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I will not compare this session in terms of importance with the previous one on the future of the European Union. By the way, let me say that, as I am the organizer of the whole conference, I refrain from giving specific opinions on certain subjects but if I had been a panelist on the session on the European Union, I would probably have been much more pessimistic about its post-war situation. I would probably have emphasized more the role of the United States after the war, as well as the fact that this war is not, as somebody said, a war of Russia against Ukraine and the rest of the world. The rest of the world does not consider that it is in a war against Russia, India, for example, definitely does not see the situation in those terms.

I just wanted to say that in passing and I will now switch to the Indo-Pacific but in a sense, there is an intellectual link here, which will be the red thread throughout this coming session: what exactly do we mean by the Indo-Pacific region? Terminology is very important in geopolitics and the region we are talking about has had a number of names over centuries or decades. For example, in the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, our predecessors talked about Indochina, which was not what we sometimes still call Indochina. It was India and China and the seas in between. The Indo Pacific concept emerged relatively recently and the key question I would like to ask the four panelists is, is this new geopolitical concept meant to represent something like an alliance against China? Most people who partly think the answer is yes, would publicly say no. My question is simple: what do we mean by Indo-Pacific? I could actually take the speakers in any order but I will give the floor first to Mr. Hiroyuki Akita, a very well-known commentator in Japan.