

# The Domestic Sources of International Politics in East Asia: The Cases of Abe and Park Governments

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# Macro Factors Common to Japan and South Korea (1)

## 1. Changes in International Political Landscape

- The decline of the US hegemony
  - The rise of China
  - The weakening of international regimes
- > “hegemonic stability”?

## 2. The Rise of Civic Power

- Advancement of general (higher) education
- Increased awareness of political accountability
- Degeneration of political elite (capability, morality)

## Macro Factors Common to Japan and South Korea (2)

### 3. Advent of Global Cyber Power

- Ubiquitous monitoring and analysis of anything of anywhere
  - Disappearing of statecraft and political discretion
- > 'governability crisis'

### 4. History Issues Overpowering Future Issues

- Nationalism versus nationalism
- History conflicts at the global level
- Paralysis of coordination among national leaders

## The Story of Japan (1): The challenges that Japan Faces

### Re-defining the Nationhood

- 'ordinary country' vs. 'unique country'
- West-oriented ocean power (海洋国家) or an Asian power
- outgoing quasi-superpower or inward 'middle power'

### It's the Economy, Stupid!

- How to revive the economy
- Top-down 'trickling down' (new formula) or bottom-up industry building (old formula)
- Can we make "Abe-nomics" afloat?

## The Story of Japan (2): Assessment of the Abe Regime

### (positive assessment)

- Recovery of optimism (conditional)
- Japan's visibility in the world politics
- Support of Abe-nomics (from the financial community and the rich)

### (negative assessment)

- Questions about Abe diplomacy
- Skepticism of Abe-nomics
- Growing gap between social strata

## The Story of Japan (3): Key Issues to Watch

- ① Abe-nomics (three arrows) / consumption tax
- ② Will recession be replaced by inflation + stagnation
- ③ The fate of collective security regime and the revision of Constitution
- ④ Can Japan fix the broken fiscal 'Primary Balance'
- ⑤ Kill or not to kill nuclear power plants
- ⑥ Foreign Relations
  - US (security, TPP, Okinawa)
  - China
  - Russia
  - South Korea
  - North Korea

# The Story of South Korea (1): The challenges that Korea Faces

## ➤ Quo Vadis?

- US+Japan or China
- Welfare (tax) state or growth-oriented state
- National unification or status quo

## ➤ Can Korea evade the 'lost 20 years' which Japan suffered?

## ➤ How to mitigate national divides (南南葛藤):

- Between the rich and the poor
- Between the conservative and the liberal
- Between the pro-US and the pro-China
- Between the pro-NK and the anti-NK

## The Story of South Korea (2): Assessment of the Park Regime

### (positive assessment)

- Increased visibility of South Korea ('presidential travel diplomacy')
- Success in dealing with the two giants (US and China)
- Improvement of equal opportunities in the society

### (negative assessment)

- Poor presidency (萬機親覽) (the lame duck arriving too early)
- Failed personnel management
- Failed coordination between Presidential office, the ruling party, and the administration
- Continued revolts from the labor community



## The Story of South Korea (3): Key Issues to Watch

- ① Diplomacy between the US and China
- ② Dealing with Japan
- ③ Intra-elite group rivalry and lack of coordination
- ④ Failing economy: where is the new engine for growth?
- ⑤ Danger of a new financial crisis
- ⑥ The economy sandwiched between Japan and China
- ⑦ Blessing and curse of the “(too much) open” economy
- ⑧ Diverse, wide national divides (ideological, political, economic/social , generation)
- ⑨ How to deal with North Korea?