

POLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA

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# INDIA AND JAPAN

Assessing the  
Strategic Partnership

Edited by  
**Rajesh Basrur**  
**Sumitha Narayanan Kutty**



# Politics of South Asia

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Rajesh Basrur · Sumitha Narayanan Kutty  
Editors

# India and Japan

Assessing the Strategic Partnership

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## PREFACE

The India–Japan strategic partnership ties Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Act East” policy with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s push for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” Both countries view the other as central to their efforts to meet the strategic challenge posed by China. Their response pairs a growing defence relationship and a joint infrastructure and connectivity drive for enhancing regional integration in competition with China’s Belt and Road Initiative. How will these interactions play out bilaterally and in their defence triangle with the United States and the resurgent Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the ‘Quad’)? What challenges lie ahead and how sustainable is the India–Japan partnership? The volume explores these questions through the framework of the under-analyzed concept of “strategic partnerships,” which fall short of alliances and are characteristic of an interdependent world wherein states find the option of going to war with a strategic adversary unfeasible.

This volume is the product of a workshop convened by the South Asia Programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). The editors would like to thank Ralf Emmers, David Envall, Arpita Mathur, C. Raja Mohan, Bhubhindar Singh, H. K. Singh and Sinderpal Singh for their critical feedback on draft papers presented at the workshop. Two anonymous reviewers provided valuable comments. We are grateful to Anit Mukherjee for his support from inception to completion of the project and to Rohan Mukherjee for helping us refine its content. We also extend our gratitude to the RSIS events team, steered by Farik

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Singapore

Rajesh Basrur  
Sumitha Narayanan Kutty

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## Conceptualizing Strategic Partnerships

*Rajesh Basrur and Sumitha Narayanan Kutty*

**Abstract** The India–Japan “special strategic and global partnership” has been described as one that will define the Indo-Pacific and shape the Asian century. This introductory chapter introduces the reader to a brief history of the growing relationship, defines the hitherto inadequately explored concept of “strategic partnership” in a post-alliance world, explains the objectives, design and relevance of the book and outlines the distinguishing features of the chapters to follow.

**Keywords** India · Japan · Strategic · Partnership

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s visit to India in September 2017, highlighted by his country’s \$17 billion commitment to build a high-speed rail line, elicited speculation about the possibility of an emerging alliance between the two countries. This is widely viewed as being in response to the rise of China and the apparent diminution of American

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commitment to and presence in the region.<sup>1</sup> How accurate are such assessments? We argue that they point correctly to the direction that the relationship between New Delhi and Tokyo is taking, but that they miss the true nature of the India–Japan “strategic partnership,” a phenomenon very different from an alliance and one that is symptomatic of interstate politics in a fast-changing world.

The India–Japan “special strategic and global partnership”<sup>2</sup> has been described as one that will define the Indo-Pacific and shape the Asian century. Under Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart, there is much expectation of change. In Modi’s view, no other strategic partnership “can exercise a more profound influence on shaping the course of Asia and our interlinked ocean regions.”<sup>3</sup> The bilateral relationship has gathered momentum in the past decade, driven by Indian and Japanese anxieties regarding China’s rise and the distinct challenge it presents to them. Political and defence consultations between the two countries have been institutionalized at the highest level and Japan is the first country with which India has set up a “2+2” dialogue involving their foreign and defence ministries.<sup>4</sup> Defence cooperation, strategic dialogue and the strengthening of economic ties have proceeded apace. Highlights of this growing cooperation include Japan’s joining of the annual Malabar naval exercises between India and the United States as a regular participant in 2015, its commitment to

<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., C. Raja Mohan, “The Case for Alliance,” *Indian Express*, September 14, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-case-for-alliance/>. From China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs came a more critical comment following the same line of thinking. See Sutirtho Patranobis, “China Has a Message for India and Japan: Form Partnership, Not Alliance,” *Hindustan Times*, September 14, 2017, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/china-has-a-message-for-india-and-japan-form-partnership-not-alliance/story-HEygmJnZgSOHxdvhrWaHI.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025: Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World, Ministry of External Affairs India, December 12, 2015, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26176> (accessed April 25, 2016).

<sup>3</sup>Media Statement by Prime Minister with Japanese Prime Minister in New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs India, December 12, 2015, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=133117> (accessed April 25, 2016).

<sup>4</sup>Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan and India Vow to Boost Defence Ties during Summit,” *Reuters*, September 1, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/japan-india-investment-modi-idINKBNOGW15520140901> (accessed April 26, 2016).

invest in building the high-speed railway mentioned above, the signing of a civilian nuclear agreement permitting Japan to export nuclear materials and technology to India in 2016, and joint initiatives on infrastructure development projects from the Asia-Pacific to Africa.

### EVOLUTION OF INTERESTS

The India–Japan relationship has been witness to many decades of divergent trajectories, particularly during the Cold War. The two countries were in separate camps and in no way strategically aligned: Japan prioritized its security alliance with the United States, while India remained non-aligned and friendly with the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War signalled the tentative beginnings of a new interest in each other. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao launched the country’s “Look East” policy, which created a window for bilateral interactions to expand. However, the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998 meant a decade of lost opportunities. Japan reacted harshly to the tests and imposed sanctions. Additionally, Tokyo stayed neutral on the India–Pakistan Kargil conflict the following year, refusing to condemn Pakistan’s violation of the Line of Control in Kashmir.

In the twenty-first century, the relationship has seen rapid movement forward. With the United States pushing for close ties with New Delhi, Tokyo could not afford to be left behind. The further rise of China’s economic and military might and its increasingly tough posture in Southeast Asia spurred mutual interest in shaping outcomes in their shared neighbourhood. India was now looking beyond its traditional preoccupation with South Asia, while Japan was doing the same with respect to its alliance with the United States.<sup>5</sup> New Delhi was also determined it would no longer remain a reactive power, but one that would “influence events abroad” rather than be “pushed by them” by building political and personal relationships.<sup>6</sup> India has since forged strategic partnerships with a range of countries from China and Russia to the United States and Japan, reflecting a hedging strategy. At the same time, Japan has gradually shed its post-Second World War aversion to playing

<sup>5</sup>David Brewster, “The India–Japan Security Relationship: An Enduring Security Partnership?” *Asian Security*, 6, 2 (2010), pp. 95–120.

<sup>6</sup>C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India’s New Foreign* (New Delhi: Viking/Penguin, 2003), p. 263.

the role of a significant stakeholder in regional strategic politics and is increasingly focused on being a “normal” major power.<sup>7</sup>

Simultaneously, the United States has sought to reduce its costs as a guarantor of regional stability in Asia by building a closer strategic relationship with India and encouraging a trilateral linkage between these two and Japan. The US “pivot” or “rebalance” towards Asia—motivated by the rise of China—is closely linked to the new US–Japan–India nexus. Cooperation between India and Japan “helps reduce gaps that would otherwise emerge” in US policy towards the Asia-Pacific at a time of “declining U.S. military resources and rising commitments in the Middle East and Europe.”<sup>8</sup>

While the US has a long-standing alliance with Japan, the new strategic warmth between it and India, and similarly between Japan and India, has taken the form of “strategic partnerships.” But what exactly are strategic partnerships? What do they facilitate and what are their limitations? The next section discusses their chief features.

## DEFINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

While much is made of “structural change” in terms of the global distribution of power—primarily, the effect of the rise of China and its challenge to the post-Cold War dominance of the United States—a deeper systemic change has been given less attention.<sup>9</sup> Power itself is not what it used to be: the possession of material attributes of what we know as “power” no longer translates directly into a capacity to use it as an instrument of foreign strategic and economic policy. This is by no means a new phenomenon. At least two kinds of power were—under certain circumstances—visibly constrained in the twentieth century. Nuclear weapons reversed the relationship between war and politics. The very notion of “Cold War” highlighted a fundamental transformation of the

<sup>7</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Re-Emergence as a ‘Normal’ Military Power*, Adelphi Paper (London: IISS and Routledge, 2005), pp. 68–369.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Fontaine, “Where Is America in Japan and India’s Plans for Asia?” *The National Interest*, December 28, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/where-america-japan-indias-plans-asia-14741> (accessed May 1, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Mark Beeson, “Hegemonic Transition in East Asia? The Dynamics of Chinese and American Power,” *Review of International Studies*, 35, 1 (January 2009), pp. 95–112; Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy. China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008).

strategic landscape: the primary purpose of nuclear weapons became one of *preventing* rather than carrying out acts of war. In short, strategic interdependence ruled out traditional power politics. In the economic sphere, the change was similar: competing states—notably the United States and Japan—could no longer conceive of the kind of economic warfare that states throughout history had engaged in. Economic interdependence made this option a self-defeating one. In both types of competition, the states that were at odds with each other were compelled to try and sort out their differences in ways that would ensure their survival as viable political and economic entities.

The new realities took a while to sink in and have become clearer in the post-Cold War era. Despite much discussion about the possibility of war between the United States, the “declining hegemon,” and the “challenger,” China,<sup>10</sup> the fundamental truth is that the two states are profoundly interdependent in both ways: they possess nuclear weapons and their economies are intricately intertwined.<sup>11</sup> In an increasingly interdependent world, the role of alliances, central to strategic politics throughout history, has begun to fade. The bottom line in a world of alliances is the capacity to combine power to defeat an adversary in war or economic conflict. That is no longer possible for major powers since significant military or economic conflict threatens systemic collapse.

Today, the relationships among powerful states with adversarial interests are characterized by interdependence, whether military or economic or both. The US–China relationship carries both. The China–Japan relationship involves economic interdependence and something close to military interdependence since Japan enjoys the benefit of extended deterrence from the United States and also has the capacity to convert its latent nuclear weapons capability into actual weapons should the need arise. Finally, China and India are militarily interdependent as nuclear weapons powers and also have a rising (though not yet mutually interdependent)

<sup>10</sup>On hegemony and challenge, see Robert S. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>11</sup>The apparent “imbalance” between their nuclear arsenals matters little. For a more detailed discussion on the irrelevance of nuclear balances, see Rajesh Basrur, “Nuclear Deterrence: The Wohlstetter-Blackett Debate Revisited,” Working Paper No. 271, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, April 15, 2014, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/rsis-pubs/WP271.pdf>. On US–China economic interdependence, see Stephen S. Roach, “China’s Big Sticks,” *Project Syndicate*, January 25, 2017, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/trump-china-protectionism-retaliation-by-stephen-s-roach-2017-01>.

economic relationship. Under such circumstances, alliances do not offer the kind of benefits that they did in a less interdependent world since an ally cannot, in practice, offer full support to a state owing to its interdependent relationship with the adversary. For this reason, old alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are losing their coherence, as is evident from the experience of the organization in Afghanistan. Australia's vacillation between the United States and China is also evidence of the change. And, importantly, there are no new alliances among the major powers. Instead, the mixed games of strategic competition and interdependence-induced cooperation that are ubiquitous have brought a different type of relationship to centre stage.

The name of the predominant strategic game today is "strategic partnerships." These are cooperative relationships that carry features of strategic (and other forms of) cooperation, but stop short of commitments to fight on behalf of a partner.<sup>12</sup> States engage in multiple partnerships that vary in content, which leaves us somewhat bewildered as to their precise meaning and strategic significance. We see our task in this chapter as one of providing greater clarity than has hitherto been evident on the characteristics of strategic partnerships, which can then permit us—in the chapters that follow—to assess the content and significance of the India–Japan strategic partnership.

Interdependence among states makes major conflict among them highly unlikely. However, it does not guarantee cooperation: *some* degree of conflict is still possible. We know, for instance, that confrontations

<sup>12</sup>See, e.g., Rajesh M. Basrur, "Modi's Foreign Policy Fundamentals: A Trajectory Unchanged," *International Affairs*, 93, 1 (January 2017), pp. 7–26; Feng Zhongping and Huang Jing, "China's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy: Engaging with a Changing World," Working Paper No. 8, European Strategic Partnerships Observatory, Brussels, June 2014, <http://strategicpartnerships.eu/publications/chinas-strategic-partnership-diplomacy-engaging-with-a-changing-world/> (accessed February 10, 2015); Natalie M. Hess, "EU Relations with 'Emerging' Strategic Partners: Brazil, India and South Africa," *Focus*, 2, 2012, <http://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publication/eu-relations-with-emerging-strategic-partners-brazil-india-and-south-africa> (accessed February 10, 2015); Vidya Nadkarni, *Strategic Partnerships in Asia: Balancing Without Alliances* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2010); Prashant Parameswaran, "Explaining US Strategic Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific Region: Origins, Development and Prospects," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 36, 2 (2014), pp. 262–289; Thomas S. Wilkins, "'Alignment,' Not 'Alliance'—The Shifting Paradigm of International Security Cooperation: Toward a Conceptual Taxonomy of Alignment," *Review of International Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), pp. 53–76. On the India–Japan relationship, see Yogesh Joshi and Harsh V. Pant, "Indo-Japanese Strategic Partnership and Power Transition in Asia," *India Review*, 14, 3 (July–September 2015), pp. 312–329.



between nuclear powers do occasionally result in marginal combat, as between China and the Soviet Union in 1969, and between India and Pakistan in 1999. Similarly, economic interdependence notwithstanding, major economic players may engage in a degree of competition. This is clearly the case between the United States and China, whose relationship is marked by tensions over the trade balance, currency values and intellectual property rights, among other things. Thus, strategic cooperation of certain kinds is still an attractive option for states faced with the possibility of conflict at a level lower than major war. In short, states engage to a considerable degree in hedging against the risk of limited conflict. Strategic partnerships offer scope for countering such eventualities and the possibility of escalation to higher levels in the event that an adversary is willing to take risks. Some key characteristics of strategic partnerships are:

- Unlike alliances, they are not expressly aimed at an identified enemy. This leaves space for building bridges with strategic adversaries with whom conflict is not a viable option owing to interdependence.
- Also unlike alliances, strategic partnerships are limited and flexible and do not involve deep action-inducing commitments to the security or even political positions of partners. Typically, states do not take strongly supportive positions on the disputes of strategic partners with other states.
- Strategic partnerships involve regular high-level political interactions, including meetings between heads of government and civilian and military officials at lower rungs.
- They frequently involve security cooperation by means of arms transfers, joint military exercises, strategic dialogues and intelligence exchanges.
- Beyond security, strategic partnerships usually extend to other mutually beneficial interactions, especially economic exchanges.

What do states gain from such cooperation if they are not guaranteed support against adversaries? They can expect to (a) augment their military capabilities in the event of military confrontations with an adversary that might result in combat (even if marginal); (b) apply joint psychological-political pressure against adversaries whose behaviour is hostile; and (c) obtain political support in international institutions where they seek approval for membership or support on specific issues. There are additional

benefits: (d) all of the above can be attained without entangling the state in an alliance that may drag it into a confrontation with its partner's adversaries. Further, (e) states may also seek to avoid dependence on powerful partners by spreading their bets through multiple partnerships. Finally, (f) states may seek to tie an adversary into a relationship of engagement and cooperation in order to alleviate risks associated with conflicts of interest.

This still leaves room for identifying different kinds and levels of strategic partnerships. India's partnerships range across a broad spectrum—from that with the United States, which involves unprecedented political, military and economic collaboration, to the India–China partnership, which is aimed at moderating tensions with an adversary. In this volume, we attempt to clarify where the India–Japan partnership stands. Clearly, it is closer to the former than the latter, but where is it likely to go in the foreseeable future?

### AIM AND DESIGN OF THE BOOK

Within the conceptual framework outlined above, this volume aims to review the past, explore the drivers bringing India and Japan closer today, and assess the prospects for the India–Japan strategic partnership. The chapters that follow gauge the relative weights of factors that are forging and impeding bilateral strategic and defence cooperation. One important objective here is to explore ways in which the strategic relationship might be sustained and strengthened without understating the limits imposed by the inherent characteristics of strategic partnerships.

This volume is distinctive in that it presents a much closer and more intensive examination of the strategic and defence cooperation between India and Japan than previous publications.<sup>13</sup> It also provides a more detailed discussion on specific ways forward for cooperation. While recognizing the pitfalls, the authors are inclined to view the future of India–Japan and India–Japan–US strategic and defence cooperation as relatively strong.

<sup>13</sup>Takenori Horimoto and Lalima Varma, eds., *India–Japan Relations in Emerging Asia* (New Delhi, 2013); Arpita Mathur, *India–Japan Relations: Drivers, Trends and Prospects*, RSIS Monograph No. 23, 2012; Rohan Mukherjee and Anthony Yazaki, eds., *Poised for Partnership. Deepening India–Japan Relations in the Asian Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016); Shutaro Sano, “Japan–India Development and Security Cooperation Should Be Steady, Not Rushed,” *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, 382, May 31, 2017; N. S. Sisodia and G. V. C. Naidu, eds., *India–Japan Relations: Partnership for Peace and Security in Asia* (New Delhi: Promilla & Co and Bibliophile South Asia, 2006).

In Chapter 2, Manjeet Pardesi argues his case for “cautious optimism” in the future development of India–Japan strategic ties. The author uses a levels-of-analysis approach to show that there is a powerful thrust towards greater India–Japan strategic cooperation. The author reviews the history of India–Japan relations, beginning with early relative closeness, a drift with the onset of the Cold War and a warming from the 2000s. He focuses on the China issue as the main driver behind closer cooperation between India and Japan as well as their trilateral relationship with the United States. He also examines non-China factors such as bilateral economic relations and the nuclear weapons issue. Exploring avenues for further cooperation, the author recommends both countries work in sync to increase India–Southeast Asia connectivity as well as coordinate in regional multilateral institutions. Coordination in Afghanistan, countering the Pakistan–North Korea nuclear proliferation nexus and peacekeeping are some other areas that the author indicates are ripe for cooperation.

In Chapter 3, Dhruva Jaishankar delves into the drivers, possibilities and limitations of the India–Japan defence partnership. Almost inevitably, the focus is primarily on the China factor as the predominant driver of bilateral defence cooperation. The author notes Prime Minister Abe’s reframing of Japan’s broader security role and his government’s move towards “normalization” of national security strategy. On the other hand, India’s growing defence profile in Asia presents an opportunity for Japan. Under Prime Minister Modi, New Delhi has placed “deliberate emphasis on relations with democratic partners in East Asia.” The confluence of these two strategies has thus seen the partnership evolve from tentative warming to rapid growth in defence cooperation that today encompasses political consultations, military-to-military contacts, including exercises, and the prospect of arms sales. One limitation the author observes in the partnership is that it appears to be personality-dependent, raising questions as to whether the recent momentum can continue beyond the tenures of Modi and Abe. Other difficulties include Japanese public reluctance on a proactive defence policy and the danger in prioritizing defence sales and joint production in the relationship. A major structural constraint, according to the author, is the reality that India is likely to “remain outside of the United States’ Asian alliance structure.” On the scope for widening defence cooperation, Jaishankar argues that Japan’s official development assistance (ODA) remains the “biggest weapon in Japan’s arsenal.” Utilizing the ODA to strengthen India’s

military capacity, e.g. strategic roads, ports, airfields or via joint projects in third countries, would bolster the partnership. A second area would be the extension of military interoperability beyond the maritime sphere. The author suggests this be done by deepening cooperation between the ground (particularly the expeditionary marine forces) and air forces through trilateral exercises with the United States.

Chapter 4 by Satoru Nagao explores India–Japan defence ties from a Japanese perspective. The author begins by examining both the negative side (separately perceived threats) and the positive aspect (commonly felt threats and responses) of China’s rise. He draws attention to the macroshift in international politics from the old system of alliances (hub and spoke) constructed by the US to a new networked system of “alliances” involving cooperation among the United States, Japan, India, Australia and others. According to the author, the focus of such a system is to shape a stable world order by constraining states that might destabilize it and persuading them to act in concert to provide public goods. He then places emphasis on the reasons why India is a trustworthy partner for Japan: shared democratic values, status quo orientation and experience in international cooperation being a few. Nagao recommends that the two countries cooperate within a framework that addresses both India’s concerns with respect to China (the land border) and Japan’s concerns regarding China (the East China Sea). As he sees it, India can reduce the defence burden on the United States and Japan, especially with regard to the Indian Ocean, while Japan, on its part, can provide technology to enhance India’s defence capability: warships, amphibious aircraft, carriers and sea-based missile defence, among other things. The author also advocates that India and Japan collaborate to build defence capacity among countries in the South China Sea area.

In Chapter 5, Satu Limaye analyses American interests in the India–Japan strategic and defence relationship and in the India–Japan–US triangular defence relationship. The author expands on the positive expectations of interactions between India, Japan and the United States—all of which are major powers, democracies and stakeholders in the international liberal order. He finds that improved bilateral India–Japan ties and their trilateral ties with the United States are crucial to constrain China and its potential to destabilize the region. He also finds that the United States would benefit if given some relief from its heavy defence burden in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, he cautions that domestic political changes in any of the three countries may affect policy

trajectories. A second constraint on American support to the India–Japan bilateral or the trilateral dialogue would be internal tensions within (a) the India–US relationship (India’s preference for autonomy in a multipolar system); and (b) the US–Japan relationship (differing expectations on issues such as cost distribution). Given the short history of warming India–US and India–Japan ties, there remains uncertainty as to how far these, and therefore the trilateral, can go. A final predicament, the author notes, relates to how the economic differences and divergent approaches by Japan and the United States will impact India’s integration into the regional economic order. Japan seems keener than the United States on India’s entry into the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) organization.

This volume is an important contribution to understanding the nature and dynamics of a changing strategic landscape in the Asia-Pacific and in global strategic politics generally. It throws fresh light on the trajectories of India–Japan and India–Japan–US relations and highlights the extent to which they are both central to an emerging security architecture in Asia. It also underlines the complications that national decision-makers face as they seek to craft policies appropriate to a constantly shifting and uncertain world. Even while drawing attention to the bumps on the road and to the limits to strategic cooperation, the five chapters that follow help identify the optimal policies that policymakers can push forward. The concluding chapter pulls together a number of threads from preceding chapters to (a) highlight how the individual chapters clarify the dynamics of strategic partnerships as a predominant feature of the evolving landscape; and (b) bring together the vectors showing where the process is heading.

## Evolution of India–Japan Ties: Prospects and Limitations

*Manjeet S. Pardesi*

**Abstract** In this chapter, the author regards the future trajectory of the India–Japan strategic partnership with “cautious optimism.” Employing a levels-of-analysis approach, Pardesi traces the factors that are responsible for the “remarkable transformation” in this bilateral relationship since the end of the Cold War. The rise of China and the rapprochement between the United States and India have driven the two countries together while, at the domestic level, India’s growing economy has led both New Delhi and Tokyo to view each other with great mutual interest. Key decision-makers on both sides, including Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have influenced the positive trajectory of bilateral relations. This chapter also pinpoints critical factors shaping the nature of cooperation between the two countries today—economics, the nuclear issue, China’s behaviour, and the salience of the United States—and explores avenues for further cooperation. Pardesi suggests India and Japan work together to enhance connectivity between India and Southeast Asia, contribute to stability in Afghanistan and coordinate their approaches in regional multilateral institutions as well as UN peacekeeping operations.

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Regional integration · Nuclear deal · Connectivity

## INTRODUCTION

India and Japan are in the process of forging a strong strategic partnership. During his visit to India in December 2015, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that Japan and India had the “bilateral relationship with the greatest potential in the world” before adding that he wanted to “turn this potential into reality.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter will argue that factors at all three levels of analysis—the international system, the state, and the individual—have brought about a remarkable transformation in India–Japan relations since the end of the Cold War, and especially over the past decade or so.<sup>2</sup> At the international level, the rise of China and the transformation of the US–India relationship have promoted closer relations between India and Japan. At the domestic level, India’s own slow but gradual embrace of the market along with sluggish growth in Japan has led New Delhi and Tokyo to view each other as important economic partners. Notably, there is bipartisan support in both India and Japan to promote this relationship. At the level of individuals and decision-makers, Abe’s enthusiasm for the India–Japan relationship has been reciprocated by India’s current Prime Minister Narendra Modi (of the Bharatiya Janata Party/BJP) as well as former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (of the Congress Party).

At the same time, there are factors at all three levels of analysis that inject an element of caution. At the international level, the India–Japan relationship is unlikely to develop into an alliance given India’s tradition of strategic autonomy. Domestically, India’s dilapidated physical infrastructure as well as cumbersome labour and land-acquisition laws put significant limitations on the economic dimension of the India–Japan partnership, especially given that India is only partially integrated with

<sup>1</sup>Shinzo Abe, “India, Japan Are Natural Partners: This Relationship Has the Greatest Potential in the World, I Will Turn It into Reality,” *Times of India*, December 11, 2015, <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-edit-page/india-japan-are-natural-partners-this-relationship-has-the-greatest-potential-in-the-world-i-will-turn-it-into-reality/> (accessed January 10, 2016).

<sup>2</sup>For the classic statement of the levels of analysis approach, see Kenneth Waltz, *Man, State, and War: A Theoretical Approach* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

the East Asian (and the global) economy. Finally, many decision-makers among India's strategic elite dismiss Japan as a "surrogate" of the United States (as a consequence of their understanding of the US–Japan alliance), while many among Japan's strategic elite continue to view India through the poverty and anti-nuclear prisms. Given these enablers and constraints at all levels of analysis, this chapter makes the case for "cautious optimism" in the future development of the India–Japan relationship. While there is no doubt that there is a growing congruence of interests between India and Japan, there are noteworthy differences in their worldviews.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three main sections. After briefly discussing the impact of Japan on Indian nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century, the next section focuses on independent India's early approach towards Japan. It is argued that in spite of a relatively good start in India–Japan relations after 1947 under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, the Cold War logic of the international system together with their divergent economic strategies meant that India and Japan became relatively unimportant for each other in their respective foreign policies. The post-Cold War transformation of their bilateral relationship is the theme of the second section. In particular, this section will focus on four factors—economics, the nuclear issue, the rise of China, and the salience of the United States—in the shaping of the contours of the India–Japan relationship in recent years. Based on the above, the final section of this chapter will identify avenues for cooperation between India and Japan (in Asia and beyond), while also noting areas of divergence between them.

## EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY THROUGH THE END OF THE COLD WAR

### *Before India's Independence*

Japan entered the political consciousness of India's nationalist elite after defeating Russia in the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War. The victory of an Asian power over a European power excited India's elite and even "remote villagers."<sup>3</sup> Ironically, while celebrating Japan's

<sup>3</sup>Bimla Prasad, *The Origins of Indian Foreign Policy: The Indian National Congress and World Affairs* (Calcutta: Bookland, 1962), p. 31.



victory over Russia, India's nationalist elite overlooked the fact that the war was fought over Russian and Japanese imperial ambitions in Korea and northeastern China. Many Indian students, intellectuals, and nationalists travelled to Japan in the subsequent years to learn from Japan's modernization experience.<sup>4</sup> Inspired by Japan, Indian intellectuals such as Rabindranath Tagore were at the forefront of the pan-Asian ideals of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism along with their Japanese counterparts, especially Okakura Tenshin.<sup>5</sup> It was only after the full-scale invasion of China by Japan in 1937 that India's nationalist elite led by Nehru developed "a certain antipathy to [wards] Japan."<sup>6</sup>

Under Nehru's leadership, the Congress Party sent a medical unit to China. Nehru also took the lead to organize "China Days" in India after calling for a boycott of Japanese goods.<sup>7</sup> This was not just an empty political gesture because (British) India had emerged as Japan's third-largest trading partner by 1912 (behind Britain and the United States), and because Japan had replaced Britain as the largest exporter of cotton cloth to India by 1935–1936.<sup>8</sup> While India was not a part of the Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, it included India's immediate neighbours, Burma/Myanmar and China. Therefore, an important component of Japanese grand strategy during the Second World War was to weaken British rule in India and to diminish British Indian military power and its links with British power in Australia. Consequently, Japan supported Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army and its armed liberation of India from the British.<sup>9</sup> In spite of Japan's initial successes during the war, including the capture of the

<sup>4</sup>P. A. Narasimha Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations—Historical and Political* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing, 1986), pp. 71–106.

<sup>5</sup>Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup>Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Centenary Edition (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 449.

<sup>7</sup>Prasad, *The Origins of Indian Foreign Policy*, pp. 137–138.

<sup>8</sup>Takahiro Sato, "Economic Relations Between India and Japan," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 53, 4 (2012), pp. 458–459.

<sup>9</sup>Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008).

Andaman and Nicobar Islands and their transfer to Bose, it was the British Indian Army that defeated the Japanese in Imphal and Kohima in northeastern India and in Burma.<sup>10</sup>

Japanese aggression notwithstanding, Nehru noted with some delight in 1946 that “though Japan was not liked, there was a feeling of satisfaction at the collapse of old-established European colonial powers before the armed strength of an Asiatic power” during the early stages of the war.<sup>11</sup> In other words, in spite of the Second World War, India’s nationalist elite continued to admire Japan from a pan-Asian perspective as Japan was the first Asian state to modernize economically as well as militarily and stand-up to the Western powers. In a different way, this pan-Asian sentiment was also on display at the International Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo, where Judge Radhabinod Pal, the only Indian justice out of a total of eleven, declared all twenty-five Japanese top leaders charged with Class A war crimes as not guilty.<sup>12</sup> According to Pal, the Tokyo tribunal was trying to write off the imperialism of the Western powers in Asia “through the invocation of ex post facto legal innovations like ‘aggressive warfare’ and the drawing of arbitrary historical timelines to determine what constituted aggression.”<sup>13</sup> While Pal was present in Tokyo in his capacity as an eminent judge (and not as a representative of India), and Nehru distanced India from Pal’s verdict,<sup>14</sup> both Nehru’s “feeling of satisfaction” noted above as well as Pal’s “dissent” demonstrate that unlike most East Asian states, India’s elite harboured no ill will towards Japan at the time of independence.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: Britain’s Asian Empire and the War with Japan* (London: Penguin, 2005).

<sup>11</sup>Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 449. This book was first published in 1946.

<sup>12</sup>Not surprisingly, Pal is revered by many Japanese nationalists. A monument to Pal was erected at the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in 2005. Norimitsu Onishi, “Decades After War Trials, Japan Still Honors a Dissenting Judge,” *New York Times*, August 31, 2007.

<sup>13</sup>Latha Varadarajan, “The Trials of Imperialism: Radhabinod Pal’s Dissent at the Tokyo Tribunal,” *European Journal of International Relations* 21, 4 (2015), p. 806.

<sup>14</sup>See Nehru’s letter to Indian Premiers dated 6 December 1948 in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume 8* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1989), pp. 233–234. This series is hereafter referred to as SWJN.

<sup>15</sup>It should be noted that former Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi was a Class A war criminal suspect but was never charged. Kishi is Prime Minister Abe’s maternal grandfather.

*From Indian Independence Until the Early 1960s*

Nehru's prominent position as India's first Prime Minister and Foreign Minister until his death in 1964 and his relatively benign view of Japan derived from a pan-Asian perspective dominated India's foreign policy towards Japan in these early years. Although India was technically in a state of war with Japan after independence, Nehru "doubted whether Japan could re-emerge as a great military power in the next generation or two" due to the extent of wartime destruction in that country.<sup>16</sup> He was a proponent of an early peace treaty with Japan as it had implications for all of Asia. Less fearful of the resurgence of Japanese military power than leaders in its other neighbours, Nehru believed that Japan should be allowed to rearm itself to a certain degree until the United Nations could come to its aid. However, Japan should not be allowed to rearm to the extent of inciting fears in China or the Soviet Union nor should it be used by the United States as a base to project military power against these states.<sup>17</sup>

Although invited by the United States, India refused to sign the San Francisco Peace Treaty (SFPT) with Japan even as India was involved with the discussion of this treaty with the United States, Britain, and the countries of the Commonwealth. "The continued presence of American troops [in Japan], the American trusteeship over the Ryukyu [Nansei] and Bonin [Ogasawara] islands [instead of restoring them to Japan], and the failure to transfer Formosa [Taiwan] to China and the Kurile islands and South Sakhalin to the Soviet Union were the major objections."<sup>18</sup> In other words, Nehru believed that the treaty did not grant Japan its full sovereignty, and that an Asian peace treaty without the participation of China and the Soviet Union was meaningless. For Nehru, the privileged position that this treaty offered the United States transformed Japan into a virtual American surrogate in foreign affairs, a view that still persists among many in India's strategic elite. In the meanwhile, India chose to remain strategically autonomous by following a policy of non-alignment.

<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Fifth Meeting, January 11, 1950, *SWJN*, 14-1, p. 527.

<sup>17</sup>Record of Talk with the U.S. Ambassador, February 20, 1951, *SWJN*, 15-2, pp. 512-513.

<sup>18</sup>Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography—Volume Two, 1947-1956* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 137.

Therefore, India signed a separate peace treaty with Japan in 1952 that was negotiated on “equal” terms.<sup>19</sup> While this treaty was modelled after the SFPT, it had several distinctive features. First, at the request of the Japanese, India waived all wartime reparations owed by Japan as actual damage done by the Japanese in India was quite minimal. Second, India and Japan granted each other “most favoured nation” status in matters of trade, unlike the SFPT under which Japan was unilaterally made to offer this status to the Allied powers. Many East Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand, feared an economically resurgent Japan, but India did not. In fact, Nehru was deeply impressed with Japan’s rapid industrialization in the three decades before the war and wanted to learn from the Japanese experience. For Nehru, resource-poor Japan’s speedy development by investing in “social capital” had important lessons for India.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Nehru may have believed that an economically resurgent Japan would keep China focused on East Asia, now that India’s suspicions regarding China were out in the open in the aftermath of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950–1951.<sup>21</sup> Notably, Nehru had informed a visiting trade delegation from Japan that “India will, within the limits of our programme of economic and industrial development, assist as much as possible in sending raw materials to Japan.”<sup>22</sup>

Japan’s peace treaty with India was Tokyo’s first significant peace treaty with an Asian state after the signing of the SFPT and heralded Japan’s “return to Asia” in the post-war period.<sup>23</sup> Notably, Japan used the peace treaty with India as a template for its negotiations with Southeast Asian states like Burma and Indonesia.<sup>24</sup> Nehru also invited Japan to the first Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 even as Japan had not been invited to the 1948 London Olympics. Similarly, under Nehru’s leadership, Japan was also invited to the 1955 Bandung Conference. Japan’s presence at

<sup>19</sup>Hiroshi Sato, “India Japan Peace Treaty in Japan’s Post-War Asian Diplomacy,” *Journal of the Japanese Association of South Asian Studies*, 17 (2005).

<sup>20</sup>Nehru’s letter to Indian Premiers, August 15, 1949, *SWJN*, 12, pp. 318, 323.

<sup>21</sup>Manjeet S. Pardesi, “India’s China Policy,” in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *Engaging the World: Indian Foreign Policy since 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 170.

<sup>22</sup>Closer Ties with Japan, May 7, 1948, *SWJN*, 6, p. 481.

<sup>23</sup>Although Japan had signed a treaty with the Republic of China (Taiwan) to seemingly end the state of war with China before signing the treaty with India, the Republic of China had lost the mainland by this time.

<sup>24</sup>Sato, “India Japan Peace Treaty in Japan’s Post-War Asian Diplomacy.”

this (Afro-)Asian forum a year before it became a member of the United Nations is significant because at least some members of Japan's strategic elite wanted to demonstrate to their Asian neighbours that Japan had foreign policy interests independent of the United States, at least in Asia.<sup>25</sup> Simultaneously, India–Japan economic relations also took off. India began exporting raw cotton to Japan in the 1950s,<sup>26</sup> and emerged as the leading supplier of iron ore to Japan in the early 1960s.<sup>27</sup> In 1950, India became the first recipient of Japan's overseas technological transfer project when Japan began to manufacture electric wires in India. By the end of the 1950s, Japan was also supplying developmental loans in yen to India.<sup>28</sup>

### *From the 1960s Until the End of the Cold War*

In spite of this relatively good start, especially because of Nehru's role at the helm of Indian foreign policy, the bipolar structure of the international system and their divergent economic strategies made India and Japan relatively unimportant for each other for the rest of the Cold War. While the alliance with the United States became the central pillar of Japanese Cold War strategy, Nehru was critical of Japan's subordinate position in that relationship. As such, there was a fundamental clash between Japan and India's visions for Asian security. Notably, Nehru had enunciated a "Monroe Doctrine for Asia" on the eve of India's independence that had called for the complete disappearance of all "foreign [Western] armies operating in Asian countries."<sup>29</sup>

However, India's complete dismissal of Japan as America's "surrogate in Asia"<sup>30</sup> was a misreading of the situation. While there is no doubt that Japan has been militarily dependent upon the United States, Japan has

<sup>25</sup>Kristine Dennehy, "Overcoming Colonialism at Bandung, 1955," in Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>26</sup>Indian cotton had played an important role in Japan's industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>27</sup>Sato, "Economic Relations Between India and Japan," p. 460.

<sup>28</sup>Horimoto Takenori, "Synchronizing Japan–India Relations," *Japan Quarterly*, 40 (1993), pp. 36–37.

<sup>29</sup>A Monroe Doctrine for Asia, August 9, 1947, *SWJN*, 3, pp. 133–135.

<sup>30</sup>Satu Limaye, "Japan and India After the Cold War," in Yoichiro Sato and Satu Limaye, eds., *Japan in a Dynamic Asia: Coping with the New Security Challenges* (Lanham: Lexington, 2006), p. 226.

pursued its own interests in Asian affairs independently of the United States (as long as they did not harm American and Japanese security). Notably, Japan chose to remain neutral during the 1962 Sino-Indian War even as the United States provided overt military assistance to New Delhi.<sup>31</sup> While “friendly trade” between Japan and China had begun in 1960, Japan was negotiating the so-called Liao-Takasaki Agreement with China during the 1962 Sino-Indian War that quasi-formalized this trade.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, this happened before the normalization of relations between the United States and China. India’s defeat in 1962 led Japan to believe that India lacked the military power to play an important role in the Asian security order, while New Delhi’s critique of American policy in Vietnam made India a diplomatically disruptive player in Asian affairs as seen from Tokyo.

Following Nehru’s death in 1964, India embraced an autarkic economic system more decisively after having begun under a mixed economy after independence.<sup>33</sup> This dramatically reduced India’s attractiveness for Japan as Tokyo was pursuing an export-oriented strategy of economic development under the so-called Yoshida Doctrine (named after Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida) after being given privileged access to the American market as a result of the US–Japan military alliance. Japan began to shift its economic attention, including its Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) towards Southeast Asia after 1966. Till then, Japan “had regarded India as a part of Southeast Asia.”<sup>34</sup> Not surprisingly, while India was among Japan’s top 10 trading partners before the 1960s, it slipped to “30<sup>th</sup> place or lower” in the subsequent years.<sup>35</sup>

Later, following the American lead, Japan did not take sides during the 1965 India–Pakistan War and suspended its aid to the subcontinental rivals.<sup>36</sup> During the 1971 Bangladesh War, New Delhi and Tokyo found

<sup>31</sup>However, Japan did extend sympathy to India. See P. A. Narasimha Murthy, “India and Japan,” in J. D. B. Miller, ed., *India, Japan, Australia: Partners in Asia?* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968), p. 54. On America’s role in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, see Bruce Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and Sino-Indian War* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2015).

<sup>32</sup>Mayumi Itoh, *Pioneers of Sino-Japanese Relations: Liao and Takasaki* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), especially Chapter 6.

<sup>33</sup>Arvind Panagariya, *India: Emerging Giant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 47–77.

<sup>34</sup>Takenori, “Synchronizing Japan–India Relations,” p. 37.

<sup>35</sup>Sato, “Economic Relations Between India and Japan,” p. 460.

<sup>36</sup>Murthy, *India and Japan*, p. 384.

themselves in rival Cold War camps after India signed a “friendship treaty” with the former Soviet Union, Japan’s principal Cold War adversary. In spite of this, New Delhi failed to note that Japan did not tilt towards Pakistan in 1971 even as the United States had.<sup>37</sup> However, in a sign that demonstrated that the subcontinent was not a strategic priority, Japan closed down its consulate in Dhaka during the 1971 Bangladesh War.<sup>38</sup> While Tokyo was certainly upset with New Delhi for India’s first nuclear test in 1974, it did not perceive India as a hostile or militaristic power in its aftermath. Notably, Japan had not yet ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), even as the US–Japan alliance provided a nuclear umbrella for Japan.<sup>39</sup>

While India had disappeared from Japan’s mental map of “Asia” after the 1960s that ended in Burma/Myanmar, Japan remained economically important for India in the subsequent decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, Japan remained among the top 3 import partners and export destinations for India.<sup>40</sup> Japanese ODA picked up again in the 1980s and began to target infrastructure projects. In fact, Japan became India’s largest aid donor by 1986 even as countries like China and Indonesia received more aid from Japan than India did.<sup>41</sup> The success of the Maruti car in India in the 1980s, a joint collaboration between Japan’s Suzuki and the Indian government, further highlighted Japan’s economic and technological importance for India’s development.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the asymmetric nature of their economic relationship and differences related to their Cold War geopolitical orientations meant that India–Japan bilateral ties remained lukewarm until 1991.

<sup>37</sup>Satu Limaye, “Sushi and Samosas: Indo-Japanese Relations After the Cold War,” in Sandy Gordon and Stephen Henningham, eds., *India Looks East: An Emerging Power and Its Asia-Pacific Neighbors* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1995), 176.

<sup>38</sup>Zillur Khan, “Japanese Relations with India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh,” *Pacific Affairs*, 48, 4 (1975/76), p. 550.

<sup>39</sup>Japan had also noted that all other nuclear powers had conducted nuclear tests in 1974. Frank Langdon, “Japanese Reactions to India’s Nuclear Explosion,” *Pacific Affairs*, 48, 2 (1975).

<sup>40</sup>Sato, “Economic Relations Between India and Japan,” pp. 460–462.

<sup>41</sup>H. D. P. Envall, “Japan’s India Engagement,” in Ian Hall, ed., *The Engagement of India: Strategies and Responses* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), p. 42.

<sup>42</sup>Raja Venkataramani, *Japan Enters Indian Industry: The Maruti-Suzuki Joint Venture* (New Delhi: Radiant, 1990).

## (GRADUAL) REDISCOVERY AFTER THE COLD WAR

Around the time of the end of the Cold War, factors at all three levels of analysis realigned to slowly but surely bring about a transformation in India–Japan relations. At the systemic level, the implosion of the former Soviet Union meant that Japan’s principal Cold War rival and India’s Cold War patron (from the 1970s) had disappeared. At the domestic level, India began the process of embracing the market from the mid-1980s—especially after 1991—thus paving the path for closer economic cooperation. India’s most important decision-makers at that time—Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh—were in favour of closer economic and political relations with Japan. Japan has gradually discovered India’s potential since the end of the Cold War, and their relationship in this period has been shaped by the following four factors: economics, the nuclear issue, the rise of China, and the salience of the United States for the India–Japan relationship.

*Economics*

The end of the Cold War coincided with a major balance-of-payments crisis for New Delhi. India managed to avoid default only after seeking economic assistance from abroad and by initiating market-driven reforms in the industrial and financial sectors. Japan was one of India’s principal partners during this difficult period. Finance Minister Singh visited Japan seeking economic assistance in April 1991. In the following week, the Japan-led Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided New Delhi with emergency assistance of \$1.5 billion.<sup>43</sup> India also sent its gold reserves to the United Kingdom as collateral to receive financing from Britain (\$210 million) and from Japan (\$195 million).<sup>44</sup> Given Japan’s economic importance to India in the 1970s and 1980s discussed above and because of Japan’s assistance during this economic crisis, Rao visited Japan in June 1992 to explain India’s economic reforms and the opportunities that they presented for closer relations between New Delhi and Tokyo.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup>India also received structural readjustment loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, organizations where Japan plays an important role.

<sup>44</sup>Sato, “Economic Relations Between India and Japan,” p. 462.

<sup>45</sup>Isabelle Saint-Mézard, *Eastward Bound: India’s New Positioning in Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), p. 43.



Simultaneously, Rao also launched India's "Look East" policy as New Delhi wanted to engage this dynamic region to India's east where Japan had played an important role in promoting economic development during the Cold War.

However, Japan was not yet convinced of India's economic promise and potential.<sup>46</sup> The Japanese overtures to India at this time were political rather economic. Japan had emerged as the second-largest economy in the world in the 1970s and it provided assistance to India, a developing country, as Tokyo was seeking a role for itself as a "great economic power" in the post-Cold War world. Even as late as 2002, when the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi floated the idea of an "economic community" in East Asia, he did not include India as one of its core members (although Australia and New Zealand were included along with Japan, China, South Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations).<sup>47</sup> In the meanwhile, India continued to remain a major recipient of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA). However, even greater ODA to India before 2003 was a result of Japan's view of itself as a "great economic power" and not necessarily because of Japan's perception of India's economic potential. It was the publication of the Goldman Sachs report on the economic potential of the BRICs countries—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—in 2003 that led Japanese politicians and businesses to favourably reassess India's economic prospects.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, India began to consistently clock in high growth rates (at approximately 6% p.a.) and emerged as one of the fastest growing major economies.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, India has become the largest recipient of Japanese ODA since 2003. More importantly, Japanese ODA to India has since acquired a strategic dimension in addition to the humanitarian goal of helping a developing country because Japan now "believes that the steady development of India is the key to maintaining

<sup>46</sup>See Chapter 6 in Victoria Tuke, *Japan's Foreign Policy Towards India: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of the Policymaking Process* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Warwick, 2011).

<sup>47</sup>Speech by Prime Minister of Japan Junichiro Koizumi, Japan and ASEAN in East Asia—A Sincere and Open Partnership, Singapore, January 14, 2002, [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/koizumispeech/2002/01/14speech\\_e.html](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/koizumispeech/2002/01/14speech_e.html) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>48</sup>Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman, "Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050," Global Economics Paper No. 99, Goldman Sachs, 2003.

<sup>49</sup>See Chapter 5 in Panagariya, *India*.

stability in Asia.”<sup>50</sup> The development of economic infrastructure, especially in the power and transportation sectors, as well as agriculture are now among the major focus areas for Japanese ODA to India.<sup>51</sup>

While India–Japan trade has also grown over the past decade or so, Japan and India are not significant trading partners. Valued at \$15.5 billion in 2014–2015 (financial year), India–Japan trade represents approximately 2% of India’s total trade.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, only 1.2% of Japanese exports are destined for India while India’s share of Japan’s total imports is 0.9%.<sup>53</sup> In terms of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), India received around \$1.8 billion in 2014, while Japan received merely \$18 million in FDI from India in 2013.<sup>54</sup> This is in spite of the fact that Japan and India entered into a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2011. However, the success of the Japan-funded Delhi Metro Project demonstrates that Japan possesses the capital and technology to help modernize India’s creaky infrastructure. In December 2015, India agreed to purchase a high-speed bullet train (for the Ahmedabad–Mumbai route) from Japan worth approximately \$15 billion through concessional loans.<sup>55</sup> Japan is also supporting Modi’s “Make in India” initiative through a \$12 billion fund.<sup>56</sup> Japan’s other projects—the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor, the Chennai–Bangalore Industrial Corridor, and the Chennai and

<sup>50</sup>Outline of Japan’s ODA to India, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, n.d., [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0504/oda\\_i.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0504/oda_i.pdf) (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>51</sup>For recent figures, see “India,” Japan’s ODA Data by Country, March 31, 2015, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/data/> (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>52</sup>Total Trade, Top Countries (2014–2015), Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, <http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/default.asp> (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>53</sup>2014, Japan’s International Trade in Goods (Yearly), Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics, n.d., <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/statistics/> (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>54</sup>Japan’s Outward and Inward Foreign Direct Investment, Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics, n.d., <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/statistics/> (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>55</sup>“Japan, India Agree on Rail, Nuclear Deal,” *The Japan Times*, December 12, 2015.

<sup>56</sup>Dipanjani Chaudhury, “Japan’s \$12 billion ‘Make in India’ Fund to Push Investments,” *The Economic Times*, December 13, 2015.

Ahmedabad Metro Projects—will have a potentially transformative impact upon India.<sup>57</sup> Importantly, this is also a part of Japan’s “Partnership for Quality Infrastructure Initiative” through which Japan seeks to boost its own economy, promote regional economic integration, and provide leadership in Asia.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, it is not surprising that former Prime Minister Singh had observed that while “India needs Japanese technology and investment,” India also offers opportunities “for the growth and globalization of Japanese companies for the overall prosperity and growth of Japan.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, Japan has been looking at investment opportunities in India ever since the 2005 anti-Japanese demonstrations in China to (relatively) reduce its dependence upon its East Asian rival.<sup>60</sup> By 2007, Japanese businesses decided to “embrace a new ‘China plus one’ strategy to diversify risk across Asia, with India as the primary focus (followed by Vietnam and Indonesia).”<sup>61</sup> Importantly, Japan concluded an important pact on rare earth metals with India after China imposed export quotas on these metals during the 2012 Sino-Japanese crisis.<sup>62</sup> The opportunities offered by India to Japanese companies can potentially help stimulate the Japanese economy that has witnessed more than two decades of weak growth.

While Japan’s recent commitment to India is significant for both India and Japan, there are important limitations for the time being. First, India is not linked to transnational production networks with its

<sup>57</sup>“Japan to Provide Rs 5536 Crore Loan for Metro Projects in Chennai and Ahmedabad,” *The Economic Times*, November 27, 2015.

<sup>58</sup>Announcement of “Partnership for Quality Infrastructure: Investment for Asia’s Future,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, May 21, 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page18\\_000076.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page18_000076.html) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>59</sup>Prime Minister Singh’s address to Japan–India Association, Prime Minister’s Office, May 28, 2013, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=96257> (accessed January 12, 2016).

<sup>60</sup>John Garver, *China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People’s Republic of China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 716–720.

<sup>61</sup>Michael J. Green, “Japan, India, and the Strategic Triangle with China,” in Ashley Tellis, Travis Tanner, and Jessica Keough, eds., *Asia Responds to Its Rising Powers, China and India* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), p. 139.

<sup>62</sup>“Japan Signs Pact to Import Rare Earths from India,” *Times of India*, November 16, 2012.

