

Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series

The Role of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in the Face of the U.S.-China Strategic Rivalry

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EAST ASIAN
STUDIES
CENTER

Monday, January 13, 3:30-5:00 pm
Mendenhall Lab 175



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The US-China strategic rivalry goes beyond just a “trade war” and is structural in nature. The fundamental problem is that they do not understand each other’s strategic thinking and cannot manage their bilateral relations as they intend to. One example is the recent consensus in the United States across the aisle that its decade-long engagement with China to transform the country into a liberal democracy was a failure. The other is the failure of what China has called the “New Model of Major Power Relations,” which the Xi Jinping administration tried to establish with the U.S. since 2013. This management failure presents an enormous challenge to the nations in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, which depend on China for trade and economy, and look to the United States for security guarantees. This dilemma of dual dependence gets exacerbated when the U.S-China relations deteriorate. While the alliance with the United States has been indispensable for Japan’s security, this alliance does not effectively address the dilemma of dual dependence. As a result, Japan is bound to pursue an “alliance plus” option to safeguard its national interests. Such an option and strategies are probably true for other nations in the region.

Yoichi Kato is also an adjunct fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., and has been a visiting scholar at Peking U. and the U.S. National Defense U. He has taught at Gakushuin U. in Tokyo, and is a former correspondent and chief for the Asahi Shimbun U.S. Bureau.



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