

## Chairperson's Summary

The National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) held the International Symposium on Security Affairs in virtual format on December 7, 2022. The theme was “The New Normal of Great Power Competition: The U.S.-China-Russia Relationship and the Indo-Pacific Region.” This symposium was intended not only to foster security dialogue but also to improve research quality, stimulate interaction, promote mutual understanding among the international public and experts, and contribute to security policy.

The symposium was divided into two parts. Session 1 examined “U.S.-China Rivalry and the Russian Factor” and Session 2 “Impacts on the Regions.” In addition, a keynote speech was delivered between the two sessions. Each session consisted of presentations by panelists followed by a discussion and Q&As with panelists. Below is a summary of the symposium's Session 1, keynote speech, and Session 2, in that order.

In Session 1 on “U.S.-China Rivalry and the Russian Factor,” presentations were made by Dr. Nick Bisley (Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of International Relations, La Trobe University), Dr. You Ji (Professor of International Relations, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University), and Dr. Yamazoe Hiroshi (Senior Fellow; America, Europe, and Russia Division; NIDS). Mr. Masuda Masayuki (Head, Government and Law Division, NIDS) conducted the discussion with the panelists.

The first speaker, Dr. Bisley, gave a presentation titled, “Minilateralism and the Dynamics of Great Power Competition in Asia: The Case of AUKUS and the QUAD.” He reviewed the history of multilateral security mechanisms in the Indo-Pacific region. Groupings were established after the Cold War to address increasingly complex transboundary challenges, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus, and the East Asia Summit. However, their effects have been limited. As competition between the United States (U.S.) and China intensified, a recent trend has been to move toward minilateralism that brings together a smaller group of members to deal with a narrower set of issues. Their examples include the quadrilateral security cooperation (QUAD) among Japan, the U.S., Australia, and India, and the trilateral security partnership among Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. (AUKUS). Dr. Bisley explained their characteristics as follows. The QUAD is focused on security but also addresses matters concerning prosperity and order. Yet, outcomes have been confined to signaling unity through discussions, and they have translated into few tangible actions.

While members share concerns about China, they have considerable policy gaps in other areas. AUKUS, in contrast, is more an architecture of interstate industrial policy. It is increasingly mentioned in key policy documents and becoming a crucial part of policy decision-making. AUKUS is comprised of two pillars—provision of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia and broader cooperation on advanced technologies—and seems unconcerned with the diplomatic consequences of its actions.

The Ukraine war has revealed that the risk of war is higher than previously recognized. The war has also reaffirmed the danger in the Taiwan Strait. With respect to minilateralism, while the Ukraine war showed what the West can and cannot achieve through sanctions against Russia, it remains to be seen whether the West has the political will to impose similar economic sanctions on China in the event of a Taiwan contingency. In conclusion, Dr. Bisley summarized that there are limitations to what minilateralism can achieve.

The second speaker, Dr. You, delivered a presentation entitled, “The Russo-Ukrainian War and its Impact on the Major Power Rivalry.” In explaining the strategic context, he expressed the view that bloc competition has militarized amid the Sino-U.S. rivalry. Furthermore, the Ukraine war has demonstrated that a similar situation could occur in Asia. He then explained the China-Russia relationship as follows. The two countries have strengthened their military and security cooperation, including expanding joint exercises. However, they are not allies, and each can act freely. While they share a common strategic interest in creating a multipolar international order, there are also differences in their interests, as illustrated by China’s decision not to provide weapons and ammunition to Russia for the Ukraine war. Thus, although the two countries have complementary economic ties, they have no common ideology, nor shared values.

Dr. You explained that China sees Russia as being provoked into waging the war in Ukraine but is opposed to the war. A Russian defeat or collapse is not desirable for China from the perspective of balancing against the U.S. The damages the war has caused to China include the loss of substantial investments in Ukraine and bilateral trade, as well as the possibility of secondary sanctions by the West. Conversely, if Washington becomes preoccupied with the war in Europe, it gives China more maneuverability in the Asian theater, raising the question of whether the U.S. can simultaneously wage war on two fronts. Dr. You explained that the Ukraine war has both positive and negative implications for China.

