

Outline of Discussion of “The JFIR International Colloquium”

The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) organized The JFIR International Colloquium on “Japan-China Relations in the Era of Power Transition” at the Conference Room of JFIR in Tokyo on August 1, 2018.



This Colloquium was intended as an occasion for an exchange of views between a Chinese delegation of 6 experts including WU Shicun, President of China’s National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCS), JIANG Xinfeng Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Foreign Military Studies, Chinese Academy of Military Sciences and HU Bo, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Ocean Research of Peking University, and a Japanese delegation of 9 experts including ITO Go, Director of Research of JFIR / Professor of Meiji University, TAKAHARA Akio, Superior Research Fellow of JFIR / Professor of the University of Tokyo and TERADA Takashi, Professor of Doshisha University, discussing such topic as “Power Transition and Maritime Order” and “Toward a Future-Oriented Japan-China Relationship” in two sessions.

As this Colloquium was convened behind the closed doors, only the brief summary of the discussions is introduced as follows;

In Session I, the Chinese side shared their perspective on today’s security landscape in East Asia, saying that, while the rise of China is recognized by some countries as a threat, causing power

transition in and outside the region, its increasing presence in and outside the region is appropriate and moderate based on their territory and population size, and the issues as seen in the South China Sea today are originated from the differences over the understanding of international and maritime rules, of which some need to be revisited. In response, the Japanese side argued that, while unnecessary challenges should not be posed, China would not feel at peace if the same were done to them by Japan, as the cases of Chinese ships excessively fishing in the Japanese water, damaging biological environment, or Chinese military vessels cruising through straits around Japan.

In Session II, the Japanese side demonstrated the history of Japan-China relations, particularly since the signing of Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China which this year marks its 40th anniversary, calling attention to the political wisdom then agreed upon between the two parties to mutually restrain itself, to establish a peaceful problem-solving mechanism, as well as to share the vision and norm of the order in East Asia. In response, the Chinese side illustrated that China portrays itself still as a developing country struggling with its domestic issues, though the size is the biggest in the world, while the pressure is amounting from outside as well, so it would be rather productive if the relation with China is established based on the understanding of such a delicate situation that China is currently in.

(JFIR secretariat is responsible for this summary.)