

Like-Minded Democracies under Shared Vision

East Asia Institute (EAI)

I. Threats to Democracy in the Indo-Pacific Region

Democratic backsliding is a global phenomenon that has been occurring since the mid-2000s. The COVID-19 pandemic is further challenging democratic principles and resilience. The Indo-Pacific region is no exception with existing authoritarian rules and populist politics, now added by new challenges due to the battle against the pandemic. The protection and promotion of democracy in this region are particularly crucial for sustaining geopolitical stability that has been disrupted by increasing strategic competition between the United States and China. Diverse and inclusive cooperation among like-minded countries to support democracy in the region is emphasized. Developing appropriate narratives and strengthening democratic norms are emphasized by all panelists.

II. Country-level Views on Democratic Partnership

How the U.S. Is Changing Its Views on Democracy

- The U.S. public and leaders are more than ever willing to secure its democracy and advance democratic values abroad. Threats against democratic values from Russia and China mobilized the US public and politicians to protect democracy home and abroad. Public and intellectual support for strengthening alliances and partnerships is also record-high, and all emphasize cooperation despite the diversity of each nation's democratic practices. In addition, the new generation in the US who witnessed the success of democratization in Asia is willing to support the idea of sharing the best practices and learning from each other to protect and advance values of democracy and human rights in Asia. This turn to cooperation contrasts with the past democracy promotion efforts such as the counterinsurgency campaigns in Mindanao.

Whether It Be Trump or Biden, Democracy Will Matter

- The Biden campaign has advocated democracy as a central theme to its foreign policy, in the candidate's *Foreign Affairs* article and major speeches, making it obvious that democracy will matter in the Biden Administration. However, at the same time, unlike the first Trump Administration's anti-democratic moves, the second Trump Administration, if Trump is elected again, then his second term administration will have to recognize the importance of democratic norms to foreign policy. Otherwise, the zero-sum ideological framing of American foreign policy may deter its efforts to strengthen democratic governance.

The Philippines, Where Democracy Has Bloomed with Democratic Partnership

- For the Philippine democracy, which survived the Marcos dictatorship and is maintaining its freedom with the help from regional and global solidarity, democratic partnership continues to be valuable. The regional networking and partnership for democracy especially in the Philippines' context, develops a shared under-

standing of the threats to democracy; shares knowledge and good practices on protecting democratic values; and amplifies voices of resistance in a regional and global setting.

- However, the Philippines is undergoing challenges in democracy development due to rising populism, fundamentalism and China's encroachment, which need to be addressed through the promotion of practice and policy at every level: regional, national, organizational and individual.

World's Largest Democracy, India

- Currently, India's democratic cooperation consists of three elements: coordination and norm-setting; development partnerships; and technical assistance and training. However, democratic cooperation from the Indian perspective largely focuses on bilateral areas, and India needs to invest more efforts in joint projects with other countries including the U.S., Japan, Europe and more in promoting democracies.

Indonesia's Conundrum: Democracy vs. Non-Interference, or Both?

- In an effort to balance between the promotion of democracy and respect for the principle of non-interference, Indonesia deliberately and purposefully introduced the idea of ASEAN Political-Security Community, which puts forth that a community cannot only be economic but also include democratic development, good governance, and respect for human rights. However, the challenge for Indonesia now is to provide a concrete leadership in its practice and to nurture and develop programs for democracy, and to further address that the promotion of democratic values does not contradict the respect for the principle of non-interference.

Amid the Global Backsliding of Democracy, Japan Should Do More

- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pursued the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision since 2016, under the three pillars: democratization; economic prosperity; and peace and stability. However, unlike the last two pillars, Japan's efforts in the democracy front have been limited due to the political and historical sensitivity of the issues. Japan's government-to-government cooperation framework has also limited Japan to respond only when there is a request made by another government. However, it is the responsibility and duty of Japan to work against the backsliding of democratic governance, free trade, and rule-based international order. Given the worrisome trend of weakening democracy, especially in the context of COVID-19, Japan should give the first pillar of democracy an equal emphasis as economy and security.

