The Role of the Nation State in Addressing Global Challenges: Japan–UK Perspectives

2-3 October

This two-day conference will assess the role of the nation state in addressing global challenges, with particular reference to the UK and Japan. It will consider the contributions and limitations of the nation state in confronting and resolving pressing international problems and in fostering a proactive and effective response to such problems by international organizations. Specifically, the conference will provide an opportunity to consider what role, either singly, jointly or in combination with other international actors, Japan and the UK might play in addressing these challenges. Contextually, it will also consider the appropriateness of institutional architectures in addressing critical issues both globally and regionally and assess, specifically, their effectiveness and sufficiency in East Asia where the experience of Japan and the UK might be most relevant.

Several critical issues will form the focal point of our deliberations over two days: day one will examine the three broad themes of failing states, disaster management, and democracy in transition. Day two will focus on three parallel case studies: the contemporary Syrian refugee crisis, the Fukushima triple disaster of 2011, and democratic transition in Myanmar/Burma.

The conference is the second in a five-year series, held alternately between London and Tokyo. The project is funded by the Nippon Foundation and is held in partnership with them and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.
Day One: Thursday 2 October

08.30-09.00  Registration

09.00-09.30  Opening Remarks
Tim Hitches, British Ambassador to Japan
Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman, The Nippon Foundation
Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House

09.30-10.45  Keynote Speech: Security Challenges in Asia: The Relevance of the European Experience
The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1990-97)
Chair: Akiko Yamanaka, Senior Diplomatic Fellow, Cambridge Central Asia Forum, University of Cambridge

10.45-11.15  Coffee break

SESSION 1  |  FAILING STATES

11.15-12.45  To what degree do failed or failing states pose a threat to global and/or regional peace and security, broadly defined? How might the international community sensibly and coherently respond to such threats? What has been the track record to date of the UK and Japan, acting individually or in concert with one another/other states, in addressing the challenge posed by failed/failing states (for example, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Libya, the DPRK, Somalia)? Are there specific examples of failed/failing states that provide salutary and instructive lessons of how the international community should respond to such challenges?

Speakers:
Akihiko Tanaka, President, Japan International Cooperation Agency
Sir Adam Roberts, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford
Takashi Inoguchi, Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo; President, University of Niigata Prefecture

Chair: Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House

12.45-13.45  Lunch
SESSION 2 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT

13.45 – 15.15

What policy lessons from recent environmental and technological catastrophes can be applied in formulating good practice for individual nation states regarding risk reduction and preparation? What comparative advantage do Japan and the UK have in responding to such challenges — do their policy strengths lie in individual or collaborative response? Which institutional actors in both Japan and the UK are best placed to respond? Are there specific examples of recent disasters — for example, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013), Cyclone Phailin in India (2013), Cyclone Nargis in Burma (2008), the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), the Kobe Earthquake (1995), the 2011 triple disaster in north-eastern Japan - that can be usefully studied in addressing the above questions, particularly with regard to such issues as aid provision, population displacement, reconstruction, housing, sanitiation? What policy recommendations can Japan and the United Kingdom make to help nations strengthen their disaster risk reduction and preparedness? Can lessons be drawn from the experiences of ad hoc military coalitions that have served in the wake of some of Asia’s recent disasters?

Speakers:
Tomohiko Taniguchi, Professor, Keio University Graduate School of System Design and Management; Special Advisor, Cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
Lt. General Goro Matsumura, Commanding General, North Eastern Army, Japan Ground Self-defence Force

Chair: Isabel Hilton, Editor, ChinaDialogue

15.15-15.45 Coffee break

SESSION 3 | DEMOCRACY IN TRANSITION

15.45 – 17.15

What are the factors that help to explain the transition from authoritarian to democratic polities and how important is external intervention in shaping such transitions? What role have Japan and the UK previously played in influencing such transitions for either good or ill? In light of the efforts by past Japanese premiers (PMs Abe and Aso, for example) to highlight the importance of ‘values based diplomacy’ (re: the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity concept), can and should Japan be playing a more active role (either independently or with the UK and other states and international organisations) to facilitate such transitions? Do such transitions and transformative experiences enhance or detract from global stability? What are the lessons from such developments as the Jasmine Revolutions in considering future potential transitions, for example in the DPRK?

