## **QI Panel:**

## **Japan’s Middle Power Diplomacy in an Era of U.S.-China Rivalry**

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**Michael Swaine 0:46**

Hello, I'm Michael Swaine, senior research fellow in the East Asia program at the Quincy Institute for Responsible statecraft. Thank you for joining us today for a presentation and discussion of an extremely important 78 page report on Japan's Asia strategy recently issued in Japan and here in the US in both English and Japanese. The English and Japanese PDFs by the way can be downloaded from the link included in this webinar announcement. The report is entitled "Asia's Future at a Crossroads, a Japanese Strategy for Peace and Sustainable Prosperity". It presents a new and in my view more realistic strategy for Japan's Asia policy than the one recently unveiled in Tokyo in its national security strategy of December 2022. Overall, the report argues that Tokyo should pursue a more proactive, middle power diplomacy to mitigate US China rivalry, avoid a sharp division in Asia and prevent great power conflict. It advocates a wide range of security economic, diplomatic and political recommendations, covering Japan's involvement in Asia. It reflects the culmination of over four years of study and debate among 11 prominent scholars and former practitioners of Japanese Foreign Policy and International Relations, most of whom are based in Japan. For today's webinar, our panel includes four individuals. Three of the project participants, Professor Yoshihide Soeya yet is Professor Emeritus at Keio University, and has served as an adviser to the Japanese government. Dr. Kuniko Ashizawa is an adjunct professor at George Washington University and American University. And Mike Mochizuki, is a Non Resident Fellow at Quincy, as well as a chaired professor at George Washington University in Japanese Security Studies. Professors Soeya and Mochizuki are the co- conveners of the project that produced the report we're discussing today. And last, but by no means least, we have Mr. Hitoshi Tanaka to provide his critique of the report. Mr. Tanaka served as Japan's Deputy Foreign Minister, and has been one of the key architects of its foreign policy in Asia. Now, the way we'll proceed is that Soeya-san Mike and Kuniko will each have five minutes to answer an initial round of questions, and Tanaka-san will have 10 to 12 minutes to give his critique of the report. After the first round of questions, if we have time, I may have time to follow up with a few questions or ask the panelists to respond to some of the points made by others. And then finally, I'll raise some questions from the audience. So we only have one hour. So we'll move through this and hopefully cover all these areas. So to begin to, so Hassan I have two questions. First question is really a sort of the most fundamental one, I guess basic one, which is what motivated this Asia's future research report this what made it what motivated your research group to actually produce this report in the first place? What were the main issues or concerns that you had that you thought it was necessary to come out with this report? Yoshi.

**Yoshihide Soeya 4:49**

Thank you, Michael, for introducing the project report and chairing this important seminar. And I'm very glad that you read our report as being realistic. And of course, that's what we really think about. And the motivations of this research project. Are there, of course, quite a few points. But the most important one is our concerns about the so called paradigm shift explicit in the Japanese mainstream discourse on security, and which is also reflected in the national security strategy document. And paradigm shift, I think, from the long held basic assumptions of Japanese diplomacy. And first explicit one is, of course, the emphasis on geopolitical challenges, dimensions of power politics. And secondly, emphasis on Japan's military self help increase in Japanese self defense capabilities, as the central element of our coping national strategy. I think both of these are very new to Japan. And, and, and but Japan doesn't have enough capability to to, you know, meet those challenges, as analyzed, of course not. So in this discourse, there is a huge discrepancy between the emphasis on geopolitical challenges, and the emphasis on Japan self help. And the document will never be complete, who is not really complete without interjecting the role of the United States, or the US Japan alliance to fill this gap. So this is the basic structure the report and the main discourse in Japan in recent years. So literally, Japan is stuck with the United States, according to this paradigm, so there are, you know, some subset of concerns or worries. First, is the US that reliable? If you essays, this, this strategy may be functional under perfect, that there is a huge question about the future of the United States. And secondly, where is the Japanese traditional diplomacy as a nexus between the United States and Asia. And in a way the Japan or the US, both strategies are propelling a collision course, if you will, and which contribute to the Division of Asia in the worst case. So these concerns are really behind, you know, the 11 scholars getting together and trying to think of an alternative, more realistic strategic vision.

