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Short Curriculum Vitae – Ippei Kamae

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The New President Trump and the US Foreign Policy - Three Dilemmas Looming Ahead

The shock of Trump's victory

On January 20, 2017, Donald J. Trump will become the 45th President of the United States of America. Almost all experts, including those in the mass media, saw little possibility of Trump being elected, but their predictions were completely off the mark. In this sense, Trump's election sent shock waves on a par with or even bigger than those sent by Brexit¹ in June, not only in the United States but through out the rest of the world as well.

The discourse in the media in response to the election results exhibits a pronounced tone of uneasiness and pessimism about Trump.² This is hardly surprising when one looks back at the statements made by Trump during the campaign. Rooted in exclusionistic and close-minded ideas, Trump's rash remarks and behavior smacking of religious persecution, racial discrimination, and misogyny rocked the media day after day. They touched a raw nerve with Americans who believe that diversity, fairness, honesty, and openness are their country's founding ideals and principles, consequently causing a strong rejection against Trump. This reaction was manifested in various events after the election.



Immediately after Trump's victory was declared, singer Lady Gaga held up a placard with the words "Love trumps hate"³ in front of Trump Tower (see the photo above⁴). Film director Michael Moore called on the members of the electoral college not to cast their ballots for Trump in the final vote in December⁵, and anti-Trump demonstrations broke out in all parts of the United States. Right after the election results were in, the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website was put temporarily down due to an overload of access by US citizens who wanted to move to Canada.⁶

Although the choice made by people in another country for their leader is no business of Japan's directly, the new president of the United States as a global superpower is going to have a substantial influence not only on Japan but also on all of Asia. For this reason, worldwide concern is naturally focused on the question of the specific shape Trump's foreign policy will take. Trump's utterances on foreign policy so far have clearly evidenced the ignorance, inconsistencies, and contradictions of his views. The media have run many cartoons satirizing them (see the map below, for example). Many have voiced apprehensions about the course of Trump diplomacy to come.⁷

How Donald Trump Sees The World



Source: Dana Liebelson, Jessica Schulberg "This Map Of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Would Be Funny If It Weren't So True"

Huffington Post, April 12, 2016

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trump-foreign-policy-map_us_570d3358e4b0885fb50e5fef

<Accessed on November 17, 2016>

Although Trump's foolish, outrageous, and irregular comments are definitely rich in entertainment value, for anyone who thinks seriously about foreign policy, displeasure and uneasiness over them merely mount and deepen pessimism. At the same time, however, some observers believe that, in spite of his extreme statements so far, even Trump will take more realistic lines from now on.⁸ This is likewise a manifestation of a certain optimism and anticipation. In this view, the reckless statements of the past were merely devices to get elected, and even Trump will have to steer a more rational course in light of the need to practice responsible management of the country as its president.

But whether one adopts a pessimistic or optimistic perspective in attempting to dissect Trump, the presidency is still in the stage of transition at present, and there will not be enough solid material for a judgment until the Trump Administration goes into action. As such, a constructive discussion is not going to result from aimless attempts at analysis, criticism, or prediction at this time. What we must do right now is to avoid pessimism and optimism about the future, dispassionately consider the situation on the basis of the available information, logically prepare ourselves accordingly. In this sense, what is definitely going to become an important point from here on is the logical contradictions in Trump's own comments and the three dilemmas they involve. Here, I would like to discuss this area with a particular focus on Trump's foreign policy as regards Asia. If and

when Trump's diplomacy probes for a pragmatic line, its key agenda will be how to settle these dilemmas.