Speakers:
David Malone, Rector, United Nations University; Under-Secretary General, United Nations
Andrew Gamble, Professor of Politics, Queens’ College, University of Cambridge
Harukata Takenaka, Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
Yuichi Hosoya, Professor, Faculty of Law, Keio University

Chair: Takashi Shiraishi, President, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
Day Two: Friday 3 October

09.30-10.00  Registration
10.00-10.30  Opening Remarks: Are existing institutional structures necessary and sufficient for solving the critical issues of failed states, disaster management and democratic transitions?

SESSION 4  |  SYRIA

10.30-12.00  What are the origins of the refugee crisis in Syria and who should take responsibility for addressing this challenge? How effective has the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) been in addressing the needs of Syrian refugees? What happens when the humanitarian needs of refugees clash with state sovereignty interests and border policing challenges? How have Syria’s neighbours, for example in Turkey and Jordan, responded to this challenge? What role might Japan and the UK play in addressing this challenge, particularly through the deployment of humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping bodies such as Japan’s Self-Defense Forces?

Speakers:
Kiichi Fujiwara, Professor of International Politics, University of Tokyo
Lord Michael Williams, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Chatham House; UN Under Secretary General, Middle East (2006-11)
Nigel Fisher, former Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Amman

Chair: Yoshiji Nogami, President, Japan Institute of International Affairs

12.00-13.00  Lunch

SESSION 5  |  FUKUSHIMA

13.00-14.30  In April, Japan reversed its ‘zero nuclear’ goals. Why did the Fukushima disaster not have the same effect on Japan that it did on Germany - while some in Japan advocate nuclear power as a viable route for energy security for the country, might renewable energy sources be just as good? Can Japanese public concerns regarding nuclear waste be allayed, given the government’s plan to continue using nuclear reactors? Similarly, is Japan able to address global security concerns over its plutonium stockpile – a problem that is exacerbated by the April decision to continue reprocessing fuel at Rokkasho? Following the Fukushima disaster, transparency and honesty have become norms for nuclear governance. What lessons can other nuclear-dependent nations take from the Japanese experience? Similarly, what can Japan learn from the UK/EU/US experiences? Given the reversal of ‘zero nuclear’ goals, will there be a place for renewable energy sources in the rebuilding of Fukushima?
Speakers:
Kiyoshi Kurokawa, Academic Fellow, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies; Chair, The TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission, National Diet of Japan
Lutz Mez, Professor in Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin
Jeffrey Kingston, Director of Asian Studies, Temple University Japan

Chair: Sir David Warren, Associate Fellow, Chatham House; British Ambassador to Japan (2008-2012)

14.30-15.00 Coffee break

SESSION 6 | MYANMAR/BURMA

15.00 – 16.30

How far has the transition to democratic government in Myanmar/Burma progressed? How has this change been effected and what role have foreign powers played? How important has overseas development assistance and economic engagement been in facilitating the transition? How durable are these democratic reforms and what can be done to ensure that they are sustainable? What has been the role of Britain and Japan in contributing to these changes? Are there lessons from other similar political transitions (either positive or negative, past or future) that might be applied to the case of Burma (for example, Thailand, the DPRK)?

Speakers:
David Steinberg, Distinguished Professor of Asian Studies, Georgetown University
Thant Myint-U, Chairman, Yangon Heritage Trust
Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman, The Nippon Foundation; Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar, Government of Japan
Jonathan Head, Southeast Asia Correspondent, BBC News

Chair: Aiko Doden, Senior Commentator, NHK

16.30-17.00 Closing Remarks

17.00 End