issues has been observed. In the field of global health, based on the lessons learned from the response to COVID-19 pandemic, efforts are underway to strengthen international norms to respond to pandemic under the World Health Organization (WHO), to coordinate a future medical countermeasures platform on the existing capacity of the ACT Accelerator[2], and to establish the Pandemic Fund under the World Bank. These efforts to strengthen global health architecture for prevention, preparedness, and response to future health emergencies, are in full swing.

The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) adopted the "Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan," which called for Parties to strengthen actions in each area to address climate change. It was also decided to establish new funding arrangements, including a fund, for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable in responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

1 Global Governance: The totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures, and initiatives that provide predictability, stability, and order in dealing with inter-state issues in an international community where there is no higher level of government unlike domestic system.

2 ACT Accelerator (Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator): an internationally coordinated platform for research, development, manufacturing, and equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics for COVID-19

(4) Increasingly Severe Security Environment Around Japan

Challenges by force to the existing international order based on the rule of law are no longer a challenge unique to Europe, but one that can arise anywhere in the world, including East Asia. In reality, the security environment surrounding Japan is the most severe since the end of World War II, with North Korea's ongoing rapid progress in its nuclear and missile development and China's ongoing unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

At the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October, General Secretary Xi Jinping was confirmed for his third term as General Secretary. In the Central Committee Report of this Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping reiterated that China is aiming to become a strong, modernized socialist country by the mid-century, stating that "Momentous changes of a like not seen in a century are accelerating across the world. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is well under way, and a significant shift is taking place in the internal balance of power, presenting China with new strategic opportunities in pursuing development." China also continues to promote the mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, and continues the rapid buildup of military power without adequate transparency. China has reinforced its unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the maritime and airspace areas of the East China Sea and the South China Sea, including intrusions into the territorial sea and airspace surrounding Japan's Senkaku Islands, and has expanded and intensified its military activities in the Sea of Japan, the Pacific Ocean, and elsewhere. In addition, while maintaining its policy of peaceful unification of Taiwan, China has not denied the possibility of the use of force, and it has been intensifying its military activities in the sea and airspace surrounding Taiwan, including the launch of ballistic missiles into the waters near Japan in August. Concerns about the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are growing rapidly not only in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, but in the international community as a whole. China's current external stance and military activities are a matter of serious concern to Japan and the international community. It is unprecedented and represents the greatest strategic challenge to ensuring the peace and security of Japan and the peace and stability of the international community, as well as to strengthening the international order based on the rule of law, to which Japan should respond with its comprehensive national power and in cooperation with its allies, like-minded countries and others. At the same time, it is important to seek responsible actions from China to build a "constructive and stable relationship" by the efforts of both sides through frank communication at a high level, including with leaders and foreign ministers.

North Korea has repeatedly launched ballistic missiles with an unprecedented frequency and in unprecedented manners, in violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the ballistic missile launched in October that flew over Japan and the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-class ballistic missile launched in November that landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Furthermore, North Korea has not shown any attitude toward responding to calls for dialogue, but rather has strengthened its hostile posture toward the U.S. and other countries, and has made clear its policy of mass-production of tactical nuclear weapons and an exponential increase of nuclear arsenal. This series of North Korea's activities is a grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security and a clear and serious challenge to the international community.

In addition, Russia is accelerating its external and military activities in the Far East and East Asia, which, especially together with its strategic coordination with China, is of strong security concern.

(5) New Issues Such as Economic Security

In addition to traditional security, addressing economic security as a new challenge is now recognized as an urgent issue for each country. With the deepening of economic interdependence and the development of science and technology, the scope of security has expanded to the fields of economy and emerging technologies. Furthermore, the boundary between military and non-military fields has become blurred. Technological innovations such as the fifth-generation mobile communications systems (5G), artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), quantum technology and others are not only bringing about

substantive changes in society and daily life, but are also directly linked to national competitiveness, as well as to moves to strengthen military power as dual-use technologies for both military and civilian applications. In addition, cyberattacks to disable or destroy critical infrastructures, interference in foreign elections, ransom demands, and theft of sensitive information are constantly being carried out, even in the form of state-sponsored cyberattacks.

