

JAPAN NOW Lecture Series



The Age of Three Emperors: The Direction of US Foreign Policy and the Future of US-Japan Relations

Friday, March 17, 2017 | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Jackman Conference Room, University of Toronto, 170 St. George Street, First Floor

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America's 45th president, Donald J. Trump, was inaugurated in January of this year. His unexpected victory was a surprise to many and it became the second major global shock in 2016 after Brexit. As an individual who has never held public office, he came to power by adroitly harnessing the anger of the American voter. Despite comparisons to past US presidents such as Jackson, TR, Nixon, and Reagan, in many ways he is a new type of leader that America has not witnessed since the beginning of the Republic. Although it will require many more months to be able to fully assess the new president's policies, one can assume that his policies will be quite different than those of his predecessor.

In a world which an undercurrent toward a power transition can be witnessed, in which direction will President Trump lead the US? Moreover, as a leader devoid of any strong ideology besides "Making America Great Again," his policies will surely be much vaguer and harder to pin down. However, he has surrounded himself with advisors and senior administration officials who do not necessarily tow the same foreign policy position toward such countries as China and Russia. Considering that he also does not have full support of a few senior GOP leaders on matters of foreign policy, how will this multilevel tug-o-war play out? And amid an era of ever increasing uncertainties, what can we expect the future course of US foreign policy be, particularly toward Asia? Will the previous Asia Pivot policy become an Asia Pullback policy similar to Nixon's Guam doctrine of the 1970s? Furthermore, how should Japan and other nations deal with an increasingly inward America that will be much less predictable and perhaps even more reckless? Through this presentation, I would like to present a possible geopolitical scenario of the future that incorporates the major powers of US, Japan, China, Russia, and the EU.



Tosh Minohara is Professor of Diplomacy at the Graduate School of Law and Politics, Kobe University where he holds a joint appointment with the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies. He received his B.A. in International Relations from University of California, Davis, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science and Diplomatic History from Kobe University. His main research themes are, from a historical perspective, the diplomatic, political, and security dimension of US-Japan relations. His recently edited *Tumultuous Decade: Empire, Society, and Diplomacy in 1930s Japan* and is the English translation editor of the forthcoming, *The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to Present*.