

Japanese Diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific Age: Toward a Collaborative Relationship with Emerging Powers

[Overview of research]

In light of the overlapping political, economic, and security issues concerning the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, the regional categorization “Indo-Pacific” has drawn much attention lately. The Indo-Pacific region is of increasing strategic importance from the perspective of maritime security and safety over sea lines of communication, inter-regional dynamics, and the geo-political rivalry among major powers. Amidst the emerging presence of the Indo-Pacific as a strategic environment, it is a new agenda for Japan’s diplomacy to engage how its regional order will be established and how its regional norms and rules are structured, all of which are deeply intertwined with Japan’s security and prosperity.

This research project pays attention to those states characterized as “emerging powers.” These states (including mainly NICs and LDCs, but also regional frameworks such as ASEAN) may not have decisive influence by themselves, whereas these emerging powers can affect the direction of the regional order. This project focuses on the emerging powers especially India, Indonesia, ASEAN, and Australia. While focusing on these states, this project aims to contribute to build an “Indo-Pacific” regional order that is desirable for Japan by enhancing cooperation with these emerging powers.

The significance of this project with regards to Japan’s diplomacy is to encourage a policy orientation of these emerging powers that extends the support for a liberal order, which leads to sustain and strengthen such liberal norms and rules amidst China’s expanding influence in the region. The project will provide a new diplomatic compass for Japan by considering and proposing the appropriate course of action with bearing in minds the needs and the sensitivities of these states. Furthermore, an emphasis on the Japan-U.S. alliance as common public goods for the region and the support and understanding of the alliance in the region will not only enhance Japan’s diplomacy, but also strengthen the foundation of the alliance itself.

This project crafts policy recommendations that strengthen Japan’s ties with the emerging powers to support a regional order based on liberal norms and rules preferable to Japan, especially those policy recommendations to strengthen relationship

with emerging powers including India, Indonesia, ASEAN, and Australia. In doing so, this project will conduct research, analysis, and public diplomacy toward the public opinion in such nations to enhance their understanding of Japanese diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific.

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