III. Visions for Democratic Partnership

Embracing the Diversity of Democracy and Pursuing a Common Goal within Like-Minded Democracies

- **Michael J. Green** highlights that while we should recognize that democracies are not monolithic but eclectic, there should be a caucus of like-minded democracies. This caucus can together develop a common and coordinated agenda in various regional groupings in the Indo-Pacific region including the East Asia Summit(EAS), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation(APEC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation(SAARC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations(ASEAN). The caucus should also establish a common set of strategic objectives for the region and a matrix of tools with strengths from each country, in recognition of the eclectic forms of democracies.
- **Dhruva Jaishankar** mentions a valuable avenue for discussions on democracy cooperation within the developing world would be to begin by understanding the varied challenges posed to democracies. This is

attributed to the fact that democratic traditions differ based on countries. For example Japan is more homogenous compared to India or Indonesia which are more pluralistic. Also, finding the middle point between European Union and ASEAN would successfully lead to effective democratic cooperation among like-minded countries.

- **Marty Natalegawa** also echoes that the partnership “on” democracy is better than the partnership “of” democracies excluding nondemocratic countries. The former is more inclusive, tolerant of diversity of views from various countries with different outlooks and stages on democracy. This inclusiveness is expected to bring in a positive contagion and multiplier effect, which was illustrated in the case of democratic developments in Myanmar, Fiji, and some countries in the Pacific. The democratic partnership should continue to provide an alternative script where current problems can find a solution through democratic response than authoritarian one.
- **Yukio Takasu** notes that in pursuing democratic governance, it is crucial that we pursue a democratic ‘partnership’ than democratic ‘unity’, and that we pursue ‘support’ for democratic governance than democracy ‘promotion’. This reiterates the importance of acknowledging the diverse shapes of democracy, and making the partnership inclusive than exclusive, and refraining from pursuing an identical form of democracy. Each country has the right to choose their particular political system. However, the universal value should be maintained, including good governance, accountability and transparency, equality, rule of law, freedom of expression, etc.

Political Leadership on the Promotion of Democratic Partnership

- **Teresita Quintos-Deles** points that given the situation in the Philippines where the central threat to democracy emanates from the state itself, Philippine pro-democracy forces should band among themselves and build solidarity with democratic forces, including democratic governments and civil society actors. Government actors should be reminded that deterioration of democracy in the Philippines leads to failure of other partnership projects including economic ones, and not only democratic partnership.
- **Marty Natalegawa** warns of the ‘deafening silence’ and the ‘incapability’ of current leaders to speak up on situations that are clearly against principles that countries in ASEAN collectively subscribed to formally and officially. The absence of leadership at the formal state-to-state level and the lack of civil society partnership needs to be addressed for a successful cooperation on democracy.

Not Only the States but Also Civil Society Should Lead

- **Teresita Quintos-Deles** emphasizes the importance of promoting participation of and amplifying the voices of the marginalized and the youth. When democracy projects are carried out by formal organizations and elitist leadership, the needs of the marginalized are easily ignored. At the same time, the younger generation needs to be involved in the discourse and assume leadership roles in addressing constraints of democracy development.
- **Yukio Takasu** states that partnership at all levels should take place, especially at the civil society level, between think-tanks, and within academia, and not only through the government. In addition to raising political support from parliamentary groups in Japan on the promotion of democratic partnership, efforts are made to partner with research groups and to form a network of civil society organizations in order to promote policy dialogue.