East Asian neighbours that have promoted economic integration in that region.<sup>63</sup> Second, as discussed in the next section, India's poor physical connectivity—land and maritime—with Southeast Asia creates barriers to economic integration across South and Southeast Asia. Third, India has no comprehensive economic agreement with Myanmar—the only Southeast Asian country with which India shares a land border—to reduce tariff and non-tariff trade barriers. This is not insignificant because even as Japan is looking towards India economically, Southeast Asia is the other major economic frontier that Japan is eyeing to stimulate its own economy. Consequently, while Japanese investments in China and Southeast Asia are ultimately set up for export to the developed world (and beyond), “Japan’s investment in India ... is aimed at the Indian market.”<sup>64</sup> Although it is not clear what this difference means in the long haul, investments in India are unlikely to provide the (short-term) returns to Japanese companies that they reaped in China. Furthermore, a loss of momentum of the Indian economy may result in the loss of Japanese interest.<sup>65</sup>

### *The Nuclear Issue*

As the only victim of atomic warfare, Japan is extremely sensitive on the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons. During Rao’s 1992 visit to Tokyo, India had agreed to start an informal bilateral dialogue with Japan on the nuclear issue—India’s only such dialogue then with a country other than the United States—to demonstrate India’s sincerity in building a comprehensive relationship with Japan.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, Japan’s other interest in seeking such a dialogue with India at that time was the result of its quest to play an important role—commensurate with its status as the world’s second-largest economy—as Japan wanted to demonstrate global leadership on this issue independently of the United States. Throughout the early 1990s, India was under tremendous

<sup>63</sup>Jeongmeen Suh and Jong Duk Kim, “Joining Pre-existing International Production Networks: Implications for India’s Economic Integration with East Asia,” *Asian Economic Papers* 13, 2 (2014), pp. 117–142.

<sup>64</sup>Green, “Japan, India, and the Strategic Triangle with China,” p. 150.

<sup>65</sup>Japanese investors also worry about ethno-religious violence in India and about India–Pakistan relations.

<sup>66</sup>Saint-Mézard, *Eastward Bound*, p. 43.

pressure from Japan, especially during the 1995 NPT Review Conference and in 1996 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In 1997, Japan became the first country in the world to ratify the CTBT.

Therefore, India's May 1998 nuclear tests came as a rude shock to Japan. Not only did Japan temporarily recall its ambassador from New Delhi (officially, for consultations) but Japan also took the lead in pressurizing India at multilateral fora, including at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) where Japan was then a non-permanent member. Furthermore, Japan implemented major economic sanctions on India, including the suspension of Japanese ODA to India, even as Japan was India's largest aid giver. Japan also lobbied other major powers to impose harsher sanctions on India and even proposed an international effort to be led by Japan to help resolve the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir (although the internationalization of the Kashmir issue was and remains anathema to New Delhi). In addition to domestic political considerations, Japan's hard-handed response to India's nuclear tests was also a result of Japanese efforts to bolster its claims to a permanent seat on the UNSC.<sup>67</sup> Most significantly, Tokyo's response demonstrated that Japan did not view India as a major power in Asia in the late 1990s, and certainly not in terms of a partner that could help Japan balance Chinese power in the region.

On their part, India's leaders were disappointed with Japan's condemnation. It was not lost on New Delhi that Japan's response to India's 1998 nuclear tests was especially severe when compared with Japan's response to Chinese or French nuclear tests in 1995-1996. India also noted that Japan was condemning India "while conveniently ignoring ... the US nuclear umbrella" that guaranteed Japanese security, and that Japan was silent on the nuclear "disarmament obligations" of the United States, Britain, Russia, France, and China as required by the NPT.<sup>68</sup> However, following the American lead, Japan discontinued all nuclear sanctions on India in October 2001 in the

<sup>67</sup>Satu Limaye, "Tokyo's Dynamic Diplomacy: Japan and the Subcontinent's Nuclear Tests," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 22, 2 (2000).

<sup>68</sup>S. Jaishankar, "India-Japan Relations After Pokhran II," *India Seminar*, 487 (March 2000). Jaishankar was then the Deputy Chief at the Indian Embassy in Japan, and is the current Foreign Secretary of India.

immediate aftermath of 9/11.<sup>69</sup> Not surprisingly, this reinforced the view in some quarters in New Delhi that Tokyo was not an independent actor in foreign affairs as it took its cues from Washington.

However, issues not directly related to the nuclear factor also help explain the cessation of Japanese sanctions on India. In the aftermath of 9/11, Japan began to appreciate the strategic significance of India's geographic location at the centre of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).<sup>70</sup> As Japanese warships entered the IOR (for the first time after 1945) to support American operations in Afghanistan, they began "quietly refuelling and resupplying at Indian ports."<sup>71</sup> The US–India Civil Nuclear deal that was negotiated between 2005 and 2008 was the most important symbol of America's strategic reassessment of India, and also led Japan to rethink India more seriously. While there was bureaucratic resistance in Japan—both within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from political leaders in Hiroshima and Nagasaki—Tokyo signed the 2008 waiver of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that paved the way for civil nuclear cooperation between the United States and India.<sup>72</sup>

In the meanwhile, changes in Japanese domestic politics raised important questions for Japan's nuclear policy towards India. In 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power after dislodging the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that had dominated Japan for most of its post-war history. However, it soon became clear that in spite of its rhetoric during the elections, DPJ's foreign policy towards India was going to be in sync with the LDP's, thereby demonstrating a growing bipartisan consensus in Tokyo towards closer relations with New Delhi. Notably, it was under the leadership of a DPJ government in Tokyo that India and Japan launched their first formal round of negotiations on a bilateral civil nuclear deal.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup>Japan–India Joint Declaration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 10, 2001, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/joint0112.html> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>70</sup>The Indian navy had recovered a Japanese vessel, *M/V Alondra Rainbow*, which was hijacked by pirates in the Strait of Malacca in 1999.

<sup>71</sup>Garver, *China's Quest*, p. 752.

<sup>72</sup>Tuke, *Japan's Foreign Policy Towards India*, pp. 311–319.

<sup>73</sup>Negotiations on a Japan–India Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, June 25, 2010, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2010/6/0625\\_01.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2010/6/0625_01.html) (accessed January 13, 2016).

After significant domestic political opposition in Japan, especially in the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis), India and Japan signed the civil nuclear deal in late 2016,<sup>74</sup> and it was approved by Japan's parliament in 2017.<sup>75</sup> It is well understood that India–Japan civil nuclear cooperation might be suspended if India were to conduct a nuclear test. Nevertheless, in light of India's growing energy needs for its rapidly expanding economy and in its bid to curb carbon emissions, this is a significant deal for New Delhi. Furthermore, it enhances strategic trust between India and Japan. The participation of Japanese reactor suppliers in India will also provide a boost to the Japanese economy. Finally, given that American reactor suppliers are partially controlled by Japanese firms—Westinghouse Electric is partially owned by Toshiba while General Electric has a joint venture with Hitachi—the Japan–India civil nuclear deal will also give a boost to the US–India civil nuclear deal. However, Japan will also need to overcome the reluctance of the local politicians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as in some quarters in Japanese public opinion which remain against this deal for the time being.<sup>76</sup>

### *The Rise of China and the Role of the United States*

The most dramatic change in the India–Japan relationship is happening at the systemic level. India has been conscious of the strategic significance of its relationship with Japan ever since the launch of its economic reforms and its “Look East” policy after the end of the Cold War as noted above. However, Japan has come to appreciate the strategic significance of India only over the past decade or so. Both India and Japan now recognize that their bilateral relationship will contribute to the emerging balance of power in Asia. After noting the significance of Japan's rise for Asia's resurgence in world history and its impact on

<sup>74</sup>Sugam Pokharel, “India and Japan Sign Civil Nuclear Deal,” *CNN*, November 11, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/11/world/india-japan-nuclear-deal/index.html> (accessed June 18, 2017).

<sup>75</sup>“Japan–India Nuclear Pact Clears Lower House Despite Opposition Concerns,” *The Japan Times*, May 16, 2017; Pallavi Aiyar, “The Arc to Tokyo,” *The Hindu*, June 10, 2017.

<sup>76</sup>“Editorial: Japan–India Nuclear Cooperation a Slap in the Face of NPT,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, December 14, 2015.

Nehru, as well as Japan’s “generosity” in the early 1990s, former Prime Minister Singh asserted in his speech to the Japanese Diet in 2006 that “India and Japan must play their rightful and commensurate role in the emerging international order.”<sup>77</sup> According to Singh, India–Japan ties “contribute to a more *balanced* regional architecture.”<sup>78</sup> These sentiments have been reciprocated by Japan. In his 2007 address to the Indian Parliament, Abe noted that Japan had “rediscovered” India in the “broader Asia” that was taking shape “at the confluence of ... the Indian and Pacific Oceans.”<sup>79</sup> More significantly, Japan’s first National Security Strategy, released in 2013, recognized India along with China as the “primary drivers” of change in the international “balance of power.”<sup>80</sup>

There are two main factors at the systemic level promoting India–Japan relations: the rise of China and the role of the United States in Japan’s and India’s foreign policies. Neither Japan nor India desires a China-led Asian security order. Both India and Japan are involved in long-running rivalries over territory and status with China.<sup>81</sup> However, China replaced Japan as the world’s second-largest economy in 2010. By 2014, the Chinese economy was more than twice the size of the Japanese economy.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, China is still expected to grow

<sup>77</sup>PM’s Address to Joint Session of the Diet, Prime Minister’s Office, December 14, 2006, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/ereelcontent.aspx?relid=23318> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>78</sup>Prime Minister Singh’s address to Japan–India Association. *Emphasis added*. While Manmohan Singh’s second term is often seen as a ‘failure’, it should be noted that the India–Japan civil nuclear dialogue began during his second term. Japan also began to truly appreciate India’s strategic importance during these years.

<sup>79</sup>“Confluence of the Two Seas,” Speech by H. E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India, August 22, 2007, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>80</sup>National Security Strategy (Provisional Translation), December 17, 2013, <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryoku/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>81</sup>John Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); June Teufel Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom and Empire of the Rising Sun: Sino-Japanese Relations, Past and Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>82</sup>China’s GDP was \$10.35 trillion while Japan’s was \$4.6 trillion at current market prices in 2014. Gross Domestic Product 2014, World Development Indicators Database, World Bank, December 29, 2015, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf> (accessed January 13, 2016).



rapidly, albeit slower than in the past and, therefore, the gap with Japan is likely to increase. While the Chinese economy was almost five times the size of the Indian economy in 2014,<sup>83</sup> India is expected to narrow this gap somewhat over the next decade as it emerges as the world's fastest-growing large economy.<sup>84</sup> In fact, India is expected to displace Japan as the world's third-largest economy over the next decade (behind China and the United States in that order) with Japan at number four. However, even as late as 2030, the Chinese economy is expected to be twice the size of Japan and India combined.<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, while Japan and India had equivalent military expenditures in 2014 (with India already spending slightly more than Japan because Japan has an informal cap at 1% of its GDP on its military spending), China spent more than twice the amount spent by Japan and India combined.<sup>86</sup> Although it is difficult to predict future defence spending, according to a study conducted by the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom, China will outspend Japan and India combined till at least 2045.<sup>87</sup> In other words, Japan and India need to cooperate in order to maintain an equitable balance of power in Asia. More importantly, both of these countries will need to work with the United States given their power asymmetry with China for the foreseeable future. While the alliance with the United States remains the pillar of Japan's emerging strategy as it transforms into a "normal" great power, Tokyo is trying to create a

<sup>83</sup>India's GDP was \$2.05 trillion in 2014 at current market prices.

<sup>84</sup>Luis Enriquez, Sven Smit, and Jonathan Ablett, "Shifting Tides: Global Economic Scenarios for 2015–2025," McKinsey, September 2015, [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/shifting\\_tides\\_global\\_economic\\_scenarios\\_for\\_2015\\_25?cid=other-empl-nsl-mip-mck-oth-1509](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/shifting_tides_global_economic_scenarios_for_2015_25?cid=other-empl-nsl-mip-mck-oth-1509) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>85</sup>The World in 2050: Will the Shift in Global Economic Power Continue, PricewaterhouseCoopers, February 2015, p. 40, <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/the-economy/assets/world-in-2050-february-2015.pdf> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>86</sup>China spent \$216.4 billion in 2014 while Japan and India spent \$45.8 billion and \$49.97 billion, respectively (in current US\$). SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, [http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex\\_database](http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>87</sup>Strategic Trends Programme, Global Strategic Trends—Out to 2045, Ministry of Defence, n.d., p. 94. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/348164/20140821\\_DCDC\\_GST\\_5\\_Web\\_Secured.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348164/20140821_DCDC_GST_5_Web_Secured.pdf) (accessed January 13, 2016).

more *equal* alliance with the United States.<sup>88</sup> India has also realized the importance of a close relationship with the United States to ensure stability in Asia (given the growing congruence in their strategic interests).<sup>89</sup>

Indeed, India has recently emerged as the second-largest buyer of America's defence equipment.<sup>90</sup> India and the United States now conduct more conventional military exercises with each other than either of them conducts with any other country.<sup>91</sup> In fact, the Pentagon sees a "convergence" between India's "Act East" policy and the US "rebalance" to Asia, while "seeking to reinforce India's maritime capabilities as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region and beyond."<sup>92</sup> India's growing partnership with the United States has helped India build closer ties with Japan. Tokyo is extremely concerned about Beijing's growing maritime assertiveness in the South China Sea and the security of Japan's energy supplies from the Middle East that pass through this body of water after passing through the Indian Ocean.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Michael Green and Zack Cooper, eds., *Strategic Japan: New Approaches to Foreign Policy and the U.S.–Japan Alliance* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2015).

<sup>89</sup>U.S.–India Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region, The White House, January 25, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/25/us-india-joint-strategic-vision-asia-pacific-and-indian-ocean-region> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>90</sup>Natalie Pearson and NC Bipindra, "India Surges to Second-Biggest U.S. Weapons Buyer," *Bloomberg*, September 28, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-27/india-surges-to-second-biggest-u-s-weapons-buyer-as-china-rises> (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>91</sup>"Report to the Congress on U.S.–India Security Cooperation," U.S. Department of Defense, November 3, 2011, [http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/20111101\\_NDAA\\_Report\\_on\\_US\\_India\\_Security\\_Cooperation.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/20111101_NDAA_Report_on_US_India_Security_Cooperation.pdf) (accessed January 13, 2016); Richard L. Armitage, R. Nicholas Burns, and Richard Fontaine, "Natural Allies: A Blueprint for the Future of U.S.–India Relations," Center for a New American Security, October 5, 2010, [http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS\\_Natural%20Allies\\_ArmitageBurnsFontaine.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_Natural%20Allies_ArmitageBurnsFontaine.pdf) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>92</sup>Asia–Pacific Maritime Security Strategy, US Department of Defense, 2015, p. 28, [http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>93</sup>84% of Japan's crude oil comes from the Middle East. See Japan, US Energy Information Administration, January 30, 2015. <https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=JPN> (accessed January 13, 2016).

At the same time, India is also worried that China's construction of artificial islands and the building of military bases there will accelerate China's arrival in the Indian Ocean on a more continuous basis sooner rather than later.

It is in this context that Japan and India are fostering a close maritime partnership along with the United States.<sup>94</sup> These three countries had first demonstrated their ability to cooperate (along with Australia) in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami by rapidly creating a "core" group to provide relief operations to all the countries that were hit. Since then, India and Japan have conducted trilateral/multilateral naval exercises with the United States (and other regional partners) as well as bilaterally in the waters around the Indian peninsula as well as the Japanese archipelago.<sup>95</sup> In a significant move, Japan will now be a regular participant in the India–US Malabar Exercises.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, they have also created the institutional mechanisms for high-level strategic cooperation. In 2010, Japan and India had their first 2+2 dialogue involving the top bureaucrats from the Ministries of External Affairs and Defence from India and the vice-ministers from Japanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense.<sup>97</sup> More significantly, India, Japan, and the United States initiated a trilateral dialogue involving their foreign ministers in 2015.<sup>98</sup> India and Japan are also working with other like-minded countries in the region and held their first trilateral at the foreign secretary/vice-foreign minister level with Australia in 2015.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup>Piracy along the east coast of Africa and in the Strait of Malacca is another shared concern of these states.

<sup>95</sup>Tomoko Kiyota, "Looming Over the Horizon: Japan's Naval Engagement with India," in Anit Mukherjee and C. Raja Mohan, eds., *India's Naval Strategy and Asian Security* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>96</sup>Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 12, 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/s\\_sa/sw/in/page3e\\_000432.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/in/page3e_000432.html) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>97</sup>Japan was the first country with which India initiated such a dialogue. Notably, India does not have such a dialogue even with the United States.

<sup>98</sup>Inaugural U.S.–India–Japan Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 30, 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/s\\_sa/sw/page4e\\_000325.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/page4e_000325.html) (accessed January 13, 2016).

<sup>99</sup>Suhasini Haidar, "India–Japan–Australia Forum Not Anti-China: Peter Verghese," *The Hindu*, June 9, 2015.

China is clearly wary of closer relations between India and Japan.<sup>100</sup> While it seems likely that the Japan–India relationship will continue to intensify (along with their relationship with the United States), this does not herald the emergence of an alliance. India’s primary military concern with China remains along their disputed Himalayan land border. However, the primary Japanese military concern vis-à-vis China is maritime in nature. India is unlikely to be able to play an overt military role in the defence of Japan in East Asia for the foreseeable future just as Japan is unlikely to come to the military defence of India were hostilities to break out in the Himalayas. The India–Japan relationship is a politico-strategic relationship as opposed to a military-operational one. Both sides feel comfortable with the growing military and economic power of the other—and in their own way are trying to help the other side build up its military and economic power—in the face of a rising China.

Furthermore, India’s tradition of strategic autonomy means that it is unlikely to forge an alliance aimed at China. India hopes to build up its own military and economic power through its growing relationships with Japan and the United States in a bid to emerge as a major power in its own right.<sup>101</sup> Japan seems comfortable with India playing such a role for two important reasons. First, Japan welcomes the rise of Indian power in Asia given that America’s global commitments may lead to a retrenchment of American power from Asia (in response to crises elsewhere in the short- to medium-term, and perhaps even in an absolute sense in the long run). Second, both Japan and India are worried about the possibility of a US–China “G2” to manage Asian strategic affairs at the expense of their interests. India was concerned about this possibility in the aftermath of its May 1998 nuclear tests when the United States and China issued a statement hoping to “jointly and individually” work towards peace in South Asia.<sup>102</sup> For Japan, a US–China condominium and the “abandonment”

<sup>100</sup>Elizabeth Roche, “China Signals Concerns Over India Being Courted by Japan and South Korea,” *Live Mint*, January 12, 2014.

<sup>101</sup>Former Prime Minister Singh listed these two countries along with Germany that had the capital and technology to “transform” India. See Indrani Bagchi, “India Should Bond with Japan and Stop Looking Over Its Shoulder at China,” *The Economic Times*, May 27, 2013.

<sup>102</sup>U.S.–China Joint Statement on South Asia, June 27, 1998, <http://fas.org/news/china/1998/sasia.htm> (accessed January 13, 2016).

of Japan is the worst of all strategic scenarios.<sup>103</sup> Notably, the United States had begun the process of normalizing relations with China in 1971 without informing Japan, its most important ally in post-war Asia.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, by forging a strong partnership with each other, India and Japan are also signalling to the United States and China that no regional order in Asia will be viable without their active participation.

## AVENUES FOR COOPERATION AND LIMITATIONS

### *India–Southeast Asia Connectivity*

Given the dramatic realignment of their relations over the past decade or so, India–Japan synergy can contribute to strategic stability in Asia. Promoting India–Southeast Asia connectivity is in the interests of both New Delhi and Tokyo. For India, such connectivity will enhance its economic engagement with East Asia, while Japanese firms can potentially reap the economic benefits by participating in this endeavour given their financial prowess as well as technological and managerial expertise. This logic of economic engagement clearly has a strategic rationale as it makes India a more credible East Asian player while providing a boost to the Japanese economy. Indeed, the synergy between India’s “Act East” policy and Japan’s “Partnership for Quality Infrastructure” has already been noted in the Japan–India Vision 2025 statement.<sup>105</sup> Japan and India also launched a bilateral dialogue on ASEAN affairs in 2014.<sup>106</sup>

In this context, the recent opening of Myanmar—the so-called land bridge between South and Southeast Asia—has the potential to transform Asia.<sup>107</sup> There are two important physical connectivity routes between India and Southeast Asia (via Myanmar). The first is an overland

<sup>103</sup>Kuniko Ashizawa, “‘Keeping the United States In’: Japan and Regional Order in East Asia,” in Elena Atanassaova-Cornelis and Frans-Paul van der Putten, eds., *Changing Security Dynamics in East Asia: A Post-US Regional Order in the Making?* (New York: Palgrave, 2014).

<sup>104</sup>Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia–Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 67.

<sup>105</sup>See footnote 93.

<sup>106</sup>Japan–India Joint Statement: Intensifying the Strategic and Global Partnership, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, January 25, 2014, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000025064.pdf> (accessed January 14, 2016).

<sup>107</sup>“Geopolitical Consequences—Rite of Passage,” *The Economist*, May 25, 2013.

route, the trilateral highway connecting northeastern India (Moreh) with Myanmar (Tamu, Mandalay and Myawaddy) and Thailand (Maesot), on which trial runs began in December 2015.<sup>108</sup> The second is a seaborne route, connecting Chennai in southern India with Dawei in Myanmar, which then connects Dawei to Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City) via Cambodia (Phnom Penh) and Thailand (Bangkok) on land.<sup>109</sup> Although there are significant overlaps between these projects and the various Japanese initiatives in the Mekong region that seek to tap into the economic dynamism of Southeast Asia,<sup>110</sup> there are important limitations.

To begin with, while the overland trilateral highway will boost the economies of India's northeastern states, it is unlikely to serve as an economic corridor in the medium term given that northeastern India remains undeveloped and poorly connected with the rest of the country. While the seaborne route through Dawei has more potential, there are considerable hurdles that need to be first overcome. Japan's own investments in Myanmar are focused on the Thilwa Special Economic Zone near Yangon as opposed to Dawei which lacks physical infrastructure as well as skilled labour to emerge as an important industrial hub. While Chennai in India is an important industrial centre (where the port is being upgraded with Japanese assistance), India needs to upgrade its economic engagement with Myanmar (and other Southeast Asian countries) to effectively participate in Japanese and other East Asian industrial production networks.<sup>111</sup> In other words, the task at hand is not only the building up of physical infrastructure but also the political upgradation of India's commercial agreements with Southeast Asia.

<sup>108</sup>“Trial Run for India–Myanmar–Thailand Highway Likely from December,” *The Economic Times*, November 1, 2015.

<sup>109</sup>Nishimura Hidetoshi, “Connectivity Between ASEAN and India and the Significance of the Dawei Development Project,” Research Institute of Economy, Trade & Industry, IAA, November 2013, [http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/special/p\\_a\\_w/036.html](http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/special/p_a_w/036.html) (accessed January 14, 2016).

<sup>110</sup>New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong Japan Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, July 4, 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/s\\_sa/seal/page1e\\_000044.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/seal/page1e_000044.html) (accessed January 14, 2016).

<sup>111</sup>Fukunari Kimura and So Umezaki, eds., *ASEAN-India Connectivity: The Comprehensive Asia Development Plan, Phase II*, ERIA Research Project Report, December 2011, [http://www.eria.org/publications/research\\_project\\_reports/asean—india-connectivity-the-comprehensive-asia-development-plan-phase-ii.html](http://www.eria.org/publications/research_project_reports/asean—india-connectivity-the-comprehensive-asia-development-plan-phase-ii.html) (accessed January 14, 2016).

### *International Institutions*

In addition to ASEAN-India connectivity, cooperation in regional multi-lateral institutions is another important avenue for cooperation between India and Japan. Japan has been pushing for India's inclusion in Asia's institutional architecture to partially dilute China's growing influence. Notably, it was Japanese diplomacy (along with backing from Singapore and Indonesia) that led to India's inclusion as a founder member of the East Asia Summit in 2005.<sup>112</sup> More recently, Japan has officially supported India's membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.<sup>113</sup> However, India-Japan cooperation in regional institutional fora remains limited for economic as well as geopolitical reasons.

First, India lacks a strong domestic consensus on promoting free trade with Asia and the rest of the world. In fact, many Asian states view India as a "spoiler" in global trade negotiations given India's posture in the Doha Round. Many ASEAN states are also frustrated with India for slowing the talks on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Furthermore, India is not a member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the world's largest free trade agreement, though Japan is, while the United States has withdrawn.<sup>114</sup> Given the domestic lack of consensus on free trade and the fact that India is in a relatively early stage of its economic development, it is unlikely to join the TPP (or any high-quality free trade agreement) in the near future.

Second, India is a founder member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) even as the United States and Japan have chosen not to join (at least for the time being). India is approaching international institutions—old and new—with the aim of enhancing its decision-making role and status.<sup>115</sup> Notably, India is set to have the second-largest voting share at the AIIB (behind China).<sup>116</sup> In part, Japanese reticence

<sup>112</sup>Mohan Malik, "The East Asian Summit," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60, 2 (2006), pp. 207–211.

<sup>113</sup>See footnote 93.

<sup>114</sup>The future of the TPP remains uncertain. While the newly elected US President Donald Trump has withdrawn the United States from the TPP, it is possible that it has gone ahead without American participation for the time being.

<sup>115</sup>Amrita Narlikar, "New Powers in the Club: The Challenges of Global Trade Governance," *International Affairs*, 86, 3 (2010).

<sup>116</sup>Rajesh Roy, "India to Have Second-Largest Shareholding in China-Led Bank," *Wall Street Journal*, June 4, 2015.

at joining the AIIB stems from the fact that it was set up at China's initiative and that Beijing is likely to play a dominant role in that institution. However, it also demonstrates Japan and India's different visions of multipolarity. Japan is more comfortable playing the role of a major power in Asia under America's overall leadership while India desires an independent role for itself in the emerging multipolar order even as it values its growing relationship with the United States.

