



# Realism diplomacy for a new era and Japan-China Relations

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## The Three Pillars of Realism Diplomacy for a New Era

- (1) Uphold universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (establish an "Action Plan on Business and Human Rights")
- (2) Protect Japan's peace and stability (realize a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance, resolve the issues of abductions and nuclear missile development by North Korea, reduce Okinawa's base burden, pursue a nuclear weapons-free world)
- (3) Face global issues, contribute to humanity, and lead the international community

# Analysis

- The Kochikai, traditionally a group of policy-minded doves, headed by Prime Minister Kishida, want to break away from the hawkish Seiwa-kai's foreign policy, the group led by former PMs Mori, Koizumi, and Abe.
- To avoid strong opposition within the party from too strong of a Kochikai presence, PM Kishida appointed Yoshimasa Hayashi, his probable successor in the Kochikai, as Minister of Foreign Affairs. As the PM consolidates his power base, he will gradually implement his own style of foreign policy.
- Prime Minister Kishida served as Foreign Minister for 4 years and 7 months during the Abe administration and has confidence in his foreign policy (What did he achieve as Foreign Minister? \*Abe-Trump close ties, Japan-Russia summit regarding the Northern Territories issue, Japan-ROK agreement over the military comfort women).
- "Realism diplomacy for a new era" is a Prime Minister's Office led initiative, with little involvement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it is not significantly different from the foreign policy of the past.



## Characteristics of PM Kishida

- Focus on listening: "The key to diplomacy is to listen to what the other person has to say first. Everything starts from there. You must not push your ideas onto the other country. If you do, the other side will not accept them."
- Becoming a leading country in Asia by moving away from US dependence: "What kind of unique role can Japan play, rather than being a US surrogate country? Japan has a role to lead in rule-making, frameworks, and maintaining order in the Asian region."

# Asian Security Conference (Shangri-La Dialogue) "Kishida Vision for Peace"

- (1) Maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on rules
- (2) Strengthen security
- (3) Promote realistic efforts toward a "world without nuclear weapons"
- (4) Enhance the functions of the United Nations, including reforming the UN Security Council
- (5) Strengthen international cooperation in new fields such as economic security

# Japan-China Relations in 2022

## Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics

- The Japanese government joined its ally, the United States, in a “diplomatic boycott” due to human rights issues in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Hong Kong, and did not dispatch any senior government officials. However, it did not use the word "boycott" and also showed deference to China, its largest trading partner.

## Western Countries' Encirclement of China

- Western countries have strengthened their encirclement against China due to human rights issues in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Hong Kong. Japan, too, is speaking up to say what must be said about the Senkaku Islands and human rights issues, but its diplomatic approach toward China has not changed much, handling China very cautiously.

## Response to Human Rights Issues in Xinjiang Uyghur and Other Regions

- Diet Resolution on the Serious Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang Uyghur and Other Regions (passed on February 1, 2022)
- In June 2022, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (Uyghur Embargo Act), a new law that in principle bans imports of products involving the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, came into force in the U.S. → Japanese companies have no choice but to deal at a high level with human rights risks

## Response to Taiwan Conflicts

- The Kishida Administration's Basic Policy: "Fundamentally reinforce defense capabilities within five years"
- The international environment is becoming increasingly severe, with the shock of Russia's invasion of Ukraine added to growing security concerns over China and North Korea. How will Japan respond to the policy of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries to raise defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product (GDP)?

# The Future of Japan-China Relations

- The Senkaku Islands, the situation in the East China Sea, peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and China's maritime expansion in the South China Sea
  - Need to build and strengthen an axis to counter China's increasing hegemonic moves.
  - At the same time, cooperation in economic fields and global warming countermeasures are also indispensable.
- Also sensitive about criticism of Japan's weak stance toward China from LDP conservatives and netizens who advocate a hard-line stance.
- Cannot escape the curse of the Japan-U.S. alliance.
- Although the West, especially the U.S. government, appears to have a tense relationship with China, some are suspicious that they are strengthening relations without Japan's knowledge, just as they did during Kissinger's secret visit to China in 1971 and when cooperating behind the scenes during the Tiananmen Square protests.
- How should Japan confront China, which has become a powerful nation?
- Need for national discussion (Japan's ideological base is weak \*The Unification Church issue is a true indication of this) →If this situation continues, it is inevitable that China's influence will permeate Japan



