

Focus: The Fragmenting World and the Diplomacy of Developing Countries (Summary)

Essay: The Global South and Japan in the Changing International Order

Keiichi Tsunekawa (Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo and GRIPS)

Liberal internationalism, a principle of international order with which the Japanese have become familiar since the end of World War II, is based on the principle of resolving disputes and conflicts of interest within and among sovereign states in accordance with rules established by consensus among the constituent members of the domestic and international orders. In contrast, “statist unilateralism,” based foremost on the principles of autocratic rule at home and national unilateralism abroad, has come to be practiced mainly by China and Russia. Countries of the Global South, however, view the current situation in terms not of a “choice of international order principles” but rather a “competition for hegemony among the superpowers,” a framework outside which they themselves can remain. Faced with the challenges of slow economic growth and the COVID pandemic, continued economic growth has become a central issue in maintaining power for the political leaders of the Global South, so they seek to extract the maximum benefit from the two-sided competition. Having no other option but “liberal internationalism,” Japan must prevent the spread of “statist unilateralism” by encouraging developed Western countries to refrain from populist unilateral practices while at the same time contributing to the economic development of the countries of the Global South.

1 Diplomacy of the Philippines as an Emerging State: Strengthening Relations with the US, Deepening Regional Diplomacy, and Enhancing Internationalist Diplomacy

Yusuke Takagi (Associate Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies [GRIPS])

Not all emerging states are revisionists. The Philippine government has actively developed its diplomacy to strengthen a rules based international order. The new Marcos administration’s foreign policy has three distinctive features. First, there is a clear trend toward strengthening relations with the United States, an approach institutionally sustained by experts in the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defense. We should not forget the fact that Philippine – US relations have been bolstered in the dynamic regional context where US allies such as Japan and Australia are making proactive engagements on multiple fronts. Second, the Marcos administration has made clear its emphasis on international law in its diplomacy, as seen not only in the Philippines’ disputes with China in the South China Sea but also in its bilateral relations with Indonesia. Third, it is difficult to find the distinctive features of Philippine diplomacy within ASEAN, which does not mean that it generally grows stagnant. The new Marcos administration’s diplomacy entails strengthening ties with the US, diversifying in ways that correspond to the transformation of the US – led security architecture in the Indo-Pacific, and deepening relations with neighboring Southeast Asian countries, all of which are being pursued via approaches that are not necessarily visible in Philippine diplomacy within ASEAN.

2 Brazil's Multilateral Diplomacy:

Lula's Emphasis on National Interests and Vision for a Multipolar World

Akiko Koyasu (Professor, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University)

The diplomacy of the Lula administration inaugurated in January 2023 has been clearly characterized in statements made by the president and his foreign minister. During the presidency of Bolsonaro, a former military officer and right-wing populist, Brazil became increasingly isolated in the international arena. This was due to the president's disregard for the environment and climate change issues as well as his mishandling of the COVID pandemic. Lula described Brazil's standing under his predecessor: "no one listened to Brazil, and Brazil did not listen to the rest of the world". Lula is now in his third term as president, a first in Brazil's modern history. He conducts diplomacy with the determination to make Brazil once again a nation that is needed by the world, to carry on the assertive presidential diplomacy that Lula himself had practiced during his first and second terms in office, and to restore Brazil to a leading role on the international stage. Brazil is a country with a multilateral foreign policy designed to realize a multipolar world. This paper explores the aims and possibilities of the diplomacy of Lula's third administration amid the ongoing bipolarization of the world driven by the US-China and US-Russia confrontations.

3 Africa and Japanese Diplomacy in the Great Power Competition:

Considering the African Policies of Russia and China

Keiichi Shirato (Professor, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University)

For many years, Japan's diplomacy toward Africa has been focusing on the pursuit of "development" and "peace and stability" in Africa. However, since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it has become clear that this war is a matter of restructuring the international order, Japan's diplomacy toward Africa now faces a new challenge: how to increase the number of nations in Africa that share the value of "freedom". In Africa, Russia is building on a relationship that has been in place since the Cold War era, and they are cultivating pro-Russian public opinion by using "information warfare" to unearth "anti-Western" sentiments that have settled deep in the hearts of African people. In addition, China is using its huge economic presence as a weapon to seize the initiative in African development. Some countries in Africa lean toward China and Russia, and political leaders have expressed their refusal to be drawn into the great power competition between the free world and China and Russia. On the other hand, the desire for freedom and democracy is strong among the peoples in Africa, which is a hope for Japanese diplomacy.

4 Leveraging Great Power Competition:

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policies Toward the United States, China, and Russia Since Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022

Shigeto Kondo (Senior Researcher, JIME Center, The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan)

Saudi Arabia has been trying to take advantage of competition between the major powers, e.g., between the US and Russia/China, and has been skillfully securing its national interests since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Wishing to deal a blow to Russia's finances, the US in 2022 stepped up its request that Saudi Arabia increase its oil production. Since Saudis responded with a gesture to increase its oil production, President Biden decided to visit Saudi Arabia. In the context of the US-China confrontation, Saudi Arabia went behind the US' back and moved to restore diplomatic relations with Iran through China's mediation despite the US pushing for closer relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saudi Arabia was able to play this game with the US and the other major powers because of its great influence derived from its huge oil production capacity.

It would be difficult for Japan to single-handedly influence the behavior of such a skillful diplomatic actor as Saudi Arabia but, by working with the US and other Western nations and by coordinating policies closely with Saudi Arabia, Japan could have some impact on its behavior and perceptions.

5 Expanding Multi-vector Diplomacy in Central Asia: Small and Medium-sized Countries Need Competitive Coexistence, Not Partition of the World

Tomohiko Uyama (Professor, Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University)

The war of aggression in Ukraine poses challenges for Central Asian countries with close ties to Russia, including dealing with sanctions against that country, but it also creates new partnership options as the world pays increasing attention to the region. They have not disengaged with Russia, taking a wait-and-see attitude amid the stalemate in the war, but have clearly distanced themselves from Russia's war; Kazakhstan in particular is increasingly wary of Russia. At the same time, relations between Central Asia and countries outside the region other than Russia are becoming more active, although even the remarkable progress in ties with China has its limits. The fact that relations with the West are improving significantly and that the region is showing affinity with Turkey, which conducts its own diplomacy maintaining relations with both Russia and the West, indicates that international relations involving Central Asia are moving toward competitive coexistence rather than fragmentation. Japan needs to re-energize its diplomacy with the Central Asian countries, which are vital to maintaining balance in the world order.