

Japan's Security Cooperation with ASEAN

-Evolution, Challenges, and Implications for Indo-Pacific Order-

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Issues

- Since the early 2010s, Japan-ASEAN security relations have undergone a significant transformation, evolving from cautious, dialogue-based engagement to active, practical collaboration.
- Today, Japan and ASEAN collaborate across virtually all major security domains: traditional defense (through dialogues, exercises, and some arms transfers), maritime security (coast guard capacity-building), and non-traditional security areas such as disaster relief and cybersecurity.
- In this context, the lecture explores the evolution and challenges of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation, as well as its implications for the future of regional order in the Indo-Pacific amidst growing geopolitical uncertainties.

Outline

- The evolution of Japan's security cooperation with ASEAN/member states since the early 2010s
 - Maritime law enforcement and coast guard cooperation
 - Defense cooperation (hardware transfers and joint military exercise)
 - Cooperation on emerging security issues (Humanitarian assistance/disaster relief and Cyber security)
- Key driving forces behind the development of Japan-ASEAN cooperation
- Strategic significance of Japan-ASEAN cooperation
- Challenges of Japan-ASEAN cooperation for Indo-Pacific regional order
- The prospects of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation and its implications for the future of an Indo-Pacific regional order

I. Evolution of Japan's Security Cooperation with ASEAN

- **1) Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) and Coast Guard Cooperation**
 - Recognizing that the most urgent regional challenges are maritime in nature—ranging from grey-zone coercion to transnational crime—Japan has prioritized enhancing the coast guard capabilities of its ASEAN partners.
 - **The Japan Coast Guard (JCG), in coordination with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), provides extensive assistance to its ASEAN counterparts.**
 - The provision of critical equipment's (patrol ships, radar systems et)
 - Multi-year training programs for ASEAN personnel at the JCG Academy in Japan
 - The dispatch of Japanese experts for on-the-ground technical guidance
 - Regular conduct of joint exercises between JCG and ASEAN counterparts.
 - Focusing on the development of a wide range of essential skills
 - Practical law enforcement procedures for interdicting illegal activities,
 - Advanced search and rescue (SAR) techniques
 - Environmental protection protocols for responding to incidents like oil spills

Provision of vessels and other equipment

Recipient Nation	Year(s)	Key Initiatives & Equipment	Funding Mechanism	Strategic Significance
Indonesia	2006–09	Three patrol vessels for National Police Water Unit Maritime radar system and additional patrol boats	ODA Grant	Early example of Japan providing hardware for maritime security to combat piracy and terrorism.
	2023-present	Two fishery patrol vessel to the Indonesian Coast Guard (BAKAMLA) Agreement for providing a large offshore patrol vessel	Grant Aid OSA	Strengthens Indonesia's capacity to secure its vast archipelagic waters and combat transnational maritime crime.
Malaysia	2016	Two used offshore patrol vessels	Grant Aid	Enhances Malaysian capability patrol and law enforcement
Philippines	2013–24	12 multi-role response vessels (MRRVs), including ten 44m-class and two 97m-class vessels	ODA	Forms the backbone of the Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) modern patrol fleet, enhancing its presence and law enforcement capabilities in the West Philippine Sea.
Vietnam	2015–20	Six used patrol vessels	Grant Aid	Bolstered the Vietnam Coast Guard's (VCG) fleet, increasing its capacity for patrols and law enforcement in its disputed EEZ.
	2023–Present	Rescue boats and surveillance equipment	OSA Grant	Continues the modernization of the VCG to enhance its maritime security capabilities.
Cambodia	2025 (Planned)	Intended supply of patrol boats for maritime surveillance	N/A	Supports Cambodia's basic maritime surveillance capabilities.

Japan's capacity building assistance to the Indonesian maritime security agency (BAKAMLA)



Source: Japan's embassy in Indonesia: https://www.id.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/news25_02j.html



Japan's capacity building assistance to the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA)

KM Arau, one of the Japanese patrol boats donated to the MMEA in 2017. Source: New Strait

Times <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2017/06/246567/meas-new-patrol-boat-japan-coast-guard-arrives-sepanggar-naval-base>



Source: Japan's Coast Guard
https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/e/topics_archive/article4267.html

● 2) Defense Cooperation

- Since the mid-2010s, Japan has expanded its engagement beyond civilian maritime agencies to establish strong defense cooperation with ASEAN states, including equipment transfers, regular joint exercises and strategic dialogues.
- Established new legal and political frameworks for deeper security engagement under a policy of **“proactive pacifism”**
- **“Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology” (2014, 2023-4)** (revising Japan’s traditional principles that had imposed a near-total ban on arms exports since 1967)
 - **The agreement on the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology** with the Philippines (2016), Malaysia (2018), Indonesia (2021), Vietnam (2021), Thailand (2022), and Singapore (2023)
- **The “Vientiane Vision”(2016)**
 - Institutionalizing Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation and emphasizing supporting “security capacity resilience” in ASEAN states
 - The rule of law, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations support, military medicine and cybersecurity among others.