COVID-19 and the crisis in Ukraine have revealed the vulnerabilities of the global supply chain. The fact that some countries do not hesitate to use economic dependencies and their own large markets as tools for coercion shows that these risks are not temporary. The challenge of theft of intellectual property and sensitive technologies is also evident.

Addressing these economic security concerns and unfair trade practices are new challenges for the multilateral trading system that has supported the expansion of a free and fair international economic order since the end of the Cold War.

Furthermore, new challenges in the domain of economic cooperation, such as development finance that ignores other countries' debt sustainability, are also emerging.

Rapidly advancing informatization, which has benefited from digital technology, has enabled a society in which anyone can freely collect and disseminate information. On the other hand, it has also given rise to problems such as cyberattacks and the spreading of disinformation. In addition, not only intentional attacks, but also the formation of confirmation bias[3] through social media has made it more difficult to form public opinion based on correct information and healthy debate.

The effects of the social divisions thus created are particularly severe in democracies, affecting the process of foreign and general policy consensus formation. There are also concerns that this situation may be exploited to assert the superiority of authoritarian regimes over democracy.

2 Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

The international community has reached a turning point in history. While the power balance is changing and geopolitical competition is intensifying, global issues such as climate change and infectious diseases threaten the survival of humankind, and the international community as a whole must cooperate to find solutions beyond differences in values and interests. International relations are thus in a complex situation of confrontation, competition, and cooperation. Under these circumstances, Japan must pursue a robust and fine-tuned diplomacy to maintain and develop a free and open international order based on the rule of law, taking an inclusive approach with the diversity of the international community in mind, to ensure the security and prosperity of its own country and people, as well as to promote universal values such as freedom, democracy, and respect for fundamental human rights.

Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of World War II, contributing to peace 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, while building today's prosperity under a multilateral trading system, Japan as a flag-bearer of free trade, has promoted a rules-based free and fair economic order. At the same time, Japan has cooperated with developing countries based on the principle of

3 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)

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 world's "trust" in Japan that has been fostered through these efforts is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy today.

However, a free and open international order based on the rule of law, which has sustained the peace, security, and prosperity of the international community, is facing serious challenges amidst historical changes in power balances and intensifying geopolitical competitions. Pressure to unilaterally change the status quo by force is also increasing in Japan's vicinity, and Japan is facing the most severe and complex postwar security environment. In response, Japan formulated its "National Security Strategy" and other strategy documents in December 2022. Under this strategy, Japan will carry out vigorous diplomacy backed by a fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities, and take full advantage of its comprehensive national power, including economic, technological, and intelligence capabilities, to meet the expectations and trust of the international community, while ensuring Japan's own peace and prosperity.

The Kishida Cabinet, as its Basic Policy, advocates developing diplomacy and security with: the determination to fully defend universal values; the determination to fully defend Japan's peace and security; and the determination to lead the international community by addressing global issues. With these "three determinations," Japan will continue to develop its diplomacy with a balanced and stable posture and with a high level of responsiveness. In 2023, Japan holds the G7 chair and serves as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. 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

First, Japan will further promote efforts to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

(a) Strengthening Cooperation with its Ally and Like-minded Countries

The G7 has responded most effectively to Russia's aggression against Ukraine through close cooperation. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, as the holder of the G7 Presidency, Japan demonstrates the G7's strong determination to uphold the international order based on the rule of law, firmly rejecting any unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion, or Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons, or the use of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the G7 takes the lead in addressing the global economy including energy and food security, regional affairs including Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, economic security, and global issues including climate change, global health, and development.

Japan has also significantly strengthened Japan-Australia-India-U.S. cooperation. While demonstrating our determination not to allow unilateral changes to the status quo by force in any region, the four countries promote practical cooperation in a wide range of areas to realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)."

In addition, FOIP is becoming even more important at this turning point in history. Japan will advance its new plan for FOIP to strengthen diplomatic efforts, and enhance coordination to realize FOIP, with partners such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Europe, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean and others, in addition to Japan-Australia-India-U.S. In particular, Japan and ASEAN will set out a vision for future ASEAN-Japan relations on the occasion of the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation to be held in Tokyo around December 2023.

