

Closing Remarks by President Sasae (Key Points)

- The discussions over the past two days by a panel of global experts have revealed many aspects of our "world in turmoil". It is difficult to summarize the details of the thought-provoking discussions, but I would like to reflect on them with gratitude to all the experts who took the stage and to the audience who watched the discussions and asked pointed questions.
- Prime Minister Kishida gave the opening remarks. He expressed his opinion on what role should Japan play in these troubled times as a peace-loving nation that has been contributing to the international community throughout the post-war era spanning nearly 80 years. He stated that he would be paying a state visit to the US in April to attend the Japan-US Summit, and that he was determined to strengthen cooperation between Japan and the US to maintain and reinforce a free and open international order based on the rule of law.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Kamikawa gave the keynote speech, explaining the essence of "Kamikawa Diplomacy". She emphasized the importance of (1) maintaining and buttressing a free and open international order based on the rule of law, (2) managing interstate competition, and (3) protecting people, including vulnerable populations. She also mentioned that she shared many of the same views as those expressed in the Institute's "Strategic Annual Report".
- The roundtable and today's six sessions generally discussed the following points:
 - There was consensus among the panelists that Ukraine is the most challenging issue and that a defeat in Ukraine would be a defeat for the entire liberal camp, which could trigger further violations of international law by forces that seek to change the status quo and accelerate the trend toward upheaval. Prime Minister Kishida has often stated in his messages, "Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow", and the participants accordingly stressed the need for continued support for Ukraine and the importance of unity among the 32 members of NATO, including Sweden. There is a widely-shared perception in Japan that the Ukraine issue is not merely a European affair but has global repercussions that could also affect Japan. Personally, I believe that Japan should suitably seek closer ties with NATO.
 - Concern was expressed about China's actions on many issues, including its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea, its neglect of the rule of law, and its economic intimidation and weaponization. On the other hand, the prevailing view was that there was no need to be overly pessimistic about US-China relations, as the US-China summit meeting in San Francisco last year had the effect of reducing tensions to a controllable level. It was also good that the speakers from China spoke openly and frankly, a reminder of the importance of dialogue.
 - On the Middle East, no opposing view was expressed against a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, which is considered to be the only way forward and that the international community needs to unite to achieve this goal despite enormous difficulties involved.
 - Concerning the United States, the impact of Trump being re-elected as president was discussed in all sessions. This is a sign that the US is in our hearts and minds, and we would like to convey this sentiment to as many people in the US as possible. There was also a reference to resilience. The US is a democracy and there is no need to be overly pessimistic. In this regard, the significance of countries being firmly prepared to pursue their existing policies and explain at

home and abroad those areas where their interests overlap with those of the US if Trump takes office again was pointed out. Trump's pronouncements as president would certainly need to be taken seriously, but more important would be to watch his actions carefully and respond to them firmly, as it is clear who stands to gain if the US's allies and friends are bickering with each other.

- In its "Strategic Annual Report 2023," JIIA described the worsening upheaval and made policy recommendations. Nevertheless, I believe that today's discussion was dominated by "cautious optimism" that recognized the need to not overreact but instead overcome serious circumstances through the wisdom of liberal countries. I would be happy if this is your takeaway, and I would like to thank all of you once again for your participation.