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India in Japan's Geo-strategic Outlook

*Titli Basu**

Japan's long-standing alliance with the US is the key feature of its defence and security policy. However, China's rise and impact on shaping the regional security architecture, and the vigour of US commitment in the backdrop of a G2 formulation, is making Japan diversify her options. Thus, India now features in the Japanese idea of Asia while it struggles to cope with the fluidity of the regional security landscape. This article critically analyses the increasing space accorded to India and the variables behind Japan's courtship of it. It probes whether Japan's India policy is Abe centric, or more enduring in nature, and examines India's position in Japan's defence outlook as Tokyo redesigns its security policy. India's advent in the Japanese geo-strategic frame will endure since the variables that pushed Japan to incorporate India in its strategic design will mature and complicate the regional security environment in the coming years.

The United States (US) alliance structure continues to remain at the nucleus of Japanese defence and security policy. China's emergence as a key variable in shaping the regional security architecture coupled with the vigour of US commitment in the backdrop of Chinese push for a G2 formulation is making Japan diversify her options. Consequently, Japan is investing in countries like Australia and India, besides reinforcing its alliance with the US. India has emerged as an important variable in Japanese security discourse and has featured in Japan's first ever 'National Security Strategy' (NSS).¹ India has also figured in the 'National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and Beyond' (NDPG),

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released in December 2013.² Meanwhile, at the Japan-US Summit Meeting, President Obama stated that Washington would work towards building regional networks with Japan-US alliance as the cornerstone to safeguard peace.³ In one of his signature moves, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's conceptualisation of the Quadrilateral Initiative, which was later refurbished in his second term as the Democratic Security Diamond, has considered India as an important pole of Japan's strategic design. India had hitherto distanced itself from such formulations. However, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, New Delhi has articulated greater strategic coordination, as observed within the trilateral frameworks, including the India-Japan-US and India-Japan-Australia, and bilateral constructs, such as the 'US-India Joint Strategic Vision for Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Region' and the 'India and Japan Vision 2025: Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World', articulated during the bilateral summit in December 2015. However, this should not be interpreted as dilution of fundamental values of Indian foreign policy. India is expected to boldly engage, but certainly not align, with all regional actors to leverage partnerships.⁴

This article critically analyses the increasing space accorded to India in Japan's defence outlook and evaluates how congruence of strategic interests is shaping the contours of India-Japan relations. The aim is to situate India in Japan's security discourse and explore the variables that are making Japan court India as Prime Minister Abe attempts to design a regional security architecture to secure its interests in the Asia-Pacific. The article questions whether Japan's fresh momentum in its India policy is Abe centric, or it is more enduring in nature? Where does India fit in Japan's defence outlook as Tokyo redesigns its security policy? Beyond the defence and security strategy, how is India weighed by the Japanese defence industry? Japan's rebooting of its security posture is often analysed through the prism of rise of China, debate over the role of the US and securing maritime interests. Yet, to comprehend Japanese attitude towards India, it is imperative to cull out trends from the complexities in China-Japan, Japan-US, China-US, and India-US relations. The article begins by sieving India from Japanese security debate and policy evolution; and then explores the answer to each of the questions raised by analysing the variables that have placed India in the Japanese defence outlook.

INDIA IN THE JAPANESE SECURITY FRAME

Going beyond the simplistic narrative of shared values facilitating bilateral relations, it is evident that one of the key reasons for India to emerge as a logical option for Japan is due to the increased US interest in India as a stabilising factor in Asia.⁵ As the post-Cold War developments led to a change in the US approach towards India and it started cultivating robust relations with India, Japan too was forced to reconsider its attitude⁶ that was for long founded on the ideological fault lines of the Cold War. While the then US President Bill Clinton's India visit in early 2000 was followed by then Japanese Prime Minister Mori's visit to India in August of that year, the Indo-US nuclear deal provided Japan the confidence to add value to the strategic partnership.⁷ Now, with the move forward on Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, the foundation of India-US relations have reached new depths.

