

JFIR's Comprehensive Research Project on
"Japan's Diplomatic Strategy in the Era of Power Transition"

Secretariat, Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc.

1. Introduction

This is a comprehensive research project launched by JFIR on the occasion of its 30th anniversary of JFIR, when the international society is undergoing a significant turning point, with a view to clarifying a mega-trend of the international society today and then to drafting out a grand design of the diplomatic strategy for Japan to pursue.

2. Background and Purpose

Emerging countries which are steadily increasing their national power are bringing both risks and opportunities to the international society. Recognizing this reality without excess or deficiency, especially on the case of China, this project evaluates the ideal way of engagement and hedging, taking a deeper step than policy toward China thus far, and aims to find out what is necessary toward the goal to controlling the risks and utilizing the opportunities.

3. Research System

This project constitutes the following four branches.

Branch 1: China Risks and China Opportunities – How Japan and the U.S. Should Respond

Branch Leader: KAMIYA Mataka, Director, JFIR / Professor, National Defense Academy of Japan

Introduction: It is an urgent matter for the international community to find out how to face properly with China which continues to rise and increase its assertiveness. This problem is particularly serious for Japan and the U.S., which has been leading the formation and maintenance of the international order so far. Based on the recognition that the rise of China is bringing both risks and opportunities to the international community, this branch analyzes China problems and explore the desirable direction of policy toward China based on Japan-U.S. collaboration.

Branch 2: Eurasian International Strategic Environment in Transition and Japan's Diplomacy

Branch Leader: WATANABE Hirotaka, Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Introduction: Currently, the Eurasian international strategic environment is dramatically changing with the realization of the idea of "One-Belt, One-Road" of China and the increasing uncertainty of the EU's future. Given this situation, this branch aims to explore the direction of diplomatic strategy that Japan should adopt in order to contribute to the realization of "free and open Eurasia" through controlling the risks rising with such transition while fully utilizing opportunities brought on the other side of the transition.

Branch 3: Japan's Economic Diplomacy in the Era of "Geo-economics"

Branch Leader: KAWAI Masahiro, Specially Appointed Professor, The University of Tokyo

Introduction: In recent years, from the viewpoint of guaranteeing security while pursuing economic interests of a nation, major countries and regions such as the U.S., the EU, China, etc. are practicing economic diplomacy based on "geo-economics" including setting of international norms and rules and establishing regional economic group. Given this situation, this branch explores the direction of economic diplomacy Japan should take to create a desirable international environment for Japan.

Branch 4: New Maritime Strategy of Japan

Branch Leader: ITO Go, Professor, Meiji University

Introduction: The current situation of China's external development, especially the way of its maritime advancement, is sometimes recognized to be in violation of existing international law and norms. However, countermeasures effective as an international society have not been taken against this current situation. Given this reality, while emphasizing conventional approach toward China to abide by the existing international law and norms, this branch aims to explore the direction of multilateral strategic approach to develop the premised regional environment for the conventional approach.