

Professor SATO Yoichiro

Alliances and Alignments: Strategic Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific



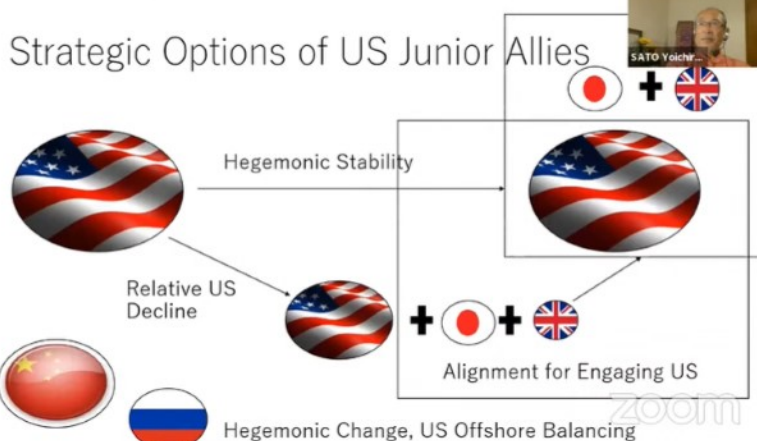
The post-World War Two East Asian security system was built around bilateral U.S. alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, as well as minor partners like Thailand and the Philippines. Often referred to as the “hub-and-spokes” system, the East Asian security system contrasted the multilateral alliance in Western Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thirty years have passed since the end of the Cold War, and the contrasting security systems in East Asia and Europe now face a similar set of challenges, going through partially overlapping transformations, yet retaining some distinct characteristics.

The most interesting common feature in both systems is the growing number of strategic partnerships. Short of an alliance, strategic partnerships nonetheless play important roles in the security systems in both regions. Their roles, however, have been the subject of debates. Do strategic partnerships “supplement” the existing Asian bilateral alliances with the United States? Do they hedge against declining U.S. commitments in the face of growing Chinese threats? Why are strategic partnerships growing? Are they growing for the same set of reasons in both Europe and Asia? These questions bring light to the dichotomy between the international relations theories of realism and liberalism.



I am currently investigating the dynamics behind the growing strategic partnerships Japan has signed with Indo-Pacific partners as well as European countries through literature reviews and interviews with policymakers. Research results will likely generate multiple edited books, academic journal articles, and policy reports.

Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies (RCAPS) Seminar
INTERPRETING JAPAN'S SECURITY ALIGNMENTS: IMPLICATIONS ON THEORETICAL DEBATES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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