India began featuring in Tokyo's security outline once the US defence department acknowledged New Delhi as an enduring security partner. The May 2007 US-Japan Security Consultative Committee argued the case for nurturing 'partnerships with India' since India's sustained growth is 'inextricably tied to the prosperity, freedom, and security of the region.'⁸ Later, Prime Minister Abe delivered his landmark speech—'Confluence of the Two Seas'—in the Indian Parliament in August 2007. The Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India was made in October 2008, the goals of which were further clarified by the Action Plan issued in December 2009. Moreover, the 2011 US-Japan Security Consultative Committee articulated welcoming 'India as a strong and enduring Asia-Pacific partner'⁹ and supported India's increasing involvement in regional architectures. Furthermore, the committee urged promoting trilateral dialogue involving the US, Japan and India. Since 2011, seven US-Japan-India trilateral dialogues at the director-general level were held, which culminated into a ministerial dialogue in 2015.¹⁰ The security cooperation intensified over the years through an elaborate framework of engagement at various levels, including the defence dialogue at the ministerial level. Both nations are negotiating to build a dialogue mechanism between their foreign and defence ministers, or a two-plus-two framework, something Japan has with the US, Russia, France, Australia, and, most recently, with Indonesia.¹¹

The maiden NSS (2013) identifies India as a 'primary driver' of the shift in the balance of power besides China.¹² The NSS outlines that Japan will deepen cooperative ties with countries like South Korea, Australia,

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India, with whom Japan shares universal values and strategic interests.¹³ Furthermore, 2013 NDPG categorically argues that 'Japan will strengthen its relationship with India in a broad range of fields, including maritime security, through joint training and exercises¹⁴ as well as joint implementation of international peace cooperation activities.'¹⁵ An older document, the 2010 NDPG, mentions India while talking about creating a security network aimed at stabilising Asia-Pacific 'by combining bilateral and multilateral security cooperation in a multi-layered manner.'¹⁶

The academic literature in Japan lately has debated the standing of India in its defence outlook. One strand in the security literature identifies India as the 'new hope' with reference to Japan's threat perception. Scholars like Satoru Nagao argue that as regional actors, including Japan, Australia and the South China Sea littoral nations, are expected to experience an assertive China given their comparatively weaker military potency, Japan requires a 'new rising power'. As both share resembling unease vis-à-vis China's military modernisation, the case of reinforcing India-Japan military cooperation is articulated, given Indian naval superiority in safeguarding the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean; its capacity to surface as a security provider to Southeast Asia given its dynamic engagement with the region; and its reputation as a reliable country.¹⁷ Another stream of scholarship opines that Indian 'intent' is centred on the South rather than the East, even as Japan comprehends the potential of an Indian blue-water navy with regard to the developments in the contested Senkaku Islands. Hence, the US, which is a more dependable partner, will continue to form the nucleus of Japan's security strategy in case of dealing with challenges stemming from China.¹⁸

One school of thought proposes that since Japanese policymakers consider the presence of the US military in the Asia-Pacific region to secure Japan and assure other regional actors by way of deterrence and crisis response, it is 'natural that Japan deigns Indo-Japan cooperation in tandem with India-US-Japan trilateral cooperation.'¹⁹ Meanwhile, a noted Japanese academic, Takenori Horimoto, articulated that for Japan 'close cooperation with India is desirable against the backdrop of declining US power in Asia vis-à-vis China.'²⁰ He further argues that augmenting relations with India would positively benefit Japan, whose bilateral ties with other nations, except for the US, are limited. Few scholars have argued that Tokyo regards its alliance with Washington as the nucleus of

its security policy, and uses other partnerships, for instance, the one with India, to support the alliance.²¹ In the Japanese view, India features as the fifth most significant nation, after the US, South Korea, Australia and the ASEAN bloc, since India is progressively becoming more powerful and geopolitically significant for Japan.²²

WILL JAPAN'S INDIA POLICY OUTLAST ABE ADMINISTRATION?

One of the focal points of discussion revolves around the following concern: is Japan's interest and investment towards India Abe-centric? Exploring the answer to this question indicates that India's significance in Japanese defence outlook will continue beyond Prime Minister Abe's administration since the variables determining the security discourse will continue in the evolving regional security architecture. Japan is dealing with the waning regional influence of its most precious strategic partner, the US, and the concern of managing a powerful China. Japan recognises that exclusively depending on the US-Japan security alliance may not further national interest in the rapidly developing regional security architecture.²³ Therefore, Abe conceived the first NSS in 2013, which charts measures to be undertaken in order to cope with the national security challenges. Subsequently, Abe encouraged the reinterpreting of Article 9 and pushing the boundaries of Japanese post-war defence posture. Furthermore, Abe has strengthened the alliance framework with the US, by creating space for limited exercise of right to collective self-defence by the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDFs) in the revised US-Japan Defence Guidelines after 18 years from the last revision in 1997. Meanwhile, he has also attempted to expand diplomatic and security cooperation with like-minded nations. Here, India is gradually being measured as a key player in addressing the strategic challenges of Japan.