### *Other Issue Areas*

In addition to Southeast Asia and international institutions, Afghanistan's reconstruction is another area of potential cooperation between India and Japan. Both Japan and India are major aid donors in Afghanistan.<sup>117</sup> However, they have not been involved in any joint reconstruction or humanitarian projects in Afghanistan so far. This is largely due to the fact that while Japan has been willing to work with other partner countries in Afghanistan, India's approach to reconstruction projects in Afghanistan has thus far been bilateral.<sup>118</sup> However, it may be worthwhile exploring the possibility of enhancing physical connectivity between Afghanistan and India via Iran and the Arabian Sea as the relations between the United States and Iran thaw. Indeed, India has expressed an interest in working with Japan for the development of Iran's Chabahar port to boost connectivity with Afghanistan and Central Asia.<sup>119</sup>

The Pakistan–North Korea proliferation axis is another important issue that has been on their bilateral agenda for some time now.<sup>120</sup> The two sides have also been holding policy consultations and dialogues on Africa. In this context, India and Japan need to explore potential synergies in peacekeeping operations. India and Japan's contribution to

<sup>117</sup>Japan is the second-largest donor while India is the fifth-largest bilateral donor.

<sup>118</sup>Kuniko Ashizawa, "Japanese Assistance in Afghanistan: Helping the United States, Acting Globally, and Making a Friend," *Asia Policy*, 17 (2014); Sandra Destradi, "India: A Reluctant Partner for Afghanistan," *The Washington Quarterly*, 37, 2 (2014).

<sup>119</sup>Sachin Parashar, "Japan may Partner with India to Develop Iran's Chabahar Port," *Times of India*, May 15, 2016.

<sup>120</sup>"Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi's Visit to Sri Lanka and India (Summary and Evaluation)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, January 2003, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/fmv0301/summary.html> (accessed January 14, 2016).



such operations led by the United Nations is a part of their strategy for UNSC reforms.<sup>121</sup> India and Japan are also cooperating with Brazil and Germany as these “G4” states endeavour to become permanent members of a reformed UNSC.

Amidst all of these areas of potential cooperation, the two sides have different views on Arunachal Pradesh and Southern Kurils, both disputed territories (even as there are no territorial disputes between Japan and India). In 2009, when China tried to block an ADB loan for India meant for Arunachal Pradesh (claimed more or less in its entirety by China), Beijing won a diplomatic coup by successfully passing a “disclosure agreement” that prevented the ADB from formally acknowledging that Arunachal Pradesh was a part of India. Importantly, Japan voted along with China on this issue even as the United States sided with India.<sup>122</sup> While Japan’s official stand is that “Arunachal Pradesh state is basically in reality controlled by India and that China and India are continuing negotiations over the border dispute,”<sup>123</sup> it is not clear whether Japan will participate in infrastructure projects in Arunachal.<sup>124</sup> In any case, it should be noted that while India has not made any recent statements about the Russo-Japanese territorial dispute over Southern Kurils/Northern Territories, India had earlier claimed that the Kuril Islands belonged to the Soviet Union as a result of the Yalta Agreement (as

<sup>121</sup>Notably, Japan’s National Institute for Defense Studies, the core research arm of the country’s Ministry of Defense, has now started featuring India prominently in its annual East Asian Strategic Review. The chapter on India in the 2013 report included a separate section on India’s contributions to peacekeeping (especially in Africa) and how it was enhancing the country’s status, <http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/e2013.html> (accessed January 14, 2016). On Japan’s approach to great power status via peacekeeping, see Shogo Suzuki, “Seeking ‘Legitimate’ Great Power Status in the Post-Cold War International Society: China’s and Japan’s Participation in UNPKO,” *International Relations*, 22, 1 (2008).

<sup>122</sup>Pranab Dhal Samanta, “China Strikes Back on Arunachal,” *Indian Express*, September 18, 2009.

<sup>123</sup>This statement was made by a Japanese foreign ministry spokesperson after reports that Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida had referred to Arunachal Pradesh as “India’s territory.” See “China Protests Over Japan’s Comments on Border Dispute with India,” *Reuters*, January 19, 2015, <http://in.reuters.com/article/china-japan-india-idINKBN0KS0XN20150119> (accessed January 14, 2016).

<sup>124</sup>For two conflicting reports, see Utpal Bhaskar, “Japanese Agency Ready to Finance Projects in Arunachal Pradesh,” *Live Mint*, June 8, 2015; Ananth Krishnan, “Japan Assures China It Will Stay Out of Arunachal Projects,” *India Today*, November 18, 2014.

noted above in the context of the SFPT).<sup>125</sup> In other words, neither India nor Japan has the complete support of the other in their respective territorial disputes with third parties.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the systemic and domestic changes since the end of the Cold War, India–Japan ties have been dramatically transformed due to the efforts of decision-makers in both the countries who have invested in this relationship. However, as shown in the previous two sections, even as there is substantial scope for cooperation as well as untapped synergies, there remain significant challenges that have thus far prevented this relationship from realizing its full potential. Nevertheless, Japan’s importance for India lies in the fact that this relationship makes India an integral part of the emerging strategic architecture of Asia that has heretofore neglected India with its emphasis only on East Asia. Likewise, the relationship with India helps Japan diplomatically as it transforms into a “normal” power because, unlike Japan’s immediate neighbours in Northeast Asia, India is one of the few countries that has welcomed the rise of a strong and prosperous Japan.

Looking ahead, this budding friendship will have to be cautiously managed owing to the changing power dynamics in the Japan–India relationship. India’s economy is expected to displace Japan’s as the third-largest in the world over the next decade and New Delhi is also likely to militarily outspend Japan by a considerable margin in the years ahead even as Japan will remain a powerful player (economically, militarily and technologically). However, India’s rapid growth may generate a competitive element in its relationship with Japan in the medium term as the two countries vie for influence, especially in Southeast Asia. Asia’s changing power equations will test the diplomatic skills of Indian and Japanese statesmen as the two countries will still need to cooperate to maintain strategic stability while China continues with its ascent.

Nevertheless, the overall prognosis for this relationship is “cautiously optimistic” as there are no sources of bilateral disputes in the India–Japan relationship. Furthermore, as explained in this chapter, both India and Japan need each other to revive their economies and to maintain a

<sup>125</sup>Japan claims that the four islands in dispute are not a part of the Kuril chain.

stable balance of power in Asia. However, the bilateral relationship has not yet attained sufficient economic momentum (as bilateral economic ties remain weak) or strategic weight (as the two sides have only recently rediscovered one another) to be on a self-propelling trajectory towards closer ties. For the time being, the top leaders in New Delhi and Tokyo will need to expend considerable political capital to steer the relationship to reap its promised potential.

## A Confluence of Two Strategies: The Japan–India Security Partnership in the Indo-Pacific

*Dhruva Jaishankar*

**Abstract** The author details the drivers, possibilities and limitations of defence ties between India and Japan in this chapter. Jaishankar notes that the primary driver of ties is the shared concern about the implications of China’s rise. Japan’s reframing of its security role and “normalization” of its national security strategy and India’s rising defence and maritime profile in the Indo-Pacific region present opportunities to both governments. Tokyo has become an indispensable partner in the region’s security architecture as per New Delhi’s calculations. The confluence of these two strategies shows great promise. However, the author highlights certain limitations including the danger of overemphasizing defence trade and joint production in this partnership in addition to the structural constraint of India remaining “outside of the United States’ Asian alliance structure.” Jaishankar recommends two important avenues of cooperation—first, the utilization of Japan’s official development assistance to invest in strategic infrastructure and, second, deepening of cooperation between the ground and air forces of the two countries.

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**Keywords** Strategic competition · Rise of China · “Act East” policy  
Security strategy · Military exercises

## INTRODUCTION

The Japan–India security partnership has been completely transformed over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> Political consultations between the two countries have been institutionalized at the highest levels, and are now more frank and wide-ranging than ever. Their defence forces participate in regular naval exercises. Staff exchanges and talks now involve ground, air and maritime forces. The prospect of defence sales and the joint production of defence equipment, once unthinkable, is a realistic possibility. For India, Japan has emerged as an indispensable partner in its attempts at economic modernization, and is integral to its efforts at preserving a favourable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>2</sup> For Japan, the importance of its strategic partnership with India is surpassed only by its alliance with the United States and its “sub-alliance” with Australia.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship has been driven by shared concerns about the rise of China, a country with which both India and Japan have politically charged territorial disputes.<sup>4</sup> While India–Japan defence ties have improved steadily since 2006, progress has significantly accelerated

<sup>1</sup>For recent assessments of India–Japan security relations, see Rohan Mukherjee and Anthony Yazaki, eds., *Poised for Partnership: Deepening India–Japan Relations in the Asian Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016); Tomoko Kiyota, “Looming Over the Horizon: Japan’s Naval Engagement with India,” in Anit Mukherjee and C. Raja Mohan, eds., *India’s Naval Strategy and Asian Security* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 175–191; David Brewster, “The India–Japan Security Relationship: An Enduring Security Partnership?” *Asian Security*, 6, 2 (2010).

<sup>2</sup>Dhruva Jaishankar, “Japan Bets Big on India,” *The Times of India*, December 15, 2015; Pranab Dhal Samantha, “In Signal to China, Manmohan Singh Embraces Japan’s Idea,” *The Indian Express*, May 29, 2013; Rory Medcalf, “A Term Whose Time Has Come: The Indo-Pacific,” *The Diplomat*, December 4, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>This and all other unattributed quotes in this chapter are based on the interviews conducted with senior officials, bureaucrats, military officers and scholarly experts at the Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Embassy of India and Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Tokyo, January 6–9, 2016.

<sup>4</sup>Hiroyuki Akita, “China Shifts to Waiting Game on Senkakus,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, August 15, 2014; Shishir Gupta, *The Himalayan Face-Off: Chinese Assertion and the Indian Riposte* (Gurgaon: Hachette India, 2014).

under Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe and Narendra Modi. Abe has steadily overhauled Japan's national security structures, loosening many of Japan's self-imposed restrictions on the use of military force. Modi has overturned some of India's traditional hesitation in forging closer security partnerships with Japan, and has been less sensitive than his predecessor to China's perceived concerns. These changes—primarily legal and administrative in Japan, and ideological and diplomatic in India—point to steadily closer Japan–India defence ties over the coming years. Converging interests, shared values, and the potentially broad scope of cooperation mean the India–Japan relationship is truly strategic in nature.

Despite steadily deepening relations, particularly in the maritime domain, there is considerable room to widen the scope of the India–Japan security partnership. Stronger ties should involve two broad areas of focus. Despite Japan's recent military transformation, official development assistance (ODA) remains the biggest weapon in its arsenal.<sup>5</sup> Further utilizing Japanese ODA for strategic purposes—in Northeast India, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and in third countries in the Indian Ocean littoral in cooperation with India—would represent a qualitative elevation of the strategic partnership. Secondly, deepening military interoperability beyond the navies—specifically, between expeditionary marine forces and between the air forces—would increase the prospects of cooperation in various contingencies.

While there are grounds for confidence and optimism in the bilateral security partnership, differences and complications will remain. There is a danger in placing military sales and joint defence production at the centre of the relationship, as arms sales could just as easily become an irritant. Another concern is the low priority that India and Japan place on each other's regional security concerns, namely Pakistan and North Korea. Finally, progress in India–Japan defence ties will have to be incremental owing to continued resistance in Japanese politics and public opinion to overt militarization and resource constraints on the part of India. However, if these concerns can be addressed, there is no reason that India–Japan security ties cannot evolve into the defining partnership in the Indo-Pacific region.

<sup>5</sup>“Japan's ODA Budget,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, June 23, 2014, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/budget/>.

## CHINA'S RISE, JAPAN'S NORMALIZATION

The primary driver of Japan–India security ties has been their shared concern about the implications of China's rise. Japan in the 1980s and 1990s invested deeply in China's economy, facilitating that country's economic transformation.<sup>6</sup> Yet, as early as 1992, when it promulgated its Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, China grew more assertive in its claims to the disputed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea (called the Diaoyu Islands in China).<sup>7</sup> The mid-2000s also saw rising anti-Japanese nationalism in China. China began to use Japan's prior economic successes as a benchmark for its own national achievements and by 2010, surpassed Japan in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>8</sup>

China's achievement of apparent economic, technological and soft power parity with Japan led to greater confidence and presaged renewed nationalism. Between 2010 and 2013, a series of confrontational incidents occurred, involving Chinese maritime confrontations, more aggressive claims to the Senkakus, violence in China against Japanese-owned businesses and citizens, and Chinese Coast Guard, naval and air force activity in Japan's contiguous zone and territorial sea. These culminated in the extension by China of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea.<sup>9</sup> Anti-Japanese views were encouraged

<sup>6</sup>Steven R. Weisman, "Tokyo Faults U.S. Sanctions for Chinese," *The New York Times*, June 22, 1989; Shang-Jin Wei, "Foreign Direct Investment in China: Sources and Consequences," in Takatoshi Ito and Anne O. Krueger, eds., *Financial Deregulation and Integration in East Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 77–105.

<sup>7</sup>Reinhard Drifte, "Japanese–Chinese Territorial Disputes in the East China Sea—Between Military Confrontation and Economic Cooperation," Working Paper, Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2008.

<sup>8</sup>Andrew Monahan, "China Overtakes Japan as World's No. 2 Economy," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 14, 2011; World Economic Outlook, International Monetary Fund, October 2015.

<sup>9</sup>"All at Sea," Banyan, *The Economist*, November 10, 2010; Cheung Chi-fai, "Activists Proud of Ocean Odyssey to Disputed Diaoyu Islands," *South China Morning Post*, August 16, 2012; Choi Chi-Yuk and Teddy Ng, "Protesters in Islands Row Vent Fury on Japanese Firms," *South China Morning Post*, September 15, 2012; "Trends in Chinese Government and Other Vessels in the Waters Surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and Japan's Response," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, January 6, 2016, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e\\_000021.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e_000021.html); "Chinese Officials Admit to MSDF Radar Lock Allegations," *The Japan Times*, March 18, 2013; "Japan Scrambles F-15 Fighter Jets After Chinese Aircraft Spotted Near Senkakus," *The Japan Times*, January 6, 2013; Jun Osawa, "China's ADIZ Over the East China Sea: A 'Great Wall in the Sky?'" Brookings Institution, December 17, 2013.

by China's leadership, including President Xi Jinping.<sup>10</sup> In 2015, on the 70th anniversary of Japan's World War II defeat, Xi hosted a high-profile military parade in Beijing to which he invited several world leaders.<sup>11</sup>

In response to China's growing capabilities, influence, and activities, Japan experienced a revolution in its national security structures. In 2006, during Shinzo Abe's first, brief, tenure as Prime Minister, Japan's National Diet passed legislation that upgraded its Defense Agency into a Ministry of Defense under a Cabinet minister.<sup>12</sup> Upon Abe's return to power in December 2012, Japan's defence policies and strategies became further aligned with its capabilities. A National Security Strategy was released in December 2013 that called for a more dynamic defence force and loosened restrictions on exporting weapons.<sup>13</sup> National Defense Program Guidelines were approved by the National Security Council and Cabinet, which clarified ways to maximize Japan's defence capabilities and defined the architecture of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF).<sup>14</sup> A National Security Secretariat was established to coordinate foreign and security policies.<sup>15</sup> All of this resulted in a more streamlined decision-making structure.

These steps were followed by changes to rules and laws related to national security. In April 2014, the Abe government announced new principles for the transfer of defence equipment and technology, coinciding with revised guidelines for US–Japan defence cooperation.<sup>16</sup> In October 2015, Japan's Ministry of Defense launched its Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) to lower the cost of

<sup>10</sup>“President Xi Attends Ceremony Remembering Japan's Aggression,” *China Daily*, July 7, 2014; Celia Hatton, “Is Xi Jinping Trying to Provoke Anger Against Japan?” China Blog, *BBC News*, July 7, 2014.

<sup>11</sup>Claire Phipps, “China Military Parade Commemorates Second World War Victory,” *The Guardian*, September 3, 2015.

<sup>12</sup>Anthony Faiola, “Japan Upgrades Its Defense Agency,” *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2006.

<sup>13</sup>“National Security Strategy,” *Cabinet Secretariat*, December 17, 2013, <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Fackler, “Amid Chinese Rivalry, Japan Seeks More Muscle,” *The New York Times*, December 17, 2013.

<sup>15</sup>Katsuhisa Kuramae, “New National Security Bureau Faces Rocky Start,” *Asahi Shimbun*, January 8, 2014.

<sup>16</sup>Heigo Sato, “Japan's Arms Export and Defense Production Policy,” Japan Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2015; James L. Schoff, “The Historic Part of Prime Minister Abe's U.S. Visit,” *U.S. News and World Report*, April 21, 2015.



procurement, manage acquisitions, oversee research and development, and boost arms exports.<sup>17</sup>

More contentiously, Abe's government embarked upon a reinterpretation of Japan's Constitution to enable collective self-defence. After considerable deliberation, Japan's National Diet passed a package of security bills in September 2015, relaxing restrictions on its ability to play a security role in overseas operations.<sup>18</sup> Constitutional reinterpretation to enable collective self-defence represents a "huge leap," according to one of Abe's top aides, and a necessity: "We have to help our friends."<sup>19</sup> Japan had already begun to make up for its lack of combat experiences through UN peacekeeping operations. South Sudan became a testing ground for Japan's new rules of engagement.<sup>20</sup>

Abe's signature legislative amendments were accompanied by changes to the size, posture and preparedness of Japan's SDF. SDF ground forces have traditionally been large, heavily armoured and oriented northwards towards Russia, with whom Japan also disputes territory. Under General Kiyofumi Iwata, it began to transition into smaller, more mobile forces capable of "countermeasures for potential attacks on Japan's remote islands."<sup>21</sup> Specifically, Japan is developing a 3000-strong marine brigade for amphibious operations.<sup>22</sup> The shift in focus from Hokkaido in the north to the Ryukyus in the south is seen as an effort to counter China's Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy.<sup>23</sup>

Operationally, India is important to Japan for securing sea lines of communication (SLOCs), upon which Japan's commercial interests and energy security are dependent. India also becomes integral to Japan's efforts at presenting itself as a more "normal" military power and

<sup>17</sup>Jon Grevatt, "Japan Launches New Procurement Agency," *HIS Jane's Defence Industry*, October 1, 2015.

<sup>18</sup>Erik Slaven, "Japan Enacts Major Changes to Its Self-Defense Laws," *Stars and Stripes*, September 18, 2015.

<sup>19</sup>Author interview with official of the Prime Minister's Office (Kantei), Tokyo, January 2016.

<sup>20</sup>"SDF Role in South Sudan to Expand in May Under New Security laws," *The Japan Times*, September 22, 2015.

<sup>21</sup>Kiyohumi Iwata, "GEN Iwata Speech Draft at AUSA 2014," Ministry of Defense, Japan, October 23, 2014, [http://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/news/defense/2014/pdf/20141023\\_eng.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/news/defense/2014/pdf/20141023_eng.pdf).

<sup>22</sup>Jeff Schogol, "Japan to Create Amphibious Force Modeled After Marine Corps," *Defense News*, March 3, 2014.

<sup>23</sup>For details about A2/AD, see Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate Over US Military Strategy in Asia* (London: IISS & Routledge, 2014).

expanding its security role in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.<sup>24</sup> Other than Japan's treaty alliance with the United States, which remains central to regional security architecture, there is an absence of capable and willing partners.<sup>25</sup> For example, no ASEAN country boasts the requisite capabilities for maritime domain awareness that India does.<sup>26</sup>

Given India's growing defence profile in Asia, Japan sees an opportunity.<sup>27</sup> "Diplomacy is about gaining more space," according to one of Abe's aides, and by deepening cooperation with India and Australia, Japan "can be more relaxed."<sup>28</sup> While Australia is undoubtedly important, India alone in Asia has the ability to help Japan preserve a favourable balance to China's inexorable rise. "Weight counts," in the words of another one of Abe's top foreign policy advisers. For Japan, "India is at the top of the ladder...we're waiting for [India's] rise."<sup>29</sup> It should be no surprise that Japan's "security cooperation with India [has been] activated faster" than it has with other countries.<sup>30</sup>

### THE INDIA–CHINA RIVALRY

If Japan–China competition defined Asia in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, a China–India rivalry could define the future balance of power in Asia.<sup>31</sup> The two countries have a long-standing border dispute

<sup>24</sup>For details about Japan's evolution into a "normal" military power, see: Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Re-emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, Adelphi Paper (London: IISS and Routledge, 2005), pp. 368–369.

<sup>25</sup>See, for example, Natasha Hamilton-Hart and Dave McRae, "Indonesia: Balancing the United States and China, Aiming for Independence," The United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney, November 2015, pp. 8–11, 16–24.

<sup>26</sup>Author interview with official from Japan's Ministry of Defense (Boeisho), Tokyo, January 2016.

<sup>27</sup>Victoria Tuke, "Expanding Strategic Horizons: Japan's Foreign Policy Towards India," Tokyo Foundation, March 25, 2013.

<sup>28</sup>Author interview with official from the Prime Minister's Office (Kantei), Tokyo, January 2016.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Kiyota, "Looming Over the Horizon," p. 179.

<sup>31</sup>Peter Drysdale and Dong Dong Zhang, *Japan and China: Rivalry or Cooperation in East Asia* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2000); Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China–India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham: Lexington, 2014); Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle Between China, India and Japan Will Shape Our Next Decade* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2008).

that has periodically heated up with incidents at Depsang in 2013, Chumar in 2014, and Doklam near the trijunction with Bhutan in 2017.<sup>32</sup> A 2013 survey showed that 83% of Indians considered China a threat, while 88% worried about the prospect of war with China over the next ten years.<sup>33</sup>

Even beyond the narrow confines of territorial disputes, other Chinese activities have been perceived by India to imperil its security. India remains concerned about China's growing presence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral, including through its ambitious One Belt, One Road initiative, which India has boycotted.<sup>34</sup> India is particularly concerned about China's support for Pakistan, including through direct assistance and exercises, large-scale infrastructure projects in territory claimed by India, the protection of Pakistan-based anti-India militants in international forums, and nuclear and missile proliferation.<sup>35</sup> Beyond the border dispute and regional security, India perceives China as blocking India's global governance ambitions—such as membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group—and remaining intransigent on bilateral economic and trade relations, perpetuating a large and growing trade deficit in China's favour.

<sup>32</sup>Zorawar Daulet Singh, "The Himalayan Stalemate: Retracing the India–China Dispute," Manekshaw Paper No. 27, Centre for Land and Warfare Studies, 2011; Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), pp. 227–266; "Chinese Military Acknowledges 2013 Incursion at Depsang Valley for First Time," *Economic Times*, July 31, 2014; Dhruva Jaishankar, "The Great Sino-Indian Alpine Test Party of 2013," *Foreign Policy*, May 8, 2013; Srinath Raghavan, "Don't Get China Wrong," *The Hindu Business Line*, April 24, 2013; "After Modi's Hard Talk with Xi in Delhi, Chinese Troops Pull Back in Chumar," *India Today*, September 18, 2014.

<sup>33</sup>Rory Medcalf, "India Poll 2013—Facing the Future: Indian Views of the World Ahead," Lowy Institute for Public Policy and Australia India Institute, May 20, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup>Alistair Scrutton, "Manmohan Singh Says China Wants Foothold in South Asia," *Reuters*, September 7, 2010; Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 138–166; David Brewster, "Sri Lanka Tilts Back from China," *East Asia Forum*, September 17, 2015; Nilanthi Samaranyake, "India's Key to Sri Lanka: Maritime Infrastructure Development," *The Diplomat*, March 31, 2015; Atul Aneja, "New China–Myanmar Oil Pipeline Bypasses Malacca Trap," *The Hindu*, January 30, 2015; Jane Perlez and Chris Buckley, "China Retools Its Military with a First Overseas Outpost in Djibouti," *The New York Times*, November 26, 2015.

<sup>35</sup>Andrew Small, *The China–Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Koh Swee Lean Collin, "China and Pakistan Join Forces Under the Sea," *The National Interest*, January 7, 2016; Priyanka Singh, "The China Pakistan Economic Corridor and India," IDSA Comment, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, May 7, 2015.

These developments led to a hardening of China policy under Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Among other things, Modi's position manifested themselves in his outreach to the United States, including an invitation to President Barack Obama to attend India's 2015 Republic Day celebration in New Delhi, during which the two countries agreed to a wide-ranging "U.S.–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region."<sup>36</sup> Much of this was echoed in a subsequent summit in 2017 with President Donald Trump. Modi also placed a deliberate emphasis on relations with democratic partners in East Asia, including expanding trilateral defence exercises and dialogues involving Japan and Australia, and focused on connectivity to Southeast Asia via Bangladesh and Myanmar.<sup>37</sup> Just as significantly, he placed a renewed focus on the Indian Ocean region, concluding defence agreements with Mauritius and Seychelles.<sup>38</sup> All of this has been accompanied by subtle—yet meaningful—shifts away from some traditional Indian orthodoxies in its conduct of foreign relations.<sup>39</sup> As C. Raja Mohan writes:

After he took charge of India at the end of May 2014, Modi has begun to put his own imprint of India's foreign policy. Not all of his moves are a departure from the foreign policy positions of the past. He is building on the incremental evolution of India's engagement with the world over the past quarter of a century and taking major initiatives of his own. The prime minister's greater clarity on India's long-term foreign policy objectives and the political will to pursue them vigorously have injected extraordinary energy into Indian diplomacy since the middle of 2014.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>"U.S.–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 25, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/25/us-india-joint-strategic-vision-asia-pacific-and-indian-ocean-region>.