The first dilemma: interventionism vs. isolationism

One of the attributes that can clearly be cited as indicative of the general orientation of Trump's foreign policy is a pronounced anti-Obama tone. Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro, who are regarded as Trump's foreign policy "brains" and known as pundits spearheading criticism of China, plainly set forth this point in their contribution to "Foreign Policy," a journal dedicated to this subject.⁹ In short, in their view, the foreign policy deployed by the Obama administration while Hillary Clinton was serving as Secretary of State under the banner of an "Asian pivot" (later "rebalance") was "an imprudent case of talking loudly and carrying a small stick," and "led to more, not less, (Chinese) aggression and instability in the (Asia-Pacific) region."¹⁰ They further criticized the Obama administration, arguing that it could not deter China with a military weakened by arms reduction accompanying cuts in defense spending, and as a result was not able to stop China from constructing military bases in the South China Sea and unilaterally establishing an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea. In addition, they claimed that the diplomatic approach of "strategic patience" led by Clinton was synonymous with inaction and effectively permitted not only Chinese expansionism but also the unlimited continuation of North Korea's nuclear arms development. They also pointed out that, during the Obama administration's term, this development made great progress. Besides conducting four nuclear tests, North Korea developed smaller nuclear warheads and missiles capable of reaching the US West Coast. They therefore advocated an end to cuts in defense spending, an arms buildup emphasizing US naval forces, and deployment of a strategy for "peace through strength," like that taken by the administration of Ronald Reagan. Asserting that Japan, South Korea, and other US allies and partners are seeking an even closer relationship with the United States against the background of the threat posed by China, they also insisted that the next administration must take full advantage of the strategic opportunity this presents.¹¹ Their position suggests there is a strong possibility that, under the influence of such foreign policy "brains," Trump will pursue a line of forceful intervention toward China and North Korea.

It is, however, also possible that Trump, who says he puts "America first," will espouse an isolationism. The UK's Financial Times observed that the litmus test of the Trump

administration's foreign policy in Asia will be its handling of China.¹² It is true that, during the campaign, Trump voiced criticism of China. He said that it was raping the US economy and that he would slap a 45-percent tariff on Chinese imports on his first day in office. He also threatened to designate China as a currency manipulator. But at the same time, he cited "US allies which are not paying their fair share" of responsibilities as one of the five weaknesses of U.S. foreign policy in a speech he made in April 2016, which set forth the overall direction of his foreign policy. He argued that, if they did not pay a fair share, the United States would have no choice but to let each defend itself.¹³ In other words, he was saying that the United States no longer had the margin to be the policeman of the world, and that, if it was merely providing support and not being appreciated for it, then the relationship could not be termed reciprocal and the United States should withdraw its military.¹⁴ As an extension of this line, he also showed a stance of tolerating the acquisition of a nuclear capability by Japan and South Korea.¹⁵ In their article advocating interventionism, Gray and Navarro likewise criticize Japan and South Korea for not assuming a cost burden commensurate with their status as the countries with the world's third- and 11th-largest gross domestic products, respectively.¹⁶ Although the details of their conversation have not been disclosed, this area may have been discussed in the bilateral meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President-Elect Trump on November 17. Of course, the fact is that Japan is already shouldering a big part of the cost burden associated with the US military presence, in the form of its budget (approximately 180 billion yen annually) for "host nation support." Any move by the US side to tell Japan to pay more could endanger the ties of friendship right from the start of building a relationship. To begin with, for the U.S. military in its deployment of a global strategy, presence in Japan makes not a little qualitative contribution that could not be calculated in monetary terms. It could be said that, if Japan is not accorded strategic importance as a forward base for checking China in line with a policy of US intervention in Asia, a serious security problem on a new order would surface for Japan.

It might be added that, in response to the election results, China's foreign ministry released a comment to the effect that China wanted to work with the next US administration and develop Chinese-US ties that are sound and steady into the long term.¹⁷ The comment also pointed out that it was important for the "two superpowers" to play a role for regional and world peace and prosperity through cooperation and constructive efforts¹⁸, and emphasized that advancement of the bilateral relationship would benefit the people of both countries and the world as a whole.¹⁹ On November 14, Trump and Xi Jinping spoke by telephone. Xi told Trump "cooperation was the only

correct choice in the relations between the two countries.”²⁰ This typical comment on the Chinese side seems intended to test Trump and see what he will do even while checking him. If, however, US foreign policy becomes more isolationistic, one expert thinks that China will view this as “an opportunity to keep strengthening its position and its role in the region.”²¹ Another suspects that Beijing regards a foreign affairs amateur like Trump as easier to deal with than Hillary Clinton, whom he characterized as “a formidable foreign policy leader.”²² To be sure, the approach of taking a tough stance on human rights and democratization in negotiations like Clinton may be more annoying to China than an anti-Chinese line focused on military might. It may also be that “the Chinese think they know businessmen, they know how to massage the ego of a powerful dictatorial strongman, so they think they can handle him.”²³ There is an undeniable possibility that the United States and China will build a good bilateral relationship by cooperating in the economic sphere. But it is precisely Trump who must take care to see that the United States does not suffer a loss of credibility due to foreign policy which, for all of its loud talk, carries only a small stick.