Japan's China Conundrum

The unfolding geostrategic developments in the Asia-Pacific are determining Japan's initiative to improve deterrence in relation to an increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan as articulated in the 'Defense of Japan' white paper.²⁴ China's escalating clout in reshaping the canon of the international system, with the objective of better serving its interests, is an ongoing process. The phenomenon of China embracing a greater role in the international realm is likely to continue much after Abe leaves. China is emerging as a major factor in global affairs in the midst of the narrative of Chinese dream and the great rejuvenation of the

Chinese nation. China considers itself as a major power, at par with the US while conceptualising the new type of major-country relationship in 2012. Subsequently, in 2013, Abe argued at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) that Japan is back and that 'Japan is not, and will never be, a Tier-two country'.²⁵ Later, during his address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015, Abe conceptualised Japan's role as a 'Proactive Contributor to Peace based on the principle of international cooperation'.²⁶

The threat perception from China, whose activism is primarily manifesting in the maritime sphere, is one of the most critical challenges for Japan besides nuclear North Korea. Tensions over the contested territorial claims related to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and the fear of entrapment rationale prevailing among a section of the US strategic community are making Japan seriously reassess its policy alternatives. Meanwhile, developments such as the designation of the Chinese Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea in November 2013, Chinese oil platform development in the East China Sea, and alleged violation of territorial waters and airspace are attempts to demonstrate Chinese determination to shape regional sphere of influence and put the US rebalancing to a litmus test. The gravity of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands challenge is deepened by mutual trust deficit and respective domestic constituencies. Moreover, Chinese military sophistication, facilitated by a continued increase in military budget (see Figure 1) and the shifting military balance in favour of China vis-à-vis the US, is making Japan anxious.

A 2015 Rand Corporation report argues that People's Liberation Army (PLA) has achieved great progress, and that the 'overall capability trend lines are moving against the United States. In some areas, such as ballistic missiles, fighter aircraft, and attack submarines, improvements have come with breath-taking speed by most historical standards'.²⁷ It further underscores that while

China has not caught up to the US military in terms of aggregate capabilities—and is not close to doing so—but it does not need to catch up to the United States to dominate its immediate periphery. China is increasingly capable of challenging the ability of US forces to accomplish mission-critical tasks in scenarios close to the Chinese mainland.²⁸

Japan is anxious that the magnitude of Chinese defence spending has improved by four times in the last 10 years and 40 times in the

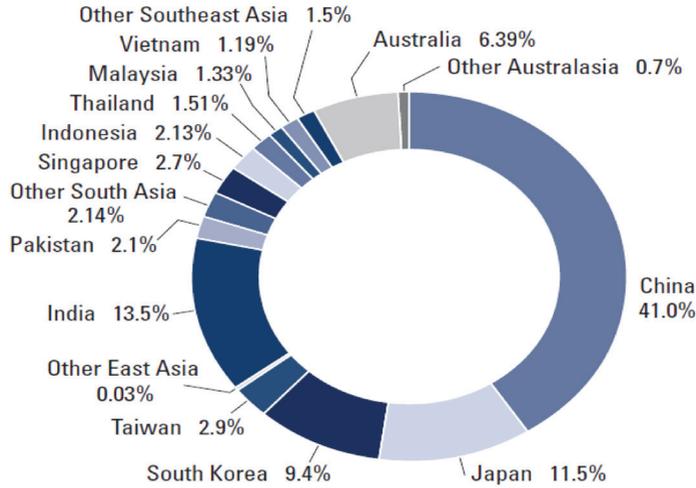


Figure 1 Defence Spending by Asian Countries

Source: ‘Chapter Six: Asia’, in *The Military Balance*, 2016, p. 215.

last 26 years.²⁹ In March 2015, China declared a defence budget rise, with a nominal increase of 10.1 per cent to US\$ 145.8 billion.³⁰ Hence, Japan has nurtured and pursued the concept of ‘active pacifism’. Abe has managed to reinterpret the pacifist constitution, allowing Japan to redefine its right to collective self-defence, aimed at enhancing deterrence to manage the security threats.³¹