<sup>37</sup>"Act East Policy: India Envisages More Vigorous Engagement with SE Asia, Says Sushma Swaraj," *Economic Times*, June 28, 2015; Manish Chand, "Act East: India's ASEAN Journey," Ministry of External Affairs, November 10, 2014.

<sup>38</sup>Suhasini Haidar, "India and Mauritius Announce Security Cooperation Pact," *The Hindu*, March 12, 2015; Oscar Nkala, "India Developing Network of Coastal Radars," *DefenseNews*, March 20, 2015; Indrani Bagchi, "Now, India Gets to Tug at China's 'String of Pearls,'" *The Times of India*, June 7, 2015.

<sup>39</sup>Dhruva Jaishankar, "India's Five Foreign Policy Goals: Great Strides, Steep Challenges," *The Wire*, May 26, 2016.

<sup>40</sup>C. Raja Mohan, *Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence* (Noida: HarperCollins India, 2015), pp. 1–2.

For India, a security partnership with Japan confers several advantages and there is support across the Indian political spectrum for closer relations with Tokyo. In part because of the non-controversial nature of security collaboration, Japan is necessary for India's efforts at developing trilateral, quadrilateral or multilateral partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. This makes Japan an indispensable partner for India in its attempts to contribute to the region's security architecture.

### A CONFLUENCE OF TWO STRATEGIES

Recent changes—primarily legislative and bureaucratic under Abe in Japan, and ideological and diplomatic under Modi in India—have affected bilateral security cooperation in significant ways. The relationship can be considered in three phases. An initial, tentative, phase of defence relations began in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests in 1998, which marked a nadir in ties after Japan led the international community in imposing sanctions against India. Despite overwhelming political and public outrage at India's tests, a few influential Japanese saw an opportunity in India's emergence as a nuclear weapons power that could “lead to greater transparency and self-restraint on the part of China.”<sup>41</sup> After 2000, relations began to normalize, with the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to India and the announcement of a “global partnership.”<sup>42</sup> These early years saw anti-piracy exercises and search and rescue operations by the two countries' Coast Guards. During a return visit in 2001 to Japan by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, defence exchanges and a security dialogue were institutionalized and counter-piracy and UN Security Council reforms were discussed.<sup>43</sup> In 2004, the two countries held a meeting of their defence policy group (DPG).<sup>44</sup> The same year, India and Japan—along with the United States and Australia—contributed speedily to humanitarian relief operations following the Indian Ocean tsunami.<sup>45</sup> In 2005, Junichiro Koizumi's visit to

<sup>41</sup>S. Jaishankar, “India–Japan Relations After Pokhran II,” *Seminar*, 487 (2000).

<sup>42</sup>C. Raja Mohan, “India, Japan Unveil New Global Partnership,” *The Hindu*, August 24, 2000.

<sup>43</sup>C. Raja Mohan and Rishik Chauhan, “India–Japan Strategic Partnership: Steady Advance Amidst Enduring Constraints,” in Mukherjee and Yazaki, *Poised for Partnership*, pp. 182–183.

<sup>44</sup>Sandeep Dikshit, “India, Japan to Strengthen Defence Cooperation,” *The Hindu*, May 27, 2004.

<sup>45</sup>S. Jaishankar, “2004 Tsunami Disaster: Consequences for Regional Cooperation,” Presentation at the 26th Annual Pacific Symposium, June 8–10, 2005.

India marked a commitment to invest in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, a major strategic investment.<sup>46</sup>

A second phase of defence ties began with Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee's visit to Japan in May 2006, with the two sides agreeing to tackle "regional and global security challenges."<sup>47</sup> This visit laid out "the context, objectives, and means to develop bilateral defence and security cooperation."<sup>48</sup> It was followed by the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Japan in 2006, during Abe's first term, when ties were elevated to a "Strategic and Global Partnership."<sup>49</sup>

Abe has a strong personal affinity for India, a consequence of the warm welcome his grandfather, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, received from his Indian counterpart Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957.<sup>50</sup> In 2007, Abe's first visit to India as prime minister was highlighted by a speech he gave to the Indian parliament, in which he referenced the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh in speaking of "the confluence of the two seas." In this instance, he referred to the joining of the Indian and Pacific Oceans to create a "broader Asia" that broke away geographical boundaries." He added: "Our two countries have the ability—and the responsibility—to ensure that it broadens yet further."<sup>51</sup> Abe also promoted his government's vision of an "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity," a strategy to extend financial and technical assistance to democracies in an arc from Eastern Europe to the Middle East and Central South Asia to Southeast Asia. "Contrary to the notion that subsequently prevailed," one of Abe's advisors notes that the policy was "not designed to hold back Beijing [but] initially focused on making the Russians aware that Japan's footprint could extend right up to their doorstep."<sup>52</sup> In 2006 and 2007, the

<sup>46</sup>Prमित Pal Chaudhuri, "India and Japan: A Nascent Strategic Bonding," Policy Brief, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, May 2015.

<sup>47</sup>Srikanth Kondapalli, "Pranab's Defence Diplomacy," *Rediff*, June 6, 2006.

<sup>48</sup>Mohan and Chauhan, "India–Japan Strategic Partnership," p. 184.

<sup>49</sup>"Japan–India Relations (Basic Data)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 28, 2015, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>.

<sup>50</sup>Mohammed Badrul Alam, "A Study of India–Japan Strategic and Security Issues," *Scholar Warrior*, Centre for Land and Warfare Studies, Spring 2013, p. 83.

<sup>51</sup>Shinzo Abe, "Confluence of the Two Seas," Speech to the Parliament of the Republic of India, August 22, 2007, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>.

<sup>52</sup>Tomohiko Taniguchi, "Beyond 'the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity': Debating Universal Values in Japanese Grand Strategy," Asia Paper Series, German Marshall Fund of the United States, October 2010, pp. 1–2.

South China and East China Sea disputes were less pronounced, and Abe was focused on a continental strategy.

The year 2007 marked a new high point in collaboration with the first quadrilateral maritime exercises between India, Japan, the United States, and Australia, in which Singapore also participated.<sup>53</sup> Yet China's negative response, which involved demarches and accusations of participants resurrecting a "cold-war mentality," contributed to hesitation to continue the quadrilateral initiative on the part of Australia, India, the United States, and even Japan.<sup>54</sup> The following years saw a steady series of steps towards closer collaboration. In 2008, Manmohan Singh and Abe's successor and ally Taro Aso agreed to a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation that emphasized security of sea lines of communication and initiated staff talks between the two countries' maritime forces.<sup>55</sup> In 2009, an action plan to advance security cooperation announced an intention to establish annual bilateral naval exercises alternating between India and Japan.<sup>56</sup> At the time, Australia was the only other country with which Japan had signed a similar declaration.<sup>57</sup> The first bilateral naval exercises, called JIMEX 12, were held three years later in 2012, and involved two destroyers from Japan, and a destroyer, frigate and corvette from India.<sup>58</sup> The first JIMEX exercises off India were held in December 2013.<sup>59</sup> Also in late 2013, Japan's Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera visited India with a proposal to sell, and perhaps jointly

<sup>53</sup>Mahmud Ali, "New 'Strategic Partnership' Against China," *BBC News*, September 3, 2007.

<sup>54</sup>"Abe's Remarks 'Cold-War Mentality,'" *China Daily*, August 23, 2007; See also David Brewster, *India as an Asia Pacific Power* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>55</sup>"Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation Between Japan and India," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, October 22, 2008, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0810/joint\\_d.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0810/joint_d.html).

<sup>56</sup>"Action Plan to Advance Security Cooperation Based on the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation Between Japan and India," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 29, 2009, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0912/action.html>.

<sup>57</sup>C. Raja Mohan, *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2012), pp. 106–107.

<sup>58</sup>"First Bilateral Maritime Exercise Between India and Japan 'JIMEX 12' Commenced on June 09, 12," Press Release, Indian Navy, June 9, 2012.

<sup>59</sup>Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar, "First India–Japan Maritime Exercise in Bay of Bengal," *The Hindu*, December 17, 2013.

produce, the ShinMaywa US-2, an amphibious aircraft.<sup>60</sup> In January 2014, Abe was the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations, an occasion that was of major symbolic importance because it included a military parade.<sup>61</sup>

Other forms of cooperation, including political consultations and military-to-military contacts developed over this period. Exchanges involving staff colleges began to take place, as well as shorter visits to military academies by cadets, although differences in language presented a barrier to more long-term exchanges. Port calls, participation in fleet reviews, and other forms of visible naval diplomacy also continued apace. In July 2010, India and Japan initiated a 2+2 Dialogue, involving the secretaries or vice ministers from their foreign and defence ministries, with a second such meeting in October 2012.<sup>62</sup> At the multilateral level, the two countries—along with Germany and Brazil—were members of the G4, which they established as the basis for United Nations Security Council enlargement.

But the period between 2007 and 2014 was also marked by hesitation on both sides. Prime Ministers Yasuo Fukuda, Yukio Hatoyama, Naoto Kan, and Yoshihiko Noda were less enthusiastic about relations with India than Abe and Aso, and attempted to mend relations with China, although with little success.<sup>63</sup> One Japanese foreign ministry official subsequently described these efforts as “disastrous.” On the Indian side, A.K. Antony, who was defence minister under Manmohan Singh, is reported to have “ordered the Indian Navy to stop holding trilateral and multilateral exercises in the Indian Ocean with the US and its allies.”<sup>64</sup> India also declined Japan's offers to use its base facilities in Djibouti during counter-piracy operations.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup>“Onodera Set to Pitch Plane to India,” *The Japan Times*, September 22, 2013.

<sup>61</sup>Dhruva Jaishankar, “A Fine Balance: India, Japan, and the United States,” *The National Interest*, January 24, 2014.

<sup>62</sup>Sandeep Dikshit, “India, Japan to Hold Second 2+2 Dialogue on Monday,” *The Hindu*, October 18, 2012.

<sup>63</sup>Kiyota, “Looming Over the Horizon,” p. 178; Martin Fackler, “In Japan, U.S. Losing Diplomatic Ground to China,” *The New York Times*, January 23, 2010; see also: Lam Peng Er, “Japan's Relations with China and South Korea: Anagonism Despite Interdependency,” in Zheng Yongnian and Lance L. P. Gore, eds., *China Entering the Xi Jinping Era* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>64</sup>Mohan and Chauhan, “India–Japan Strategic Partnership,” p. 194.

<sup>65</sup>Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, “India and Japan,” p. 9.



Japanese officials noted a significant and—from their perspective—welcome change in India’s position under Modi: fewer concerns by their Indian counterparts about jeopardizing relations with China. Modi’s visit to Japan in September 2014, his first bilateral visit outside of South Asia as Prime Minister, may have marked the beginning of the third phase in defence relations—during which the two sides upgraded the description of their relationship to a “Special Strategic and Global Partnership.”<sup>66</sup> Japan took steps to facilitate cooperation with India on sensitive space and defence issues.<sup>67</sup> In that visit and in Abe’s return to India the following year, India welcomed Japan’s liberalization of arms transfers and changes to its legislation concerning collective self-defence, thus encouraging Japan’s rise as a more “normal” military power.<sup>68</sup> India also joined Japan in expressing concern about developments in the South China Sea.<sup>69</sup>

In 2015, Japan was permanently included in the nominally bilateral US–India Malabar exercises.<sup>70</sup> As British analyst Shashank Joshi has noted, Malabar’s institutionalization as a multilateral exercise means that “the pace and scale of military exercises [with the United States and Japan] far exceeds that which India achieved even with the Soviet Union at the height of their partnership in the 1970s and 1980s.”<sup>71</sup> In 2015, Japan also added two more defence attachés to its embassy in New Delhi, making India only the fifth country where it stationed military attachés from all three services and the Coast Guard.<sup>72</sup> For its part, India decided to permanently station a naval officer as its attaché at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo—as opposed to rotating the post between the three services—indicative of the centrality of maritime cooperation to the defence relationship.

<sup>66</sup>“Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025: Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World,” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 12, 2015 (hereafter “Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025”).

<sup>67</sup>Mohan and Chauhan, “India–Japan Strategic Partnership,” pp. 186–187.

<sup>68</sup>“Tokyo Declaration for India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership,” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, September 1, 2014 (hereafter “Tokyo Declaration”); “Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025.”

<sup>69</sup>“Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025.”

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>Shashank Joshi, “Indian Power Projection: Ambition, Arms and Influence,” Whitehall Paper 85, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2015, p. 135.

<sup>72</sup>“India–Japan Defence Ties to Grow Stronger,” *Economic Times*, July 26, 2015.

Abe's visit to India in late 2015 was not short of important deliverables. Japanese officials describe it as "spectacular" and "epoch-making." Indian observers were equally enthusiastic.<sup>73</sup> A former Indian ambassador to Japan called the concluding joint statement "remarkable for its strategic resolve, clarity of purpose and joint actions...It marks a qualitative new phase of the India–Japan strategic partnership with vast region-wide ramifications."<sup>74</sup> The headlines were dominated by a decision to conclude a bilateral civilian nuclear agreement (which was signed in November 2016 and came into force by mid-2017) and Japan's offer of a low-interest loan and technical assistance to develop India's first high-speed railway. The security agreements achieved during the visit were equally significant. One concerned the transfer of defence equipment and technology, while a second related to security measures for protecting classified military information. Modi called these "decisive steps in our security cooperation" that built "on our decision to expand staff talks to all three wings of the Armed Forces and make Japan a partner in Malabar Naval Exercises."<sup>75</sup>

### LIMITATIONS TO THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

There are certainly reasons for confidence and optimism about the Japan–India security partnership relationship and these are reflected in the tone of recent joint statements.<sup>76</sup> But there are also a number of reasons for caution or scepticism about its potential. For some analysts, deep-seated bureaucratic resistance, India's preference for bilateralism, the unreliability of the United States, and the hangover of Cold War-era strategic cultures in both countries continue to present significant impediments.<sup>77</sup> There is also a view that bilateral institutions lack substance, that a "hollow institutionalisation... infects Japan–India defence ties."<sup>78</sup> For example, although both India

<sup>73</sup>Sanjaya Baru, "India, Japan Chart Asia's Peaceful Rise," *The Hindu*, December 15, 2015.

<sup>74</sup>Hemant Krishan Singh, "Modi-Abe Summit: Shaping the Indo-Pacific," *Business Standard*, December 15, 2015.

<sup>75</sup>"Media Statement by Prime Minister with Japanese Prime Minister in New Delhi," Prime Minister's Office, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, December 12, 2015, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=133117>.

<sup>76</sup>"Tokyo Declaration"; "Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025."

<sup>77</sup>Mohan and Chauhan, "India–Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 194–195.

<sup>78</sup>Sourabh Gupta, "Abe and Modi Attempt to Bridge the Indo-Pacific," *East Asia Forum*, January 5, 2016.

and Japan contributed greatly to relief efforts following the 2015 Nepal earthquake, there was little cooperation; Japanese assistance was flown to Kathmandu via Bangkok.<sup>79</sup> India has also been traditionally conscious of “potential Japanese backsliding, given the internal divisions in Japan and the depth of the Sino-Japanese relationship.”<sup>80</sup> On Japan’s side, there is a natural propensity to relegate India to a regional South Asian security context, and lingering sensitivities about China’s adverse reaction to Japan–India security cooperation.<sup>81</sup>

Others point to difficulties in private sector cooperation between India and Japan as a real challenge.<sup>82</sup> For example, the public–private partnership agreements linked to the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor were poorly designed, ensuring, in the words of one Japanese foreign ministry official, that “progress has been modest.”<sup>83</sup> Similarly, troubles faced by a Japanese–Singaporean consortium in a potable water project in Gujarat—deemed a failure by some officials in Tokyo—have set off warning signals among other Japanese firms that had previously been interested in the Indian market.<sup>84</sup>

The governments of Abe and Modi have found ways to transcend or overcome many of these difficulties, whether in forcing an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation, signing a high-speed railway agreement or initiating the trilateral dialogue with Australia. Nonetheless, there are structural realities that India and Japan will have to contend with. India will remain outside the United States’ Asian alliance structure, complicating certain possibilities for cooperation with Japan. For example, Japan’s communications and information systems are designed for integration with the United States, which will have certain implications for interoperability. India and Japan will also have to contend with

<sup>79</sup>“Japan to Dispatch SDF to Nepal, Part of Multifaceted Aid Effort,” *The Japan Times*, April 28, 2015.

<sup>80</sup>Mohan, *Samudra Manthan*, p. 106.

<sup>81</sup>Noboru Yamaguchi and Shutaro Sano, “Japan–India Security Cooperation: In Pursuit of a Sound and Pragmatic Partnership,” in Mukherjee and Yazaki, *Poised for Partnership*, pp. 153–178.

<sup>82</sup>Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, “India and Japan.”

<sup>83</sup>Author interview with official from Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho), Tokyo, January 2016.

<sup>84</sup>Jyotsna Bhatnagar and Kajal Vadodaria, “Rs. 4000-Cr Dahej Desalination Plant Yet to See Light of Day,” *The Financial Express*, August 21, 2015.

difficulties arising from different approaches to freedom of navigation. Japanese analysts have observed serious differences given that authorization is required for foreign military exercises and manoeuvres in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).<sup>85</sup> The structural slowdown of the Japanese economy and the consequent problems it may pose for Japan's diplomacy and external relations is another factor that could jeopardize deeper relations.

While these are examples of some of the more obvious differences, at least four potential limitations risk being overlooked. The first is the danger of overemphasizing defence trade and joint production in the relationship. The sale of the US-2 or another major platform by Japan to India may have once appeared to be a natural outgrowth of a closer bilateral security partnership, and defence sales were a high priority for Abe's government. However, they could just as easily become an irritant. The saga involving the proposed sale by Japan of Soryu-class submarines to Australia was indicative of the danger of putting too much stock in defence sales. In that case, a deal proved impossible to finalize despite a high-level political agreement with former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott.<sup>86</sup> Japanese defence companies found themselves at a disadvantage given their inexperience in dealing with international markets, unlike their civilian counterparts, and Japanese firms struggled to contend with much more experienced French and German competitors.<sup>87</sup> The failure by Australia to finalize a submarine agreement in Japan's favour tainted Japan–Australia ties.

An agreement between India and Japan over the sale or joint production of US-2 amphibious aircraft or another platform may yet materialize, but it is certainly not a foregone conclusion. India's defence procurement process is particularly complicated, as the United States discovered with the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) competition.<sup>88</sup> The US-2 has faced questions about its cost, adequate

<sup>85</sup>“Freedom of Navigation Report for Fiscal Year 2014,” U.S. Department of Defense, March 23, 2015.

<sup>86</sup>Demetri Sevastopulo and Hiroyuki Akita, “Japan Seeks Submarine Sale to Australia in First Big Weapons Export in 70 Years,” *Financial Times*, January 11, 2016.

<sup>87</sup>Cameron Stewart, “Submarines’ Three-Way Race Between France, Germany and Japan,” *The Australian*, October 22, 2015.

<sup>88</sup>Ashley Tellis, *Dogfight! India's Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft Decision* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2011).

demand in third countries, and the transfer of technology. The danger of tortuous defence deals setting back ties applies more widely, including to the proposed sales of deep submergence rescue vehicles (DSRV) and minesweepers.<sup>89</sup>

Second, both India and Japan must become more sensitive to the others' regional security concerns—North Korea in Japan's case, and Pakistan in India's. Although Japan expects India to cooperate in condemning North Korean aggression, it is often dismissive of Indian views of Pakistan.<sup>90</sup> Attempts have recently been made by both sides to find more common ground, and for both parties to speak in one voice following provocations by Pakistan or North Korea.<sup>91</sup> But these habits will need to become more regular and institutionalized if the strategic partnership is to truly blossom.

Third, given the personal investment of Modi and Abe in the bilateral relationship, there are naturally concerns about whether the recent momentum can continue beyond their tenures as prime ministers. On the Indian side, there is greater uncertainty. A future prime minister, regardless of political party, may not bring the same drive, purpose, or clarity to India's engagements in the Indo-Pacific and with Japan in particular. Japan's policy orientation is, however, more stable than it has been in many years. Japanese bureaucrats and officials are generally confident that Abe's national security reforms and foreign policy orientation will outlive his tenure as prime minister. The "usefulness of [regional and global partnerships] is recognized" by a majority of people in power, according to one foreign ministry official.<sup>92</sup> There is also a growing realization that trilateral and quadrilateral security arrangements are a cornerstone of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The growing foreign policy consensus is partially a consequence of China's expanding influence, North Korean belligerence, and the targeting of Japanese nationals by groups in the Middle East. That said, the more Japan–India security cooperation can be institutionalized through regular consultations,

<sup>89</sup>Kiyota, "Looming Over the Horizon," p. 184.

<sup>90</sup>Yamaguchi and Sano, "Japan–India Security Cooperation."

<sup>91</sup>"Japan, France Condemn Pathankot Terror Attack," *Business Standard*, January 5, 2016; "North Korea's Test Matter of Deep Concern: MEA," *The Asian Age*, January 7, 2016.

<sup>92</sup>Author interview with official from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho), Tokyo, January 2016.

exercises, and exchanges, the greater the likelihood of it surviving the tenures of individual leaders.

Finally, both sides must appreciate that progress in India–Japan defence ties will have to be steady but incremental. This is partly a consequence of continued resistance in Japanese politics and public opinion to overt militarization. Despite the transformation of Japan’s national security architecture and the ever-closer relationships with the United States, Australia and India, Japanese public opinion remains inherently pacific in nature, bordering on isolationist. Even though the debates surrounding constitutional reinterpretation resolved themselves in Abe’s favour, they also exposed the continuing doubts about militarization and overseas deployments. Japan has yet to confront the possibility of casualties by its security forces overseas, but such a development could make public opinion sharply hostile to foreign military action.

India, meanwhile, faces various kinds of resource constraints, including in the maritime domain where cooperation with Japan is the most promising. India’s plans for expanding its surface warship capabilities—particularly aircraft carriers—have faced delays, and New Delhi has paid inadequate attention to modernizing and expanding its submarine fleet.<sup>93</sup> Its naval expansion has “frequently been stymied by a series of infrastructural, organisational and political failings.”<sup>94</sup> A rare bright spot has been its acquisition of P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft, but this is not an adequate substitute for its depleted blue water naval force.<sup>95</sup> India’s marine expeditionary capability is also modest but growing, and increased after the 2007 purchase of the amphibious transport dock ship *USS Trenton* (renamed the *INS Jalashwa*). With full availability, India’s amphibious landing ships can carry a little over 4000 troops, far smaller than a US Marine Expeditionary Brigade (15,000) but comparable in size to the initial British landing force during the 1982 Falklands War (5500).<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup>Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, “India’s Maritime Strategy,” in Mukherjee and Mohan, eds., *India’s Naval Strategy and Asian Security*, pp. 24–27.

<sup>94</sup>Iskander Rehman, “Tomorrow or Yesterday’s Fleet? The Indian Navy’s Emerging Operational Challenges,” in Mukherjee and Mohan, eds., *India’s Naval Strategy and Asian Security*, p. 57.

<sup>95</sup>Rehman, “Tomorrow or Yesterday’s Fleet?” p. 55.

<sup>96</sup>Joshi, “Indian Power Projection,” pp. 88–89.

Barring a much greater priority placed on acquisitions, India's capacity to partner Japan (and the United States and Australia) in being a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific will be limited and will improve only incrementally.<sup>97</sup>

### CONCLUSION: WIDENING THE SCOPE OF COOPERATION

Despite real limitations to a closer partnership, the forces driving deeper security cooperation between India and Japan are definite, and the progress over the past decade has been remarkable. More sophisticated naval exercises and an intensification of current trends are to be expected, while cooperation on non-traditional security issues—such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief—remains an easy way of surmounting various political and legal obstacles to closer defence ties.

However, there are two broad areas of cooperation that are deserving of greater attention. The first involves ODA. Despite its military modernization and fewer restrictions on its ability to use force, ODA remains the biggest weapon in Japan's arsenal. But as a Japanese foreign ministry official points out, its ODA in the 1990s was not strategically oriented, despite India being the first and among the largest recipients.<sup>98</sup> The objectives of such assistance were primarily to improve the business climate in India.<sup>99</sup>

In recent years, both India and Japan have begun to see the strategic possibility of Japan's loans and aid, both in India and in other friendly countries in the region. In addition to the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Japan provides support in Northeast India, an area of strategic significance, specifically for National Highway 54 in Mizoram and National Highway 51 in Meghalaya.<sup>100</sup> These projects have faced setbacks, including differences between the Japan International Cooperation Agency and India's National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

<sup>97</sup>Anit Mukherjee, "India as a Net Security Provider: Concept and Impediments," Policy Brief, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, August 2014.

<sup>98</sup>In 2013, Japan provided over \$3.1 billion to India in loan aid. "Japan's ODA Disbursements to India by Fiscal Year," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014.

<sup>99</sup>Tuke, "Japan's Foreign Policy Towards India," pp. 214–215.

<sup>100</sup>S. Arun, "Rs 15K Cr North East Connectivity Project Struggling to Take Off," *The Hindu*, November 14, 2015.