**Michael Swaine 7:51**

Right, well, just to follow up on that, then what you point to is the one or two of this specific policy recommendations that you that you find most most cogent, most interesting of the report that relates to this, this new alternative to the paradigm that's dominant now in in Tokyo, and it's in its foreign policy, what would you point to as a couple of, of the recommendations, that would be the most interesting?

**Yoshihide Soeya 7:04**

Well, all the recommendations should be should be interesting in the sense that, you know, they are somewhat alien in the discourse of Japanese security. And, you know, as a result of over emphasizing geopolitical challenges, and, you know, this goes, this misses is still remaining possibilities of consolidating, you know, code even coextensive with China, and consolidating cooperation among regional countries. And rather than raising, you know, one or two, and well, if I may, one most controversial one to traditional sort of security in discourse. People would be to, to ask the Japanese government to come out with more explicitly about their opposition to the so called independence of Taiwan. And of course, at the same time, opposition to the use of force is equally important. But, you know, the spirit behind this this sort of proposal is that these proposals policy recommendation could be a common denominator, so to speak, to build cooperation and work with other Asian nations to avoid a division in the regional order and to build a regional network of what we call middle power cooperation.

**Michael Swaine 9:51**

Great. Okay. Thank you. Thanks very much. Well, let me turn to Mike now for a for a couple of questions. Mike. What do you see when you look at this report as the as the major potential friction between the strategy that was outlined in the report? And the current nature of the US Japan alliance, in terms of both US and Japanese policies and expectations were? Where are the major discrepancies in your view?

**Mike Mochizuki 10:33**

Michael, thanks for that question. So before I address the issue of friction, potential friction between the United States and Japan if our ideas are implemented, just so that there's no misunderstanding, let me just emphasize that our report assumes that there is a general convergence of strategic perspectives, interests and values between the United States and Japan, and that Japan, as well as the United States, certainly find Chinese assertiveness and economic and military coercion, worrisome. And we emphasize that many times in the report that the US Japan alias should continue to be one of the key pillars of Japanese foreign policy in Asia. And we also emphasize the importance of political and military deterrence. But on the issue of friction, despite this basic convergence and strategic perspectives, between the United States and Japan, we recognize that there are probably differences and approach priorities and outlook. One stems, basically, from Japan's geographic proximity to China. So I think Japan more than the United States would probably put greater priority have greater sensitivity on trying to avoid a confrontational relationship with China, and to reduce tensions to prevent war. Secondly, we think we argued that Japan's approach is less ideological. And so Japan does not want to divide the region and the world into kind of two warring camps, what America is often referred to this conflict between democracies and authoritarian states. And so while we emphasize and acknowledges the diversity of political systems in Asia, and we put priority on peaceful coexistence, and an open and inclusive regionalism, now, while some of the ideas in the report, if implemented, just disappoint American policymakers and even cause frictions in US Japan relations, for sure. But I think it really depends on the perspectives within the American policy community. For those Americans who want to transform the US Japan alliance, and the US of America, US Alliance Network, in the region, into a hard military alliance that sort of like Nadler to contain China, and to lock Japan in terms of military operations to defend Taiwan, they will certainly be disappointed. But an American who was concerned about some of the extreme anti China voices in the US policy community should welcome our ideas and recommendations. And I think our ideas and recommendations should help those in the the Biden administration, the moderate voices in the Biden administration, that want to engage constructively with China, and to stabilize US China relations. In short, you know, I think what we're trying to do is to stake a a broad, middle and moderate ground between the extreme views that have become more influential in the United States. But we argue that Japan can do this alone. And we recognize that Japan continues to be a major power, but it needs to build coalitions with other countries. And this is why we advocate a middle power diplomacy. And we see the Republic of Korea as Japan's most important middle power partner in East Asia. And I think our views know might overlap with the so called spirit of Camp David by in August, but we want to kind of reorient the US, Japan South Korean interest action, so that there's greater emphasis on Restabilization of relations with China, but also constructive diplomacy towards North Korea. And some of those ideas, I think was certainly cause some friction among the hardliners in the US policy community.