Japan is critical of China for attempting to alter the status quo by coercion. The Japanese foreign ministry has stated that Chinese ships traversed the adjoining waters of the Senkaku Islands more frequently since September 2012 (see Figure 2). In latest developments, on 9 June 2016, the Japanese defence ministry confirmed that its Setogiri destroyer had detected a Jiangkai I-class frigate of the Chinese Navy entering the Japanese contiguous zone at the northeast of Kuba Island³² and exiting through the north-northwest of Taisho Island,³³ situated in the Okinawa Prefecture. Additionally, Japan also claims that a Dongdiao-class intelligence collection vessel of the Chinese Navy entered its contiguous zone at the north of Kitadaito Island on 16 June.³⁴ Moreover, Japanese statistics on scrambles through the third quarter of 2015 reflect that Air Self-Defence Forces (ASDF) fighter aircraft scrambled 373 times against Chinese jets³⁵ (see Table 1). Despite robust economic engagement between the two nations, the Senkaku dispute along with Japan’s wartime history, including visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by the Japanese

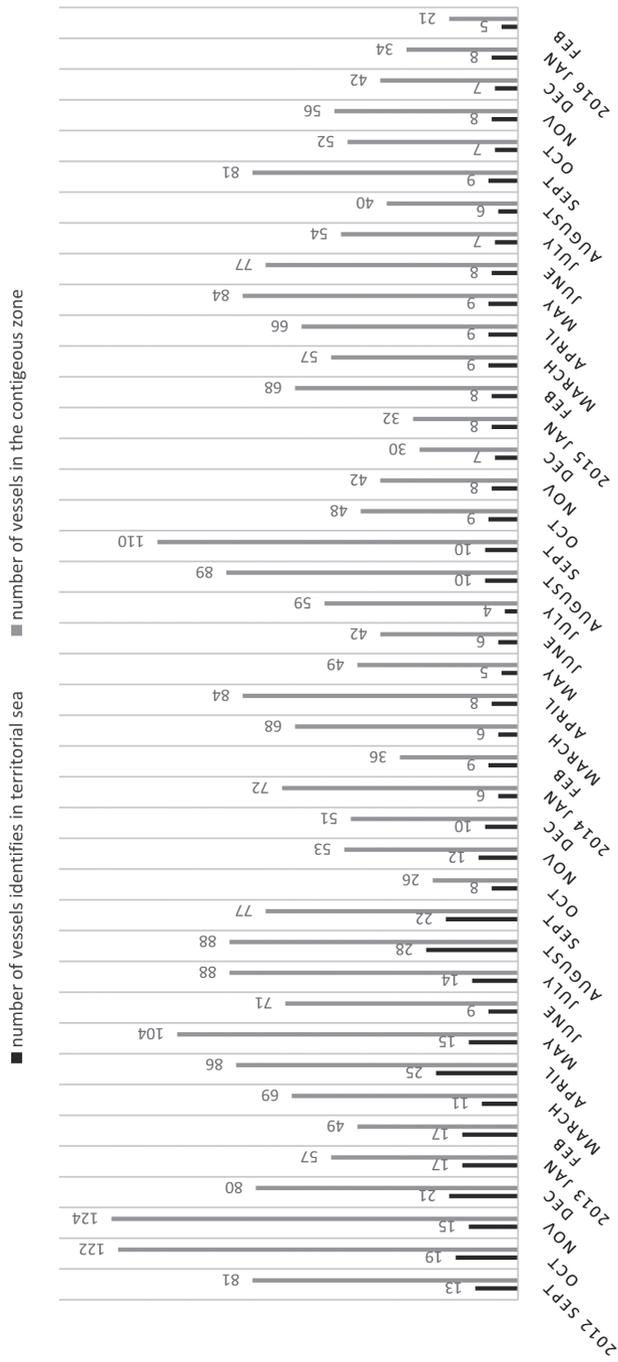


Figure 2 Alleged Violation of Japan's Contiguous Zone and Territorial Sea Surrounding the Senkaku Islands by Chinese Vessels

Source: Author, using data drawn from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.³⁶

Table I Number of Scramble

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Country/Area</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>Russia</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>North Korea</i>	<i>Others</i>	
2011	247	156	5	0	17	425
2012	248	306	1	0	12	567
2013	359	415	1	9	26	810
2014	473	464	1	0	5	943
2015	288	571	2	0	12	873

Source: data gathered from Defence Attaché, Japanese Embassy, New Delhi.

leadership, has created an impasse that has the potential to escalate into a serious military confrontation. Hence, Japan is rethinking its strategy to strengthen its capabilities. Beyond catering to nationalism, China has a larger stake in Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands as China's posturing in the dispute in East China Sea will hold a message for the contending states in the South China Sea.³⁷