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

A rules-based free and fair economic order is the foundation of growth and prosperity not only for Japan but for the world. Japan will continue to exercise its leadership as a flag-bearer for free trade, work to maintain the high standards of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and ensure the full implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

Agreement, and lead World Trade Organization (WTO) reform. In the digital sector, Japan will also play a central role in international rule-making, including WTO e-commerce negotiation, to promote "Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)." On the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), an important framework for bringing sustainable and inclusive economic growth to the Indo-Pacific region, Japan will contribute to the development of a framework that will lead to concrete results at an early stage in close cooperation with IPEF participating countries.

Japan will also make proactive efforts to support Japanese companies to expand their businesses overseas. It is also working toward the lifting of import restrictions on Japanese food products in all countries and regions through all-Japan efforts. Japan will continue to strive toward successful holding of the 2025 World Exposition (Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan).

(c) Strengthening of UN Functions

Faced with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the UN and the UN Security Council are facing a time of trial. However, it is precisely because we live in an era of deepening division and confrontation that the UN, with its 193 member states, is of great significance in reflecting the collective will of the international community under multilateralism. It is also extremely important for the international community to return to the vision and the principles of the UN Charter, which upholds respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the general prohibition of the use of force, in order to emerge from the current chaos in the international community. Therefore, Japan will proactively contribute to strengthening UN functions as a whole, including UN Security Council reform, through close communication with other Member States so that the UN can fulfill its responsibilities. What is needed now is not discussion for the sake of discussion, but action toward UN reform. Japan will continue to make efforts for early progress through close communication among the G4 (Japan, India, Germany and Brazil) as well as relevant countries such as the U.S., the United Kingdom (UK), France, and African countries. Furthermore, Japan will also continue to contribute to UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) and other UN peacebuilding initiatives.

(2) Dealing with Security Challenges

The first element of comprehensive national power for Japan's national security is diplomatic capability. Under the new National Security Strategy, Japan will develop a strong diplomacy backed by a fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities, prevent crises before they occur, and proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment. At the same time, defense capabilities, which express Japan's will and ability to defend itself, cannot be replaced by other means. Fundamentally reinforced defense capabilities will bolster the solid footing of Japan's diplomacy for proactively fostering a desirable security environment for Japan. In pursuing such efforts, as a peace-loving nation, Japan will adhere to the basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. In addition, Japan will work to fundamentally reinforce its foreign policy implementation structure in order to accurately respond to the rapidly changing international situation.

Furthermore, in order to promote economic security, Japan will actively work to further strengthen cooperation with like-minded countries and formulate international norms that address new challenges.

(a) Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Japan will further deepen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the linchpin of Japan's foreign and security policy.

Through a series of meetings with the U.S., the two countries have confirmed that unilateral change to the status quo by force is never acceptable in any region. On the basis of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the potential of the Indo-Pacific region, which is strategically most important for both countries, must be linked to its stability and prosperity.

To this end, Japan and the U.S. will work together to strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and response capabilities, taking into account the evolving roles and missions of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. In doing so, both countries will focus on further strengthening bilateral coordination through the Alliance Coordination Mechanism, allied efforts in peacetime, deepening cooperation between Japan and the U.S. for the effective operation of Japan's counterstrike capabilities, cooperation in the

fields of space, cyber, and information security, technology cooperation to ensure that the Alliance maintain its competitive edge, and joint investments in emerging technologies, etc. Japan will also continue its efforts to ensure that U.S. extended deterrence[4] remains credible and resilient. Furthermore, Japan will further optimize the posture of U.S. Forces in Japan, as well as make every effort to mitigate impacts on local communities through efforts such as the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to Henoko as soon as possible while maintaining the stable presence of U.S. forces in Japan.

At the same time, through the Japan-U.S. Economic Policy Consultative Committee (the Economic "2+2") launched in July, the two countries will discuss diplomacy, security, and economy as a whole, and further strengthen cooperation on issues common to both countries, such as economic security and maintaining and strengthening a rules-based economic order.

(b) Strengthening Ties with Allies and Like-minded Countries

In addition to the Japan-U.S. Alliance, it is also important to build a multilayered network among allies and like-minded countries, expand it, and strengthen deterrence. To this end, while utilizing frameworks such as the Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Australia, and others, Japan will strengthen security cooperation with Australia, India, the Republic of Korea (ROK), European countries, ASEAN countries, Canada, NATO, the EU, and others.

The Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement[5] was signed with Australia in January, and at the Japan-Australia Summit in October, the leaders signed the new Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. Japan has been continuing to steadily strengthen and expand cooperation with Australia in the field of security to ensure peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

With European countries, the EU and NATO, Japan has been strengthening security cooperation based on the recognition that the security of Europe and of the Indo-Pacific regions is inseparable. European countries, the EU and NATO are increasing their interest in the Indo-Pacific and against this backdrop, Foreign Minister Hayashi became the first Foreign Minister of Japan to attend a NATO Foreign Minister's meeting in April, and in June, Prime Minister Kishida became the first Prime Minister of Japan to attend a NATO summit. In December, Japan, the UK and Italy announced that they have reached a mutual understanding on the joint development of next-generation fighter aircraft (the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP)) and in January 2023, Japan and the UK signed the Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement[6]. Japan will continue to promote concrete cooperation with European countries, the EU and NATO to expand their engagement to the Indo-Pacific.

(3) Relations with Neighboring Countries and others

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

While there are various possibilities between Japan and China, China's unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea, including the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea are intensifying, and there are a number of challenges and concerns, such as China's intensification of a series of military activities around Taiwan, which includes the landing of ballistic missiles in the waters near Japan including its EEZ in August. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is also important. Furthermore, Japan is seriously concerned about the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the situation in Hong Kong. At the same time, both Japan and China have a great responsibility for the peace and prosperity of the region and the international community. Japan will communicate with China at various levels, including with leaders and foreign ministers, firmly assert its position and strongly request responsible actions by China, while at the same time continuing dialogue

4 Providing deterrence that a country possesses to its allies and others.
5 An agreement which establishes procedures between Japan and Australia for the cooperative activities conducted by defense force of one country while visiting the other country, and defines the status of the visiting force
6 An agreement which establishes procedures between Japan and the UK for the cooperative activities conducted by defense force of one country while visiting the other country, and defines the status of the visiting force.

including issues of concern and cooperating on matters of common interest. It is important that both Japan and China make efforts to build constructive and stable relations.

The ROK is an important neighboring country with which Japan should cooperate in dealing with various issues of the international community. With the response to North Korea and other issues in mind, there is no question as to the importance of enhancing Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK strategic coordination, including in the area of security. It is necessary to restore and further advance sound Japan-ROK relations, based on the platform on which friendly and cooperative bilateral relations have been built since the normalization of diplomatic relations. Building on the results of the Japan-ROK Summit Meeting held on November, Japan will continue to communicate closely with the ROK government. In addition, Takeshima is an inherent territory of Japan both 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.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine shakes the very foundation of the international order. The series of actions by Russia, including the illegal "annexation" of parts of Ukraine and the killing of innocent civilians, are in violation of international law and can never be justified. Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, takes the position that Russia's nuclear threat is absolutely unacceptable, let alone the use of such weapons. The security in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific region can no longer be discussed separately. Japan, with its strong determination not to allow any unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force in any region, will continue to work closely with the international community, including the G7, and strongly promote sanctions against Russia and support for Ukraine. In regard to relations with Russia, Japan will respond in a manner that protects its national interests. Japan-Russia relations are in a difficult situation due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and Japan is not in a situation to talk about the prospects for peace treaty negotiations, but Japan will firmly maintain its policy of concluding a peace treaty through resolution of the territorial issue. In addition, the resumption of the Four-Island exchange program and others including the Visits to Graves, is one of the highest priorities for Japan-Russia relations in the future.

Regarding Japan-North Korea relations, the Government of Japan has been seeking to normalize its relations with North Korea through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. While ensuring the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions by the international community, Japan will continue to aim for the complete denuclearization of North Korea, coordinating closely with the U.S. and the ROK, and cooperating with the international community, including in the UN Security Council. In addition, the abductions issue, which is a top priority for the administration, is a humanitarian issue with a time constraint. It is a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens, and at the same time, it is a universal issue for the international community as a violation of basic human rights. There is no time to lose before we resolve the abductions issue. Japan will continue to make utmost efforts to realize the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date while working closely with relevant countries, including the U.S.