- **The “Vientiane Vision” 2.0 (2019)**

- Updating the concept to synchronize Japan-ASEAN cooperation with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)
- Echoing the spirit of the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine ("Heart-to-heart Cooperation", "Tailored and Lasting Cooperation," and "Equal and Open Cooperation")
 - Promoting the development and sharing of universal norms regarding the sea and air space Promoting ASEAN's efforts to enhance maritime domain awareness capabilities, and supporting individual states' efforts to enhance their national security
 - Assisting ASEAN's organizational responses to regional challenges (natural disasters and non-traditional threats)

- **The “Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation” (JASMINE Initiative:2023)**

- It specifies specific defense cooperation under four pillars
 - (1) to carry out efforts to create a security environment that does not allow any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion
 - (2) To continue and expand the Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation
 - (3) To pursue further friendship and opportunities between Japan and ASEAN defense officials
 - (4) To support defense cooperation between ASEAN, Japan, and the Pacific Island countries

● Official Security Assistance (OSA) (2023)

- Designed to “provide equipment and supplies as well as assistance for infrastructure development to partner countries with a view to strengthening their security and deterrence capabilities in order to prevent unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, ensure the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region in particular,” (MOFA 2023)
- OSA projects are limited to fields not directly related to international conflict.
 - 1) Activities for ensuring peace, stability and security based on the rule of law Ex. Monitoring and surveillance in territorial waters and airspace, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, etc.
 - 2) Humanitarian activities Ex. Disaster response, search and rescue, lifesaving, medical care, transport of relief goods, etc.
 - 3) International peace cooperation operations Ex. Capacity building to participate in Peacekeeping operations, etc. (MOFA 2025)

Transfer of Defense Equipment

Recipient Nation	Year(s)	Key Initiatives & Equipment		Funding Mechanism	Significance
Indonesia	2025	Signed the agreement to provide high speed patrol boats for Indonesian Navy	1 patrol boat	OSA	Enhancing the monitoring and surveillance capabilities of Indonesian Navy.
Indonesia	2025 (proposal)	Advanced frigate via a joint production scheme (proposal stage)	8 frigate (proposal stage)	Defense Transfer supported by Japanese loans (proposal stage)	Japan and Indonesia discussing the possibility of jointly constructing a total of 8 the Mogami-class frigates (building four in Japan and four in Indonesia), with technology transfers for systems like radar and electronic warfare.
Malaysia	2025	Seven rescue boats and 14 UAV for Malaysian Armed Forces		OSA Grant	First Japanese military aid to Malaysia; modest in size but pivotal in broadening bilateral defense cooperation beyond dialogue.
Philippines	2017–2018	Beechcraft TC-90 patrol aircraft	5 aircraft	Defense Transfer (ex-JMSDF, gratis)	First Japanese military aircraft transfer abroad. Expanded PH maritime patrol by covering West PH Sea.
Philippines	2024	J/FPS-3 Air surveillance radars	3 (fixed radar units) + 1 mobile	OSA	Japan's first high-tech defense export. Enhances Philippines' air and maritime domain awareness
Philippines	2023-4	Coastal radar systems & RHIB fast boats.	(Multiple radars & boats)	OSA	Improving Navy's littoral surveillance and mobility.
	2025- (planned)	Used frigates via a joint development scheme (Proposal		Defense Transfer (Proposal stage)	Japan is currently in discussions about the possibility of exporting six used Japanese frigates (Abukuma-class)to the Philippines
Vietnam		Potential OSA package (under consideration)		OSA (planned)	Considering non-lethal aid (e.g. surveillance gear) for Vietnam]. Would strengthen Vietnam's situational awareness in SCS.