A section of the Japanese right-wing media has emphasised that a robust US-India-Japan security engagement is imperative in dealing with the developments in the disputed territorial claims in East and South China Seas and the Indian Ocean and defending the sea lanes.³⁸ China is mentioned while articulating that, as democracies, both India and Japan would be the 'stabilising factors in the equations of Asian security'.³⁹ Literature also reflects arguments that an initially reluctant Japan is cultivating India as a 'counterweight'⁴⁰ and seeking a strategic alliance to balance a powerful China.⁴¹ It must be noted that few academics do not measure India for its individual weight but evaluate India as an essential card with regard to China. Japan is unable to grasp the diplomatic worth of India without the 'China factor'.⁴²

Japan's Concern over the Depth of the US Commitment

Japan is concerned about the gravity of the US commitment towards the region. Strategic reassessment may make the US employ a conscious decision of not provoking China and respond to the new type of major power relations. Japan is aware about the fear of entrapment rationale prevailing in Washington. There is a school of thought which maintains that the US is anxious about being pulled into Japan's conflict. Even though Japan was nervous that the US would drag them into war for six decades, today the US is anxious that it may get tangled in Japan's

conflict due to Article 5 of the security treaty.⁴³ Japanese apprehension concerning the US commitment is deep-seated. Japan has kept the US anchored in East Asia but American military preoccupations in the Middle East and Central Asia and its reactions in Ukraine, the changing dynamics of the US pivot/rebalancing strategy in the region, and anxiety over cutbacks in the US defence budget have raised Japanese worries vis-à-vis the US obligation. Furthermore, the economic profile of the US's relations with China has made the strategic landscape rather complex. While bilateral trade in goods between these two 'integral trading partners'⁴⁴ amounted to \$598 billion in 2015 (see Figure 3), China has emerged as a key creditor for the US government, holding approximately \$1.3 trillion in treasury debt (see Figure 4). In 2014, the US investment in China touched \$65.8 billion and Chinese investment in the US has increased to \$10.2 billion. Therefore, US is deliberating carefully to avoid infuriating a major trading partner and creditor.

Even though the US-Japan security alliance serves as the base of regional security, the memories of the Nixon shocks, Clinton's Sino-centric approach, and the June 1998 nine-day summit trip with then Chinese President Jiang Zemin⁴⁵ have triggered unease in Japan. This

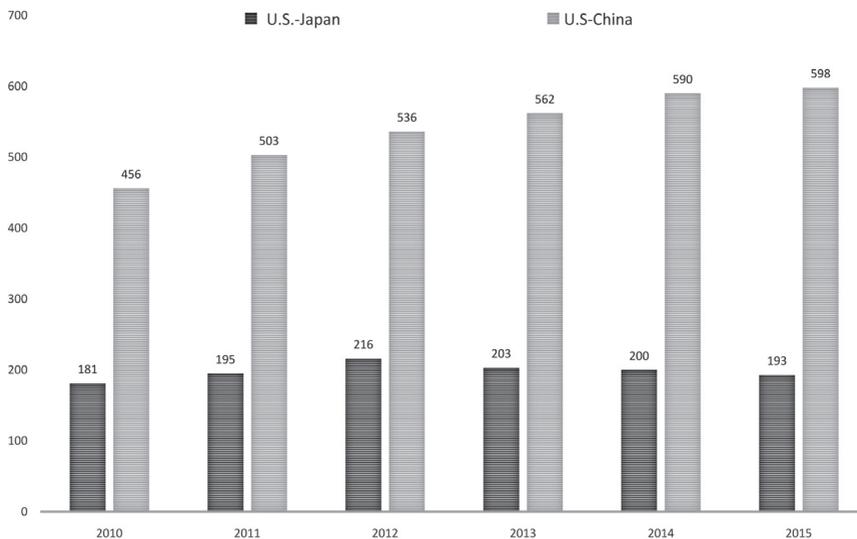


Figure 3 US Trade in Goods with China and Japan

Source: prepared by the author based on the data from the US International Trade Data, United States Census Bureau.⁴⁶

