Special Feature:

Political dynamics in the Indo-Pacific

13 "Free and open Indo-Pacific" in Japanese diplomacy

The Indo-Pacific region is the next strategic arena of international politics. What are the relationships between Japan's 'free and open Indo-Pacific strategy' and countries such as India, ASEAN countries, China, and the US? The author explains the diplomatic strategies of each country and examines the new international order. Hiroshi Nakanishi (Kyoto University)

20 Continue building "success stories" in the Indo-Pacific: The key is strengthening connectivity Realizing "free and open Indo-Pacific" is tantamount to spreading Japan's success stories in Southeast Asia to the wider region. MOFA's head of South Asia Division talks about this issue Shiqeki Takizaki (MOFA)

28 Questions on the "improvement" of Japan-China relations

The so-called "improvement" of Japan-China relations is only a return to a neutral position from a negative relationship. There are still various important challenges that needs to be dealt with. The author analyzes the situation from the perspective of bilateral diplomacy and the formation of international order. Shin Kawashima (University of Tokyo)

36 Understanding "strategic autonomy" of Modi administration

While Modi administration promoted Make in India policy, it fluctuated over the decision on whether or not to accept Chinese investment. India's diplomacy has a unique logic different from "nonalignment" and the strategic role of Japan. Toru Ito (National Defense Academy)

42 Indo-Pacific... for whom? ASEAN's expectations and anxieties

Is the "Indo-Pacific" a concept to "restrain China"? Analyzing various arguments allows one to see a common question - "Indo-Pacific for whom"?

Mie Oba (Tokyo University of Science)

Trend 2018

- 6 Cover Story Interview: **Now is the time for "diplomacy" to retake the center stage** Yasushi Akashi (Chairman, International House of Japan)
- 54 Political divide goes to the extreme: America's political base revealed by the midterm election US midterm election in November was held in a political climate of extreme divide. This article summarizes the midterm election that had the participation level of presidential elections from the vantage point of being in the US and looks forward to the next presidential election. Toshihiro Nakavama (Keio University)

60 Basis for Trump administration's hardline towards China

The policy that lead to the "US-China trade war" seems to be borne out directly from the President's fierce statements. While they seem to have some sort of a scenario in mind, no one knows how this will end. This article reconsiders the meaning of a free trade order and analyzes what's to come. Naoatsu Aoyama (Asahi Shimbun)

64 Third year's the charm for Japan-US trade friction?

A strong demand for trade negotiations has been made in rapid succession. We are at the crossroad to stay the course or go back to the era of controlled trade. Will the honeymoon between Japan-US relationship finally come to an end? What are the "tactics" of Trump administration and the strategy of Abe administration? Mikio Sugeno (Nikkei Shimbun)

70 Disappearance of discretion from the foreign policy of Moon administration

While the South-North relationship has moved forward as stated in its policy promises, ROK's relationships with Japan and US are becoming mixed. What impact will Moon administration's policy that could derail Japan-US-ROK trilateral coordination have on the situation in Northeast Asia? Katsumi Sawada (Mainichi Shimbun)

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Vol.52, Nov./Dec. 2018

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INF Treaty has had a symbolic meaning, signifying the end of Cold War structure. What will be the impact of Trump administration's withdrawal of INF Treaty without the deployment of nuclear weapons? Are there ways to assure nuclear disarmament in a post-INF Treaty world? Taku Ishikawa (National Defense Academy)

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New presidents in South Africa and Zimbabwe show that politics in Southern Africa is in transition. The author examines a new era, following the leadership of heroes that lead national liberation, where each country is facing a similar challenge of searching for new legitimacy to lead. Yoichi Mine (Doshisha University)

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Another man who acts and speaks in an authoritarian manner and touts putting its country first above all else has become the leader, this time in Brazil. A detailed analysis of voter behavior reveals that political corruption and the division of society is at its core.

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Focus: It's now or never for climate change

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"Green business" is rapidly expanding following the Paris Agreement. International competition over this new business opportunity has already begun. What kind of strategy should Japan employ in this competition? Yukari Takamura (University of Tokyo) /Hideo Suzuki (MOFA)

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Trump administration has turned its back on the Paris Agreement. However, other governments, local governments, and the private sectors are joining the Agreement in doves. Now is an opportune time for Japan to take a global initiative in dealing with climate change.

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