(4) Regional Diplomacy Issues

The crisis brought about by the upheaval of the international order is not "someone else's problem" for any country or region in the world. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a challenge to the very foundation of the international order based on the rule of law. It has also caused a serious impact on the Indo-Pacific region, Middle East, Africa, and other regions through rising food and energy prices. Japan must also look at the issue of attempts by Russia, China, and other countries to divide the international community by disseminating disinformation. In particular, emerging and developing countries, also known as the Global South, are increasing their presence, and it is important for Japan to strengthen cooperation with these countries. In particular, in addressing common global challenges, Japan must take an inclusive approach, listen carefully to the voices of these countries, and provide them with the support they truly need. Such steady diplomacy

will further strengthen a free and open order based on the rule of law in the international community.

Facing the Indian Ocean, Southwest Asia is a strategically important region located at a strategic point along the sea lanes of communication linking Japan with the Middle East and Africa. This region, with a population of approximately 1.8 billion people 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 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 Island region is a very important region from the perspective of realizing FOIP. Looking ahead to the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM) to be held in 2024, Japan will robustly support the development of Pacific Island countries and their unity, respecting the needs of each country, through the PALM Ministerial Interim Meeting in 2023, bilateral dialogues and others, 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 gone through various conflicts and disputes throughout its history. Tense and unstable situations as well as severe humanitarian conditions still persist. 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 frameworks such as the "Japan-Arab Political Dialogue."

Africa, which is expected to account for a quarter of the world's population by 2050, is a continent supported by young people with plenty of hope and a dynamic growth perspective. For approximately 30 years since Japan launched the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, Japan has provided support based on the spirit of unfailingly supporting African-led development. At TICAD 8 in August, Japan strongly conveyed the message that Japan will promote initiatives as "a partner growing together with Africa" with quintessentially Japanese approaches, focusing on "people". Japan will continue to contribute to the realization of the resilient Africa that Africa itself aims to achieve, and to further deepen Japan-Africa relations.

Many Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) countries share fundamental values with Japan and are partners with a strong presence in the international arena. Their strategic importance in ensuring supply of resources is also increasing against the backdrop of the recent energy and food crises. Japan will continue to cooperate with these countries to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order. In addition, Japan will also work with the Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) communities and people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, who have supported the traditional friendly relations between Japan and the LAC, and strengthen cooperation in various fields to narrow the development gap in LAC countries and to achieve inclusive and sustainable development through Green Transformation (GX) and Digital Transformation (DX) that will bring about new growth.

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.

Japan, based on the fine-tuned regional diplomacy that it has established with countries in all regions,

will continue its efforts to share the importance of order based on the rule of law and to maintain and strengthen this together for the stability of the regional and international community.

(5) Dealing with the Common Challenges of Humankind

Japan must take the lead in addressing the common challenges of humankind, in order to ensure the international order that it defends, to receive the trust of people around the world. Developing countries, which make up the majority of the international community, are facing increasingly complex international circumstances and worsening global challenges, and finding it difficult to foresee stable development. Against this backdrop, Japan will further expand and enhance ODA -one of the most important tools of diplomacy- and accelerate efforts to realize FOIP and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its strategic and effective use based on the concept of human security in the new era. To this end, Japan will revise the Development Cooperation Charter by the first half of 2023.

In response to rising food prices caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan will work to support vulnerable countries through cooperation with international organizations and like-minded countries, including through the TICAD process and other mean.

Climate change is a common challenge to all humankind and a critical issue that the entire international community collectively needs to address. In light of the situation in Ukraine, balancing efforts to address climate change with the need to strengthen energy security has become an important issue. Based on the outcome of COP27 held in November, Japan continues to address climate change issues and calls on all parties to take further actions, including efforts to reduce emissions in line with the 1.5 °C goal[7].

Regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan will continue to steadily advance realistic and practical efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons, including the "Hiroshima Action Plan"[8] proposed by Prime Minister Kishida as the first step of a realistic road map which would take us from the "reality" of a harsh security environment to the "ideal" of a world without nuclear weapons, based on the foundation of trust with its ally, the U.S. In this regard, Japan will further foster the momentum of the international community toward a world without nuclear weapons including through the meetings of the International Group of Eminent Persons (IGEP)[9] and also deepen discussions with G7 members and others in order to send a powerful message at the G7 Hiroshima Summit.