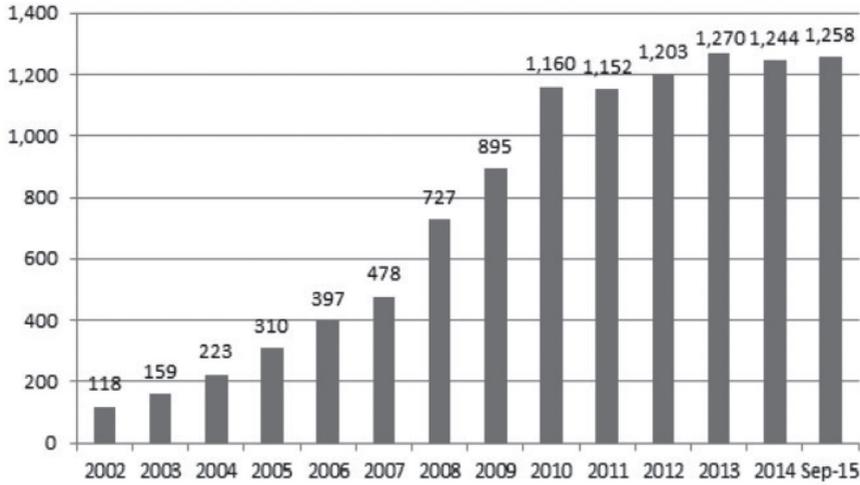


Figure 4 China's Holdings of the US Treasury Securities: 2002 - September 2015 (\$ in billions)

Source: US Department of the Treasury.⁴⁷

thrusted Japan to reinforce the security alliance and explore new partnerships.⁴⁸ Consequently, a 'Global Partnership' was instituted with India in 2000, which eventually got upgraded to the 'Strategic and Global Partnership' (2006) and then a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' (2014). Furthermore, a 'Joint Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World' was articulated in 2015.

Prowess of the Indian Navy

Another determining factor that will continue to present India as an important partner to Japan beyond Abe is the Indian Navy's reputation and credibility. India's military muscle, particularly naval competences, is favourably perceived by Japan.⁴⁹ Noted scholar Marie Izuyama argues the case of convergence of interest and 'shared responsibility' in securing the SLOCs as a 'public good' for the region.⁵⁰ Moreover, Ambassador Hiroshi Hirabayashi also underscores the responsibility to 'secure peace and stability along sea lanes' in India-Japan cooperation.⁵¹ Evaluating the regional developments pertaining to China's arrival and 'fragile partnership' with the US, Japan is ready to engage with India on serious issues in relation to sea-lane security.⁵² Japan desires India's cooperation

in guarding the Indian Ocean SLOCs since it is critical for its energy shipments. With dependence on imports for 94 per cent of its primary energy supply, Japan is severely dependent on Middle Eastern oil imports (see Figure 5), and the Indian Ocean is, therefore, vital for Japanese energy imports from the region. Japan has habitually depended on the US Navy to safeguard its vessels in the Indian Ocean. However, Japan is increasingly realising India's productive role in defending the regional sea lanes. Chinese infrastructure activism along the Indian Ocean has made India, the US and Japan apprehensive. India's maritime competences are likely to guarantee secured passage of Japanese vessels through Malacca Strait.⁵³ Besides protecting energy interests, SLOCs, particularly the Malacca Strait, are exposed to the dangers of piracy and terror incidents. India had also extended help during the 1999 M/V Alondra Rainbow piracy episode.⁵⁴ India is valued as an important security partner in terms of its growing maritime power projection capacity to secure key SLOCs and chokepoints linking Middle East to the Indian Ocean.⁵⁵ The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) serves as an important connection between India and the East Asia, consolidating India's status as a dependable naval power with power projection capability.⁵⁶