Despite troubles concerning implementation on the ground in India's Northeast, the use of ODA in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands presents an interesting opportunity. Abe's top foreign policy advisors and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are keen to assist India in developing infrastructure on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Tokyo fully appreciates the archipelago's pivotal location in the Bay of Bengal, a region that it believes could evolve into the next locus of strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific after the South China Sea. China, too, understands that competition is shifting westwards. As Selina Ho writes, "China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean...explains its perceptual shifts of India. It has become reliant on the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean for shipping its oil and gas imports. Its weaker position vis-à-vis India in the Indian Ocean raises India's position in China's threat calculations."<sup>101</sup> By jointly developing civilian air and seaport infrastructure in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Japan and India can help ensure that the Bay of Bengal does not become the next South China Sea.

Another way of employing ODA strategically would be in joint projects in third countries in the Indo-Pacific littoral. This might include Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, both of which are politically well disposed and are significant recipients of Japanese ODA. Japan has bid for the construction of an 18-metre-deep port in Bangladesh at Matabari and sought opportunities elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>102</sup> Across the Indian Ocean in East Africa, "Japanese investment is usually regarded as reliable and of excellent quality."<sup>103</sup> In 2017, Japan and India unveiled the idea of an Asia–Africa Growth Corridor, widely seen as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. An even bolder proposition would involve joint projects in a corridor extending from the Central Asian republics to western Afghanistan and the Iranian port of Chabahar, where India has committed investment but where development has faced difficulties.<sup>104</sup> Both Modi and Abe visited all five Central Asian republics

<sup>101</sup>Selina Ho, "China's Shifting Perceptions of India: The Context of Xi Jinping's Visit to India," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 279, East-West Center, October 2, 2014.

<sup>102</sup>Natalie Obiko Pearson, "Japan Beating China in Race for Indian Ocean Deep-Sea Port," *Bloomberg Business*, June 23, 2015.

<sup>103</sup>John Aglionby, "Tokyo Takes on Beijing in Africa, Claiming Quality Over Speed," *Financial Times*, January 11, 2016.

<sup>104</sup>Amitav Ranjan, "Chabahar Port: India in a Hurry to Clear \$150-mn Iran Credit Line," *Indian Express*, December 22, 2015; Turloch Mooney, "India–Iran Joint Chabahar Port Development Stalls," *IHS Journal of Commerce*, December 17, 2015.



in 2015, and both their countries have a shared interest in Afghan stabilization, as well as good relations with Tehran. Joint development on an infrastructure corridor that connects Central Asia to the Indian Ocean—and runs parallel to the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor—would have very important strategic implications, and address some of the shortcomings of the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) pipeline project.

A second broad area for deepening security cooperation involves cooperation between India and Japan’s ground and air forces. As Japan reorients its ground forces and India upgrades its force projection capabilities, it raises the possibility of cooperation between brigade-strength marine forces. Both services could also benefit from joint exercises with the US Marine Corps, suggesting that trilateral exercises—like Malabar—may be the most effective way forward. This would also overcome complications that might arise from an absence of a status of forces agreement. Much the same applies, if for different reasons, to the air forces. Although staff talks have been initiated between the two air forces, and could result in the exchange of test and transport pilots, it is at present “premature” to consider bilateral air exercises. A further complexity arises from the fact that, unlike maritime exercises in the open seas, the air forces require designated airspace for exercises. The US-led Red Flag exercises, in which Japan has participated, and in which India took part in 2016 after an eight-year hiatus, offer an opportunity for joint India–Japan air exercises in a trilateral or multilateral setting in the near future.

The Japan–India partnership has already witnessed remarkable progress from the initial contacts in 2000, particularly under the leaderships of Abe and Modi. However, progress will be incremental, and could see setbacks if high-profile defence deals are allowed to dominate perceptions of the relationship. If such perils can be circumnavigated, India and Japan could forge a partnership that will be critical to preserving a favourable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

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## Why Japan Needs India as a Defence Partner

*Satoru Nagao*

**Abstract** In this chapter, the author explores Japan–India defence ties from the Japanese perspective and highlights the reasons that have drawn Japan closer to India in this regard. This chapter examines the positive and negative sides of China’s rise and recommends that India and Japan cooperate within a framework that addresses their mutual concerns—be it the India–China border dispute or Chinese actions in the East China Sea. Nagao suggests Japan and India share the burden of ensuring stability in the Indian Ocean Region and collaborate to strengthen the defence capacity of countries in the South China Sea. Japan is also willing to contribute towards India’s defence capabilities in the form of warships, amphibious aircraft carriers and sea-based missile defence. At the systemic level, Nagao notes a shift from the US-led hub-and-spoke alliance system to an emerging security cooperation network revolving around cooperation between the Japan, India, United States, and Australia among others. Such cooperation, the author observes, could persuade certain assertive states to become more responsible stakeholders in the system.

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**Keywords** Defence cooperation · East China Sea · Southeast Asia  
Sino-Indian rivalry · Indian Ocean

Furthering cooperation between Japan and India is becoming more and more plausible. Japan and India have already started a 2+2 dialogue (vice-ministerial level) and have held joint exercises such as Japan–India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) and Japan–US–India Malabar Exercises. Since 2012, Japan has participated in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited India and met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December 2015, both governments signed an agreement on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, and an agreement on security measures for the protection of classified military information. It is most likely that these agreements will usher in a new era of strategic cooperation.

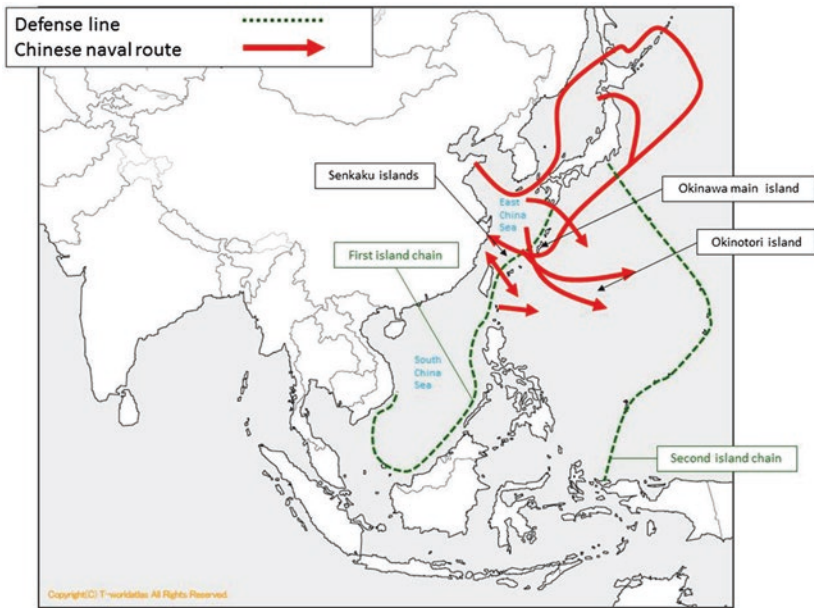
However, it is important to bear in mind that Japan had not entered into such a deep security relationship with India before the 2000s. Why did Japan come to need India as a defence partner in the twenty-first century? This article focuses on three questions cardinal to understanding this shift: What problems have emerged for Japan after the 2000s? Why does Japan believe India is a trustworthy defence partner? And what role can such Japan–India cooperation play?

### CHALLENGES FACED BY JAPAN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Japan–India relations advanced in the twenty-first century once Japan began facing problems with China. Hence, the China factor cannot be overlooked while assessing Japan–India security cooperation. China’s rise has had both positive and negative ramifications for Japan. Because negative aspects imply the worst-case scenario, they should be analysed first.

#### *Negative Side of China’s Rise in East China Sea and South China Sea*

China has been expanding its military activities around Japan and countries of the South China Sea. For example, in the East China Sea, a Chinese nuclear attack submarine violated the territorial seas of Japan in 2004. Since 2008, China has also started naval exercises on the Pacific side of Japan. The area of these naval exercises has been expanding from the first island chain to the second island chain, which forms the defence line of China. More recently in August 2013, five Chinese warships, which had participated in the Russia–China joint exercise, travelled around Japan. This was the first time the Chinese navy navigated around Japan (Fig. 4.1).

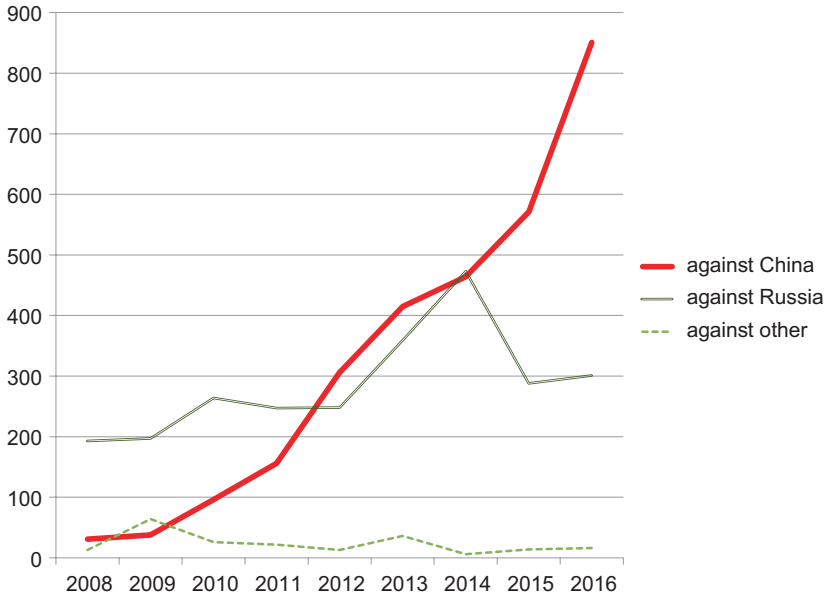


**Fig. 4.1** China’s naval activities around Japan (*Source* Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Defense of Japan 2015 (White Paper),” p. 44, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015\\_1-1-3\\_web.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_1-1-3_web.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2016))

Along with these naval activities, the Chinese air force too has been expanding its activities. The 2013 White Paper of Japan’s Ministry of Defense pointed out that “In FY 2012, the number of scrambles against Chinese aircrafts exceeded the number of those against Russian aircraft for the first time” (FY = Fiscal Year).<sup>1</sup> The number of scrambles against Chinese aircraft further increased to 851 times in 365 days in 2016 (Fig. 4.2).<sup>2</sup> In addition, in November 2013, China set up a

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Defense Itsui Onodera, *Defense of Japan 2013* (Annual White Paper) E-book version, Fiscal Year 2013, Digest Part III, p. 1, Tokyo, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2013/04\\_Digest\\_part3.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2013/04_Digest_part3.pdf) (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Minister of Defense Gen Nakatani, *Defense of Japan 2015* (Annual White Paper) E-book version, Fiscal Year 2015, Digest Part III, p. 1, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015\\_Digest\\_part3\\_web.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_Digest_part3_web.pdf) (accessed February 11, 2016).



**Fig. 4.2** Number of times foreign airplanes forced Japan to be in scramble mode (*Source* Ministry of Defense, “Joint Staff Press Release: Statistics on Scrambles Through Fiscal Year 2016,” April 13, 2017, [http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2017/press\\_pdf/p20170413\\_02.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2017/press_pdf/p20170413_02.pdf) (accessed June 13, 2017))

new “Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ).” This is tantamount to being given air cover by the Chinese air force to Chinese naval ships for expanding their area of activities.

In the South China Sea too, China has expanded its military activities. The South China Sea is vital for Japan’s security because of three geographical reasons. Firstly, the Southeast Asian region is a strategically important place. Southeast Asia is the centre of the Indo-Pacific, has developed very fast economically and will soon be the centre of world politics. Southeast Asia is a joint area between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and sits on key sea lines of communication (SLOCs) between the Middle East and Northeast Asia, including Japan. In addition, Southeast Asia is a resource-rich region. Secondly, Southeast Asia is not a fully integrated region and hence strategically vulnerable. Thirdly, Southeast Asia is surrounded by great powers like China, Japan, the United States, Australia

and India. Drawing from history, a parallel may be seen in the situation of Central Europe (comprising East and West Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc.) during the Cold War. During the Cold War, Central Europe suffered repeatedly due to the US–Soviet great power game. If Southeast Asia, which will be the theatre of this great power game, enters into an unstable situation, it is likely that the impact will decide the fate of the entire Indo-Pacific.

Under its claim to the “nine dotted line,” China claims 90% of the South China Sea.<sup>3</sup> Given that China is building new airports in the South China Sea, we can expect it will give air cover for its military and paramilitary ships in the near future. Japan is therefore concerned with the situation in the South China Sea.

### *Changing Military Balance: The Background Reality*

Why has China’s assertiveness intensified so much lately? In August 2013, then Japanese defence minister Itsunori Onodera’s statement at a symposium in Tokyo carried an important point worth taking note of. He reiterated, “China has made more and more advancement into the seas. When it did not have as much military capability, China tried to promote dialogue and economic cooperation, setting territorial rows aside. But when it (China) sees a chance, any daylight between a nation and its ally, it makes blunt advancements. This is what is happening and what we should learn from the situation in Southeast Asia.”<sup>4</sup> This statement clearly denotes that Southeast Asian countries cannot deter China’s assertiveness, as they do not have enough military power to do so.

If history may be referred to, the tendency of China’s maritime expansion has been based on the military balance. For example, in the South China Sea, China occupied the Paracel islands in 1974 just after the Vietnam War ended and the United States withdrew from the region. After the Soviet Union withdrew from Vietnam, China attacked the Spratly islands controlled by Vietnam in 1988. On similar lines, after

<sup>3</sup>Prof. Swaran Singh and Dr. Lilian Yamamoto, “Spectre of China’s Artificial Islands,” *Indian Defence Review*, 30, 3 (July–September 2015), pp. 78–82.

<sup>4</sup>Harumi Ozawa, “Japan Could Be ‘Main Player’ in Asia Conflict: Minister,” *Defense News*, August 26, 2013, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130826/DEFREG03/308260005/Japan-Could-Main-Player-Asia-Conflict-Minister> (accessed January 11, 2016).

the United States withdrew from the Philippines, China occupied Mischief Reef, which both the Philippines and Vietnam claimed.<sup>5</sup>

After the Cold War, the military balance around the South China Sea has been changing. The procurement of submarines is a good example since the main task of submarines is to tackle statist threats by collecting vital information about the opponent and destroying their ships. China acquired at least 43 submarines between 2000 and 2016. During the same period, Vietnam and Singapore acquired only five submarines each and Malaysia acquired two. In the South China Sea, no other coastal country has acquired submarines as of 2016. Like the situation in the South China Sea, the military balance between Japan and China has also been changing fast. Compared with China's whopping 43, Japan has acquired only 16 submarines since 2000.

Reflecting on the situation of Japan and countries around the South China Sea, it becomes evident that, despite not possessing enough military power, the United States has emerged as the key player in maintaining the military balance in that region. On 27 October 2015, US destroyer *USS Lassen* entered 12 miles from the side of China's artificial island in the South China Sea. On 8 and 9 November 2015, US B-52 strategic bombers flew within 12 miles from China's artificial islands. It is expected that such display of United States' freedom of navigation policy will stop or delay China's assertiveness in this region in the short term at least. However, Japan is also concerned with the long-term scenarios. Although US submarines are far more sophisticated than China's, numerically they have been decreasing. Since 2000, the United States has acquired only 14 submarines while the total number of submarines possessed by the United States has declined from 127 in 1990 to 68 in 2016. Vice Admiral Joseph Mulloy, deputy chief of naval operations for capabilities and resources, observed that China had more diesel and nuclear-powered submarines than the United States in February 2015.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the United States cannot concentrate all military power in Asia because it needs to deal with likely problems in other parts of

<sup>5</sup>Japan Ministry of Defense, "China's Activities in the South China Sea," December 2016, [http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/surround/pdf/ch\\_d-act\\_20161222e.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/surround/pdf/ch_d-act_20161222e.pdf) (accessed June 13, 2017).

<sup>6</sup>"China Submarines Outnumber U.S. Fleet: U.S. Admiral," *Reuter*, February 25, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/25/us-usa-china-submarines-idUSKBN-0LT2NE20150225> (accessed January 11, 2016).

the world as well. Japan and countries around the South China Sea are concerned about a situation in which the United States might be involved in conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central and South America or Africa and cannot provide enough military support in the South China Sea region in the case of a conflict erupting in the latter. Although US President Donald J. Trump promises to increase the number of warships and fighter jets to “make America great again,” US influence as a security provider has been declining. US allies and friendly countries now require a new security framework to adjust to the situation.

As mentioned above, rising Chinese and declining US power are causing the security situation around Japan to deteriorate. Because their military modernization is too fast, Japan and countries around the South China Sea are likely to suffer from China’s assertiveness in the near future. Therefore, there is a need for them to maintain the military balance with China despite its bigger military budget. What should be done?

### *The Positive Side of China’s Rise*

Despite the negative ramifications discussed above, the positive aspect of China’s rise should not be overlooked in the context of non-state security threats and other global challenges. Although countries around the Indo-Pacific have been undergoing increased economic development, there are still other challenges, such as piracy, smuggling, terrorism and failed states. These problems not only exert an impact locally, but also have wider, global-scale implications. For example, in 2001, after the 9/11 terrorist attack, people realized that Islamic extremism in one failed state substantially affects world politics at large and hence a problem of this nature cannot be contained within the confines of a particular state. Thus, Japan holds China’s efforts to deal with Islamic extremism in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa or anti-piracy measures in the coast of Somalia, etc., in a positive light. Japan has already negotiated with China on how to keep peace and order in Afghanistan. Japan has also cooperated with China in anti-piracy measures. Although Japan has not joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Japan will share an interest with China if the latter invests in economic development projects to deter terrorism.

In addition, the world needs to collectively prepare for new challenges likely to emerge in the near future. Pressing concerns like rising sea level and the challenge of climate change will trigger novel security problems in the



near future. Influx of refugees caused by these problems is one such example. In 2015, millions of refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia came to Europe. Such influx of refugees will affect world politics sooner rather than later by changing the economic and environmental conditions of the region. Thus, if China will share the responsibilities in these global problems, its rise will also have a positive impact.

However, what remains of concern is China's irresponsible behaviour. China has not accepted international arbitration on the South China Sea issue. In 2014, China sent submarines towards the Indian Ocean under the pretext of anti-piracy measures although submarines are not effective weapons to deal with piracy. If China shows this kind of attitude on global issues, countries around China, including Japan, will not be able to take China's rise in a positive light.

### *Emerging New "Alliance" System*

As mentioned above, it is important to reassess the alarming speed of China's military modernization. While on a positive note, China's rise could be integral in dealing with pressing problems, China needs to construct a responsible image and the surrounding countries need to persuade China enough to work on it. How should that be done? Two strategies might be effective.

Firstly, maintaining the military balance is the topmost priority to deter any worst-case scenario. In view of declining US military power, the best method for maintaining the military balance should be devised. Secondly, great powers around China including Japan should show to China that responsible behaviour rather than a forceful attitude will have mutually beneficial outcomes for all concerned. A cooperative system should emerge for these countries in this region to fulfil these two conditions.

For a long time, bilateral alliances led by the United States, like the Japan-US, US-South Korea, US-Australia and US-Philippines alliances, have maintained order in the Indo-Pacific. After the 1970s, even China was friendly with the United States against the Soviet Union. However, despite the United States allying with many, a deep defence relationship is lacking among its allies. For example, both Japan and Australia are US allies, but there are no close security ties between them. The headquarters of the submarine command of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force is a good example of Japan-US closeness. Despite the submarine headquarters' need to deal with sensitive military information, it is located within the

US naval base in Yokosuka, Japan. Because “Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger,” Japan and the United States have deep connectivity.<sup>7</sup> There exists no such kind of deep security connectivity between Japan and Australia.

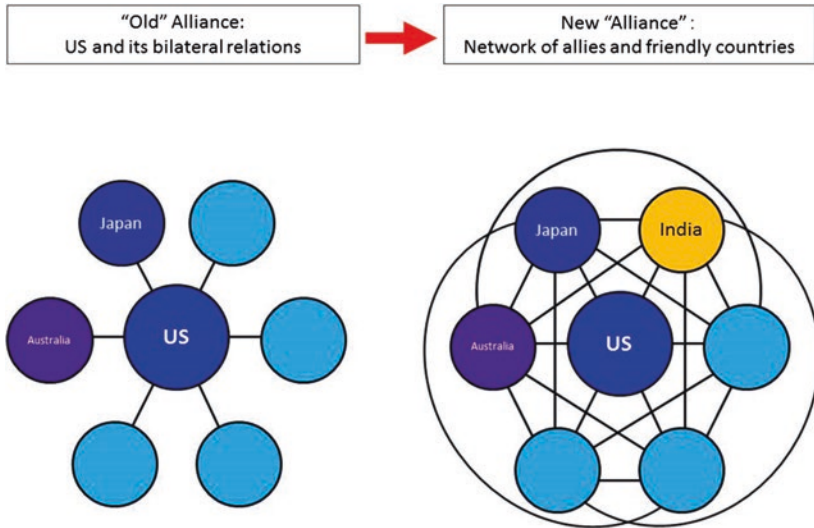
This system would effectively function if the United States has enough military resources to tackle all the problems in this region. In such a context, US allies like Japan and Australia, being dependent on US military power and information, would get necessary help from the United States and resolve issues if any.

However, the situation has changed gradually on the ground. Because US military resources have been declining, the bilateral “Old” Alliance system is not enough to maintain peace and order in this region. This changing power balance is best reflected in “China’s assertiveness” in the region and emphasizes the need for an alternative system that can function better in changed circumstances. Hence, currently, a New “Alliance” system has emerged gradually. What is the New “Alliance” system? Several multinational security cooperation arrangements have recently been formed among Japan–India–US, Japan–US–Australia, Japan–India–US–Australia–Singapore, etc. These arrangements are of key importance in understanding the New “Alliance.” There is a possibility that the network of these several minilateral security initiatives would culminate in a collective security system in the near future (Fig. 4.3).

The first Japan–India–Australia Trilateral Dialogue held in June 2015 was symbolic because it did not include the United States. The trilateral dialogue, which did not include the United States, is an effort to take on some of the responsibilities hitherto assumed by the United States. In January 2015, the seventh fleet commander of the US Navy mentioned that they would welcome Japan’s patrolling of the South China Sea.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Japan–U.S. Security Treaty: Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America,” Article V, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html> (accessed May 26, 2016).

<sup>8</sup>Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, “U.S. Would Welcome Japan Air Patrols in South China Sea,” *Reuters*, January 29, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/29/us-japan-southchinasea-idUSKBN0L20HV20150129> (accessed January 11, 2016).



**Fig. 4.3** “Old” Alliance and New “Alliance” (Source Satoru Nagao, “The Japan–India–Australia “Alliance” as Key Agreement in the Indo-Pacific,” *ISPSW Publication*, September 2015, Issue 375, The Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW), Berlin, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?en&cid=193713> (accessed September 23, 2015))

This example shows that the United States wants Japan to share some of its naval responsibilities. Hence, in the near future, it is likely that countries in this region will start new trilateral frameworks like Japan–India–Vietnam<sup>9</sup> and India–Indonesia–Australia.<sup>10</sup> In the worst-case scenario, this alliance system will maintain the military balance with China.

However, it is crucial that the concerned countries do not ignore the flexibility of this New “Alliance.” The New “Alliance” system is not solely

<sup>9</sup>Satoru Nagao, “Assessing the Strategic Importance of Vietnam: Current Security Dynamics for Japan and India,” *Defence and Security Alert*, 4, 7 (April 2013), pp. 28–31, <http://www.dsalert.org/int-experts-opinion/international-geo-politics/594-assessing-the-strategic-importance-of-vietnam-current-security-dynamics-for-japan-and-india> (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>10</sup>Ashok Malik, “Australia, India, Indonesia: A Trilateral Dialogue on Indian Ocean,” *Commentaries* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, September 17, 2013), <http://www.orfonline.org/research/australia-india-indonesia-a-trilateral-dialogue-on-indian-ocean/> (accessed January 11, 2016).

limited to allies and friendly countries, but could be extended to others including China and Russia if these countries act responsibly under the agreed set of rules (United Nation Convention for the Law of the Sea, code of conduct, etc.). For example, the United States invited China to the Rim of the Pacific Exercises in 2014. By such initiatives, the United States tried to persuade China to cooperate with it and its allies. India, Australia and most Southeast Asian countries have also held joint exercises with China. In anti-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia, not only Japan, India, the United States and other Asian and European countries, but also China and Russia cooperate among themselves. These examples indicate that this cooperative multilateral security framework has good potential not only for maintaining the military balance but also for defusing tension.

In view of both the positive and negative sides of China's rise, this New "Alliance" system is emerging as an effective system. And in this system, cooperation between a proactive Japan and a rising India will be a decisive factor. In September 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared that relations between Japan and India have "the greatest potential of any bilateral relationship anywhere in the world."<sup>11</sup> This brings up two related and important questions: (i) Why does Japan believe India is a trustworthy defence partner? and (ii) What role can Japan–India defence cooperation play?

### INDIA AS JAPAN'S TRUSTWORTHY DEFENCE PARTNER

If India, like China, challenges the status quo and disturbs stability in the region, it will no longer be viewed as a trustworthy partner by Japan. However, because of three factors, it can be inferred that India will remain trustworthy.