Furthermore, Dr. You noted that China perceives the U.S. attempt to build a multilateral cooperation network in the Indo-Pacific region as a threat and is countering

it with its own multilateral cooperation. The new Cold War-style rivalry is heating up, and he expressed concern that the asymmetric military capabilities of the two blocs will prompt the U.S. to take preventive actions.

The last speaker, Dr. Yamazoe, gave a presentation titled “The Collapse of Putin’s Great Power Ambitions” for a Japanese perspective. According to Dr. Yamazoe, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia, having been a great power in the past, has regarded the post-Soviet space outside its borders as territory where Russian people reside and should be integrated. With great power ambitions, the Putin administration has acted to establish the post-Soviet space as a sphere of influence where Russia can unilaterally use power and to have it recognized by other great powers. To this end, Russia’s options have included bolstering state power, diplomatic and economic means to align interests, and forceful means to inflict damage on others. With Ukraine as the primary target of these great power ambitions, Putin has endeavored to incorporate Ukraine into the Russian sphere of influence through inducements into economic integration frameworks and political engagement.

However, Russia’s actions vis-à-vis Ukraine from 2014 to 2022 shattered these great power ambitions. The forced annexation of Crimea in 2014 and intervention in the Donbas conflict dramatically weakened economic ties with Ukraine, compelled Ukraine to engage in defense efforts in break with Russia, and eroded its state power due to economic sanctions. In turn, Moscow began to excessively rely on tactics that inflicted damage on Ukraine and Western countries that supported Ukraine. In 2022, Putin waged a large-scale military operation in an attempt to force Ukraine’s submission to Russia and integrate it forcefully. However, Russia underestimated the increased resilience of Ukraine since 2014. It exposed Russia’s lack of military capability to achieve its goal and weakened its state power. Moscow does not have the ability to unilaterally wield power over Ukraine, and Western countries refuse to recognize Ukraine’s subjugation to Russia. Other countries in the post-Soviet space, even if not seeking a break with Russia, have begun to disregard its power, further narrowing the scope for Russia’s exercise of power. Additionally, while Moscow maintains friendly relations with some Middle Eastern countries, it has grown more dependent on these relationships.

Lastly, Dr. Yamazoe noted that China, as a non-Western country with significant power, is an important partner for Russia’s great power ambitions. Both countries have demanded a better position in facing the Western presence in the international order and emphasized their own norms. Meanwhile, Russia lacks the capability to support China amidst the multifaceted U.S.-China competition. Nor has Beijing provided substantial

direct support to enhance capabilities for Russia's military operation against Ukraine. Russia continues to engage in war while its capability declines and may face the risk of regime collapse. This situation is expected to make it challenging not only for Western countries but also for China to treat Russia as a leading country in the world.

In Session 1's discussion, Mr. Masuda provided an overview of the recent debates on great power competition. In the context of the U.S.-China rivalry, the debates have revolved primarily around the rise of China, which is increasing its influence particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, and the threat of Russia has not necessarily been a major focal point. Based on this introduction, the discussant asked questions to the three speakers, which can be summarized into the following two broad issues.

The first issue concerns the impact of the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 as well as Russia's moves on future Sino-Russian cooperation and unilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Dr. Bisley noted that enhanced China-Russia cooperation, along with the Russian threat, will complicate the implementation of regional unilateral mechanisms like the QUAD, whose members had been addressing China's security threat as a common concern. Dr. You analyzed that, despite China's dissatisfaction with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it is highly sensible for China to force the U.S. to expend its resources on both the European and Indo-Pacific fronts as long as military conflicts are a possibility in the Taiwan Strait and elsewhere. Due to this strategic convenience, he expected that China-Russia strategic cooperation will continue to deepen.