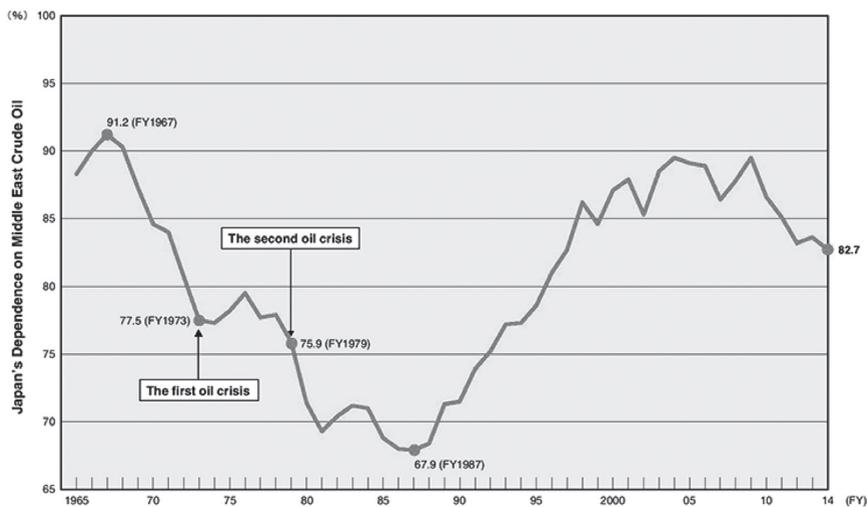


Figure 5 Japanese Reliance on the Middle East Crude Oil of Total Imports

Source: Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) website.⁵⁷

JAPAN'S DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND INDIA

With the instituting of the National Security Council, the enactment of the 'Act of Protection of Specially Designated Secrets', outlining of the 'Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology' and the reinterpretation of Article 9, Japan has transformed the essence of its security policy.⁵⁸

Shifts in Japan's Defence Equipment and Technology Policy

In an important development in April 2014, in keeping with the country's first NSS, Japan planned the 'Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology' to suit the new security environment. These principles substituted the preceding 1967 'Three Principles on Arms Exports'⁵⁹ formulated under Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, which were further tightened in 1976 by Prime Minister Takeo Miki, where the policy guideline declared that 'Government of Japan shall not promote arms exports, regardless of the destinations.'⁶⁰ The notion of *tsutsushimu*, implying restraint in arms transfers stopped Japan from entering overseas defence markets and participate in global joint development and production of arms.⁶¹ Based on the 1967 and 1976 guidelines, arms exports and arms technology transfers are prohibited barring few exceptions, for example, the Japan-US joint development/production of the ballistic missile defence system.

However, the domestic defence market has been very small, which in turn affects the maintenance of defence production base required to make quality defence equipment for the JSDFs. The defence ministry procurement level is relatively small, which makes the equipment too expensive and, subsequently, amounts to low profits for the defence contractors.⁶² The Japan Business Federation (Keidanren), in its May 2013 proposal, has argued that with the aim of supporting and developing the defence industrial base, the government has to design strategies for defence production and firming the technological base; endorse international joint development/production; and mend acquisition and procurement policy.⁶³

In one of the major policy initiatives in April 2014, Prime Minister Abe adopted the 'Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology'. Scholars argue that changing the 1967 Principles of Arms Exports will enable revival in the defence sector.⁶⁴ The 2014 principles underscore the following: 'clarification of cases where transfers are prohibited', 'limitation to cases where transfers may be permitted as well

as strict examination and information disclosure', and finally 'ensuring appropriate control regarding extra-purpose use or transfer to third parties'.⁶⁵ Subsequently, the June 'Strategy on Defence Production and Technological Bases' argues that, based on the 2014 Three Principles, the defence ministry will undertake essential measures to promote defence equipment and technology cooperation, for instance, in international joint development and production, with the purpose of contributing to maintaining and improving defence production and technological bases. Besides the US, the Strategy talks about establishing new defence equipment and technology cooperation with the United Kingdom, France, Australia, India and Southeast Asia.⁶⁶ The defence ministry has argued that overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology supports firming up cooperation with ally like the US in addition to other nations. Moreover, it works towards augmenting Japan's defence production and technological bases and enhancing defence capability, since 'international joint development and production projects have become the international mainstream in order to improve the performance of defence equipment and to deal with their rising costs'.⁶⁷

Keidanren has mapped India while articulating the need to promote equipment and technology cooperation with foreign nations and international organisations.⁶⁸ The 2015 'Keidanren Defence Industry Policy Proposal' underscores that the 'government should simplify the technology transfer procedure and accelerate conclusion of defence equipment agreements and information security agreements'.⁶⁹ The December 2015 'Joint Report of the India-Japan Business Leaders Forum' underscored that following 'an overarching agreement between Japan and India to cooperate in the defence and security sector, there is a need to promote engagement between Japanese and Indian private sector companies in the area of high-technology items'.⁷⁰

Make in India

India's Act East strategy and Modi's Make in India campaign intersects with the transition in Japan's post-war security attitude and the relaxation of the self-imposed arms export ban.⁷¹ The December 2015 'Agreement Concerning Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation', marks new beginnings in bilateral defence cooperation by 'making available to each other, defence equipment and technology necessary to implement joint research, development and/or production projects'.⁷² In addition, both sides signed an 'Agreement Concerning

Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information' to ensure the 'reciprocal protection of classified military information.'⁷³

