

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT
Event

Japan's Vision for a Free, Open and Inclusive International Order Based on the Rule of Law

DATE
Friday, July 29, 2022 at 2:30 p.m. ET

FEATURING
Hon. Yoshimasa Hayashi
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan

CSIS EXPERTS
John J. Hamre
President and CEO, and Langone Chair in American Leadership, CSIS

Christopher B. Johnstone
Senior Adviser and Japan Chair, CSIS

Transcript By
Superior Transcriptions LLC
www.superiortranscriptions.com

John J. Hamre: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome. We're so glad that you're here.

And I don't know very many people that could draw a crowd like this on the last day of July on a Friday afternoon, you know? (Laughter.) I think that's almost a miracle. But it's, I think, partly because, Hayashi-san, we know you so well and we all have admired your intellect for so many years. But you also now are in a very important position, and to be the foreign minister of Japan is really – it's such a premier thing. But you've been lifted up to this because of your enormous abilities, and we're all fortunate for that. We're the beneficiaries of that.

It takes place – and our welcome, and we're so glad to have you here – but it takes place against the tragic backdrop of the murder of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo. And we, all of us here, everyone knew him. I was introduced to him at the time when he came to CSIS in 2013 and said Japan is back, you know? And what he did was he brought confidence back to Japan. He let Japan be a leader again, and that was his lasting contribution. And it gives you the platform now, Hayashi-san. It gives you the platform to build on it.

And you know, Japan for a period of time, when we became wobbly, Japan became our big brother to carry the agenda of freedom and democracy in Asia, and we benefitted so much from that. And now, with Kishida-san and Hayashi-san's leadership, we know have strength in Asia at a time when we need it. We're going to hear more about that. We're going to hear about that agenda today and a vision that is going to be the core of the new Japan's leadership in Asia.

So would you please, with your – with your applause, welcome this wonderful leader, the foreign minister of Japan, Hayashi Yoshimasa? (Applause.)

Minister
Yoshimasa
Hayashi:

Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Hamre, of a very – (speaks in Japanese) – introduction of myself – diplomatic, should I say, as a foreign minister. But thank you very much for glad to hear that I'm back here.

Japan is back, also said by late Prime Minister Abe, but I would say we are here to stay. So thanks for giving me this opportunity – (applause) – thank you – to address you at the time-honored CSIS.

And before I begin my speech, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken and many friends of the United States across the parties for their heartfelt condolences following the recent sudden and tragic death of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Former Prime Minister Abe was a statesman, and

actually I know him even before he run for office and also before I run for office, both of us sharing the district as Yamaguchi Prefectures. And he believed in the power of the people of Japan, like Dr. Hamre mentioned, and restored Japan's vitality. So he was also a world leader who dedicated himself to the peace and stability of the international community. So, through his outstanding leadership, the Japan-U.S. relationship has been elevated to the new heights, and his vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific has been embraced widely in an international community going beyond Asia.

We are all struggling to cope with the fact that he's gone. I still cannot believe that. But I believe that the best way to honor him is to carry on his legacy and conduct the diplomacy of Japan with strength, as he led the way.

With these thoughts in mind, I am visiting Washington, D.C., this time, and actually this is for the first time since becoming the foreign minister last November. So I have a deep personal connection to this city – I lived here almost a year – and also to the United States. After joining – actually, after the college joining the trading company called Mitsui in 1984, company sent me to buy U.S. tobacco leaves – (laughter) – to North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, all those cities. I experienced warmth of Southern hospitality there. Later, when I left the company to study in Boston, I was surprised to be told that – my friends told me my English had a slightly Southern accent. (Laughter.) And even now, that accent often slips out when I have a drink – (laughter) – speaking like, I am all ears, like this. (Laughter.)

So today I am delighted to be back to discuss the strengthening of the Japan-U.S. alliance. Japan and the U.S. are in position to steer the course of the international community. Today, I will talk about the challenges that Japan and the U.S. must tackle amidst an increasingly severe international environment, as well as my vision for our collective future.