Asia-Led, Not U.S.-Led Regional Partnership

- **Yukio Takasu** underlines that regional partnership should be led by Asian countries, not the U.S. The democratic partnership should not be regarded as an effort by the U.S. to balance against China intrusion, but Asian countries in the region should pursue a shared vision in promoting partnership.
- **Michael J. Green** mentions that democracy is under attack by China grounded upon its engagement of information warfare. To protect democracy, countries in Asia need to play an important role, instead of being led by the US, which remains dominant. However, the US will persist as an important actor in promoting democracy since it has the largest budget allocated for democracy promotion with its experiences of success and failure. ■

IV. Chair & Panelists

■ **Sook Jong Lee** is a professor of public administration at Sungkyunkwan University and senior fellow of the East Asia Institute. She has been directing the Asian Democracy Research Network since its formation in 2015, leading a network of about nineteen research organizations across Asia to promote democracy with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy. Her recent publications include *Transforming Global Governance with Middle Power Diplomacy: South Korea's Role in the 21st Century* (ed. 2016), and *Keys to Successful Presidency in South Korea* (ed. 2013 and 2016).

■ **Teresita Quintos-Deles** has been at the forefront of peace initiatives in the Philippines, starting as a civil society activist and, more recently, as a public servant. She was the first woman to be appointed as Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, with Cabinet rank, serving a first term in 2003-2005 and a second term under the 2nd Aquino government in 2010- 2016. Under her watch, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed in 2014. She sat as an Expert-Member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) in 1991-1994. In 2017, she served as a UN Senior Mediation Adviser, with a special focus on Gender and Inclusion. She currently chairs the International Center on Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov), which she co-founded in 2005; and serves as chair-convenor of the women's coalition EveryWoman.

■ **Michael J. Green** is senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and director of Asian Studies at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He served on the staff of the National Security Council (NSC) from 2001 through 2005. Dr. Green has authored numerous books and articles on East Asian security, including, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783* (Columbia University Press, 2017). He received his master's and doctoral degrees from SAIS and did additional graduate and postgraduate research at Tokyo University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received his master's and doctoral degrees from SAIS and did additional graduate and postgraduate research at Tokyo University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received his bachelor's degree in history from Kenyon College with highest honors.

■ **Dhruva Jaishankar** is a Nonresident Fellow at the Lowy Institute, and Director of the US Initiative at Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. Previously, he was a Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at Brookings India in New Delhi and the Brookings Institution in Washington DC. His research examines India's role in the international system and the effects of global developments on India's politics, economics, and society, with a particular focus on India's relations with the United States, Asia and the Indo-Pacific, and Europe. Jaishankar holds a bachelor's degree in history and classics from Macalester College, and a master's degree in security studies from Georgetown University.

■ **Marty Natalegawa** served as Foreign Minister of Indonesia (2009 – 2014). He was Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN (2007-9) and Ambassador to the UK and to Ireland (2005-7). He authored “Does ASEAN Matter? A view from Within” (2018). He is a member of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Mediation. He is also presently a member of the International Academic Advisory Committee of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; the Southeast Asia Advisory Board of the CSIS; International Crisis Group Board of

Trustees; Global Advisory Committee of the Jeju Forum; University of Western Australia's Public Policy Institute Advisory Board; the Board of Directors of the Global Centre for Pluralism, Ottawa and is a Prominent Research Scholar and member of the Honorary Board of the Bank of Indonesia Institute. He is a member of the UN SG's Advisory Board on Disarmament and the Board of Trustees of the UNIDIR. He is also ASPI Distinguished Fellow. He earned a D.Phil. from the ANU; an M.Phil. from University of Cambridge; and a BSc (Hons) from the LSE.

■ **Yukio Takasu** is a Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Human Security. He served as a former UN Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, and a former Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations. In his personal capacity, he chairs “The Future of Democracy” study project (2018-2022) by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) on expanding support for democratic governance in Asia. Mr. Takasu is Visiting Professor of Ritsumeikan University, and has held academic positions at Harvard University, the University of Tokyo, the Graduate University for Policy Studies. Mr. Takasu was educated at the University of Tokyo (Faculty of Law) and Oxford University (Merton College). His publications include “SDGs and Japan: Human Security Index of Japan” (2019).

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