The second dilemma: anti-globalism vs. free trade

The second dilemma is also related to the isolationism taken up in the first. It is the question of how the United States should position free trade from now on. Trump has hammered out the “America first” line and is above all bent on rebuilding the domestic economy, insisting that the country “doesn’t have any money.” He thinks the cause of this situation lies in globalism, and took a stance clearly opposed to it in the campaign, when he pledged that he would “no longer surrender the country or its people to the false song of globalism.”²⁴ This also holds for the Trans Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership that now grew into the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the prospective new Asia-Pacific framework for free trade that would also be an engine to drive globalism and is being promoted by 12 countries in the region, including Japan and the United States. Trump voiced his opposition to the TPP early in his campaign²⁵ and continued to call for the agreement to be scrapped throughout it.²⁶ The aforementioned Gray & Navarro article, too, denounced the TPP as a bad deal for the US economy that, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), would weaken the foundation of US manufacturing and even the defense capabilities of the United States and its allies.²⁷ As noted above, however, Gray and Navarro advocate a hard line against China. Nevertheless, as things now stand, the initiative in rulemaking for trade in the region is liable to be taken by

China, which has not joined the TPP. This, in turn, could grow into a problem that detracts from the very stability of the region, not just its economic vitality. There is a consequently a certain point behind use of the word “strategic” in the TPP.

To begin with, the promotion of free trade has by no means been confined to the Obama administration; it has been one of the pillars of US diplomacy ever since the end of the Second World War. The Republican Party, too, has thus far taken a positive stance on free trade as a matter of party policy. Historically speaking, the slide into protectionism before the Second World War was one of the factors that triggered the conflict. Taking this lesson to heart, the developed countries worked out the Bretton Woods system and strove for the international spread of free trade under the leadership of the United States. If Trump wants to criticize perceived blunders made by the Obama administration and mourn about how they led to a decline in US governance and loss of US prestige, the answer for him is to be found not in anti-globalism but only in a further engagement with the rest of the world. Conversely, if Trump, who professes to be a supporter of free trade, were to renounce it and continue to swim against the current of world history, his United States would no longer be anything but hypocritical and irresponsible on this score.

The third dilemma: the division in domestic politics

As a result of the congressional election held at the same time as the presidential one, the Republicans managed to retain a majority in both the Senate and the House. Toward the end of the campaign, however, the anti-Trump movement gathered momentum within the Republicans along with the Democrats.²⁸ Trump criticized Republicans who had expressed their opposition to him as being “Washington insiders like Hillary Clinton.” He sarcastically added that they were “the ones the American people should look to for answers on why the world is a mess, and we thank them for coming forward so everyone in the country knows who deserves the blame for making the world such a dangerous place.”²⁹ Considering this deep division in the Republican party itself, there remains substantial worry about whether the party will be able to come together around appointments for posts in the new administration.³⁰ The presidential transition team led by Michael R. Pence, the Vice-President-Elect, is currently mulling over selections for the Trump administration. On November 13, the decision was made to designate Reince Priebus, Chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), as the White House

Chief of Staff, and Steve K. Bannon, who is known for his right-wing views and was Chief Executive Officer in the Trump campaign, as Chief Strategist and Senior Counselor in the Trump administration.³¹ Priebus hails from Wisconsin and is said to have close ties with Paul Ryan, the Wisconsin Congressman who was recently reappointed Speaker of the House of Representatives.³² Priebus's appointment was a plum for his help in delivering Trump's victory in Wisconsin, where the Democrats have traditionally been strong. The media reports that it was also made in the hope of future coordination with Ryan, who did not give any assistance to the Trump campaign.³³ But some think that the intention of keeping Ryan in check by putting Priebus in the spotlight also lies behind the designation.³⁴ Bannon once attacked Ryan when he was a political enemy and non-supporter of Trump through Breitbart News, the alt-right website he headed.³⁵ His relation with Ryan, who stands in the mainstream of the Republican Party, and Priebus, who is close to Ryan, has been likened to that of oil and water. In the policy aspect, too, there are many points in which the far right and Republican mainstream do not see eye to eye. Some pundits even believe that Trump deftly put Priebus and Bannon in White House posts to have the two prominent figures vie with each other.³⁶ However, there is absolutely no guarantee that these appointments will not make the division in the party even deeper.

