

Preface

We are witnessing changes in the international structure, which will define our emerging future. Yet what lies ahead is unforeseeable. Japan's *National Security Strategy* approved in December 2022 states at the outset, "We are reminded once again that globalization and interdependence alone cannot serve as a guarantor for peace and development across the globe." It explains that the international order is at stake with "serious challenges" due to historical changes in power balances and intensifying geopolitical competitions. Such anxieties pervade many countries and regions, albeit with differences in nature and level. Increasingly, security and prosperity cannot be taken for granted. We are in an uncertain world full of crises.

How are we to live in an uncertain world full of crises? It is not easy to set out a strategy and prescription for this question. The National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) has been conducting analyses and research on the strategic environment surrounding Japan, making continuous observations of regions and policies. However, the international structure is undergoing changes that will define our emerging future. More than ever before, analyses and research on strategic trends are required from an angle or perspective that transcends regions and policy areas, sometimes intersecting the dimensions of time and space. This is precisely the reason for launching the research book series, "NIDS Perspectives."

For the first edition of the series, we are pleased to publish *The Shifting Dynamics of Great Power Competition*. The crises permeating the uncertain world are fundamentally caused by the intensifying great power competition over the nature of the international order. Power is the basic element of international politics, and the order provided by the overwhelming power

of the United States has underpinned the post-Cold War world. This is the liberal international order constituted by the international system, which is upheld by the superior military muscle and economic strength of the United States, as well as by universal values, including human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. However, the power balance has changed with the rise of China and the relative decline of the United States. There is now a fiercer competition between the two countries over power, interests, values, norms, and the nature of the international order reflecting them. The logic of competition is diffusing throughout the world and dominating policy areas that were considered areas of cooperation.

The Shifting Dynamics of Great Power Competition consists of two parts. Part I outlines the logic and structure of the strategic competition between the United States and China, as well as the role of the Russia factor. Part II discusses how the great power competition, with a focus on the U.S.-China rivalry, has extended to other countries and regions. Of course, this book does not claim to cover all policy areas or all countries and regions associated with great power competition. We welcome critiques from our readers. In an era of great power competition, we would be pleased if this book makes even a small contribution to the academic and policy discussions on the nature of the international order and the strategic environment surrounding Japan—and the wider world.

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