#### *India Is a Democratic Country*

Firstly, a democratic country has an advantage gaining trust because freedom of expression helps build confidence between countries. The holistic understanding and assessment of the military strategy of other countries is based not only on official documents but also on exchanging

<sup>11</sup>Kanwal Sibal, "India's Relations with Japan Show Us the Right Way to Look East," *Daily Mail*, January 27, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2546889/Indias-relations-Japan-right-way-look-East.html>.

opinions among experts in and out of government. However, when Chinese experts are asked about matters relating to defence, their replies are the same as the official views. They are not “allowed” to have a different view on such matters. The lack of critical thinking and opaqueness in access to information in China raises fears among the neighbouring countries about its real intentions.

On the other hand, there is no such regulation in India. For example, in 2005, a BBC survey in India showed that only 1% of Indians trust elected politicians.<sup>12</sup> Though this low level of trust is not satisfactory, it is, indeed, symbolic of the fact that anybody can voice their complaints and opinions freely. This factor helps maintain the trustworthiness of information regarding India because opinions are expressed in a free democratic environment.

In addition, democratic countries are at an advantage in leading other countries since democratic functioning supports multilateral systems. What is the role of democracy in leading a multinational system? While choosing a leader of a group, people who live in democratic countries emphasize that leaders be elected by their supporters. Leaders are supposed to care about the supporters they lead. An influential country that approaches problems by using multinational cooperation might face a similar situation. To lead many countries, they need to respect and care about the will of the people. If the leading country is also a democratic country, it can better perform the role of a leader in a multinational system.

### *India Is Not Likely to Challenge the Status Quo in South Asia*

As mentioned in the preceding sections of the chapter, is not likely to challenge the status quo in South Asia. To understand this, it is important to analyse why India’s use of military force towards countries around India is relatively restrained. Below is the list of India’s military operations since independence. This list shows that most of India’s operations are *reactive* and the Indian army has not crossed its border since 1972 except for peace keeping or peace building operations (even if intervention in Sri Lanka was a relatively big operation, the main purpose of this operation was also peacekeeping). India’s restraint in the use of force is a consistent strategy. In addition, India also accepted a United Nations

<sup>12</sup>“Pakistanis ‘Put Religion First,’” *BBC*, September 15, 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4246054.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4246054.stm) (accessed January 11, 2016).

tribunal ruled in favour of Bangladesh regarding the India–Bangladesh sea boundary dispute in 2014 (Table 4.1).

India’s foreign policy has been termed by other countries as being relatively generous and that of “strategic restraint.” If we focus on the

**Table 4.1** List of India’s military operations

	<i>Active or reactive</i>	<i>Type of operation</i>	<i>Area of operation</i>
Junagadh (1947)	Active	Limited war	Outside
India–Pak (1947–48)	Reactive	Limited war	Outside
Hyderabad (1948)	Active	Limited war	Outside
Northeast (1956–now)	Reactive	Counter-insurgency	Inside
Goa (1961)	Active	Limited war	Outside
India–China (1962)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Kutch (1965)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
India–Pak (1965)	Reactive	Limited war	Outside
Nathu La & Chola (1967)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Maoist (1967–now)	Reactive	Counter-insurgency	Inside
India–Pakistan (1971)	Active	Limited war	Outside
Siachen (1984)	Active	Limited war	Inside
Falcon & Checkerboard (1986–87)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Punjab (1984–92)	Reactive	Counter-insurgency	Inside
Brasstacks (1987)	Active	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Sri Lanka (1987–90)	Active	Peace building	Outside
Maldives (1988)	Reactive	Peace building	Outside
Kashmir (1989–now)	Reactive	Counter-insurgency	Inside
1990 Crisis (1990)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside
Kargil (1999)	Reactive	Limited war	Inside
Parakram (2001–02)	Reactive	Coercive diplomacy	Inside

*Sources* Satoru Nagao, “The Emerging India Is Not a Threat, Why?: An Assessment from Japan,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science*, III (July–December 2012), pp. 99–109. In this list, I have divided India’s military operations into three categories. Firstly, ‘Active’ or ‘Reactive’, which refers to who sent combat troops first. Secondly, there are five types of operation, ‘Limited war’ (The probabilities of total wars may have reduced after World War II. Thus, most wars are limited war), ‘Coercive diplomacy’ (Coercive diplomacy is one kind of diplomatic persuasion by using military intimidation and coercive diplomacy is not war or deterrence. In a war, one country compels its opponent by using military operation. In coercive diplomacy, it attempts to persuade the opponent. “Whereas deterrence represents an effort to dissuade an opponent from undertaking an action that has not yet been initiated, coercive diplomacy attempts to reverse actions which have already been undertaken by adversary” (Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic problems of Our Times Third Edition* (Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 196), ‘Peace building’ (Peace building is forceful operation for peace keeping), ‘Peace keeping’ (Peace keeping is military operation based on agreement of all warring parties), and “Counter-insurgency” (domestic operation to maintain law and order). Thirdly, ‘area of operation’, which refers to ‘Inside’ or ‘Outside’ of India

power balance in South Asia, we find one fitting explanation. Because India has already been the only great power in South Asia, it cannot garner more benefit from bullying smaller neighbours. India's GDP is seven times bigger than Pakistan's since the 1971 Indo-Pak War.<sup>13</sup> Now, about 80% of the total defence budget spent in South Asia is spent by India alone. If India tries to attack small neighbours, size of the opponent being far smaller, India can get only some marginal benefits at best. Instead of bullying its neighbours, India has shown a generous attitude and tried to persuade them to cooperate. Such a policy reflects considerable maturity on the part of a leader in South Asia. Thus, such generosity encourages Japan to trust India as a responsible country that will neither challenge the status quo nor disturb the peace. Simply said, India's attitude in South Asia is not China's attitude in the West Pacific.

### *The Experience of International Cooperation*

Thirdly, international cooperation inevitably leads to greater Indian influence since the country has a long experience of joint international military operations. Why is international cooperation so important for a country to be influential? There are three reasons. Firstly, an open society builds a secure feeling for other countries. Secondly, the experience gained through several multinational operations, such as peace-keeping operations, joint exercises and military capacity-building activities contributes to acquiring the know-how to manage multilateral cooperation necessary for becoming a leading country in this region. Thirdly, rich experience of international cooperation implies sufficient contribution towards global problems as a responsible great power. The Indian Army homepage, for example, states, "The Indian Army's participation in the UN peacekeeping operations spans a period of 57 years, covering 43 UN Missions in which over 90,000 Indian soldiers served in various parts of the world... Indian troops have taken part in some of the most difficult operations, and have suffered casualties in the service of the UN."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Angus Maddison's database of GDP, Population from 1926–2010, <http://www.ggd.net/MADDISON/oriindex.htm> (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>14</sup>Official website of the Indian Army, <http://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplate/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=e40A2YG3r3hzP0xjK/4HmA==&ParentID=q+ZAdzx3BlnESzGMYNUQg==&flag=4Ra01CaeT2XFy40ByUXQ> (accessed January 11, 2016).

Anti-piracy measures and joint exercises also indicate India's collaboration with other military organizations for achieving common objectives. India has organized the multilateral joint exercise *Milan*. And there are annual joint exercises or joint patrols with Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. There have been more than 60 joint Indo-US exercises over the foregoing decade and Japan and India have also so far implemented seven joint exercises.

Military capacity-building measures are also one form of international cooperation. Many foreign military personnel, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, etc., have been trained by Indian armed forces institutions, such as the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School and INS Satavahana for submariners.<sup>15</sup> India has given and is planning to give patrol vessels and planes to Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius with relevant training courses.

All the aforementioned factors fulfil India's credibility in having a rich experience of international cooperation necessary to be a responsible great power.

### THE ROLE OF JAPAN-INDIA DEFENCE COOPERATION

There are three areas where Japan-India cooperation can help maintain the military balance with China and deter the worst-case scenario.

#### *The Linkage of the India-China Border Area and the East China Sea*

In the India-China border area, it is known that the military balance is changing because Chinese military infrastructural modernization is proceeding very fast. Within 48 hours, Chinese armed forces can be ready for battle in the border area whereas India needs one week for preparation as there are not enough roads on the Indian side.<sup>16</sup> This means that

<sup>15</sup>Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Global Strategic Move: India Increases Defence Trainings in Asia, Africa and Latin America," *The Economic Times*, September 5, 2014, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-09-05/news/53602190\\_1\\_defence-cooperation-african-countries-myanmar](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-09-05/news/53602190_1_defence-cooperation-african-countries-myanmar) (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>16</sup>Deeptiman Tiwary, "Chinese Clearing Forest Cover to Grab Border Land," *The Times of India*, August 26, 2013, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-26/india/41453967\\_1\\_chinese-troops-incursion-sino-indian-border](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-26/india/41453967_1_chinese-troops-incursion-sino-indian-border) (accessed January 11, 2016).



India could land in a dangerous situation of facing Chinese forces that are more than three times bigger in the border area.<sup>17</sup>

Along with such rapid military modernization, the area of Chinese military activities too has been widening. Since 2011, India has recorded 350–450 incursions every year. Compared with 2012, the frequency of Chinese air force incursions has increased over three times in the Tibet region.<sup>18</sup> For the first time, China–Pakistan air combat exercise “Shaheen” was held in Tibet region in 2015. In addition, China is deploying troops in Pakistan-administered Kashmir as well. Thus, nowadays, Japan and India have a similar problem. And because of the geographical location where the two countries are located on opposite sides of China, Japan–India cooperation can rectify their respective numerical inferiority. For example, if India cooperates with Japan, India will not need to deal with all the Chinese fighters at once because China is likely to keep some of their fighters in their east side against Japan and vice versa. Indeed, since the United States started freedom of navigation operations in October 2015, the number of Chinese incursions in the Indo–China border area has declined.<sup>19</sup> This fact indicates that Japan–India cooperation can similarly counter China’s assertiveness.

Therefore, by using Japanese know-how of high-end military infrastructural development India can maintain the military balance with China. Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida has already stated that Arunachal Pradesh is a part of India. Japan has started to invest in India’s strategic road project in the Northeast region of India since 2014 to connect India and Southeast Asia. By means of this road, the Indian army can deploy more forces and move supplies from other areas to the border area in the Northeast region.

<sup>17</sup>Rajat Pandit, “India Boring Border Tunnels to Take on China, Pakistan,” *The Times of India*, August 16, 2012, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-16/india/33232484\\_1\\_tunnels-rangpo-sikkim](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-16/india/33232484_1_tunnels-rangpo-sikkim) (accessed January 11, 2016); Raful Singh, “India Far Behind China’s Combat Power,” *Hindustan Times*, December 12, 2013, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-far-behind-china-s-combat-power/article1-1161711.aspx> (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>18</sup>Air Marshal (Rtd) M. Matheswaran, “China’s Tibet Build Up,” *Deccan Herald*, May 5, 2015, <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/475657/chinas-tibet-build-up.html> (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>19</sup>Hakeem Irfan, “Incursion Bids by China’s PLA Down by Over 15%,” *The Economic Times*, December 21, 2015, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/incursion-bids-by-chinas-pla-down-by-over-15/articleshow/50260002.cms> (accessed February 11, 2016).

This road-building project is just a beginning. Because Japan's government will ease those regulations that restrict Japan's Official Development Assistance to support military-related dual-use infrastructural projects, further substantial support from Japan's side may be expected in India's strategic projects like construction of roads, tunnels, airports and helipads to deploy military force.

*India's Rise Helps Lower the Heavy Burden of Japan and the United States in the Indian Ocean*

*China Has Started to Increase Its Military Activities in the Indian Ocean*

Since the mid-2000s, China has started to increase its military activities in the Indian Ocean. Because China is concerned about its total dependence on its sea lines of communication from the Middle East through the Strait of Malacca, it has tried to make an alternative route via Middle East–Pakistan–China and/or Middle East–Myanmar–China through the Indian Ocean. In 2012, at least 22 contacts were recorded with vessels suspected to be Chinese submarines patrolling in the Indian Ocean.<sup>20</sup> On 3 December 2013, the Foreign Affairs Office of China's Ministry of Defense informed India's military attaché in Beijing about the two-month deployment of their nuclear submarine.<sup>21</sup> In 2014, at least two Chinese submarines and one submarine support-ship docked at a port in Sri Lanka. In 2015, one Chinese submarine called at the port of Karachi in Pakistan. Currently, these submarines have been sighted on average four times every three months.<sup>22</sup> The activities of these submarines indicate that China's area of influence will expand in the Indian Ocean because these Chinese submarines can attack India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines and SLOCs at will.

<sup>20</sup>Rahul Singh, "China's Submarines in Indian Ocean Worry Indian Navy," *Hindustan Times*, April 7, 2013, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/china-s-submarines-in-indian-ocean-worry-indian-navy/story-0Fjrc7s9jHwg1ybpiTSL.html> (accessed May 26, 2016).

<sup>21</sup>"Chinese N-Sub Prowled Indian Ocean: Two-Month Patrol Demonstrated Glitch-Free Deployment," *Indian Military Review*, 5, 4 (April 2014), p. 8.

<sup>22</sup>Sanjeev Miglani and Greg Torode, "Wary of China's Indian Ocean Activities, U.S., India Discuss Anti-Submarine Warfare," *Reuter*, May 2, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-usa-submarines-idUSKCN0XS1NS> (accessed May 26, 2016).

In addition, China also exports weapons to countries around India. A submarine, especially, has an important role and effect in India's strategy. Pakistan decided to import eight Chinese submarines for their navy, and Bangladesh has imported two submarines from China. Logically then, the Indian Navy will need to have enough ships to keep a regular watch over the location and purpose of other countries' submarines. This means that these submarines will, to a great extent, regulate India's naval activities. In addition, the possibility that India's hostile neighbour, Pakistan, may also try to obtain nuclear submarines in its constant effort to counter India's rising power in the region must not be overlooked. Because Pakistan does not have the technology, there is a reasonable possibility that China will support the development of such "indigenous" nuclear submarines to counter India.

The weak point, however, in China's strategy is that it does not have any naval port in this region. Therefore, under the "String of Pearl Strategy," China is investing in the development of many ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Indian Ocean. If the Chinese navy uses civil-purpose ports as naval supply bases, such as Gwadar in Pakistan, China could successfully tackle the lack of a naval port in the region. In addition, China has set up a naval base in Djibouti for an anti-piracy mission.

*India Will Be the Most Influential Sea Power to Fill the Power Vacuum of the Indian Ocean Region*

Why has China's assertiveness heightened the Indian Ocean lately? The changing US-China military balance may have affected the situation. The United States became an influential country in this region, especially after the 1970s. It dispatched aircraft carrier battle groups several times in order to respond to conflicts within the region, such as the Indo-China War, the third Indo-Pakistan War, the Gulf War, *Operation Enduring Freedom* after 9/11 and the Iraq War. The United States has used the island of Diego Garcia as a hub to deploy military power. Thus, it continues to be the most powerful presence within the region. However, because US naval power has been declining, China has been increasing its naval activities in the Indian Ocean as in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Thus, we need to find an alternative country to fill the power vacuum in this region.

There is a high possibility that India will be the most influential sea power to fill the power vacuum of the Indian Ocean Region in the near

future. There are six reasons pointed out by Alfred Thayer Mahan who analysed why Britain was a sea power: (1) “Geographical Position,” (2) “Physical Conformation (especially, the length of coast line),” (3) “Extent of Territory (especially the balance between the extent of coast-line and military defence resources),” (4) “Size of Population (for working at sea),” (5) “Character of the People” and (6) “Character of the Government.”<sup>23</sup>

First of all, India has an advantageous “Geographical Position” because the Indian subcontinent is separated from the Eurasian continent by high mountains. This advantage is also proved by historical facts. There are only three empires that dominated most of the subcontinent in Indian history: the Maurya Empire, the Mughal Empire and the British Raj and all their territories were bordered by the mountain range (Fig. 4.4). Thus, the Indian subcontinent is a kind of island. And India can concentrate on its naval forces if it possesses the necessary will.

In addition, the history of the Cholas indicates another geographical advantage for India. Representatives of the Chola Empire, which was located in Southern India, made an expedition to Southeast Asia in the eleventh century. The sphere of its influence had expanded along the entire coastal area off the Bay of Bengal. This historical fact is another prominent example of India’s geographical advantage. Since India is located at the northern centre of the Indian Ocean, it is able to access not only Southeast Asia, but also all sides of the Indian Ocean, including the Middle East and East Africa.

India has “Physical Conformation” because it has 7517 km of coast-line (of which the mainland is 6100 km). The Indian Navy being the only strong power as a coastal country of the Indian Ocean Region means that India has enough “Extent of Territory.” Presently, India is acquiring more than 100 warships. In the next ten years, it is planning to increase its warships from 136 to 200.<sup>24</sup> There is a possibility that India will possess three aircraft carrier battle groups and nine nuclear submarines by 2030.

<sup>23</sup>A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1890).

<sup>24</sup>“Indian Navy to Have 200 Warships in Next 10 Years,” *The Times of India*, November 13, 2013, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-13/india/44028232\\_1\\_ins-vikramaditya-navy-day-ins-khukri](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-13/india/44028232_1_ins-vikramaditya-navy-day-ins-khukri) (accessed January 11, 2016).



**Fig. 4.4** Influence area of empires in the subcontinent (Source Satoru Nagao, “The Emerging India Is Not a Threat, Why?: An Assessment from Japan,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science*, III (July–December 2012), pp. 99–109. [http://203.200.1.30/CSIR\\_RootRepository/Content/Themes/Defence/DefenceHistory/HistoryofDefen/History/df%20history.pdf](http://203.200.1.30/CSIR_RootRepository/Content/Themes/Defence/DefenceHistory/HistoryofDefen/History/df%20history.pdf) (accessed January 7, 2016))

India has the sixth largest population at sea, consisting of 55,000 sailors, employed in various countries.<sup>25</sup> Thus, India also satisfies the condition of “Number of Population” to work at sea. Based on the history of the Chola Empire, the “Character of the People” in India could be regarded as sea power-oriented. And finally, along with the “Character of Government” point, two reasons could be cited to show that the Indian government is interested in expanding its sea power. The report “Nonalignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty

<sup>25</sup>Japanese Shipowner’s Association (Japanese homepage), [http://www.jsanet.or.jp/qanda/text/q4\\_43.html](http://www.jsanet.or.jp/qanda/text/q4_43.html) (accessed May 26, 2016).

First Century,” drafted in consultation with Indian national security advisors, states, “presently, Indian military power has a continental orientation. Emerging as a maritime power should thus be India’s strategic objective.”<sup>26</sup> And India’s defence budget has accordingly increased the share of its navy from 12.7% in 1990 to 15.8% in 2015.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, according to Mahan’s theory, India has sufficient potential to become a sea power, also simultaneously suggesting that India could become an influential country in the Indian Ocean Region. If India has the required will and enough capabilities, the cooperation with India could contribute a lot for Japan. This is because Japan and its ally, the United States, will be able to relieve themselves from the heavy burden of safeguarding security in the Indian Ocean and deploy more military force in the East China Sea and West China Sea to maintain the military balance in Asia.

*The Potential Contribution of Japan–India Defence Cooperation in the Indian Ocean*

If India becomes a sea power, what could be the contribution of Japan–India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean? For example, Japan is planning to assist India’s airport project in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep Islands by exporting a sophisticated radar system and a power plant. If India could strengthen these bases, it would be relatively easy to project power into the Malacca Strait.

Japan can also contribute to India’s warship-building capabilities, including aircraft carriers and submarines. Japan already possesses sophisticated anti-submarine helicopter carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates and conventional submarines. At present, India wants not only to import arms, but also to develop the capacity to build under the “Make in India” policy. If so, Japan–India shipbuilding cooperation will be a good initiative.

<sup>26</sup>Sunil Khilnani, Rajiv Kumar, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Prakash Menon, Nandan Nilekani, Srinath Raghavan, Shyam Saran, and Siddharth Baradarajan, “Nonalignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty-first Century” (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, February 2012), p. 38, [http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment%202.0\\_1.pdf](http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment%202.0_1.pdf) (accessed May 26, 2016).

<sup>27</sup>Ministry of Defence (Government of India), “Annual Report 2015–2016,” p. 13, <http://mod.nic.in/writereaddata/Annual2016.pdf> (accessed May 26, 2016).

The strategic cooperation potential between Japan and India is not only limited to shipbuilding capabilities, but can be extended to other capabilities. It is well known that Japan and India are negotiating for the sale of Japanese US-2 rescue planes. This rescue plane can land on the sea and fly from the sea. Despite “rescuing” being the main purpose of the plane, it also has another tactical function, i.e., it can be used for marking the country’s presence. For example, if India deploys this plane for rescuing people or for disaster management in other countries, it will be perceived as a marker of India’s will to extend tangible support to those in need and thus mark India’s presence. Their image of India will improve and India can expand its influence in these countries. From Japan’s perspective, this plane could be a very useful political tool for India.

The US-2 is just a beginning for the arms trade between the two countries. Japan has many such sophisticated technologies to offer. For example, to protect India’s aircraft carriers, India needs to deal with China’s anti-ship ballistic missiles that can attack India’s aircraft carrier. This means that India needs a sea-based missile defence system. Under Japan–US joint development of a sea-based missile defence system, Japan is developing some of the most important parts of this system. If so, Japan and India along with the United States can cooperate in the missile defence sector. And because missile defence systems are closely related to space technologies, there is a possibility that Japan–US–India cooperation in the missile defence sector will evolve into space defence cooperation as well.

The minesweeper is also an important tool for India to deal with Chinese submarines because submarines can set up sea mines. Japan has good know-how and equipment to deal with sea mines. Since World War II, Japan has had to sweep sea mines, an exercise that has continued for more than 65 years after the war. In 1950, Japan joined the Korean War to sweep sea mines. In 1991, it made an international contribution by sending minesweepers to deal with mines deployed in the Gulf War. Basically, these points elucidate that Japan has gathered substantial sophisticated know-how for minesweeping. If India needs to deal with sea mines set up by China’s submarines, Japan and India can share this skill and equipment.

The coastal sonar system will also be an important product in the said context. Japan’s system to detect any move from a submarine to the small ships on the surface and inside the sea has been very sophisticated. Japan and India should collaborate in this sector too.

In addition, even when we think about developing infrastructure in countries around India, Japan–India cooperation is useful there too. In the countries around India, China has invested a huge budget to build infrastructure and expand its influence. If India does not possess enough budget and technology, China will increase its influence in the Indian Ocean Region and harm the “great power image” of India. Thus, defence cooperation is a useful method to rectify India’s individual numerical inferiority.

Base-sharing is also a useful tool for the Indian Navy for asserting their presence. If possible, Japan–US–India should use the same base in Djibouti and in the other parts of the coastal area both against piracy and for countering China’s maritime presence in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, to deal with China’s naval activities in the Indian Ocean, Japan–India defence cooperation could be very effective and useful.

### *Japan and India Can Collaborate to Support Countries Around South China Sea*

In the South China Sea, because China’s military power is far bigger than that of other countries, the countries around the South China Sea need to amalgamate their leadership as one integrated power and beef up their military power with a trustworthy partner to provide coastal states with military support. In this case, Japan–India strategic cooperation will be useful.

By now, India has already started to support armed forces in Southeast Asia as a part of its “Look East Policy” and its updated version “Act East.” India has trained aircraft carrier crews in Thailand, submarine crews and fighter pilots in Vietnam, and pilots and the land crew of fighter airplanes in Malaysia. Further, India has agreed to train the pilots and provide maintenance to the fighter airplanes in the Indonesian Air Force. Singapore is using India’s land and air bases for training.

Although Japan has not supported armed forces in Southeast Asia since long, it has supported many systems, including anti-piracy systems, tsunami warning systems and cyber defence systems, and has built infrastructures like airports and seaports. These systems are indirectly related to maritime security in the South China Sea. In addition, under the current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan has also started arms donation to these countries. For example, Japan will donate patrol ships to Vietnam and the Philippines. In the case of the latter, Japan has leased two TC-90



training planes that can boost the navy's capability to conduct maritime aerial reconnaissance.

Thus, if Japan and India collaborate with each other, they can support countries around the South China Sea more effectively. For example, if Japan built an airport in Vietnam and the Indian Air Force trained Vietnam's fighter pilots, Vietnam could get both an airport and fighter pilots. Furthermore, if accepted by Vietnam, both Japan and India can share the air base for refuelling and thus support Vietnam by showing their presence in this region. Hence, Japan–India–Vietnam cooperation can create a “win-win-win” situation. Japan and India can also collaborate to establish a communication network project in the South China Sea.<sup>28</sup>

To achieve this goal, what kind of systems ought to be established? In January 2014, when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Delhi, the two prime ministers “welcomed the launch of a bilateral dialogue on ASEAN affairs.” It will be useful if this will promote a series of trilateral strategic dialogues, for instance, Japan–India–Vietnam, Japan–India–Philippines, Japan–India–Singapore, Japan–India–Indonesia, Japan–India–Malaysia. Through such dialogues, both Japan and India can share information, better identify the needs of these Southeast Asian countries and decide how to cooperate or support them.

## CONCLUSION

To summarize the salient points of the article, China's rise has had both a positive and a negative impact, but lately the negative ramifications have gained leverage. The main reason lies in the changing US–China military balance. Countries around China, including Japan, want to deter its assertiveness by maintaining the military balance and persuading China to show more responsible behaviour. For this, the emerging new security cooperation network will be effective. Security cooperation between proactive Japan and rising India will be the decisive factor. India's behaviour is also likely to remain that of a responsible power because India is a democratic country with a consistent history of restrained military action against its neighbours. Furthermore, India's experience of multilateral operations has aided in both its reputation and

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Dr. Pankaj Jha, Director of Indian Council of World Affairs, March 16, 2016.

experience regarding responsible behaviour in international society. To maintain the military balance, Japan and India can cooperate by using the linkage of the East China Sea and the India–China border, share the burden of ensuring stability in the Indian Ocean and collaborate to support countries around China in the South China Sea. Collectively speaking, then, these are the reasons why Japan is seeking more cooperation with India lately.

