The Resilience of the “Open Liberal International Order”:
The Situations of the US, China and Europe, and their Impacts
Sub-Project I: The Trump Administration’s Foreign Policy and Japan-US Relations

Project Outline

Post-World War II peace and development have been secured by the “open liberal international order”. Many countries have enjoyed stability and prosperity under this order that encourages cooperation and inclusion, not confrontation nor exclusion. Japan is also one of these nations that has benefited from the order by contributing to its preservation and development. The biggest challenge the international community currently faces is this order itself becoming destabilized and its outlook uncertain.

The inauguration of an “America First” Trump administration will have a great impact on the international community as well as the United States, which has been a leader of this international order, as it gives the impression that the country no longer has any significant interest in the importance of the order and is even ready to face off against other countries for the sake of its own national interests.

US policies have constructed and secured the order in the Asia-Pacific region, and could directly affect the security and stable economic development of its ally Japan as well. Japan hence must fully recognize what changes have been happening inside America that made a Trump presidency a reality and whether the role of the nation as a democratic leader of the world could be altered essentially.

This sub-project analyzes America’s ongoing situation underlying the inauguration of the Trump administration, utilizing means such as opinion polls or fieldwork in the United States. Qualitative changes in the country presumably would affect the policies and stability of the Trump administration as well as the national architecture even after the current administration. The project also studies the policy-making process of the Trump administration, tries to minimize its contingency as much as possible, and finally makes policy recommendations for better future Japan-US bilateral relations, all of which are of great significance to Japan, being responsible for the regional security together with the United States, Japan’s sole ally.

Research Group Composition

Group Leader
Funiaki Kubo, Professor, The University of Tokyo, and Senior Adjunct Fellow, JIIA

Members
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Masahito Watanabe, Associate Professor, Hokkaido University

Members/Secretaries
Yasunori Nakayama, Director General (Acting), JIIA
Shu Nakagawa, Director of Research Coordination, JIIA
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Project Meetings
First Meeting
Date and Place: June 14, 2017 in JIIA Conference Room
Topics: Planning of FY 2017 Study Group Activities
Evaluation of Trump’s Diplomacy: Between Unprincipled and Flexible

Second Meeting
Date and Place: August 8, 2017 in JIIA Conference Room
Topic: The Trump Administration’s Relationship with the Media: Is a Discussion of “Fake News” Inevitable?

Third Meeting
Date and Place: October 17, 2017 in JIIA Conference Room
Topic: Reflecting on the Ideological Trends in the Trump Administration’s Foreign Policy: Will We See Any Change in the “Post-Bannon” Era?

Fourth Meeting
Date and Place: November 20, 2017 in JIIA Conference Room
Topic: The Democratic Party under the Trump Presidency: Which Direction Does the Party Go in the Post-Obama Era?
Fifth Meeting
Date and Place: February 8, 2018 in JIIA Conference Room
Topic: Veterans and Politics

Public Symposium: “Reviewing the First Year of the Trump Presidency”
Date and Place: February 22, 2018 in JIIA Conference Room
Topics: What is ‘Trumpism’? Will It Endure?
       The Domestic Political Landscape under the Trump Presidency and the
       Outlook for the 2018 Midterm Elections
       The Foreign Policy Philosophy of the Trump Administration