The “Mogami”-class frigate

Source: Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

:<https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/equipment/ships/ffm/mogami>



The “Abukuma”-class frigate

Source: Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

<https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/equipment/ships/de/abukuma/>

- **3) Security cooperation on emerging security issues**
- **3)-1: Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HADR)**
 - **Supporting the foundation and operations of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre).**
 - Japan has been the largest financial contributor to the AHA Centre since its inception (Between 2011 and 2021, Japan gave over \$40 million to the AHA Centre, mostly via the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF)).
 - → **the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA)**
 - **Joint exercises and training**
 - **The Japan-ASEAN HADR Invitation Program**
 - – inviting a group of ASEAN officers to Japan for a week-long program that program combines educational seminars on Japan's disaster management framework.
 - - Tabletop Exercises (TTX) that simulate multilateral responses to hypothetical disaster scenarios

HADR cooperation

Initiative/Exercise	Year(s)	Participants	Description	Strategic Significance
Support for AHA Centre	2011–Present	Japan, ASEAN (AHA Centre)	Japan has provided significant financial and technical support through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) for the establishment and operation of the AHA Centre, including its ICT systems and the DELSA stockpile. ⁷⁰	Positions Japan as a key partner in building ASEAN's indigenous disaster management capabilities and reinforces ASEAN Centrality.
ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on HA/DR	2010–Present	Japan, various ASEAN and Plus countries	Japan actively participates in and co-chairs this working group, which conducts practical cooperation and joint exercises to enhance regional HADR capabilities. ⁷	Promotes interoperability and confidence-building among a wide range of regional militaries in a non-controversial field.
Japan-ASEAN Invitation Program on HA/DR	2023–Present	Japan, all ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Secretariat	A program under the "Vientiane Vision 2.0" framework, featuring seminars, Table Top Exercises (TTX), and observations to strengthen multinational coordination for large-scale disasters. ⁶⁹	Institutionalizes ASEAN-wide cooperation and strengthens the region's collective disaster response capacity.

● 3)-2. Cybersecurity Cooperation

- As ASEAN faces growing cyber threats (attacks on critical infrastructure, cybercrime), Japan has stepped up as a partner to bolster regional cyber defenses.
 - **Founding the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC)** in Bangkok in 2018, (Initially funded by JAIF, now supported by JICA).
 - Trained hundreds of ASEAN officials in network security, incident response, etc
 - **Lunching Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program in 2023** as a part of the JASMINE initiative
 - involving comprehensive exercises and seminars on international cyber law to enhance the incident response capabilities of ASEAN militaries
 - Enhancing ASEAN members' resilience against cyberattacks and fosters information-sharing networks.
 - Promoting a secure digital Indo-Pacific economic environment.

Cyber security cooperation

Framework	Year(s)	Participants	Description	Strategic Significance
ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC)	2018–Present	Japan, all ASEAN Member States	A flagship project in Bangkok, funded by JAIF, providing hands-on training, incident response drills, and exercises to build a skilled cybersecurity workforce across ASEAN. ⁷⁴	Serves as the central hub for regional cyber resilience, enhancing the security of critical digital infrastructure and fostering a common response culture.
Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program	2023–Present	Japan MOD/SDF, ASEAN defense authorities	A defense-focused program involving comprehensive exercises and seminars on international cyber law to enhance the incident response capabilities of ASEAN militaries.	Strengthens military-to-military cyber cooperation and builds a network of defense personnel focused on the cyber domain.
ASEAN Japan Cybersecurity Community Alliance (AJCCA)	2023–Present	Cybersecurity communities from Japan and 9 ASEAN countries	A consortium of private-sector and academic cybersecurity communities aimed at promoting information sharing and fostering a robust digital ecosystem.	Facilitates crucial public-private partnerships and leverages non-governmental expertise to address evolving cyber threats.
Remote/Tabletop Cyber Exercises	2023–Present	Japan, ASEAN government agencies	Joint exercises simulating large-scale, sophisticated cyberattacks on critical infrastructure to improve information sharing and joint response based on agreed procedures.	Tests and refines joint operational procedures, enhancing the practical readiness of both Japan and ASEAN to handle a major cyber crisis.

II. Driving forces for Japan-ASEAN security cooperation

- **1. Shared security concerns**

- **1) The escalation of the South China Sea territorial disputes**

The convergence of concerns between Japan and many ASEAN states, particularly among key maritime states, about the growing tensions in the South China Sea has become the main catalyst for their partnership to advance into active, practical security cooperation.

E.g.