The second issue is whether China and Russia and their competitors in the Indo-Pacific region—the U.S. and Australia—have the intention and capability to surpass the great power competition and build an international order. Dr. Yamazoe mentioned that Russia's idea of a multipolar world does not seek to build a new order that encompasses the whole international community. Rather, it seeks recognition of a certain sphere of influence and Russia's superior position within an order led by great powers, akin to the 19th-century Concert of Europe. Russia has indicated that it will cooperate with China in interfering with the U.S.'s ability to act. Nonetheless, in the ongoing war, Russia has prioritized escalating armed conflicts over maximizing cooperation with China, which in turn exposed Russia's lack of capability to be involved in transforming the international order.

Dr. Bisley stated that, in Australia, China is seen as a challenger that will fundamentally overturn the existing international order. Dr. You noted that, amid China's military and economic rise, the option to incorporate China into the U.S.-led international order and

coexist peacefully is becoming increasingly unlikely. He expected that unless the U.S. and China accept each other's regional hegemony, both countries will continue to pursue a balance of power (parity) in all fields, from military to economic and technological.

For the keynote speech, Dr. Edward Luttwak (Head of Washington Strategic Advisers) delivered an address titled, "Can China Fight a War?" He described the tendency of recent state leaders to start wars without consideration of the prospects of victory, giving the examples of the invasion of Ukraine by President Putin of Russia and the Iraq War by President Bush of the U.S. He stated that initiating war is a difficult choice to make, making it also difficult to determine whether the Chinese government will go to war or not.

He then analyzed whether China has the capability to successfully wage a war against the U.S. and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

Dr. Luttwak presented the concept of "sustainable war," a war in which nations' ability and resolve to continue fighting can be sustained over an extended period following the outbreak of hostilities. He gave the examples of Russia's maintenance of social infrastructure through self-sufficiency in food and energy in the invasion of Ukraine since February 2022, as well as the low impact of domestic anti-war movements on the execution of the war. A focal point of the discussion is whether China possesses the conditions to fight a sustainable war. Dr. Luttwak explained that, although China used to be self-sufficient, it now relies on imports for items like livestock feed, such as wheat and soybeans, as well as protein sources, such as meat and dairy products, and may experience food shortages in around three months after initiating war. Moreover, China relies on imports for energy, making it highly vulnerable if war causes imports to cease. He pointed out that China's social infrastructure, which would support a prolonged war, could easily be put at risk due to economic sanctions and other factors.

Dr. Luttwak then discussed a potentially greater challenge for China—securing a sufficient number of soldiers which is constrained by the one-child policy. A war with Taiwan is estimated to result in 25,000 casualties. With mothers becoming emotional over their son's death, coupled with media coverage, casualties would have significant impact in China. In this context, he mentioned the clashes between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Ladakh in 2020. Whereas India disclosed the number of casualties promptly following the clashes and conducted funerals nationwide, China released glorified information seven months later. As this example reveals, combat-related deaths have considerable impact in China. Dr. Luttwak analyzed that Chinese society has low tolerance for sacrificing soldiers, and from the perspective

of stabilizing the domestic rule of the Chinese Communist Party, Party leaders cannot ignore the issue of “post-heroic warfare,” a war that emphasizes the public’s avoidance of war casualties.

Moreover, in maritime operations, the value of aircraft carriers and destroyers has diminished, while the value of submarines has increased. Dr. Luttwak noted that torpedo attacks by Japanese submarines and attacks by U.S. forces in the Taiwan Strait could potentially inflict significant damage on Chinese vessels. Taking these factors into account, he concluded that, in the Taiwan Strait scenario example, China does not have the capability to fight a prolonged war while imposing many sacrifices on its people, as is the case in Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

In Session 2 on “Impacts on the Regions,” presentations were made by Dr. Aries Arugay (Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman), Dr. Jagannath Panda (Head, Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, Institute for Security and Development Policy), and Dr. Satake Tomohiko (Senior Fellow, Defense Policy Division, NIDS). Dr. Shoji Tomotaka (Head, Asia and Africa Division, NIDS) conducted the discussion with the panelists.