**Michael Swaine 15:22**

Great. Well, thank you. Well, speaking about middle power diplomacy, then, I mean, what, what, what two or three year things would you say, to try to convince Washington and Beijing for that matter, about the importance of Japan pursuing this kind of role? Because it's possible that that one or both of these countries could see this effort, say, from the United States perspective as as a way of weakening the alliance in maybe not intentionally, of course, but in indirectly. So what would you say would be the best argument for putting forth this notion for the need for Japan to take a much more active role in leading middle powers?

**Mike Mochizuki 16:09**

Great, so for the alliance for the US-Japan alliance and we certainly feel that the US Japan alliance remains important for deterrence. But the alliance should not be an end in itself. It is a means to an end and the ultimate end is to maintain peace in the region. But, you know, we would argue that the way the alliance has been perceived sometimes in Washington, Washington, DC, is an alliance to contain China, which could exacerbate a security dilemma with China, and in the end, could make the region more unstable. So we see the importance of not only pursuing deterrence, but pursuing diplomacy, and an enlightened view of American interests, should actually embrace that approach. But I know that, given the paradigm shift that we see in the United States, there will be some who will not appreciate our ideas, but I think that would be an enlightened policy approach for the United States. And it will be the same towards China. I mean, we are not for appeasing China. I mean, we have many passages that are quite critical of China. But if China really is interested in peaceful coexistence, and regional stability, then an enlightened Chinese view would be one that would embrace our ideas.

**Michael Swaine 17:52**

Right. Okay, thank you very much, Kuniko. Let me let me turn to you now for a few minutes. We've just heard some comments about very concrete security issues. But in addition to that, the report also examines Japan's policies regarding regional, economic and transnational challenges. So what are some of the policy issues in these areas that are addressed in the report? And what are the relevant recommendations that the report makes in these areas? Kuniko?

**Kuniko Ashizawa 18:28**

Thank you. We so this regional economy Korean and also transnational challenges at the at the area for Japan to kind of work in complete manner to exercise the kind of the idea for the new Japanese diplomacy, which is neither party promising also throw us but simultaneously more kind of independent, autonomous supporting policy. And then particularly in the economic arena, we started Japan actually had been doing this type of middle power diplomacy and and also a little bit more proactive things since the 1970s. So we like to depend on the mind leaders, all kinds of policy makers to what Japan has done it before and to kind of revitalize that what the country has been doing, because there's, again, a professor Soeya point, that paradigm shift and thinking in Japan and so that there will be a plus to be less emphasis on that achievement Japan has done. And in particularly in these two areas, because the economy issues and then also to national challenge issues. It requires some type of regional cooperation and coordination among the states in Asia, and so that we thought that Japan can utilize those mechanisms. So in a way to indeed prevent and avert division in Asia, because old middle powers, and then also small powers in Asia, do not want to see the sharp division in Asia. And then also because Japan as a leading middle pass to the second largest economy, so we went to kind of use this arena to depend exercise a little bit more, they've saved by the busy ball, that diplomacy in a way to contribute them more and see that the general public goods for sustainable MC that prosperities, and they also economy development. And then I can probably put only like maybe one or two examples in this five minutes.

One example for this middle part diplomacy and avoiding division in Asia is our idea for the CPP CP TPP. The comprehensive progressive agreement on Trans Pacific Partnership for this particular section, we did propose Japan still should encourage the US to join in the future, maybe in the long term, that to join CP TPP. In the meantime, we also suggested, as they argue that Japan also continue to encourage South Korea, which is immediately kind of already ready to join economically ready to join CP TPP. And then maybe other developed economies like could we use even to join to consider joining CP TPP. So that in May kind of say that mechanism that is flamer as a more inclusive, in a way this is in line with the Oakland A's you know, it's not that should definitely help the future of Asia.