Global health is an important issue that directly affects not only people's health but also economy, society, and national security. Based on the lessons learned from COVID-19, Japan will contribute to the development of global health architecture that contributes to enhancing prevention, preparedness, and response to future health emergencies, while leading the response to global health challenges set back by COVID-19 to achieve universal health coverage (UHC)[10].

Japan will also proactively address various issues that must be resolved to achieve the SDGs, including plastic pollution, biodiversity conservation, the escalating humanitarian crisis, refugees and displaced persons, terrorism and violent extremism, and gender equality.

In order to protect human rights, which are fundamental values, Japan will promote human rights diplomacy in its own way, by speaking out firmly against serious violations of human rights and encouraging the efforts of countries that are trying to make improvements through "dialogue and cooperation."

7 The goal stated in the Paris Agreement, which is to limit the global average temperature increase to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to continue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

8 The plan based on the following five actions proposed by Prime Minister Kishida at the Tenth NPT Review Conference held in August as the first step of a realistic roadmap toward a world without nuclear weapons: (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 in the global nuclear stockpile, (4) securing nuclear non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, (5) encouraging visits to the affected communities by international leaders and others.

9 An international meeting of which Prime Minister Kishida announced the launch in his policy speech in January. 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. The first meeting was held in Hiroshima in December.

10 Universal Health Coverage (UHC): To ensure that all people can receive the quality health services they need at an affordable cost without financial hardship.

(6) Strengthening of Comprehensive Foreign Policy Implementation Structure

In order to steadily achieve concrete results regarding the above issues, it is essential to ensure a flexible foreign policy implementation structure and to improve the working environment and the livelihood of staff members of overseas missions who are at the forefront of diplomatic activities. In this light, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) will work to improve various benefits affected by the fluctuation of foreign exchange rates and the rising cost of living. In addition, MOFA will work to fundamentally strengthen the foreign and consular policy implementation structure including its staffing, financial basis including further expansion of ODA, and digital transformation (DX) promotion, and to engage in strategic communication. MOFA will also strive to increase the number of Japanese nationals working at international organizations, expand the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, and strengthen cooperation with Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) communities. Furthermore, MOFA will also play a steadfast role toward the inscription of the "Sado Island Gold Mines" on the World Heritage List. With the renewed international exchange activity that has accompanied the relaxation of border measures, the Ministry will also continue to take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals overseas.

Column

State Funeral for the Late Prime Minister ABE Shinzo

Prime Minister Kishida delivering a memorial address (September 27, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

On September 27, the state funeral for the late Prime Minister ABE Shinzo was held at the *Nippon Budokan*, attended by more than 700 guests, including 48 foreign leaders, from 217 countries and regions. The presence of such a large number of people from overseas was a sign of respect and condolences. On the evening of the day of the funeral, Prime Minister Kishida, together with Mrs. ABE Akie, the spouse of former Prime Minister Abe, and others, took the opportunity to directly express appreciation to the foreign representatives that attended the funeral and to respond courteously to the condolences expressed from overseas.

Some attendees made comments that former Prime Minister Abe was an outstanding global leader, that they wanted to remember his achievements, and that it was a great honor to attend the state funeral, which honored former Prime Minister Abe, who made great contributions to world peace, including the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

From September 26 to 29, Prime Minister Kishida and Foreign Minister Hayashi respectively held 38 and 24 meetings with visiting foreign dignitaries. They were able to hold multilayered and multifaceted meetings with many leaders from all over the world visiting Japan at the same time, including the U.S., Australia, India, ASEAN, Pacific Island countries, Europe including the EU, and also from the Middle East and Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

During the meetings, there were fruitful discussions on a wide range of topics, such as the maintenance and strengthening of the international order based on the rule of law as advocated by former Prime Minister Abe, the promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" for that purpose, the security situation in the Indo-Pacific region including the East China Sea and South China Sea, issues related to North Korea, the situation over Ukraine, and cooperation for strengthening the overall functions of the United Nations. This demonstrated both in Japan and abroad that the Kishida administration is determined to firmly carry on and develop the diplomatic legacy fostered by former Prime Minister Abe.

Prime Minister Kishida shaking hands during a meeting with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, who attended the state funeral (September 26, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

Foreign Minister Hayashi holding a meeting with Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, who attended the state funeral (September 27, Tokyo)