Other people whose names have come up in the news³⁷ as candidates for posts in the Trump administration are former Congressman Newt Gingrich and Senator Bob Corker (Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations) for Secretary of State; Senator Jeff Sessions, an ardent Trump supporter, and former New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani for Secretary of Defense; and Michael Flynn, former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, for National Security Advisor³⁸. While Trump's team will presumably make appointments on the Cabinet level for personnel to head departments and agencies in its own way³⁹, the question is whether or not people with the right temperament and experience will land in positions on the level of deputy secretary and below, which actually run these organizations on a day-to-day basis. Since the election, a sense of alarm about this risk has prompted calls for reconciliation and cooperation directed to the people who voiced their opposition to Trump during the campaign.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, there remain deep and wide divisions within the Republican party, and the mudslinging between Trump and Clinton in the campaign further polarized supporters of the Democratic and Republican parties. At this point, it remains unknown whether the administration can assemble qualified personnel and get them to cooperate so that it can actually work.

If Trump steers the wrong course with respect to any one of these three dilemmas and the ship of state loses its balance, his administration could see its unifying force weaken. This, in turn, could stall Trump's foreign policy and lead to disruption in the Asia-Pacific region. For the United States and, indeed, the whole world, the period beginning on January 20, 2017 is going to be a crucial one.

¹Brexit: a coinage of the words "Britain" and "exit." It refers to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, which was decided through a national referendum.

² In the wake of Trump's election, there has been no shortage of articles and papers taking a gloomy view of what is in store. They may be exemplified by the following. Greg Miller "Intelligence community is already feeling a sense of dread about Trump" *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2016: Jason Brennan "Trump Won Because Voters Are Ignorant, Literally" *Foreign Policy*, November 9, 2016: Yascha Mounk "Donald Trump Is the End of Global Politics as We Know It" *Foreign Policy*, November 9, 2016.

³A play on words, because the president-elect's last name is the same as "trump" in "trump card." The literal meaning is therefore "love beats hate." It could conceivably also be construed as "love Trump's hate." The phrase is a sharp criticism and refusal of Trump, who has repeatedly said and done things bordering on hate speech. At the same time, it can be interpreted as a magnanimous assertion preaching a placation of the divided national emotions. As such, it is a deeply nuanced and artistic expression. Luchina Fisher, "Lady Gaga Protests in Front of Trump Tower" ABC News, Nov. 9, 2016. <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/lady-gaga-protests-front-trump-tower/story?id=43418105> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)

⁴ From Lady Gaga's Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/p/BMlc8lJDirX/> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)

⁵ Sumire Kunieda, "US Film Director Moore Calls for Resistance to Trump's Presidential Inauguration," *Mainichi Shimbun*, November 13, 2016.

⁶ "Canadian Immigration Website Down – Influence of the US Presidential Election?" *cnn.co.jp*, November 9, 2016 <http://www.cnn.co.jp/world/35091887.html> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)

⁷ Linda Sieg and Ju-min Park "Trump presidency to create high anxiety among Asian allies" *Reuters*, November 9, 2016: Ben Dooley "Trump win casts pall of uncertainty over Asia" *AFP*, November 11, 2016.

⁸On November 14, President Barack Obama had a meeting with President-Elect Trump. At a press conference after the meeting, he said "I don't think he is ideological. I think ultimately he is pragmatic in that way." Julie Hurschfeld Davis "Obama Urges Donald Trump to Send 'Signals of Unity' to Minorities and Women" *The New York Times*, November 14, 2016: Hideki Washiike, "Nikkei Average Highest in 9 Months amid Expectations of Pragmatic Policy in the Coming Trump Administration – GDP Traces a Favorable Trend," *Bloomberg*, November 14, 2016.

⁹ Sieg and Park. *Ibid.* Robin Harding, Charles Clove, SherryFei Ju, Bryan Harris and Ben Bland "China hawk or isolationist? Asia awaits the real Donald Trump" *The Financial Times*, November 10, 2016.

¹⁰ Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro "Donald Trump's Peace through Strength Vision for the Asia-Pacific" *Foreign Policy*, November 7, 2016.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Harding *et al.*, *Ibid.*

¹³ "Transcript: Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Speech" *The New York Times*, April 27, 2016.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views" *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

On his Twitter account, Trump wrote "The @nytimes states today that DJT believes "more countries should acquire nuclear weapons." How dishonest are they. I never said this!" where he completely denied that he had ever condoned the acquisition of a nuclear capability by another country.