Dr. Arugay gave a presentation titled, “Torn Between Two Powers: The Philippines in the U.S.-China Rivalry.” He explained that, in contrast to the previous Rodrigo Duterte administration’s tough stance on the U.S., Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who just took office as president about six months ago, seeks to reboot Philippines-U.S. relations, such as by making progress in the implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. Conversely, Dr. Arugay did not expect a change in the Philippines’ emphasis on China. He gave examples, including continued cooperation between the Philippines and China on resource exploration in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), President Marcos’ plan to visit China in January 2023 before visiting the U.S., and adherence to the One China policy. At the same time, he cautioned that the One China policy can have multiple interpretations to the Philippines.

Additionally, while acknowledging that it is premature to assess the foreign policy of the recently established Marcos administration, Dr. Arugay pointed to various challenges facing the independent foreign policy that the administration is exploring. Specifically, he raised questions, such as whether the administration can maintain its hedging strategy amid the increasing uncertainty of the region’s strategic environment. He also wondered whether the administration could formulate foreign policies that align personal and national interests, given that not only President Marcos but also his family have a relationship with China. Dr. Arugay then referred to President Marcos’ remark at

the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November 2022 where he mentioned that the “best politics is to perform,” suggesting that his foreign policy may be limited to performativity that does not necessarily yield results, rather than performance that entails concrete outcomes.

Dr. Arugay also underscored the importance of Japan-Philippines cooperation. He mentioned that bilateral cooperation is making progress in various ways, including Japan's support for enhancing the capabilities of the Coast Guard and the construction of a subway line in the capital city of Manila, and stressed the importance of advancing middle power cooperation. In this context, he referred to a security survey conducted in the Philippines in 2022, in which Japan was a close second after the U.S. as the Philippines' favored partner for strengthening security cooperation.

The second speaker, Dr. Panda, gave a presentation titled, “Not Drawing a Parallel: An Indian Perspective on Ukraine and Taiwan.” Noting that it was inappropriate to draw a parallel between the Ukraine war and the Taiwan crisis, he discussed the importance of distinguishing the similarities and differences between the two. Starting with the similarities, both Ukraine and Taiwan are democracies and free-market economies, and they are adjacent to authoritarian states. As for the differences, Ukraine is an independent sovereign state unlike Taiwan. China and Taiwan are also separated by sea unlike Ukraine, which has a contiguous border with Russia. In addition, he noted on the geopolitical significance of Taiwan situated in the heart of the Indo-Pacific region. Particularly considering its location in the Indo-Pacific, the Taiwan crisis has a greater security significance for Japan and India compared to the war in Ukraine.

Moreover, Dr. Panda stated that the situation does not allow for complacency, despite views mainly expressed by security experts in the U.S. that China's use of force against Taiwan is not imminent. Rather than sudden use of force, he described that China is pursuing a gradual use of force, beginning with occupying islands in the South China Sea and then islands near Taiwan before extending to the main island of Taiwan. Additionally, Dr. Panda noted that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the severe Western sanctions against Russia are certainly offering insights to China, whose PLA lacks combat experience.

In light of these circumstances, Dr. Panda emphasized that partner countries in the Indo-Pacific, including the QUAD, must be prepared to respond to unforeseen events. In particular, India needs to take actions recognizing that the Taiwan crisis may have ripple effects on the security issues of India, even if it is obliged to maintain a neutral stance in the West versus China and Russia dynamics. He underscored the importance

of Japan-India cooperation, saying that India needs realistic plans that do not necessarily assume U.S. engagement.

The last speaker, Dr. Satake, gave a presentation titled “Great Power Competition and Japan” for a Japanese perspective. He defined great power competition as a competition for power, interests, and values, as well as a competition over an international order encompassing all of these elements and its legitimacy. While the U.S. once pursued engagement, expecting China and Russia to integrate into the liberal order and carry out domestic reforms, their cooperation with the West gradually declined from the mid- to late 2000s, posing a greater challenge to the existing order. Underlying this shift were also changes in the U.S.-China power balance, coupled with the rise of populism and decline of democracy, which together weakened the legitimacy of the Western order. The Ukraine war since February 2022 revealed that the liberal order did not have the universal influence that Western countries thought it had. Against this backdrop, the U.S. abandoned integration of China and Russia into the liberal international order and is working with its allies to make a comeback against China.