- The standoff between the Philippines and China at Scarborough Shoal in 2012
- Numerous incidents involving “gray zone” operations by China’s coast guard (and even Navy ships) against civilian ships within the EEZ of the Philippine, Malaysia, Vietnam
- Similar incidents within Indonesia's EEZ near the Natuna Islands
- China’s large-scale artificial island construction and militarization in the Spratly Islands especially since 2014

- These incidents greatly altered the security calculations of both Japan and ASEAN claimant states, **creating a convergence of strategic interests** that had not previously existed.
- **Japan**
 - Seeing the incidents as serious challenge to its national security (would disrupt its regional seelines of communication, might spread to the East China Sea) and to a rules-based maritime order (eroding the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: UNCLOS)
- **ASEAN claimant states**
 - Seeing the incidents as a direct threat to their sovereignty and access to vital maritime resources (The growing presence of China's Navy ships).
 - The massive increase in China's naval and coast guard capabilities created an urgent sense of **a power gap**.

● 2) Transnational security concerns

● Piracy and Maritime Crime

- For decades, piracy and armed robbery in the Malacca Strait and surrounding seas have posed a significant threat to regional commerce, endangering sailors and impeding traffic.
- Japan's leading role in launching the **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** in 2004

● Disaster response needs/Cyber threats

- Japan and Southeast Asia together form one of the world's most disaster-prone regions.
- Making Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) a cornerstone of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation.
- Strengthening the region's collective resilience to cyber threats.

● 2. Normative alignments and shared visions of regional order: FOIP and AOIP

- Since the mid-2000s, both Japan and ASEAN have championed a rule-based regional order. Their shared vision has increasingly aligned with the emergence of Indo-Pacific concepts, Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP)
- **Shared principles**
 - Commitment to a rules-based order, openness, inclusivity, respect for international law including UNCLOS, and the critical importance of freedom of navigation and peaceful dispute settlement
- **“ASEAN Centrality” and areas of cooperation**
 - Japan's FOIP → the significance of inclusiveness and supports ASEAN centrality.
 - AOIP's priority areas of cooperation (maritime cooperation, connectivity, sustainable development, and economic cooperation)
→ all areas Japan was already strongly engaging in

- **Thess normative alignments have provided an impetus for closer security collaborations aimed at realizing a shared vision of regional order**
 - The adoption of the Vientiane Vision 2.0 in 2019
 - The adoption of the 2020 ASEAN–Japan joint statement on AOIP for coordinating FOIP-AOIP implementation.
 - The implementation of dozens of projects supporting AOIP priority areas under the FOIP framework (By late 2022, Japan reported 89 concrete cooperation projects, ranging from maritime safety to infrastructure and health security)
- **further fueled the advancement of practical security cooperation.**
 - The conclusion of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2023
 - The Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE) in 2023
 - The Joint Vision Statement adopted at the Japan-ASEAN 50th Anniversary Commemorative Summit →wider defense cooperation.

● The emergence of mutual strategic trust

- In “the State of Southeast Asia: 2025 Survey Report,” conducted by the Yusof-Ishak ISEAS, Japan consistently emerges as **the most trusted nation among major powers**, including the United States, the EU, China, and India (since the survey began in 2019).
- “Among those who trust Japan, 40.5% of ASEAN-10 respondents believe that **Japan is a responsible stakeholder that respects and champions international law**” (ISEAS 2025).
- After more than 50 years of collaboration, Japan not only shares a common vision of regional order with ASEAN but also embodies one of the key principles of the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine.
 - “Japan as a true friend of the countries of Southeast Asia will do its best for consolidating the relationship **of mutual confidence and trust based on “heart-to-heart” understanding with these countries**”

III. Strategic significance of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation

- 1) ASEAN: Autonomy, Centrality and Diversification

- Japan's security assistance has bolstered ASEAN's maritime, disaster-relief, and overall law enforcement capabilities, thereby strengthening their "**autonomy**" in safeguarding Southeast Asian security.
- Japan's security initiatives = **few political conditions**
 - **emphasizing "regional public goods"** rather than exerting political pressure to choose "a side."

→ASEAN can "**diversify**" their security reliance and enhance their critical capabilities without compromising their "**neutrality**" and "**centrality**".

