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I will talk about US-China, Japan-China and US-Japan. Regarding US-China, the manner of the Trump administration is something more than we expected. However, it is true that there are elements that have to be set sometime, like IPR. I thought we had gone through that in the 1970s and 1980s, and Japan was told a lot – we called it foreign pressure. We wondered why the Chinese were not told this. Was it too big to complain? I am not trying to defend everything Mr. Trump has been saying, but there is some truth in that as well. However, there is some concern that maybe Mr. Xi and Mr. Trump only want to hear what they want to hear from the surroundings, so that is something we have to be concerned about.

Regarding Japan-China, now we are moving. The Prime Minister was in Beijing yesterday and was greeted very warmly, for the first time in seven years. China has changed because of the international environment; they have come around to us, I think, which is very good. The keyword is 'From competition to cooperation.' However, we will not change partners. For example, the Pew Research Centre in the United States released a research on October 1st, only three weeks ago, in which they asked people in many countries around the world which country would be the leader in the future, China or the US. There were only two countries in the world where 80% of people said that it should remain the US. They asked in France, UK, Germany, Holland, Korea – everywhere – and only two countries said this, the US and Japan, so the Japanese people still have a lot of confidence in the US. I think this is because of its values – freedom of speech, democracy and human rights – which we do not share 100% with China.

Thirdly, on Japan-US relations, they are pretty good because we have been able to manage problems with bilateral issues. We have just agreed to negotiate on trade agreement for goods. It is a pity that the US have opted out from TPP and the Paris Accord, but we are going to do this by ourselves with likeminded countries, and we can wait for the US to change its mind and come back. Maybe it will not be this administration but the next, and we can wait. It is like in the movie *Shane* 50 years ago, where the young boy is calling out to Shane to come back. We always say, 'America, come back!' and I think that can happen in two or three years.

Lastly, a lot of people think that America has been a stable partner that has moved, but I do not take that view. Maybe Americans would like to challenge me on that, but look at what happened in 1971 and 1972. Mr. Nixon suddenly changed the gold-dollar policy and his policy on China. We were shocked, because we were blindly following the US when Britain and France were already supporting Beijing. During the 1990s, when North Korea was doing some bad things, Mr. Clinton wanted to give a light water reactor to North Korea. What happened? Korea and Japan followed, and Mr. Bush came out and said it would not happen. Mr. Bush started the Iraq War. France and Germany said no, Japan and UK followed the US. Mr. Obama came out and said that that was wrong. Now Mr. Trump is saying that everything Mr. Obama did was wrong.

Therefore, when the US wants to play waltz we all danced waltz and when they changed to tango, we danced tango. The disc jockey has always been the US. We have always been doing this. The next leader may change the music again.

One last thing is that Americans are very smart people and know that the biggest beneficiaries of the world institutions created by the US has been the US; that is why the US economy is so good, and that is why they will wake up sometime.

Steven ERLANGER

It is true that the US is a very difficult partner, a very difficult date, very hard to predict, has lots of mood swings, and that continues.