Dr. Satake then presented an outlook for great power competition. Although Russia’s invasion of Ukraine ironically strengthened Western unity, democratic societies have latent instability. Conversely, China and Russia are confronted with their own mounting challenges, such as economic stagnation and the impact of Western sanctions. Furthermore, while both share the overarching goal of overturning the U.S.-led order, there are some differences between the two countries. On the one hand, Russia seeks to forcefully and radically change the order. On the other hand, China uses force but seeks a gradual transformation of the order, through peaceful means such as international organizations, and through the gray zone. In addition, the “China Model” lacks universality more than the Western order. Some argue that the world will likely see a “variegated” order, meaning, instead of the simple binary rivalry of “democracy versus authoritarianism” as observed during the Cold War, the variations in U.S. and Chinese influence will be manifested in each issue and domain differently.

Dr. Satake explained Japan’s response as follows. Japan has been among the countries that benefited the most from the post-war rules-based international order. Nevertheless, until Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Japan viewed great power competition as more or less another country’s affair. As Sino-Russian cooperation deepens, Japan finds itself facing crises on three fronts: China, Russia, and North Korea. Amid Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the escalation of tensions in the Taiwan Strait, Japan increasingly regards itself as a party to the great power competition.



The Kishida administration advocates a “fundamental reinforcement” of Japan’s defense capabilities, aiming to enhance autonomous capabilities that do not necessarily rely on the U.S. For a long time since the end of World War II, Japan has upheld a low-profile security posture, adopted a policy of prioritizing economic activities, and maintained diplomatic relations by separating politics and economics. In today’s severe security environment, however, the economy may become subservient to security.

Dr. Satake concluded his presentation with suggestions for “managing competition.” As long as competition itself should not become an end in itself, and as long as Cold War era containment is unfeasible, he noted that competition with China rests on co-existence. He also described that competition entails not only negative but also positive aspects, such as increased assistance and provision of public goods. The key is to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects. In this vein, Japan should further strengthen the U.S.-led alliance network while exploring stable relations with China. Dr. Satake stated that cooperation with regional countries in information sharing, crisis management, and rulemaking will become ever more necessary, and highlighted the importance of Japan taking the lead in enhancing regional cooperation mechanisms.

In Session 2’s discussion, Dr. Shoji began with comments and questions regarding the three presentations. He asked Dr. Arugay about how the Marcos administration will deal with China and the U.S. if a Taiwan crisis arises, Dr. Panda about how India will respond if a Taiwan crisis arises, and Dr. Satake about the balance between security and economy in Japan-U.S. cooperation.

Dr. Arugay briefly discussed the relationship between the Philippines and Taiwan. He then suggested that, while the response of the Marcos administration will vary depending on the situation, it may adopt a U.S.-leaning response based on the history of such responses in the Philippines.

Dr. Panda responded that a contingency in Taiwan would be complex. He suggested that India will adopt a wait-and-see approach while preparing multiple emergency plans. He said that, with a large Indian population in Taiwan, India would first engage in negotiations with mainland China for rescue operations and then consider political and military support for the Indian people in Taiwan.

Dr. Satake noted that, while Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will not directly lead to a Taiwan contingency, the situation in Ukraine may have an impact on the power balance in the Indo-Pacific in the medium- to long-term. Regarding economic security, Dr. Satake stated that Japan should provide cooperation in coordination with the region by adhering to international rules.

In response to a question from the audience regarding international order building and domestic reforms, Dr. Satake noted that Japan strives to build an order based on rules that encompass diverse values, albeit the emphasis is on values such as human rights and democracy. Dr. Panda was asked about the Russian people's reaction to the invasion of Ukraine during his visit to Russia. He stated that there were wide-ranging discussions in the country, and that many experts and individuals expressed negative opinions. He also underlined the importance of India's relationship with Russia from the perspectives of their relationship since the Soviet era, diversification of diplomacy, and China and Pakistan issues. Dr. Arugay was asked about the Philippine government's position on the One China concept, and he explained that successive administrations have expressed slightly different viewpoints.