And then the last part of the CPT CP TPP proposal is that we thought that we will also at the time, probably tried to bring Taiwan and also China together within secretively because that would make a sense for economically but also politically, I mean, in terms of use, you know of any population what or what to avoid the division in Asia. But in order to do so, there's a little bit harder to make China Post China and Taiwan to join. So our proposal also kind of specified that Japan need to kind of conduct the diplomacy to make China in Taiwan simultaneous admission joining CP TPP came in with the collaboration with other Asian countries. So that's a kind of one concrete proposal we put out for the Japanese, the monitor the leadership for the leading middle part, diplomacy in Asia. We also discussed about climate change, which is a transnational challenge arena. And in again, Japan has been doing the least at least I see Japanese kind of effort for that the climate change or environmental issues in Asia, but a little bit kind of slowed down. But we thought is the political the blood bank, its effort to contribute that during the Asian Panthers dealing with climate challenge and other environmental challenges. And for that, for this particular arena, we suggested Japan and in China was a really important actors. Influential we see that consequential actors for the regional economy, environmental issues, particularly climate change, so that we suggested to countries indeed, maybe six to work together for the developing the new environmental technologies, because bowser can say they are specialized in getting the new technologies but the also the two countries may consider working together for introducing low carbon infrastructures and development in the third countries in Asia, ie the developed developing countries in Asia. So by with disconnect to example, we kind of visualize that what Japan can do in multilateral religion or institutional building, but also what Japan can do in cooperation with China in a way to proceed to middle power diplomacy.

**Michael Swaine 24:53**

Right. Well, thank you very much Kuniko. Now I'd like to turn to Tanaka, Todd. knock us down. Ken, basic question. Can you give us your comments on the report or your critique of the report? Do you agree or disagree with the reports? Overarching perspective, its emphasis on middle power, diplomacy, etc. And if you could give us a few of your thoughts on some of the concrete policy recommendations, please.

**Hitoshi Tanaka 25:41**

Okay. Okay, since I left my government about 20 years ago, therefore, I don't represent the government today. As soon as I put it, I may be belonging to the old part of Japanese traditional diplomacy. Therefore, I, there is a large agreement. In my, in this in this report, I can agree to almost all the part except a few. Therefore, I will, in particular, I would very much like to agree to the concept that deterrence, the expansion of Japanese military power itself couldn't resolve anything. What is important, is a diplomacy in line with the expanding Japanese defense capability and enhanced deterrence against China against North Korea against Russia, therefore, to must go along with the enhanced deterrence, and also diplomacy and the poor that Japan must be very proactive. I agreed to the basic concept of this report.

But I don't agree to the categorization of middle power diplomacy, because, you know, it's middle power categorization is a kind of belittling thing. From different angle, Japan may be still big power. And small countries like Singapore like Mongolia, they can play a very, very active important role. Therefore, I think, categorization of middle power that bothers me a lot. Therefore, there is no point of categorizing Japan's diplomacy as middle power diplomacy. What is important in substance of that diplomacy, not categorization of that diplomacy.

My third point is a question of the Japanese basic goal, diplomatic goal, as Soeya-san and others said, we will we would not like to see a divisive Asia, we would not like to see a divisive Asia. But listening to the the political leaders or even bureaucratic leaders in the United States say, it appears to me that the United States policy is very much depend upon the concept of a kind of old, black and white, kind of, you know, assuming that if you pursue the policy United States proposes, it's going to be a division of the world. President, President Biden talks about autocratic Nation versus democratic nation. What it means. I'm sure, the President would like to expand the democratic capacity of the world, but categorizing all those countries as autocracy that wouldn't help those countries to become democracy. Therefore, I mean, this is somewhat very strange. So as I as I said, we would like we would not like to see divisive Asia. Therefore, there are a couple of questions of matter of wording. It's been said that Japan places import turns on the relationship with countries who have same value. But yet, if you look at Asia, Asia is known for a kind of diversity. There are different governance, the different the different sort of scale of economies, different culture, different, different everything. Therefore, by sort of emphasizing that we are pursuing stronger relationships with countries who have the same body that, again wouldn't help the region to be, in a sense, stabilized. In particular, the question is China, what is the best way for us to cope with China? And there is no question I think everybody agrees that there is a need for joint deterrence efforts on the part of the United States in Japan based upon us Japan Security Treaty, no question. But what is important is then what should be the diplomatic policy on the part of Japan? What is, in my view? What is the most important thing is our capability to change the policy on the part of the United States? This sounds ironic, but yet, I think we talk about strengthening the Alliance relationship, in order to strength strengthen the alliance, Japanese voice must be heard. It's not like Japan following the US lead all the time. I think what is important alliances function is called upon to speak up, as this report says, for Japan to speaker, but the same time United States needs to listen to the view on the part of Japan. The question is, what would be the right way for us to be heard, take, for instance, United Kingdom, UK probably is the most intimate alliance of the United States.