So, first, let me emphasize the importance of this moment. We are currently standing at a historical crossroads, one fraught with a sense of crisis. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrage that has shaken the very foundation of the free and open international order, and disrupted the peace and prosperity we have enjoyed since the end of the Cold War, leaving us with a critical question: Will we – will we be able to uphold a free and open international order based on the rule of law, or will we end up allowing the international community to become a jungle where the strong overwhelms the weak and brute force can easily change the status quo? We are facing a watershed moment.

What is happening in Ukraine must never be allowed anywhere in the world, including especially in the Indo-Pacific. We must all learn the lessons from the current situation in Europe. Russia's aggression needs to go down in history as a clear failure. Otherwise, it is inevitable that other countries will

follow Russia and attempt to change the status quo by force. For this reason, it is vital that we unite in support of Ukraine and sanction against Russia.

President Biden has rallied the international community to this end, and Japan highly appreciate his leadership. Japan itself has also made the decision to drastically change its foreign policy toward Russia.

In addition, Russia's aggression is causing major disruption in the world's energy and food supplies, although Russia is using false narratives about this. To address these challenges, we will further strengthen our cooperation through the G-7 and other fora.

It may seem as if the world is divided into two camps which are split between completely different worldviews: the G-7 and likeminded countries, including Japan and the United States, on one side; Russia and countries that take a similar position on the other. However, as seen in the case of the aggression against Ukraine, there are many countries in between. For example, take the U.N. General Assembly resolution on aggression against Ukraine which was adopted this month – this March. Though it succeeded with an overwhelming majority of 141 countries, 35 countries abstained. Certainly, each country has its own reasons for abstention, but we must never accept unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force no matter where in the world. We must work to make the international circle of this consensus larger and more resilient. Therefore, we will continue to tenaciously reach out to those middle-ground countries while also being mindful of their individual situations.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to turn to the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific is home to more than half of the world's population and accounts for nearly 60 percent of world's GDP. It's the growth engine of the world, a region filled with potential. There is no doubt that this region is of utmost strategic importance to Japan and the U.S. Our goal is to prevent conflicts and utilize the region's potential for stability and prosperity. However, even in this region the logic of brute force is gaining more traction over the rule of law. And the strategic balance in the region is increasingly challenge for Japan and the United States.

Obviously, ongoing unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercions in the East and South China Sea, are matters of growing concern to the international community, especially to countries in East Asia, including Japan. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is also of extreme importance. We also cannot overlook attempts to achieve national interest by leveraging access to gigantic market, opaque development assistance, and other forms of economic coercion. As underscored in the Japan-U.S. Joint Leaders Statement issued in this May, it is essential to maintain a high-level, candid dialogue with China.

Japan does not hesitate to say what needs to be said to China, urging Beijing to fulfill its responsibilities as a major power in addressing international challenges such as regional stability and development finance, in accordance with the rules of international community. At the same time, cooperation with China is also important when necessary, such as on climate change. Besides, China is a key player in dealing with North Korea, as was demonstrated in the Six Party Talks. These views underpin Japan's efforts to build a constructive and stable relationship with China.

North Korea has been intensifying its nuclear and missile activities, thus increasing security threats to Japan and the U.S. This year alone, there have been at least 28 – 28 – missile test launches., including ICBM+ ballistic missiles. There is also concern about a possible seventh nuclear test. North Korea's nuclear and missile activities are in violation of Security Council resolutions and are a clear and serious challenge to the peace and stability of international community. Security cooperation among Japan, the U.S. and the Republic of Korea is becoming increasingly important in face of these threats. And we will enhance the trilateral security cooperation, including Japan, the U.S., ROK joint exercise, which we agreed to in June. Also, the abductions issues must be resolved immediately.

In a midst of the Quad leaders meeting in Tokyo this May, China and Russia conducted joint bomber flights near Japan. It is no exaggeration to say that the deeper and stronger military coordination between China and Russia is emerging as a security concern. The common goal of Japan and the U.S. is to build a free, open, and inclusive international order in the Indo-Pacific region, based on the rule of law. this is precisely what Japan's vision of Free and Open Indo-Pacific, known as FOIP, seeks to achieve. Japan will strengthen its FOIP efforts and formulate a FOIP plan for peace by next spring.

