

Significant Japan-U.S. and Quad Cooperation in Maintaining and Enhancing Global Governance

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When U.S. President Joe Biden visited Japan from May 22 through 25 for the first time since his inauguration early last year, a Japan-U.S. summit and a Japan-U.S.-Australia-India Quadrilateral Security Dialogue summit took place in Japan, attracting global attention. At a time when international political, geopolitical and security situations were growing severer, these talks demonstrated the significance of enhancing strategic Japan-U.S. and Quad cooperation.

As the Ukraine crisis and war continue, the situation where Western countries support Ukraine and enhance pressure on Russia is likely to be prolonged. In such situation, international energy prices have remained high, bringing about great costs to the global economy and civic life. In the meantime, the significance of long-term global initiatives to enhance climate change countermeasures remains unchanged. There are many other important global challenges that Japan, the United States and the Quad countries should tackle in cooperation with each other.

These summits in Japan indicated a basic policy of Japan, the United States and the Quad countries to address the Ukraine crisis and other global issues while enhancing their cooperation and collaboration. It was significant that these countries clarified their attitude of maintaining a basic policy to reject an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force, while giving political considerations to India that has close political and military ties with Russia.

Regarding international politics, geopolitics and security, how to address the ongoing Ukraine crisis undoubtedly became a focus of discussion at these summit talks. This was clarified by joint statements issued after the summit talks. As indicated by the fact that the Japan-U.S. and Quad summit talks were held in Japan, meanwhile, these talks also focused on strategic responses to China.

China has increased its presence in international politics, the global economy, and military and security fields and attracted global attention with its maritime expansion and coercive actions. The United States has grown wary of China and deepened its recognition of China as its greatest challenger, giving top priority to a strategy for competition with China. This policy trend became clear under the Trump administration and has been taken over under the Biden administration, which has added a value-based foreign policy approach giving priority to human rights and democracy. The former and incumbent presidents and administrations, Democrats and Republicans, and military and diplomatic establishments have shared concerns about and a rivalry against China. The policy trend should be viewed as a long-term structural one that may be sustained irrespective of government changes.

The United States' full-blown rivalry and competition against China has brought about a harsh U.S.-China confrontation called a "new U.S.-China cold war". The Biden administration has adopted a foreign policy strategy that gives priority to alliances and strategic partnerships in confronting with China. Acknowledging that the United States is no longer the world's policeman, the Biden administration intends to cooperate with U.S. allies in addressing key security and geopolitical

issues. In this respect, Japan and the United States now share a view that their alliance is an axis for addressing Asian or Indo-Pacific issues. A Japan-U.S. joint leaders' statement issued after the bilateral summit noted that the Japan-U.S. alliance is extremely significant for strengthening deterrence and response capabilities. The statement also demonstrated Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's determination to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities and secure a substantial increase in its defense budget, as well as Biden's support for the determination.

“We strongly oppose any coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo and increase tensions in the area,” reads a Quad joint leaders' statement, reaffirming the four countries' cooperation and collaboration in contributing to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. It was apparently significant for the Quad leaders to have confirmed that a new Australian Labor Party government led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, which was inaugurated just before the Quad summit, would give priority to its participation in the Quad dialogue and its cooperation with Quad partners.

The summit talks in Japan were extremely significant in that the Japan-U.S. alliance and the Quad framework were reaffirmed as important for maintaining and stabilizing global governance. The emergence and escalation of the Ukraine crisis has led to a new situation in which the Western world is required to address Russia and China issues simultaneously, forcing the United States to conduct two-front operations. Japan-U.S. and Quad cooperation and collaboration are required to deepen to respond to the new geopolitical environment.

Various challenges threatening to destabilize the world were discussed at the summit talks, including energy price hikes that are feared to destabilize the world. The Japan-U.S. joint leaders' statement noted that the two leaders welcomed efforts by the international community to secure stable energy and food supplies, indicating that energy security has been positioned as a significant global challenge under the Ukraine crisis. Regarding the tightening supply-demand balance and future destabilization of the international natural gas and liquefied natural gas market that attract attention as the most critical energy issue under the Ukraine crisis, the statement remarkably pointed out that Kishida emphasized the significant role U.S. LNG plays in alleviating global supply constraints and welcomed investment by U.S. industry to increase oil and natural gas production.

To phase out dependence on Russia, the rest of the world is urgently required to secure non-Russian energy supply. In the natural gas and LNG market that is in the severest supply and demand situation, U.S. LNG that features flexible supply and has led global supply growth has been globally recognized as significant. Investment in upstream and other natural gas sectors is required to be secured and expanded to increase LNG supply. If Germany and other European countries try to procure non-Russian natural gas and LNG in the absence of overall supply expansion, they and major Asian gas-consuming countries may have to play a zero-sum game or a race to procure natural gas and LNG. Investment to expand U.S. supply may not only help stabilize energy markets but also allow the United States to contribute to maintaining global energy governance.

As energy security has been rapidly highlighted as important under the Ukraine crisis, the Japan-U.S. joint leaders' statement noted that the two leaders recognized the importance of nuclear energy and committed to greater nuclear energy collaboration and to accelerating the development and global deployment of advanced and small modular reactors. It also pointed out that the Japanese and U.S. leaders also shared their intention to explore an initiative to provide Asian partners with support for strengthening their energy security and welcomed the establishment of the Japan-U.S. Clean Energy and Energy Security Initiative (CEESI) to achieve both energy security and net-zero emissions. The statement thus demonstrated to the world that it is significant to strengthen Japan-U.S. cooperation

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in enhancing energy measures in various aspects. Initiatives led by Japan and the United States to maintain and enhance global governance and global energy governance will attract attention increasingly.

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