But yet, I think, you know, United Kingdom is known for their very sort of talkative, talk to views vis a vis the United States during the time of Iraq, and also things. They think that alliances role of allies like UK is to make sure that the policy on the part of the United States is sound, constructive, and for that. Voice of the UK with them was very much hurt. Why? Because UK has got a leverage, leverage. I mean, UK is created in Europe, unfortunate British Britain has left the EU, but yet, the fact that the United Kingdom was a member of European Union increased the leverage on the part of UK in, you know, for the sake of the abuse being hard to the United States. Therefore, my view is, in order for Japanese voice to be heard, by the United States, we have to have our own leverage. And all leverage is our diplomacy to Asia. And if the sort of argument here is more is the same, but yet my point is, in order for us, I think it is very important for us to strengthen our relationship with the United States. Why? Because United States is the largest power in the world tends to be sort of should I say, self assertive, and unilateral to some extent, therefore, someone needs to talk to them. That this is an interest on the part of Japan this is the interest of Asia as a whole. For that, Japan must have a much more proactive diplomacy with China, vis a vis Korea, vis a vis ASEAN in the rest of Asia by having a strong alliance. I mean, by having a strong relationship with countries in Asia, we could strengthen our islands relationship with the United States. I organized Prime Minister's trip to North Korea in 2002, it was very firmly disagreed by the United States, all people categorize as neoconservative. They mad about the, the one of the closest Alliance, Japan, the Prime Minister of Japan goes to North Korea, who had been sort of set as Axis of Evil. But yet, the results I assured to the American, that Japan Japan will not damage the United States’ interests. Japan has its own agenda, the problem will try to work out our own agenda with North Korea, but yet the result of which will not harm the interests of the United States. And do you think that by Prime Minister's trip to North Korea, the relationship between Japan and the United States has been weakened? No way.

Therefore, as as Hitoshi talks about, I am for the inclusion of China, Taiwan, to CP TPP. We say to the United States, it's up to you. You may or may not wish to join in TPP. America all the time say that because of the Congress, we cannot do that. We understand that. But yet, I think the fact that the United States will not be able to join in CPP doesn't boss to pursue the inclusion of China, and also Korea, and Taiwan. So I think what I would like to emphasize is the fact that indeed, the the deterrence, increased deterrence is good. But yet the proactive diplomacy is needed. And one of the key concept is to strengthen Alliance relationship. What is needed for us to strengthen the relationship with the United States, we need to have a leverage leverage comes out of a strong relationship with countries in Asia. Let's stop here

**Michael Swaine 37:19**

Thank you. Well, we we want to emphasize for those of you listening in if you want to ask questions, please do so. You should see the option, the selection for that at the bottom of your screen. I haven't seen any questions coming in thus far. But I'm hoping that that they will. And so please do ask any questions or make comments in the q&a screen. But I would like to ask any of the participants in the report? If they have any comments on Tanaka-san’s comment about the middle power diplomacy label. I mean, it seemed Mike has raised his hand. I mean, it seemed like what you were saying Tanaka-san actually was very much like what is described in the report that that the role of Japan should be to strengthen his diplomacy in the region, with with other powers in order to gain greater leverage in its interactions with the United States in part, which. We can call it, whatever, but it sounds like that that's quite similar. But the idea of calling it middle power diplomacy, I think is something that that you that you disagree with. But anyway, Mike, you put up your hand?

