SPECIAL FEATURE

5 Analysing the Perceptions, Key Issues and Challenges of Japan’s New Defence White Paper 2020
by KATAHARA Eiichi

Tokyo’s perceptions of its security environment have been changing in varied and nuanced ways as evident in the 2020 defence white paper. Although Tokyo’s concerns about China have grown substantially, its attitude towards Beijing remains cautious and pragmatic, and is far from adversarial, unlike the current US administration.

19 Okinawa Beyond the Hub-and-spoke Alliance System: A Reappraisal
by Carmina Yu UNTALAN

The US–Japan–Okinawa triangle remains the most prominent and long-standing representation of state-centric thinking. State centrality in conducting East Asian international relations has obscured not only the significance of non-traditional security issues, but also the contribution of local non-state actors. Okinawa, for what it has done and represents, is a revelation of inadequacy of the Westphalian state system.

34 Emerging Challenges of Japan’s Cooperative Approach to China
by Naoko ETO

The Yoshihide Suga administration has indicated that it intends to continue Abe’s diplomacy. How Japan would involve in the Belt and Road Initiative is in fact of particular interest. More fundamentally, the feasibility of firms participating in the Japan–China Third Country Business Cooperation project needs to be clarified. One of the factors behind Japan’s promotion of reconciliation with China was to curb China’s “salami-slicing” of power over the Senkaku Islands via dialogue with China.

47 Japan’s Practice of Modern Monetary Theory amid the Pandemic Recession
by XING Yuqing

Japan is not alone in implementing aggressive fiscal policy. Most of the countries affected by the coronavirus had launched huge fiscal stimuli. The implementation of modern monetary theory (MMT) is imperative, given that the pandemic has further suppressed Japanese domestic consumption and investment. In the long run, inflation would become a major concern of MMT-style policies.
Understanding ASEAN as a Relational Community: A Study Focused on Political-security Aspects
by HAN Zhili

ASEAN adopts an innovative practice of regionalism. A relational theory of world politics provides an alternative framework in understanding the connotation and the form of the ASEAN Community. ASEAN's centrality has been tested, but it has never been undermined. The “relational community” offers a new way of thinking for the building of the future East Asian community.

Italy and China: Much Ado about an MoU
by Giulio PUGLIESE

Scraping beneath the surface of Eurosceptic posturing, Italy’s Belt and Road memorandum of understanding and its engagement with China hardly had any effects to the detriment of the European Union’s (EU) China agenda. Noise and symbolism aside, Italy’s support for the EU’s initiatives aimed at foreign screening investment mechanism and industrial policies did not change in substance, not unlike the “much ado about nothing” EU–Italy stand-off over its budget law.

China–Middle East Relations: New Developments, New Challenges
by ZHU Zhiqun

China has traditionally maintained friendly relations with all countries in the Middle East, including countries hostile to each other, such as Iran and Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war of 1980–88, and Israel and Iran today. It has become increasingly involved in Middle Eastern affairs as its economic and strategic interests in the region grow. There will be more pushbacks from the United States due to US–China strategic rivalry.

China’s Rail Infrastructure On Track to Go Global
by Walker DARKE

China’s rail diplomacy has many supporters and critics, but the consensus is that the scope and size of the project is massive and far from simplistic. It should be noted that people’s perception of the BRI and the rapid development of rail infrastructure abroad is mainly shaped by preconception of China and its progress.