- Japan offers an alternative source of support that aligns more closely with ASEAN's vision of regional order, **where no single power dominates the region.**

● 2) Japan: Multifaceted Threats, Diversification

- Facing multifaceted threats ranging from traditional to non-traditional security
- The limits of the Japan-US alliance
- The risk of overreliance on a single partner
- **Security diversification**
 - E.g Japan has expanded two-plus-two (2+2) foreign and defense ministerial dialogues since the late 2000s—with Australia, France, the UK, Indonesia, India, Germany, the Philippines, Russia (suspended)
 - Strengthening the maritime and defense capabilities of ASEAN states is **essential for protecting Japan's sea lines of communication**, which are critical to its national security
 - **ASEAN is critically important** = one of the few regional actors sharing a common vision of international order

● 3) Overall strategic significance

● Promoting a stable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific

- Enhancing ASEAN's maritime and defense capabilities is **crucial to preventing a power vacuum** that could be filled by coercive behavior
 - e.g. the closure of US military bases in the Philippines in 1991 → the increasing tension in the South China Sea issues
- Maintaining a stable balance of power is **essential to uphold a "rule-based" order in the Indo-Pacific**, especially when the region faces coercive actions that challenge existing international laws (especially those concerning sovereignty and the UNCLOS)

Comparative Military Expenditures in the Indo-Pacific: 2024-2040

Country	2024 Budget (USD Billions, Constant 2024)	2024 Budget (% of GDP)	2030 Projection (USD Billions, Constant 2024)	2030 Projection (% of GDP)	2040 Projection (USD Billions, Constant 2024)	2040 Projection (% of GDP)
USA	997.0	3.4	1,050.0	3.1	1,150.0	3.0
China	471.0	2.6	675.0	2.8	900.0	3.0
Japan	55.3	1.4	80.0	2.0	105.0	2.0
Indonesia	11.0	0.8	16.0	0.9	27.0	1.1
Malaysia	4.3	1.0	6.0	1.1	8.5	1.2
Singapore	15.1	2.8	19.0	2.7	23.0	2.6
Vietnam	7.2	2.1	11.0	2.2	17.0	2.3
Philippines	6.1	1.3	9.5	1.4	14.0	1.5
Australia	36.8	2.0	57.0	2.2	80.0	2.4

All figures are presented in constant 2024 US dollars to eliminate the effects of inflation and allow for a time-series comparison.

- The acceleration of military modernization and the widening power gap
- The significance of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation is expected to grow even further in the coming years

IV. Challenges for Japan-ASEAN security cooperation

- Despite the remarkable progress and strong driving forces, Japan and ASEAN have faced notable challenges and constraints that limit its potential to enhance their security cooperation and hence to advance their shared visions.

1) Internal challenges/constraints

- **Japan's budgetary constraints**
 - OSA program operates on a modest budget
 - ODA has much larger budget, but it can only be used for non-military fields.
 - Financial increases frequently encounter resistance due to competing domestic priorities, such as social welfare.

(OSA) Fiscal Year

2024

Total Budget (JPY)

5 billion Yen

Total Budget (USD, Approx.)

\$30–34.6 million

2025

- 8 billion Yen

~\$56 million

(ODA)

2024

565 billion Yen

US \$3.8 billion

2025

565 billion Yen

US \$3.8 billion

● Japan's legal constraints

- Japan's legal frameworks for security assistance remain largely constrained by its "pacifist" constitution.

● The operational guidelines for the “Three Principles on Defense Equipment”

- Limit the export of “finished defense products” to five categories: rescue, transport, surveillance, monitoring, and minesweeping.
- The direct export of “finished products” **armed with lethal weapons** is only feasible through **joint development projects** with recipient countries
 - e.g. the joint development of an advanced frigate based on the Japanese “Mogami” class frigate with Australia).
 - e.g. Proposing the export of six Japan's used frigates to the Philippines and eight advanced frigates, known as the Mogami-class, to Indonesia

● OSA

- “Whether or not it involves defense equipment, cooperation will be carried out under the framework of the “Three Principles on Defense Equipment Transfer” and its operational guidelines” (MOFA 2025)

● ASEAN's internal diversity

- ASEAN as an organization fully supports a rule-based order founded on international laws.
- Yet, not all ASEAN member states prioritize major security issues, such as the South China Sea issue, in the same manner, even when these issues could significantly undermine the credibility of major international laws **directly related to Southeast Asian Security**
 - e.g. No ASEAN's "collective" statement on the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on the South China Sea
- This could restrict the scope of what ASEAN and Japan should achieve together **"multilaterally"** in upholding the rule-based international order.
- A "rule-based" international order entails more than just fostering a stable balance of power; it necessitates **"multilateral" collective diplomatic efforts**.
 - e.g. International norms never die, even when powerful states openly violate them, as long as the majority of other states "collectively" react to these actions, even if only through diplomatic means.
 - **Expressing collective diplomatic criticism of these practices is the minimum necessary effort**
 - **ASEAN should be at the heart of these diplomatic efforts, in line the principle of "ASEAN centrality" in the Indo-Pacific**

2) External challenges/constraints

- **The intensification of US-China strategic competition**

- Southeast Asia as the primary theater for the intensifying strategic rivalry between the United States and China

→ imposing further dilemma on ASEAN member states.