Since announcing a vision for FOIP in 2016 – by late Prime Minister Abe, actually – Japan has been in dialogue with various countries to share its vision and collaborate with them. As a result, various actors have come to announce their own visions for the Indo-Pacific that align with that of our FOIP. This February, the Biden administration announced the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy. We believe that it demonstrates the U.S.'s unwavering commitment to this region. At the same time, in order to realize a FOIP, we will promote cooperation with our most important partner in this context, ASEAN, which adopted ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, AOIP. We will also cooperate with Quad members India and Australia, and G-7 and European partners. Furthermore, we need to step up our cooperation with the Pacific Island countries.

Next, I would like to talk about three challenges we need to address in the Indo-Pacific region, the most critical theater for both Japan and the United States.

Our first challenge comes in the form of restoring strategic balance. Diplomacy can work more effectively when the security balance is firmly maintained. As such, there is an urgent need to strengthen the defense and response capability of the Japan-U.S. alliance. After all, heaven helps those who help themselves. I stressed this point at Japan-U.S. 2+2, convened virtually this January. I emphasized then, and continue to emphasize now, that Japan intends to play a larger role in maintaining the balance.

In order to demonstrate this commitment, we will formulate a new national security strategy by the end of this year. We are going to fundamentally strengthen Japan's defense capability within five years, substantially increasing our defense budget in order to underpin this plan. We will continue to keep all options, including what we call counterstrike capabilities, on the table as we realistically consider what is necessary to protect the lives of our citizens and our territory. Through these efforts, we will evolve bilateral roles and missions and strengthen our joint capabilities.

At the same time, the U.S. military presence and unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan have become even more important. In order to maintain the competitive edge of the Japan-U.S. alliance well into the future, we need to fundamentally strengthen our cross-domain capabilities including cyberspace, electromagnetic spectrum, as well as our investment in advanced technologies such as AI and quantum science. It's crucial that we also ramp up cyber and information security.

Furthermore, I believe that the credibility of extended deterrence by the United States need to be strengthened. Russia's recent nuclear threats in the midst of its aggression toward Ukraine are absolutely unacceptable. On the other hand, Russia's outrageous actions reminded us of the importance of extended deterrence in ensuring the stability of the international community. In particular, East Asia is home to China, which continues to expand its nuclear capabilities, and North Korea, which has made no secret of its desire to possess nuclear weapons. In light of strategic balance in the region, Japan and the U.S.'s effort are required to further improve the credibility and resilience of U.S. extended deterrence.

Nonetheless, it is Japan's strength and strong belief that apocalyptic horrors caused by nuclear weapons must never be repeated. Japan will advance realistic measures to realize a world without nuclear weapons, upon the foundation of the trust it enjoys with the U.S. In particular, I would like to strongly urge China, which is rapidly building up its nuclear arsenals in an opaque manner, to contribute to arrangements that reduce nuclear risks,

increasing transparency and advance nuclear disarmament, as stated in the Japan-U.S. Joint Leaders Statement in May.

The NPT is the foundation for efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. A few days from now, actually, the NPT Review Conference is set to begin in New York. As the only nation that has suffered atomic bombing in war, we will strive to reconcile conflicting views between participating countries to produce a meaningful outcome of the conference. While it's not common for heads of government to attend, Prime Minister Kishida himself will be the first Japanese prime minister to do so, demonstrating our dedication and commitment to the conference.

In recent years, multilayered partnership with allies and likeminded countries that share universal values in the Indo-Pacific region – such as Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-ROK, NATO+AP4, and AUKUS – have become more active. From the viewpoint of further encouraging such security partnership in the region, Japan signed and has been negotiating the reciprocal access agreements, RAAs, with Australia and the U.K., respectively. Also, Japan is deepening strategic discussions not only with these two countries, but also with the Philippines, Germany, India, Indonesia, and France, through 2+2 ministerial meetings. Furthermore, we will advance defense equipment and technology transfer agreement with ASEAN countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, the second challenge facing Japan and the U.S. lies in the building of economic order and economic security. One of the purpose of my visit to the U.S. is to hold the first economic 2+2 ministerial meeting with Secretary of State Blinken, Secretary of Commerce Raimondo, and Minister of Economy Trade and Industry Hagiuda. We are living in a time in which it necessary to discuss diplomacy, security, and economy as one from a geopolitical perspective. First of all, I would like to emphasize that the common goal of Japan and the U.S. is to create a free, open, and inclusive economic order in the Indo-Pacific, harnessing the remarkable growth potential of the region.