**Mike Mochizuki 38:43**

Well, I'm somewhat reluctant to answer this question, because Professor Soeya is the person who wrote the definitive treatise on Japan's middle power diplomacy. But it's interesting that in the feedback that we've gotten when we rolled out the report in Japan is that that was probably the key issue that many people push back on. And I think it represents a somewhat of a misunderstanding of what we mean by middle power. So we certainly recognize that Japan in terms of power capabilities, especially on the economic side, remains a major power. But we're making a fundamental distinction between great powers and middle powers and and then what great powers do and this is, like the United States, Russia and China, is that they pursue foreign policy, oftentimes, in unilateral means, and they often might engage in the use of military force. And the middle powers that we have in mind, you know, don't tend to do that. And Japan in that sense, I think really represents what we would call a leading of middle power. And then the second point is in terms of strategic leverage, I agree with you, fundamentally Tanaka-san that the way to get the strategic leverage vis a vis the United States is for Japan to have better relations with his neighbors. And I think South Korea is really fundamental to that. But the other thing we should recognize that given the change in relative power with the rise of China, that the United States is more dependent than ever before on Japan. So the up until now, I think Japanese tend to worry that the United States is going to abandon Japan, and therefore, Japan is reluctant to speak up. But it's really now the opposite, that United States cannot pursue a effective strategy in Asia without the proactive support of Japan. And therefore the Japanese themselves should recognize that they have this leverage. And they should be willing to speak up. And this will change kind of the the routine that the United States in Japan has had over decades. Ah, and Americans will wonder well, what's happened. But nevertheless, the Japanese should feel confident that they now have this leverage, and they should be willing to speak up. And Americans will then get used to listening to the Japanese.

**Michael Swaine 41:36**

Right, Yoshi, you had your hand up as well.

**Yoshihide Soeya 41:39**

So I'll be just brief, because discussions will be endless. Panic, Hassan said categorization. To me, it's not categorization. I mean, well, even in terms of categorization, I mean, Loew Institute Asian power index, you know, these areas, categorize Japan in a group of middle powers. But anyway, that's not the point about my argument. As far as the report, it's, it's more concept. It's more strategic policy concept. And when I started this argument, I presented this as analytical concept of Japanese behavior, essentially, you know, we have constitution, particularly Article Nine, in the domain of security, and Alijah diplomacy, and the US Japan alliance. So these two premises are the fundamental premises of Japanese policies and behaviors. And I characterize these behaviors as closer to middle power behavior. And so that was my original analysis. But as far as the report goes, I mean, the substance is pretty much what we want to, you know, sort of present us a good middle power behaviors, and the middle power cooperation. And so it's a strategic sort of concept, as far as the report goes. So if that is accepted, it may just end up being as just a small, small problem of phrasing and naming this this diplomacy. And maybe if that's our level of disagreement, it's it may not be that substantial, I would think.

**Michael Swaine 43:23**

Great. Well, thank you. Tanaka-san. You put your hand up.