- While great power competitions **place Japan-ASEAN cooperation in the middle of great-power tension**

→ might cause ASEAN member states to hesitate in deepening security cooperation with the US and Japan, which China might perceive as provocative.

→ leading Japan to take a delicate, cautious approach to ASEAN

- This inherent caution would moderate the pace and extent of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation even when there is an urgent need to prevent the emergence of power vacuum in the region.

- **The resurgence of power politics**

- ***The return to spheres of influence (2025)***

- **Pro. Monica Duffy Toft** (Academic Dean, Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at Tuft University's Fletcher School)

- **Main argument**

- “World politics has increasingly reverted to **a more traditional, hard power-oriented dynamic**”
- “**Larger countries are once again leveraging their military strength and economic influence to establish spheres of influence —geographic regions where they exert economic, military, and political control without necessarily claiming formal sovereignty**”
- “Today's geopolitical landscape particularly resembles the close of WWII when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin sought to divide Europe into spheres of influence. **Today's major powers are seeking to negotiate a new global order primarily with each other**, much as Allied leaders did when they redrew the world map at the Yalta negotiations in 1945” (e.g. US-Russia negotiation over Ukraine).

- **What are major factors for this shift?**

- **Toft:** “The nations now driving the return of power politics - China, Russia, and the United States- have all been led by **figures who draw on a collective sense of national humiliation** (“make our country great again” narrative)”
- These leaders believe that “**commanding and extending spheres of influence**” **though the use of hard power** is the only way to bring back their country’s greatness
- “The reemergence of spheres of influence signals that the nature of the global order is being tested” - could lead to a return to **the power politics of earlier eras**;

or

“ **The resurgence of a rules-based order** centered on multilateral cooperation, economic globalization, and US-led or collective security arrangements that deter expansionist ambitions **after enduring several cycles of destabilizing crises**”.

- **The Indo-Pacific region would be directly impacted by global geopolitical shifts.**
→ **greatly marginalize international law and multilateral institutions(such as ASEAN and the EU) while jeopardizing the autonomy of smaller states**

V. The prospects of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation and its implications for an Indo-Pacific regional order

- **The Indo-Pacific region stands at a critical juncture**
 - The region faces the potential to either
 - devolve into greater unpredictability and instability, where smaller states constantly fear the coercive use of military and economic might by larger states
 - or
 - to evolve into a more stable and predictable environment, where the rule of law and multilateral institutions function effectively (based on a stable balance of power), allowing for the peaceful resolution of disputes, regardless of the size of state power
- The fate of the region is not solely dependent on the policy directions of the US and China; it also hinges on the ability of other regional countries to act **collectively to endure or even deter “several cycles of destabilizing crises” that many arise from great power competitions.**

- Building on the tangible progress of Japan-ASEAN security cooperation, which is grounded in a shared vision of rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific, Japan and ASEAN should strive to:
 - 1) Strategically utilize their limited resources to **bolster "asymmetrical" deterrence capabilities"** to hedge against coercive military actions and thereby contributing to a stable regional balance of power.
 - Japan needs to increase funding for OSA and more actively and flexibly use defense transfer initiatives.
 - For ASEAN states, this is not about choosing sides between the US, Japan, or China. It is about protecting their own autonomy and, more broadly, establishing a regional order that is favorable to smaller countries.
 - 2) Promote more **cohesive "multilateral" diplomatic initiatives** to ensure the preservation of existing international law
 - Presenting a more unified and collective stance and voicing criticisms against actions that undermine existing international laws in the Indo-Pacific

- 3) Reinvigorate ASEAN-led institutions to alleviate tensions arising from great power rivalry and balancing practices, thereby contributing to the stabilization of the regional balance of power.
 - ASEAN-led region-wide institutions (the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting (ADMM)-Plus, the East Asian Summit (EAS)) are the only regional frameworks that include all of the great powers.

Thank you for listening !