This aim is not feasible without continued U.S. commitment. In this context, Japan welcomes the IPEF, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, launched by the U.S. in May this year. Japan will work with the U.S. and other partner countries so that the IPEF can reap an early harvest.

At the same time, the U.S. should be a leader in the economic integration of the Indo-Pacific region. It was the U.S. that developed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, into what it is today, with a clear-sighted view of its strategic importance. Currently, several economies have requested their accession to the TPP and discussions are underway. However, in light of the history of the TPP's establishment and significance, it's none other than the

U.S. that should be at the heart of it. Bearing all this in mind, Japan strongly hopes for the return of the U.S. to the TPP at the earliest possible timing as it bears great strategic importance.

The next point I would like to emphasize is the need to deepen Japan-U.S. cooperation on economic security. The COVID-19 pandemic and the global incidents that followed exposed the vulnerability of our supply chains. New challenges have been emerging, such as the theft of critical technologies, the forced transfer of intellectual property rights, and the quasi pursuit of national interest backed by economic power. Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable to these challenges could risk limiting our diplomatic flexibility and weakening international solidarity towards strategic issues. We shared this view at today's economic 2+2 ministerial meeting in which we discussed issues of economy, diplomacy, and security as one, and we affirmed our commitment to strengthening Japan-U.S. cooperation in this regard. In Japan, the Economic Security Promotion Act has recently been enacted. Based on this law, Japan will further promote Japan-U.S. cooperation in areas such as the stable supply of strategic goods, supply chain resilience, and development and safeguard of advanced technologies, while harmonizing our system with that of the United States and other like-minded countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, the third challenge is how Japan and the U.S. can upgrade people-to-people exchange to the next level. Such interactions have long sustained and upheld our robust Japan-U.S. alliance.

A highlight of my past, now, experience came in 1991 when I interned in the office of Representative Steve Neal from North Carolina and then-Senator late William Roth. And with Senator Roth, I was personally involved in the launch of the Mansfield Fellowship Program and I am pleased to be joined today by incoming fellows and alumni and also secretary general over there of the program. Thank you very much for coming today.

Since then I have made it my life's work to promote this kind of people-to-people exchange between Japan and the U.S., believing that friendship fostered therein will be buttress a robust Japan-U.S. alliance today and in the future. We continue to ensure that our people-to-people exchange is keeping pace with the changing times. At the Japan-U.S. summit meeting in May, our two leaders concurred to boost programs, including the Mansfield Fellowship Program, and also foster the next generation of leaders that will advance a free and open Indo-Pacific. I'm fully committed to pushing this forward.

It would be remiss not to mention the contributions of great Japanese-American leaders in developing people-to-people exchange between our two nations. Taking this opportunity, I would like to pay my profound respect to great predecessors – to name a few, former Senator Daniel Inouye, former

U.S. Japan Council president Eileen Hirano Inouye, and former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta. We would like to collaborate with next-generation Japanese-American leaders to further develop Japan-U.S. cooperation in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I said at the beginning, we are currently standing at the historical crossroads. Japan and the U.S. must be prepared to walk a long and winding road. Some people here knows this is from the Beatles.

So Japan and the U.S. must be prepared to walk a long and winding road for the foreseeable future. Political scientists often ask who will lead the 21st century. However, our job is not to predict the future. Our mission is to create it. This future must be a free, open, and inclusive international order based on the rule of law.

It is also important for a democratic system to develop incrementally into one in which freedom, human rights, and diversity are better respected. In Japan and the U.S. we fulfill our responsibility to lead such global governance while broadening support for this order and cooperating with other like-minded countries.

I am sure that the road ahead will be long and winding, but our unwavering commitment and tireless efforts will surely lead us to the door of peace and stability in the international order.

Thank you very much for your attention. (Applause.)

Christopher B.
Johnstone:

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Chris Johnstone. I'm a senior adviser and Japan Chair here at CSIS. Thank you again for joining us today and thank you, Foreign Minister Hayashi, for a truly impressive speech, one that represented, really, a comprehensive articulation of Japan's vision for the region and the world. Very impressive indeed.

We really only have a very few minutes for questions. I'll ask one, and then perhaps we can invite the audience to ask one as well, and then we'll see if we have any time left.

So, sir, if I may, I thought I'd ask about China, building on what you mentioned in your speech. You noted the importance of high level candid dialogue with China and Japan's efforts to build a constructive and stable relationship with Beijing. But as very much is true for the United States, these channels have been challenging to build and sustain during the current environment and, like so many other leaders, Prime Minister Kishida has been unable to meet directly with President Xi. I wonder if you could share

with us what you expect, what to anticipate in the months ahead in Japan-China relations, as we approach the party congress this fall and the prospect of a third term of President Xi.

Min. Hayashi: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Chris.

Like I said at the beginning, I think we need to restore the regional strategic balance. That is becoming more challenging for both of us, Japan and the U.S. And like to refrain from commenting on the domestic political situation of China, but there are various concerns between Japan and China because we are enabling countries.

So at the same time, the Japan-China relationship is important not only for the two countries but also for the peace and prosperity and stability of the Indo-Pacific area and also international community.

So I actually had a videoconference with the State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi this May, and it's essential to maintain in high level and candid communication with China from time to time. So I admire President Biden's, Secretary Blinken's effort, and just yesterday they had a conversation. So I think both sides – important for both sides to strive to build a constructive and stable relationship where the two countries will cooperate on matters of common interest, such as climate change.

So many thing we have to compete, we have to face, but also try to find something we can cooperate is very important things. And also, I believe that there will be an opportunity to see the Foreign Minister Wang Yi at ASEAN-related foreign ministers next week. So keep going with the dialogue and show that we are having dialogue is also very important things.

Mr. Johnstone: Yeah. Very much mirrors, I think, the U.S. approach and mindset about the relationship as well.

We really are short on time. Let me invite just one question from the room, if I may.

Frank, I invite you to stand.

Q: Thanks so much, Chris. And I want to assure the audience that Mansfield Fellows are not boycotting the minister. They're preparing to pay their respects to him. (Laughter.)

Minister, you spoke about your efforts to align Japan's efforts to build a free and open Indo-Pacific with partners across ASEAN and South Pacific Islands, and I know that you recently met with your counterpart, Foreign Minister Park Jin of the Republic of Korea.

I was hoping you might elaborate a little bit on Japan's aspirations to work with that like-minded state to advance the goals of a free and open Indo-Pacific. ROK itself is also working on a draft of their Indo-Pacific strategy to be released maybe next year. So what is your vision for how that partner may work with you?

Min. Hayashi: Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you for explaining about what – (laughter) – a fellow state at the beginning. (Laughter.)

But Japan-ROK and also Japan-U.S.-ROK coordination is really, really indispensable for the stability of this region, especially including in dealing with North Korea. And the bilateral relationship between Japan and ROK continue to be extremely strained due to issues such as former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula and also comfort women.

But this situation shouldn't be left as it is. So last July 18th I had a meeting with the ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin and discussed these outstanding bilateral issues. And we will continue to closely communicate with the Yoon administration based on our principled position to restore sound Japan-ROK relations.

And for international cooperation, including trilateral cooperation with the United States, I have confidence for new Korean administration and us and the U.S. government are almost everything on the same page. So it's really nice to have that trilateral cooperation back in the same.

So thank you very much.

Mr. Johnstone: It really has been an impressive rhythm of trilateral engagement over the last several months.

I'm afraid that we are short on time. The minister has a very tight schedule. So thank you, again, Foreign Minister Hayashi, for joining us, coming to CSIS today, and please join me in another round of applause for – (applause).

Min. Hayashi: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause.)

Mr. Johnstone: Thank you. Thank you very much.