**Hitoshi Tanaka 43:27**

All disagreement between myself and Soeya-san goes back to old age. No point no point of repeating that argument again, but yet, I think my mike Mochizuki's intervention helped me in a sense, because if that were the case, if middle pwoer sort of concept is more to do with, you know, the manner in nation approaches issues, then you can distinguish hard power like the United States or hegemonic power, like China, Russia, or United States and a country like Japan, moderate power. So, I simply don't like to sort of size the nation. In terms of big, middle, small, right, we all are nation states. Therefore, I think that type of again, I said, categorization will not help the substance of that. You know, the second thing again, in relation to what Mike Mike Mochizuki said, again, the whole question is question of China, how to make sure China is, isn't sort of, you know, reasonable entity. China would never be a reasonable entity, but yet, deterrence and again, America says, well, we understand America has no longer pursue engagement policy. For Japan, Japan is to pursue engagement policy. Why? Because given the geographical proximity, China is by far the largest economic partner or Japan, and almost all countries in Southeast Asia, or even Korea, other nations in Asia, China is the largest economic partner, therefore, you cannot survive in this region, without considering the sort of attractiveness or whatever, the market of China. Therefore, in again, the inbound, japan, Japanese stands to gain a lot from those coming from China as a tourist. So I think the interest we have vis a vis China may somewhat differ from the interest in United States has people may say that the United States cannot stand, China becomes a hegemonic in the region, United States cannot stand China over passing the United States in terms of capabilities. But what bothers us a lot to be end of the day, that sort of concept may leads to a military conflict in the region, we would like to avoid it by all means, the most, sort of the closest possible military conflict would be Taiwan, Taiwan, I mean, all those government people or light drink in this country, time talks about how you're going to be the tomorrow's Ukraine. And again, their campaigning succeeded, because by citing Taiwan, as if China would make a military aggression, any day, Jaan succeeded in expanding that capability, that's fine. But yet, our interest is to avoid any military conflict in the region. So end of the day, what worries me most is even security interest may differ. So that's the reason why I say the closest dialogue and closest discussions between Japan and United States is essential. I have been discussing with the United States all the time, economic matters, the Okinawa issue, and all this kind of nasty issues, nasty issues. America is a mighty mighty nation. Therefore, as as you say, Americans power has become limited. No question about it. America stands to gain more from the Alliance relationship in Japan, no question about it. But yet, let's recognize that we may have a different interest. The objective maybe shouldn't be the same. But yet the the interest vis a vis China may be different.

**Michael Swaine 49:05**

Right. Thank you, Tanaka-san. We've let me turn now we just have a few minutes left 10 minutes left to some of the questions. And I basically I want to try to combine some of them because we have quite a few questions that relate to Japan's stance vis a vis Taiwan. And Tanaka-san just mentioned that and some of us have also mentioned that already and somebody I think it was Kuniko. I can't remember said that. In the report. There is there is a statement about about Japan needing to be more clear in its opposition to Taiwan independence as a unilateral as a unilateral action. But I'd like to, by way of channeling the questions. I'd like to ask any members of the panel here if they could comment a little bit more on what the report says Japan's posture should be overall vis a vis the Taiwan issue. In terms of both defense posture and diplomacy, what is the bottom line of the report on? On that question Japan and the Taiwan issue? Would anybody like to comment on that?

**Yoshihide Soeya 50:20**

Okay, I'll go first and then make Mike will follow? Well, I think the bottom line is stabilizing the status quo, or the Taiwan Strait. And, but though, of course, difficulty has to do with the fact that things are changing, you know, somewhat dramatically, so. So conditions behind a, you know, status quo over the Taiwan Strait, are changing, but still, the importance of maintaining status quo for the time being, I think may not change. So I think that that should be the bottom line behind the current sort of thinking about about this question. And if I may, there was a very interesting question. In in this zoom function from Mariasu, talking about the US being preoccupied with, you know, Europe, Ukraine, and Taiwan, and on top, Israel, and, you know, Hamas conflict, and which may have a larger implication for Middle Eastern, you know, sort of security landscapes. So, U.S. starting to confront three strategic sort of fronts. And to what extent Taiwan is central to us against these jobs? I think this is a very important question. And if if I may suspect the intention behind this question is U.S. priority of Taiwan may not be as high as the other two, or maybe for the time being, at least Israel- Hamas sort of issues should occupy the the American decision makers mind for some time. And so Taiwan, attention to Taiwan may, in relative terms may be weakened. I don't know whether he suggests to that extreme but But anyway, this is a very important issue in the U.S. And Japan, of course, has to have its own sort of independence assessment and priorities on these issues. And talk talk to the United States as a as a trusted ally. As you know, Tanaka-san and Mike Mochizuki have been talking about. And so I'll stop here, Mike, if you want to follow up.