<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/797832229800050688> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)

However, it was reported on March 29, 2016 by the New York Times and even Breitbart, the alt-right news website organized by Steven Bannon, who will be entering the White House as a ranking official, that Trump said he approved the acquisition of nuclear arms by Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, also in remarks he made in an appearance on a CNN motion video. Ian Hanchett "Trump: 'I Hate Proliferation' But It Would Be Better if Japan, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea Had Nuclear Weapons" *Breitbart*, March 29, 2016.

¹⁶ Gray and Navarro, *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "Trump to be Next President – Expectations of a Pullback from the 'Asian Pivot' – China Takes Aim at a Decline in US Presence" *The Sankei Shimbun*, November 9, 2016.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Te-Ping Chen "Trump, China's Xi, Set Tone of 'Mutual Respect' in Phone Call" *The Wall Street Journal*, November 14, 2016.:

²¹ Statement by Bonnie Glaser. Tom Phillips, Justin McCurry, Oliver Holmes and Vidih Doshi "'An Epochal Change': What a Trump Presidency means for the Asia Pacific region" *The Guardian*, November 11, 2016.

²² Statement by John Delury. *Ibid.*

²³ Statement by Yanmei Xie. Harding *et al.*, *Ibid.*

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- ²⁴ "Transcript: Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Speech" *The New York Times*, April 27, 2016.
- ²⁵ Alanna Pettroff "Donald Trump slams Pacific free trade deal" *CNN Money*, April 23, 2015.
- ²⁶ Jose A. DelReal and Sean Sullivan "Trump: TPP trade deal 'pushed by special interests who want to rape our country'" *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2016
- ²⁷ Gray and Navarro, *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ In March 2016, before Trump won the primaries to become the official Republican presidential candidate, 122 ranking members of the party, some of whom had held Cabinet positions, announced their opposition to Trump. Even in August, after he had become the official Republican candidate, about 50 Republican experts in national security issues, including many involved in the first announcement, signed an anti-Trump letter in which they asserted that Trump lacked the "character, values, and experience" to be president and said he would "put at risk our country's national security and well-being." In addition, eight Republican specialists in Asian diplomacy including Michael Green, who is known as an expert on Japan and was formerly Senior Director for Asian Affairs on the National Security Council (NSC), criticized Trump and came out in support of Clinton. David E. Sanger and Maggie Haberman "G.O.P. Officials Warn Donald Trump Would Put Nation's Security 'at Risk'" *The New York Times*, August 8, 2016; Richard Katz, "Unprecedented! 'Trump is a Danger' Warnings from the Republican Party," *Toyo Keizai*, September 3, 2016.
- ²⁹ Sanger and Haberman, *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Kimerly Dozier and Shane Harris "Team Trump Struggling to Fill National-Security Jobs" *The Daily Beast*, November 10, 2016.
- ³¹ "President-Elect Donald J. Trump Announces Senior White House Leadership Team" Press release, *President Elect Donald J. Trump (The Website for Trump's Transitional Team)*, November 13, 2016. <https://www.greatagain.gov/news/president-elect-donald-j-trump-announces-senior-white-house-leadership-team.html> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016); Michael D. Shear, Maggie Haberman and Alan Rapperport "Donald Trump Picks Reince Priebus as Chief of Staff and Stephen Bannon as Strategist" *The New York Times*, November 13, 2016.
- ³² "Priebus the Next Chief of Staff – Trump Takes Stance of Cooperating with the GOP Mainstream," *The Reuters*, November 14, 2016.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ For example, Haruhiko Furumura, "Reward for the Campaign Victory in Wisconsin," Harry Furumura's political information and analysis blog, November 15, 2016. <http://suinikki.blog.jp/archives/67150146.html> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ Steve Holland "Trump likely to reward loyalty with top appointments" *The Reuters*, November 10, 2016.
- ³⁸ At the time of this writing, there was a report that Flynn had in fact been offered the post of National Security Advisor. Matthew Rosenberg and Maggie Haberman "Trump Offers National Security Post to Michael Flynn, Retired General" *The New York Times*, November 17, 2016.
- ³⁹ "Donald Trump is Picking His Cabinet. Here's a short list" *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/us/politics/donald-trump-administration.html> (Confirmed on November 17, 2016)
- ⁴⁰ Richard H. Kohn "Why GOP national security experts must agree to serve in a Trump administration" *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2016; John R. Schindler "Forming Trump's National Security Team" *Observer*, November 10, 2016: