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A lot has been said about Trump over these last three days. The question is how to deal with the man, and we have firsthand experiences here because a lot of them have been involved in their administration, or sometimes even in the administration, with Donald Trump. We will start with Hiroyuki. Tell us what the experience of Trump one in Japan has been, and how you lived through the thing.

Hiroyuki Akita

First, thank you very much. I came from the other part of the globe, so I am very honored to be here. I just want to make two quick comments, including the answer to your question. One is about the distinctive potential differences with the first Donald Trump. The second comment is about how we, the US allies, can best mitigate and also take advantage of Trump's DNA.

The first point: difference. I think keywords for the first-term Trump were, of course, transactional, as we all know, and maybe playing golf together. This means that Trump made much of personal relationships and also chemistry. Then-Prime Minister Abe understood Trump's DNA as a politician, and he played golf with Trump for four times and enjoyed American beef hamburgers together, to build close personal relationships. Unfortunately, I do not know the result of the golf match because it is kept as a state secret. However, I believe that he made an effort to lose by a slim margin in order to please Mr. Trump. However, the second term will not be that simple at all. The second Trump will have much higher aspirations. He has only four years, so he will try to achieve something big, to be remembered and to make himself great again, or even greater. There are two new keywords. One keyword is so-called 'neo-Yalta diplomacy'.

Virginie Robert

Neo-Yalta diplomacy?

Hiroyuki Akita

In 1942, Roosevelt and Churchill negotiated with Stalin about how to establish the world order after World War II. Of course, the context is completely different, but it is neo-Yalta diplomacy. Then, the second keyword could be 'Nobel Peace Prize'.

Virginie Robert

Nobel Peace Prize? Okay.

Hiroyuki Akita

Yes, Nobel Peace Prize. I will get back to the point. First, neo-Yalta diplomacy. This means that Trump will try to achieve something big by directly negotiating with big powers, such as China or Russia, regardless of whether they are a partner or an adversary. The size of the country will be more important in order to achieve something big. That is the reason why he really likes Putin and Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader, and he invited Xi Jinping to the inaugural ceremony.

Virginie Robert

I do not think he is coming.

Hiroyuki Akita

Maybe he is not coming, but if Xi Jinping is as shrewd as Trump, maybe. I do not know. Anyway, Trump does not necessarily love those people, but I think Trump believes that those dictators or autocrat leaders are more useful to negotiate with and achieve something big.

Virginie Robert

Therefore, he is going to be more comfortable with rogue leaders to negotiate, because they are kind of the same DNA.

Hiroyuki Akita

Right, the same DNA. However, to be fair, I think there are advantages and big risks. The advantage is that Trump might be able to achieve some big progress on deadlocked issues. A typical one is the war in Ukraine. However, there are much bigger risks. That is that the national interests of US allies in Europe, and Asia will be neglected or even ignored. Let us remember that Roosevelt and Churchill negotiated with Stalin in 1942, but I do not think that they consulted in detail about those talks in advance with the US or British allies. Of course, the context is different, but there is a risk that middle-power US allies will be ignored.

Virginie Robert

Ignored, yes. We are going to come back to this.

Hiroyuki Akita

Yes. Then, similarly, the second keyword is 'Nobel Peace Prize'.

Virginie Robert

I know Obama got it and was first surprised by it, too.

Hiroyuki Akita

Indeed. Trump wants to make himself greater than Obama, and I think that he firmly believes that he deserves better than Obama, who won the Nobel Prize just by setting a goal to abolish nukes. One of the biggest targets for that purpose could be North Korea or Iran or the Middle East as a whole. As for North Korea, again, he repeatedly says, 'I have a very good relationship with Kim Jong-Un, the North Korean leader'. I do not think he really loves him, but his relationship with the North Korean leader is important to make a deal. Therefore, that is one. Maybe, on the other hand, as discussed by the previous panel, another agenda could be in the Middle East. Maybe he will try to complete the puzzle of the Abraham Accords in the Middle East or try to tackle the nuclear issue of Iran. Therefore, again, there is advantage. The advantage is that his kind of unpredictable and disruptive leadership may help to make progress on those issues, but the flip side is risk. Another risk is that he might negotiate in a much weaker position. Let us look. He will only have four years, but virtually he has only two years before the midterm election. Therefore, compared to a leader in North Korea or China or Russia, he is in a weaker position. That is a risk.

Then, the final point, how we should mitigate or take advantage. I think there are three approaches. One is a bad approach, the second is a good approach and the third is the best approach. The bad approach is to try to preach to Trump and then try to change his mind. We all know that is very counterproductive. Then the good approach is to mitigate the risks for US allies in Europe or Asia by collaborating together to better absorb any shock coming from Trump. Maybe we are already doing it.

Virginie Robert

Collaboration.

Hiroyuki Akita

Collaboration. However, maybe the best approach is to take advantage of his slogan of 'Make America Great Again'. Therefore, I would say that maybe we can say this to him, 'As US allies, we really want US to become greater again. Also, we also want to be even greater together with the US. In this context, we are very willing to do whatever we can to support your big deal to be successful'. This approach will maybe give more leverage than preaching or flattering Trump.