

“Rising Challenges for the Japan-U.S. Alliance in the Global Commons (Cyberspace, Outer Space, and the Arctic Ocean)”

[Research Overview]

With technological innovation and structural shifts in the global community also come changes in the frameworks for international security. While cyberspace serves as critical infrastructure for both economic and military activities, it also faces the threat of attacks not only from states but also from terrorist groups. Furthermore, in light of China’s pronounced rise, the militarization of space is no longer dominated by the hegemons of the Cold War era. It must also be noted that the ongoing effects of global warming are transforming the once-unchartered territory that was the Arctic Ocean, making way for the possibility of economic and military activity in the area. These spaces are of increasing importance as public spheres – or “global commons” indispensable for global prosperity, as well as security – and the international community faces the shared challenge of ensuring security by averting threats, and establishing international governance over these spaces.

While the Japan-U.S. Alliance had served to promote the peace and stability of the two states and beyond for more than 50 years, the changing strategic environment around the global commons has presented a new set of challenges as noted above. As a state at the forefront of technological innovation, Japan boasts cutting-edge technology, abundant experience in space development drawing on its long history of collaboration with the United States, and naval power with anti-submarine capabilities – all of which are matched by few other states. However, it was not until recent years that Japan had begun to consider the global commons in the context of security. On the other hand, securing the global commons and contributing to global prosperity are mutual obligations among the two states, and a challenge in which Japan must take an active role. In assessing such a role, its scope need not be limited narrowly to areas in which Japan could act “on its own.” Rather, Japan should collaborate with the U.S. to complement its areas of expertise, widen the breadth of its role, and maximize its efficacy.

The objective of this research project is to analyze the global commons (encompassing cyberspace, outer space, and the Arctic Ocean), and to craft policy recommendations bearing in mind the pertinent roles of the Japan-U.S. alliance and Japan’s specific roles grounded in its strengths. The desired state of Japan-U.S. collaboration, areas of specialization, and Japan’s strengths (in terms of technology, economics, influence in the realm of foreign policy, and the capabilities of the Maritime Self Defense Force) are among the points included in the

recommendations that address global cooperation, Japan and its alliance's roles in establishing governance over "the commons." Furthermore, in considering cooperation with the United States, this project will also contemplate measures that go beyond intergovernmental collaboration to utilize the combined strengths of industry, government and academia in Japan.

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