India's defence modernisation and procurements offer enormous possibilities for Japan's defence industry, which until recently, focused on the domestic market to validate Japan's pledge to peace.⁷⁴ The March 2015 India-Japan Defence Ministerial Meeting stressed that defence technology cooperation 'can emerge as a key pillar of bilateral defence relations.'⁷⁵ Moreover, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has recognised Japan as a privileged partner in Make in India.⁷⁶ While Japan has a major concern relating to control of intellectual property in case of military technology, India has developed a stellar reputation when it comes to trust and protecting intellectual property rights. India has imported a number of equipment from various countries, including the former Soviet Union and then Russia, the US and Israel. Technology transfer has happened with India under licence and there are no cases so far when there has been a breach of intellectual property rights. India does not engage in reverse engineering or third country transfer.⁷⁷

India is keen on joint development and production of defence equipment. The negotiations concerning obtaining defence technology from Japan, for example, the Utility Seaplane Mark 2 (US-2) amphibian aircraft negotiation, which started in 2013, have reached the concluding phase. ShinMaywa Industries, the manufacturers of the US-2 amphibian aircraft, began consultations with a few Indian companies as both countries reportedly debate on the prospect of assembling the US-2 aircraft in India. In this regard, ShinMaywa Industries may partner with Pipavav Defence and Offshore Engineering Company.⁷⁸ While ShinMaywa Industries have experience in India since it delivered aerobridges and set up waste water treatment pumps,⁷⁹ the US-2 is the first Japanese aircraft presented to the Indian market that is otherwise operated by the JMSDFs. Following the April 2014 policy shift, Japan has engaged in military technology cooperation. For example, the decision to export gyroscopes, made by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, to elevate precision of the US developed Patriot Advanced Capability-2 (PAC-2) missile interceptors, and providing sensor technology by way of a joint research to Britain intended at advancing air-to-air missiles' guiding competences.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Japan heavily invested diplomatic capital but lost the bid for a submarine contract in Australia.⁸¹

Building on the 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership', Prime Minister Modi has invited Japan to take part in Project 75 India. The

aim is to reinforce naval power by constructing six stealth submarines in India. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Heavy Industries, manufacturers of ultra-quiet Soryu class submarines, are welcome to participate and match strengths with other contractors such as DCNS of France, HDW of Germany, Rosoboronexport of Russia and Navantia of Spain.⁸² But it is vital to understand that in these kind of projects, commercial feasibility, technology prerequisite, and project time frame often complicate military technology cooperation. Until now, the scope of the India-Japan defence cooperation has revolved around an elaborate framework of defence exchange at various levels but the December 2015 agreement is a concrete step that aims to boost bilateral relations with co-development and co-production of sophisticated defence equipment and technologies. While India navigates the challenges associated with indigenous production and improving the investment setting, Japan has the litmus test of transforming the defence industry, making it more competitive and globalised. Besides, shrinking the cost for domestic procurement is a concern because of the steep prices of domestically produced arms.⁸³ Also, experts argue that Japan's domestic market is only valued at about US\$12.5 billion annually. So, overseas deals will permit the defence contractors to step up and increase profits.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, Japanese companies are new to international competition, and therefore require government assistance. Robust longstanding fiscal subsidies are necessary.⁸⁵

SUMMING UP

Japan's alliance with the US will remain the central pillar of its security policy. However, India has started to feature in the Japanese idea of Asia. India has been identified and will further be cultivated as a potential partner as Japan struggles to cope with the fluidity of the regional security architecture. India's advent in the Japanese security frame will continue and outlive the Abe administration since the variables that pushed Japan to incorporate India in the matrix of Asian security will further mature and complicate the regional security architecture in the coming years. India is not only mapped in the Japanese policy papers in the context of constructing a security network intended to stabilise Asia-Pacific, Keidanren has marked India while articulating the need to support equipment and technology cooperation with foreign nations and international organisations. As a late entrant in the international market, Japanese defence contractors are facing tough experiences while

measuring up to big players of international repute, as witnessed in the case of Australian submarine contract. Therefore, Japan should earnestly pursue the Indian market as engaging in the area of high-technology items will inject dynamism into India-Japan bilateral relations, which in turn will lay a strong foundation, beyond mere symbolism. As discussed earlier in the article that Japan almost always follows the US footsteps when it comes to engaging with India, the recent logistics support agreement with the US signals deeper US-India ties. This is expected to further instil confidence in Japan to seriously consider India as a valuable partner in its attempts to stabilise the volatility in Asia-Pacific.

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