

Osaka G20 Summit to Seek Unity Around Multilateralism?

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Region: [Asia](#)
Theme: [History](#)

The [G20](#) summit in Osaka, Japan is bringing together all the contradictions of an interconnected but highly fragmented world. The Middle East, or West Asia, is still in turmoil, and international terrorism keeps being a disruptive issue in many regions of the world. Moreover, China is under attack from the US, and is getting more support from the international community, as demonstrated on Sunday in Rome by the election of Qu Dongyu as director general of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. The Chinese candidate received 108 votes, the US nominee had to be satisfied with just 12.

The G20 is the most representative political group at the world stage and will turn 10 in September 2019. The group represents 80 percent of global GDP and is a sign of a road toward a multipolar configuration of the world order, overcoming the anachronistic conception of the G7.

Founded as a reaction to the 1990s financial crisis, it represents a step forward to a holistic reform of international governance, giving a wider representation to the most populous developing countries within the framework of the existing institutional architecture.

Unfortunately, the US with some of its major allies is working in the opposite direction, in an attempt to re-establish a unipolar world through policies characterized by protectionism, boycott, military threats and bullying.

The last example is the aggressive posture toward Iran. What will happen in Osaka? What are the prospects for global governance?

The agenda of the summit is extensive. It stretches over global economy, trade, employment, health, innovation, development and environmental issues. Japanese **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe** will try to promote the “Osaka Track” to take advantage of the summit in view of the upcoming elections. His focus will be on innovation in order to build a Society 5.0 (post-industrial), namely, to support a fair use of digital data, on the back of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, robotics and big data. The idea is to develop these innovative fields for human development by promoting a people-centric approach.

Potentially, much more revolutionary is the will to discuss the cryptocurrency issue, where Abe’s Japan wants to start discussion on the international monetary system, moving beyond Bretton Woods.

The topic is no longer avoidable because it is an existing phenomenon, and is also being promoted by some states, by Facebook, and in the near future by other key global corporations. States are jealous of their control over fiat currencies, but technological

changes have already paved the way to new systems of payment. There is the possibility that Osaka will be a watershed in this historic development of financial markets.

There is possibility of deals on the sidelines of the Osaka summit, but not much hope that China and the US will make progress in trade negotiations.

The recent US State Department Report on religious freedom strongly criticizes China's policies in [Xinjiang](#), and the new Chinese tech firms on the US trade entity list is another unfair step against China - but also goes against the interests of the US business community.

Furthermore, the US and Germany's proposals to table the Hong Kong issue during bilateral talks are equally absurd. Is Hong Kong an international issue? Not at all.

Surely, China, Russia and India will reaffirm a strong commitment to a multipolar world which is against protectionism and unilateralism.

These three powers will be supported by many other countries, not only BRICS, and the US will stand even more isolated.

Major tensions stem not only from trade, technological and monetary issues, but also from interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

In this sense, the US is definitely working against international norms and UN principles of mutual respect.

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