**Mike Mochizuki 53:10**

So, yeah, I think in terms of our bottom line regarding how Japan should approach the Taiwan issue, I think it boils down to three. One is that, despite kind of the expectations of many American policymakers, Japan should be very prudent and cautious about moving forward on joint military planning and coordination directly for the defense of Taiwan. And given the sensitivity of this issue, because of the past, such a move is likely to be much more provocative towards China. But at the same time, we believe that Japan should kind of fill out its defensive defense doctrine. And so we are supportive of Japan investing more on the right kind of defense capabilities, and the more Japan is able to defend itself, especially the Southwest island chain, because the Southwest island chain is so close to Taiwan, the coast of Taiwan, Japan, having the ability to defend itself could complicate the Chinese military planning and thinking regarding the use of force against a Taiwan and that would enhance a deterrence.

Secondly, we believe that Japan should provide much more robust, credible assurances, towards China about its stance on the status of Taiwan as, as Professor Soeya has said, Japan's interest just like the US interest is in terms of maintaining the status quo. But that means that Japan does not support the formal independence of Taiwan. And Japan should actually say that, and so far, it seems that Prime Minister Kishida is quite reluctant to say that and only refers to the 1972 communique, which is kind of implicit about that. But the United States has already stated explicitly, that the United States does not support the independence of Taiwan, I think it would be good if the Japanese government would state that explicitly.

And then the third point is that I'm all for Japanese politicians going to Taiwan to promote cultural, economic, social interactions between Japan and Taiwan. But I think that it would be wrong for Japanese political leaders, when they go to Taiwan to send the wrong message to Taiwan, that Japan is now ready, and willing to use its Self Defense Force directly for the defense of Taiwan. You know, unfortunately, I think some people in Taiwan have that impression that Japan is about to go and defend Taiwan. And so the message that Japanese leaders should make send to the people of Taiwan when they go to Taiwan is that Japan wants to maintain the status quo, and Taiwan should kind of engage in a dialogue with Mainland China.

**Michael Swaine 57:04**

Great, thanks Mike. Tanaka-san you had your hand up. We only have two minutes. We only have two minutes left.

**Hitoshi Tanaka 57:11**

Three things one, as Mike Mochizuki said, the Japanese position is yes, we understand and respect the position of China. But yet we are interested in peaceful settlement of the issue. We all the time, say this peaceful settlement to in the event the United States were to decide to intervene militarily into the contingency, Japan undoubtedly support United States. That would be the prior consultation from the United States based upon Article Six of U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. There is no I have no doubt in my mind that Japan will support. Three, much clearer statement for independence of Taiwan may be needed. But yet, if you look at the political situation in Japan, it's a suicidal thing for the Prime Minister is a national policy, no question about it. But yet, the it's like hardliners in the US Congress today, you cannot choose the old speaker. Same thing. In Japan, there are very strong Taiwan lobby and strong right wing people. And that is a hazard. So any country has got a political weakness, the that that's where we are. But in terms of substance of the policy, Yes. We have for sure. We would support we would not support the independence of Taiwan.

**Michael Swaine 58:58**

Well, thank you, Kuniko. We're right at the nine o'clock mark. But do you have just a brief very brief comment?

**Kuniko Ashizawa 59:04**

Twenty seconds? Yeah, because I think it's Taiwan issue can see attacks upon the question of humorous promotion and democracy promotion. So we had a one section in our report defining to the Japan's position with human rights and democracy. And we really took the realistic kind of approach, which is yes, Japan is a democracy state. So we need to, of course, take this question seriously. But we emphasize the need of Japan's self improving our democratic and also human rights record within the country. And it also suggested the more like a bottom up approach to engage in civil society organization, more grassroots groups to in each country, each country entity to indeed help promote their own way of this human rights and and also democracy questions. So that's our analysis in the report.

**Michael Swaine 1:00:05**

Great, thank you very much. Unfortunately, we are out of time, the hour has just shot by. And I hope you will all read this excellent report. There's, of course, much more in addition in it, and more details, describing many of the points that have been made in it. So please do read the report and distribute it to others. And I want to thank very much Tanaka-san, for participating. And, of course, the three panelists who are part of this report, Mike, and Yoshi and Kuniko, thank you so much for being part of this. And thank you all to the audience for tuning in and listening to these comments. And in some cases, we didn't get to some of your questions. I'm very sorry about that. We may be able to answer those offline. But thank you very much. It was a great discussion.