

America at 250: The Test of Global Leadership

アメリカは2026年7月4日、建国250年という大きな節目を迎えました。長い歴史の中で、世界に大きな影響を与えてきた国として、その歩みを振り返る機会にもなっています。一方で、国際情勢が大きく変化する今、アメリカにはこれまでとは異なる課題や期待も寄せられているようです。これからの世界で、影響力のある国にはどのような役割が求められるのでしょうか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The United States marked the 250th anniversary of its founding on July 4, Independence Day. In a speech marking the occasion, President Donald Trump declared that America has been "the hope, the promise, the light, and the glory among all of the nations of the world," and vowed to take the country to "new levels." He also stated, "We don't want communists in our country."

The President's remarks underscored a determination to press ahead despite the country's enduring tensions between its founding ideals and present-day realities. At a time of growing global instability, the United States remains essential to advancing freedom and democracy as a leading superpower.

The Declaration of Independence, which Trump praised, proclaims that "all men are created equal" and possess the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Those principles have profoundly shaped the development of modern democracy.

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Source: America at 250: The Test of Global Leadership

Japan Forward

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1. Article

Following two world wars, the United States took the lead in building an international order founded on democracy, the rule of law, and free trade, serving as a pillar of global [prosperity](#) and [stability](#) throughout much of the 20th century.

During the Cold War, it stood alongside Japan and Western Europe and ultimately played a central role in the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leader of the communist bloc.

Today, however, the United States is deeply divided. Disputes over economic inequality, diversity, and immigration continue to fuel political polarization. In many ways, the [contradictions](#) within American society itself paved the way for Trump's rise.

The United States has also stepped back from its traditional role as the guarantor of the international order. It has withdrawn from international organizations and fallen behind on payments to the United Nations. Its National Security Strategy released last year declared that the era in which the United States underpinned the global order had come to an end.

As the United States has become more inward-looking, [authoritarian](#) states have grown increasingly bold in seeking to change the status quo by force. China, in particular, has expanded its economic and military influence in an effort to reshape the international order to better serve its own interests.

Concern over China is shared by both Republicans and Democrats. At the same time, there is growing reluctance in Washington to bear the global responsibilities that the United States assumed during the Cold War. As a result, it is calling on allies and other like-minded nations to shoulder a greater share of the burden.

The United States has also made significant policy missteps. Trump's tariff policies have drawn opposition from many countries, while the consequences of the Iran war continue to unfold. Nevertheless, one reality remains unchanged: the world still expects the United States to play a leading role in international affairs.

Japan fought a fierce war against the United States during World War II before its defeat. In the postwar era, however, it chose its [alliance](#) with the United States as the cornerstone of its national security.

At a time when China and other authoritarian powers pose growing challenges, Japan should further strengthen that alliance and work closely with the US to safeguard peace and stability in the international community.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. prosperity 繁栄

The small town enjoyed years of prosperity after the amusement park opened.

2. stability 安定

Doing fun things with friends helps improve mental stability.

3. contradiction 矛盾

There is a contradiction between his words and his actions.

4. authoritarian 権威主義の

The football coach had an authoritarian style that some players disliked.

5. alliance 同盟

The two schools formed an alliance for a science project.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How did the United States help shape the international order after World War II?
2. In this editorial, why is China mentioned as a major concern?
3. What does the author suggest Japan should do in response to current global challenges?
4. Do you believe that President Trump respects democracy and the rule of law? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel that Trump's policies with Russia, Greenland, Canada, and Iran will help stop China from expanding its military influence?

4. 米建国250年 世界秩序の維持に役割を

米国は独立記念日の7月4日、建国250年を迎えた。

トランプ大統領は演説で「米国は世界の希望や栄光であり続けた」とし、米国を「新たなレベル」に引き上げると語った。「米国に共産主義者は不要だ」とも述べた。

理想と現実の間で葛藤を繰り返しながらも前進する決意を示したものだ。世界が混迷を深める今こそ、自由と民主主義を奉じる超大国として役割を果たしてもらいたい。

トランプ氏がたたえた独立宣言は「全ての人間は平等で、生命、自由、幸福追求の権利を持つ」と謳（うた）い、近代民主主義に大きな影響を与えた。

米国は20世紀、2度の大战を経て、民主主義や法の支配、自由貿易に基づく国際秩序の形成を主導し、世界の繁栄と安定を支える灯台の役目を担った。東西冷戦期に日本や西欧諸国を牽引（けんいん）し、共産主義陣営の盟主ソ連を崩壊に追い込んだ。その歴史的役割は高く評価できる。

だが米国は今、深刻な分断にあえいでいる。経済格差や多様性、移民政策を巡る対立や衝突が絶えない。米社会に内在する矛盾がトランプ氏を生み出した側面もあろう。

米国は国際秩序を支える役割を縮小している。国際機関から脱退し、国連への支払いも滞る。昨年発表の国家安全保障戦略では、米国が世界秩序を支える時代の終焉（しゅうえん）を宣言した。

そうした中、専制国家群が力による現状変更を図る憂慮すべき事態が生じている。とりわけ中国は経済力や軍事力を振りかざし、国際秩序を自国有利に作り替えようとしている。

米国には共和、民主両党派を通し対中警戒論がある。ただし、東西冷戦期のように米国ばかりが多くの責任を負うことを避けたい空気が広がっている。そこで、同盟国や同志国に責任分担を求めている。

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4. 米建国250年 世界秩序の維持に役割を

米国は時折、誤算に直面する。トランプ氏の関税政策には各国が反発した。イラン戦争の余波も続く。だが、米国が世界への関与を求められる現実是不変である。先の大戦で日本は米国と激しく戦い、敗れた。戦後は米国との同盟関係を選び、国家安全保障を担保してきた。今は、中国などの脅威を前に、同盟を強化し、米国とともに世界の平和と安定を守っていくべき時代である。

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