## Thoughts from the Tiananmen File

- On July 31, 2020, the Tiananmen Square Incident Diplomatic File, was removed from secrecy designation more than 30 years after its creation.
- A large volume of records, totaling 4,050 pages in 12 files including those released in December 2020 (portions that were blacked out as of the end of July were revealed in December)
- The Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published all of these files on its website.
- Hidemi Shiroyama provides analysis in *Tiananmen File* (Chuokoron Shinsha, 2022)
- The Japanese government, the organizational policy decisions of diplomacy, the perceptions and personalities of political leaders and diplomats, and why they made or were forced to make the decisions they did at any given moment ⇒  
The lessons of history

## “China School” Diplomats in Pursuit of a “Desirable Image of China”

- Despite Japanese diplomats in Beijing sympathizing with the students and citizens' movement for democracy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave top priority to relations with the Chinese Communist Party and government, and downplayed developments on the civilian side (there was no discussion of developing a "human rights diplomacy" in the first place).
- Reluctant due to the war and hesitant to become involved in “domestic issues” such as human rights and democratization in China, along with fears that the CCP would become even more exclusionist as Western pressure mounted, the “China School diplomats” pursued their own "desired image of China" without fully debating the true nature of the Communist Party system.
- Some time after the Tiananmen Square protests, the Western countries, while publicly crying for strengthening sanctions against China, moved closer to China behind the scenes through economic cooperation in order to seize control of China's economic interests, and this took precedence over Japan's resumption of yen loans to China. “China School diplomats “were more wary of the West than China.
- China is now becoming more exclusionary, bringing the history of humiliation it suffered from Japan to the fore and using the people’s trauma to promote anti-Japan nationalism

# Japan's Diplomacy Unable to Establish Its Position

- Japan's unfortunate situation in which it is forced to constantly try to secure its position among the major powers
- → Is Japan a member of the West, or a major Asian power? "The Japanese government and Japanese companies should do their utmost to refrain from any actions that might be seen as taking advantage of others' misfortune" \*1
- → Japanese expatriates returning to Beijing are "seen by the Chinese leadership as welcome reinforcements" \*2
- What kind of country does Japan want to be? (Discussion at the Arches Summit in France in 1969, and the diplomatic document "On Japan's Stance Toward China" which has been rewritten many times\*3)
- Despite calls for Japan-China friendship, the relationship has never been one of mutual respect and equality (the majority of the Chinese people, especially farmers, are indifferent to political freedom\*4, China today is a "weak China," and historically China has always taken a strong exclusionary stance when it has been weak\*5).
- Failure to see that if politics do not change in the long term and in the big picture, a serious situation will develop (emphasis on the long term and in the big picture rather than on democracy and human rights\*6; fear of the "Great Democracy" and the national security-oriented attitude of Deng Xiaoping, the architect of the reform and open-door policy\*7)
- Low awareness of human rights among Japanese politicians and Japanese society ("It would be troublesome if Chinese nationals seeking asylum were to appear"\*8)

# Will Japan's Human Rights Diplomacy Change?

## Basic Position of Japan's Human Rights Diplomacy

- (1) Human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal values. In addition, the human rights situation in each country is a matter of legitimate concern to the international community, and **such concern should not be viewed as interference in internal affairs.**
- (2) **Human rights are to be respected and their protection is the most fundamental responsibility of all nations, regardless of culture and tradition, political and economic system, or stage of socio-economic development,** even though the methods and speed of achieving their protection may differ.
- (3) **All human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, are inseparable, interdependent and complementary,** and all human rights and other rights must be protected and promoted in a balanced manner.
- (4) **Based on an attitude of "dialogue" and "cooperation,"** Japan will promote the improvement of human rights issues of concern to the international community, including Japan, **at international forums such as the United Nations and bilateral dialogues,** and will provide necessary and possible cooperation through technical cooperation and other means.

# Where China Is Headed, Where Japan Stands

- How does President Xi Jinping view the "Great Democracy" (although he seems to be adopting the methods of a Mao-style mobilizing political movement)?
  - How is the continuing slump in real estate and finance and the impact of the zero COVID policy affecting Chinese society?
  - How to interpret the relationship between China and Russia, which has invaded Ukraine
  - Which policy will embody the Japanese government's position of "not regarding human rights as an internal affair?" Sanctions have been imposed on Russia. Economic security is mainly focused on the West (both government and business).
  - How can Japan defend universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law without being at the mercy of the major powers like the U.S. and China?
  - How should Japan build up its military in the face of its weakening economic and demographic strength?
- ⇒ In all of this, Japan needs to hold a national debate. To that end, the foundations of democracy must be strengthened. Japan needs to analyze the situation in China from a realistic perspective and decide its own position in Sino-Japanese relations and international politics.