Finally, Japan’s role in US–India relations needs to be considered. Here, Japan’s role is especially important. Because of historical experience, there are uncertainties between the United States and India. For the United States, Pakistan has been important for dealing with the Soviet Union or Islamic extremism. But India is not comfortable about American support to Pakistan. At the same time, the United States is concerned about India’s independent foreign policies. India cooperates with not only the United States, but also with Russia. Japan can counter these uncertainties. Japan has been a trustworthy ally for the United States for more than 60 years. And Japan–India relations have been progressing very fast too. This means that Japan is trustworthy for both the United States and India. If and when the United States or India face problems or frictions with each other, Japan, in view of its congenial relations with both countries, will act as messenger or mediator for both. Thus, good and stable Japan–US–India relations seem the best strategic arrangement for both the United States and India.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated, “The 21st century belongs to Asia ... but how the 21st century will be depends on how strong and progressive India–Japan ties are.”<sup>29</sup> The time has now come to proactively further this cooperation to ensure prosperous stability in the whole of the Indo-Pacific.

<sup>29</sup>Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan and India Vow to Boost Defence Ties During Summit,” *Reuters*, September 1, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/09/01/japan-india-investment-modi-idINKBN0GW15520140901> (accessed November 20, 2015).

# Integrating an Ally and an Aligner in a Principled Security Network: The United States and the India–Japan Strategic Partnership

*Satu Limaye*

**Abstract** This chapter examines American interests in the India–Japan strategic partnership and the India–Japan–United States trilateral relationship. Limaye suggests that the United States would benefit from some relief from its heavy defence burden in the Asia-Pacific. Improving ties between India and Japan as well as the triangular defence relationship with the United States would help accomplish this. The author also stresses the effect of domestic political changes in these three countries on policy trajectories and the internal bilateral tensions between each. Another key predicament relates to the divergent approaches adopted by Japan and the United States that impact India’s integration into the regional economic order—notably, its entry into the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) organization. With this in

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view, the chapter offers the long-term recommendation that India, Japan and the US work out ways to coordinate on commercial ties—including international and regional economic rules, norms and institutions—to build a sustainable partnership to complement their expanding defence relationship.

**Keywords** United States · US–Japan–India Trilateral Dialogue  
US rebalance · Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)  
Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

## INTRODUCTION

American perspectives of Japan–India relations and the US role in the relationship—through its separate bilateral alliance with Tokyo and alignment with New Delhi and also through participation in the US–Japan–India Trilateral Dialogue and maritime exercise *Malabar*—are currently positive and expectant. This is widely true in the US government and among policy analysts, and generally on a bipartisan basis. Even President Donald Trump who, during his election campaign, raised critiques about alliances and partnerships across the Asia-Pacific<sup>1</sup> seems to regard the United States–Japan–India trilateral partnership as significant and welcome. Speaking in his Rose Garden appearance with visiting Indian Prime Minister Modi on June 26, 2017, President Trump highlighted the fact that “[o]ur militaries are working every day to enhance cooperation between our military forces. And next month, they will join together with the Japanese navy to take place in the largest maritime exercise ever conducted in the vast Indian Ocean.”<sup>2</sup>

Prior to President Trump, the most frequent and hopeful American public commentators about these ties have tended to be strong proponents of an “alliances first,” “league of democracies,” and realpolitik approach to foreign and defence policy in the Asia-Pacific and among the most concerned about China’s future threats based on recent assertive

<sup>1</sup>See Robert Sutter and Satu P. Limaye, *America’s 2016 Election Debate on Asia Policy and Asian Reactions*, East West Center, October 2016, <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/americas-2016-election-debate-asia-policy-and-asian-reactions>.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/26/remarks-president-trump-and-prime-minister-modi-india-joint-press>.

actions in the East and South China Seas.<sup>3</sup> But as President Trump's remarks suggest, the concept of the United States–Japan–India trilateral now appears to be an accepted part of America's strategic toolkit in the Asia-Pacific region even among leaders who are not part of a traditional pattern of American foreign policy approaches.

Still, the “alliances first,” “league of democracies” and realpolitik ideological and policy roots are important to appreciate because they are consistent with the chronological history of the development of trilateral ties. Under the President George W. Bush Administration that took office in January 2001, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), released on September 10, 2001, articulated the concept of an “east Asian littoral” running from the Sea of Japan to the Bay of Bengal. Though the concept did not fully “incorporate” India in that it stopped at the Bay of Bengal, it was a substantive change from the 1990s when US East Asia strategy reports simply did not mention India (except the one issued in 1998 after India's May 1998 nuclear tests—and these mentions were certainly not to facilitate improved United States–India relations). The Bush Administration also took bureaucratic steps to include India in its thinking and policy regarding East Asia and the Pacific—for example by incorporating India into the Asia section of its National Security Council (NSC). But the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 interrupted this overall line of work—which might well be characterized as a precursor to the latter “rebalance” or “pivot” to the Asia-Pacific announced during President Obama's administration. Later, in the second term of the Bush Administration, the initial iteration of the United States–Japan–India trilateral (which was actually a “quadrilateral” including Australia) was held on the sidelines of an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting. At the time, the Bush Administration had counterpart conservatives in Prime Minister Abe of Japan who was the initiator of the effort, and Prime Minister Howard in Australia, but a non-conservative leader in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in India. This quadrilateral was scuttled, at least in significant part, ironically, because of Beijing's opposition.

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, Daniel Twining, “Abe, Modi Exercise Their Right to Help Shape Asia's Future,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 10, 2015, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Abe-Modi-exercise-their-right-to-help-shape-Asia-s-future>; Robert Manning, “Abe's India Visit Highlights Asia's Security Ties,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 12, 2015, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Viewpoints/Viewpoints/Abe-s-India-visit-highlights-Asia-s-security-ties>; Editorial, “Asia's Axis of Freedom India Japan,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/asia-axis-of-freedom-1450315204>.

During President Obama's term, trilateral relations with Japan and India were further developed even if the political configurations in the three capitals were still more mixed—with the first ministerial-level meeting of the trilateral occurring in September 2015 (the trilateral kicked off in 2011 at the Assistant Secretary of State-level). Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking at the first ministerial meeting in New York, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, stated that the US “really welcome[s] this collaboration. It’s an important moment for us to be able to underscore our interest in the Indo-Pacific region as part of India’s East Asia policy, and also part of Japan’s very active engagement with South and Southeast Asia under Prime Minister Abe.”<sup>4</sup> Linking America’s “rebalance,” India’s “Act East” and Japan’s “proactive contributions to peace” policies as a common basis of engagement with each other is a key element in the American perspective; a nod to perceived synergies and convergences in the region amongst the three democracies. In an editorial entitled “Asia’s Axis of Freedom,” the *Wall Street Journal* characterized enhanced India–Japan relations in the wake of Prime Minister Abe’s December 2015 visit to New Delhi as “one of Asia’s most promising developments” and welcomed the “tightening of the knot” through expanded “economic and strategic agreements.”<sup>5</sup> And Richard Fontaine, President of the Center for a New American Security, writes “Washington should welcome the new links between its Japanese ally and its Indian strategic partner and encourage their further growth.”<sup>6</sup> And US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter made the case for the United States–Japan–India trilateral as the first element (what he termed “pioneering trilateral mechanisms”) of a “principled security network.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>John Kerry, Secretary of State, *Remarks with Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida*, September 29, 2015, New York, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/09/247485.htm>.

<sup>5</sup>“Asia’s Axis of Freedom,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/asias-axis-of-freedom-1450315204>.

<sup>6</sup>Richard Fontaine, “Where Is America in Japan and India’s Plans for Asia?” *The National Interest*, December 28, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/where-america-japan-indias-plans-asia-14741>.

<sup>7</sup>Ashton Carter, Remarks on “Asia-Pacific’s Principled Security Network” at 2016 IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, June 4, 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/791213/remarks-on-asia-pacifics-principled-security-network-at-2016-iiss-shangri-la-di/>.

The trilateral arrangement has seen some of its most important advances over the past few years at a time of growing “strategic distrust” of China in all three countries. A separate Japan–India–Australia trilateral also held its first meeting in June 2015; with a conservative Prime Minister Abbott then in office in Canberra as a counterpart to Prime Ministers Abe and Modi.

Today, conservatives again hold power in both New Delhi and Tokyo and in large measure in the United States (at least in the sense of a Republican party-led administration with several relevant officials from the conservative foreign policy and military establishment). As these political and ideational dynamics suggest, an ongoing theme of the United States–Japan–India trilateral is the calibration between the political configurations that create ebbs and flows in the effort and the structural factors that appear to be driving the initiative’s steady development and sustainability. To date, structural factors and political configurations mostly have gone hand in hand, and even when political configurations have not been aligned, the trilateral has moved ahead. Whether this augurs continued progress in the years ahead is not certain, but the evident suggests that the structural factors might now outweigh the political ones.

### AMERICAN INTERESTS AND SUPPORT FOR JAPAN–INDIA/ TRILATERAL RELATIONS

While appreciating that India–Japan relations in their current incarnation and the trilateral dialogue are recent and still evolving, there are ample symbolic and substantive grounds for American interest and support. The image of cooperation amongst the United States, Japan and India, respectively the 3rd, 2nd and 10th largest populations and the 1st, 3rd and 9th largest economies, and all democracies, is a powerful political and policy symbol; with some domestic resonance in all three countries. Public opinion polling shows particularly strong support in the United States–India and United States–Japan dyads—but there is mutual goodwill in Japan–India ties too; though India’s views of Japan are less favourable than Japan’s views of India.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>See Bruce Stokes, “How Asia-Pacific Publics See Each Other and Their National Leaders,” Pew Research Center, September 2, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/09/02/how-asia-pacific-publics-see-each-other-and-their-national-leaders/>. On American and Japanese views of each other see “Americans, Japanese: Mutual Respect 70

Within all three countries there is no major domestic opposition or obstacle to improving relations with each other even if there are disagreements about specific elements of relations (e.g. some opposition in Japan to civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India or American criticism of India's trade and investment policies—which has grown under the current Trump Administration).

The fact that both India and Japan are democracies also makes it easier for the United States to advocate and pursue closer ties with both countries in terms of domestic politics. American domestic constraints to improving ties with New Delhi and Tokyo are insignificant compared to constraints to improving ties with other major countries such as China and Russia. The more intriguing issue is not why such an alignment in international affairs is symbolically and substantively significant today but why it has taken so long to materialize and just how far it can go. Apart from the symbolic benefits of robust ties among like-minded democracies, there are more concrete reasons for US interest and support for these relationships.

First, the United States' ties with both India and Japan have been steadily improving. The comparatively recent and robust improvements in United States–India ties—growing defence sales; the signing by India of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), one of the “foundational agreements” that will facilitate defence cooperation; a major defence trade and technology initiative or DTTI, expanded trade and investment ties, and much more frequent high-level visits between leaders—have received considerable attention.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the United States–Japan alliance, in part because it is a foundational structure of the post-war international system and critical to the United States remaining forward postured in the Asia Pacific region, not to mention to the defence of Japan, receives somewhat less attention in terms of recent positive developments. Important improvements have occurred in

Years After the End of WWII,” <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/04/07/americans-japanese-mutual-respect-70-years-after-the-end-of-wwii/>. And on American and Indian views of each other see *America Divided: Political Partisanship and US Foreign Policy: Results of the 2015 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy*, [http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/CCGA\\_PublicSurvey2015.pdf](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/CCGA_PublicSurvey2015.pdf).

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Council on Foreign Relations Task Force Report, *Working with a Rising India: A Joint Venture for the New Century*, November 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/india/working-rising-india/p37233>.



United States–Japan relations since the immediate post-Cold War era sense of drift (recall the alliance “crisis” of the first Gulf War) and worries that Japan was seeking to lead a new Asian regional economic order (“lead goose of the flying geese model”). In 2015, Prime Minister Abe became the first Japanese leader to address a joint session of the US Congress, the two countries promulgated new defence guidelines and Japan subsequently passed domestic implementing legislation. Japan entered into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) (especially astounding when one considers the previously fraught United States–Japan commercial/trade tensions of the 1980s and 1990s), and the range and sophistication of military exercises and missile defence cooperation are major developments in moving the United States–Japan alliance forward. At the same time, Japan is also seeking more “autonomy within the alliance” and pursue what has been termed security “normalization” on its own. These two trends, taken together, suggest a more capable and dynamic United States–Japan relationship too.

The United States is, for both Japan and India, the most important external partner—notwithstanding numerous specific policy differences—and this is a critical advantage for the United States as it undertakes trilateral cooperation. Indeed, within evolving international strategic and economic dynamics (e.g. the rise of China, great power tensions and production and supply chain globalization), America’s importance for India’s and Japan’s calculations is rising, not declining. A variable that affects this is America’s *willingness* to continue to be the key international player, not its *capacity* to be such a player. And debate about the balance of “willingness” versus “capacity” has come to the fore since the Trump Administration took office.

Second, the United States regards both Japan and India as stakeholders in the international liberal order, not challengers. This is not to suggest that there are no divergences on international rules, norms and institutions in a variety of areas from international whaling to trading arrangements. But having the international systemic weight of both Japan and India largely if not uniformly in support of the prevailing, largely US constructed and led liberal order—even as they, especially India, seek modifications to that order—is to the advantage of Washington. Washington is particularly mindful that Japan and India are aligned (along with Germany and Brazil) in a bid to become members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Acknowledgement that the United States, Japan and India share common interests and values

is a regular feature of government and expert commentary characterizations of the interactions among them.<sup>10</sup>

Third, most forthrightly expressed from many American non-government perspectives, improved Japan–India and trilateral ties are critical to dealing with a rising China for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. Richard Fontaine of the Center for New American Security (CNAS) argues: “By balancing China and ensuring that it rises in a region where the democratic powers are also strong and working together, closer ties between Tokyo and New Delhi help anchor a peace that is favourable to prosperity and liberal values. They demonstrate that, contrary to Beijing’s claims, the story of Asian security is about much more than an American fixation with “containing” China.”<sup>11</sup> Fontaine also says “The aim should be not to ensnare China in that web but to ensure that the United States and its partners balance rising Chinese power and deal with Beijing from a position of strength.”

John Hemmings frames the benefits of the Japan–India relationship as part of the now some two-decade-old defence policy emphasis on creating a web of relationships amongst partners and allies. He writes: “However, an interlocking web of alliances around this struggling behemoth can deter it from unwise adventurism and act as a constraining influence.”<sup>12</sup> Such an interpretation is consistent with official US policy expressed by former Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter’s support for the United States–Japan–India arrangement as a pioneering trilateral mechanism of a principled security network in the Asia-Pacific. Daniel Twining has used the specific case of the United States and India’s invitation to Japan to join naval exercises as “demonstrating how trilateral cooperation can shore up Asia’s fragile security architecture—and complicate China’s ambitions to emerge as the region’s dominant power.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>See for example, Department of State, United States–Japan–India Trilateral, December 19, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/12/179172.htm>.

<sup>11</sup>Richard Fontaine, “Where Is America in Japan and India’s Plans for Asia?” *The National Interest*, December 28, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/where-america-japan-indias-plans-asia-14741>.

<sup>12</sup>John Hemmings, “Don’t Constrain an Expansionist China Alone. Try Trilaterals,” December 2, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/dont-constrain-expansionist-china-alone-try-trilaterals-14479>.

<sup>13</sup>Daniel Twining, “Abe, Modi Exercise Their Right to Help Shape Asia’s Future,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 10, 2015, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Abe-Modi-exercise-their-right-to-help-shape-Asia-s-future>.

And Walter Lohman of the Heritage Foundation raises the question whether “Responding to China’s Rise: Could a ‘Quad’ Approach Help?”<sup>14</sup> So far, the official trilateral dialogue has steered clear of directly seeking to frame discussions as anti-China, but the “China driver” is clearly an important element pushing the three countries closer together—and it is certainly seen that way in Beijing.

A fourth reason for the United States to welcome closer Japan–India relations is that the developing relationship can contribute to a key US defence policy objective: linking America’s Asia-Pacific alliances and partnerships together to achieve a range of outcomes such as:

- Promoting security cooperation with allies and friendly nations;
- Creating favorable balances of military power in critical areas of the world to deter aggression or coercion;
- Linking the US Department of Defense’s strategic direction with those of US allies and friends;
- Enhancing interoperability and peacetime preparations for coalition operations;
- Promoting bilateral and multilateral engagement in the region and cooperative actions to address common security threats;
- Building [allies and partner] capacity and developing mechanisms to share the risks and responsibilities;
- Increasingly working with key allies and partners to sustain stability and peace as the distribution of global political, economic and military power is becoming more diffuse;
- Encouraging allies and partners to enhance their roles in security and in regular multilateral security cooperation;
- Expecting more from allies even as their military power is mostly in decline, particularly relative to potential threats... an allied “pool” for force demand and supply, and increasing interoperability and training; and
- Creating capable allies and partners to assure access to and use of the global commons, both by strengthening international norms of

<sup>14</sup>Walter Lohman, “Responding to China’s Rise: Could a ‘Quad’ Approach Help?” *The National Interest*, June 25, 2015, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/responding-chinas-rise-could-quad-approach-help-13182>.

responsible behaviour and by maintaining relevant and interoperable military capabilities (2012 Strategic Guidance).<sup>15</sup>

Enhanced Japan–India ties in cooperation with the United States could contribute to each of these outcomes, including those that predate the development of substantively improved Japan–India ties in the past decade or so.<sup>16</sup> The Obama Administration’s pivot/rebalance has echoed the themes relating to allies and partners: “Our challenge now is to build a web of partnerships and institutions across the Pacific that is as durable and as consistent with American interests and values as the web we have built across the Atlantic. That is the touchstone of our efforts in all these areas.”<sup>17</sup> The Trump Administration’s first National Security Strategy, released in December 2017, states that the U.S. will “expand our defense and security cooperation with India, ... support India’s growing relationships throughout the [Indo-Pacific] region [including presumably Japan] ... [and] support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region.”

The first instance in which a *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) specifically juxtaposed Japan and India in the context of linking allies and partners was in 2006. That document stated, “In the Pacific, alliances with Japan, Australia, Korea and others promote bilateral and multilateral engagement in the region and cooperative actions to address common security threats. India is also emerging as a great power and a key strategic partner. Close cooperation with these partners in the long war on terrorism, as well as in efforts to counter WMD proliferation and other non-traditional threats, ensures the continuing need for these alliances and for improving their capabilities.”<sup>18</sup> Understandably, the 2006 QDR, the first written after the 9/11 attacks on the United States and at the peak of the “global war on terror” (GWOT)—the 2001 QDR was publicly released the day *before* the

<sup>15</sup>United States Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, [http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf).

<sup>16</sup>The specific phrases are derived from the U.S. *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* published since 2001.

<sup>17</sup>Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>.

<sup>18</sup>Department of Defense, QDR, 2006.

9/11 attacks—also reflected the Bush Administration’s very positive disposition towards both Japan and India.

From the American perspective, the prime and parallel structural drivers of China’s potential future challenge and the alliance and partner network effort of US defence policy form the bedrock of a potentially sustained and systematic improvement in Japan–India and United States–Japan–India relations.

Fifth, Japan–India cooperation under a framework of the United States–Japan alliance and improving United States–India relations could help realize efficiencies and deal with declining defence budgets and commitments elsewhere. Richard Fontaine writes, “And at a time of declining U.S. military resources and rising commitments in the Middle East and Europe, Indo-Japanese cooperation helps reduce gaps that would otherwise emerge in the rebalance of U.S. policy toward Asia.”<sup>19</sup> Again, the objective of coordination among the US’s “Rebalance,” Japan’s re-engagement with Southeast and South Asia, and India’s “Act East” policy is an important driver of American interest in and support to Japan–India and trilateral relations. While the consonance of the US’s recent “rebalance” and India’s two-decade-old “Look” and “Act East” policies are often noted, it is also crucial to appreciate that Japan’s efforts to engage India, primarily but not exclusively under Prime Minister Abe, reveal a clear set of strategic priorities on the part of Tokyo. These priorities include giving substance to his concept of “proactive contribution to peace” in the form of being a security provider, countering China’s military and commercial activism across the Indo-Pacific, building a bilateral relationship with India, taking advantage of partner and alliance networking opportunities, and strengthening ties with maritime Asia.

Sixth, the United States welcomes Japan–India cooperation regarding Asia-Pacific regional institutions. For example “multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific” was the first subject mentioned in the 7 June 2015 trilateral meeting held in Honolulu.<sup>20</sup> The three countries have already participated in the 2013 Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief and

<sup>19</sup>Richard Fontaine, “Where Is America in Japan and India’s Plans for Asia?” *The National Interest*, December 28, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/where-america-japan-indias-plans-asia-14741>.

<sup>20</sup><http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/06/244441.htm>.

Military Medicine exercise hosted by Brunei.<sup>21</sup> With both the United States and India as full members of the East Asia Summit (EAS) and other regional groupings, there is a basis for regular dialogue and coordination in framing the direction of these organizations.

### POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS ON AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR AND INTERESTS IN JAPAN–INDIA AND TRILATERAL RELATIONS

The overall potential benefits for the United States of closer Japan–India and trilateral ties are not matched by American concerns about constraints. In fact, to date, and given the still very early development of these ties, there have been virtually no concerns expressed publicly about Japan–India ties much less trilateral cooperation. But there are potential constraints and difficulties that at least need to be considered. While it is not necessary to overcome these constraints and difficulties to pursue trilateral cooperation, clearly if they become more significant or acute, they could interfere with or limit how far and how fast trilateral relations could progress.

First, as a practical matter, government leaders in these three democratic countries will change, sooner or later, as a result of elections. While it is of course impossible to predict how future leaders in each capital will regard trilateral cooperation, it is difficult to envision as favourable an alignment as has happened over the past half-decade when the United States–Japan–India Trilateral Dialogue was officially launched. While not equally warm, the President Obama–Prime Minister Modi, President Obama–Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi–Prime Minister Abe dyads seem to be infused with genuine respect and compatibility; and, in the case of Japan–India relations, ideological compatibility. The fact that these three leaders were also in sync (though not in coordination) in focusing on the Asia-Pacific region has been an additional boost to alignment. Initial signs under the new Trump Administration in the United States suggest that the political convergence continues. President Trump’s three meetings with Prime Minister Abe (during the transition, an official visit to Washington, and on the sidelines of the July 2017 G20 meeting in Hamburg) have been much better than expected given earlier comments during the presidential campaign. However, especially in Tokyo,

<sup>21</sup>U.S.–India Strategic Consultations, September 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/09/232338.htm>.

there are anxieties about the new US administration's commitments to the alliance, especially in the wake of ever-more heightened provocations from North Korea, and the handling of bilateral trade issues. The United States–India bilateral has gotten off to a similarly better start than many expected. However, here again, how forward the Trump Administration will be willing to lean on such initiatives as the defence trade and technology initiative and whether or not its position on visas and the trade deficit complicates relations remain to be seen. Meanwhile the continuity in the Abe–Modi relationship (sometimes characterized as an Asian leaders' "bromance") is an anchor.

While structural drivers such as the China challenge continue pushing the three countries together, and are unlikely to disappear in the near- or mid-term, how elected leaders in Washington, Tokyo and New Delhi decide to privilege a trilateral approach to the China challenge remains open to question. A less active Asia policy by the United States, the election of a leftist, nonalignment-focused Indian government, or a Japan facing further economic weakening or political leadership change could place constraints on how fast and far the development of United States–Japan–India bilateral and trilateral relationships could proceed.

Second, the United States will welcome close Japan–India ties and trilateral cooperation, but only so long as US bilateral relations with each remain on a positive trajectory. While there need not be a break in the United States–Japan alliance or a "return to the bad old days" of United States–India relations to derail US interest and support for Japan–India and trilateral ties, Washington would certainly be less enthusiastic if relations with one or both Japan and India were to become substantially problematic. This is not difficult to imagine. For example, in 2013–2014, United States–India relations were nearly frozen for a whole year due to a major diplomatic spat in which an Indian diplomat was arrested for alleged violations of immigration laws in connection with domestic hired help. And after a Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) election victory in 2009, United States–Japan relations were in disarray due to unreliable communications and mixed messages on key policy issues for more than a year. And more recently, "history issues," on which conservatives in Japan have taken positions that seem to renege on past apologies and raise doubts about Japan's World War II-era behaviour, have also complicated bilateral

United States–Japan relations and US interests in trilateral alliance coordination in northeast Asia with Japan and South Korea.

More problematic than these transitional hiccups are fundamental limits to how far bilateral relations with both countries can improve—especially with India. From a US vantage point, neither India nor even Japan may be willing to do enough in the “allies/partner space” which encompasses increased defence spending, more access for US posture adjustments, interoperability and even joint operations. India’s continuing reticence about signing key foundational agreements (beyond LEMOA), much less providing the US access to Indian military facilities, suggests some of the limitations. As a new Council on Foreign Relations Task Force report notes, “Despite such progress [in improving relations], India is not yet among the closest US partners for immediate consultation on global crises, a role still occupied by members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and US allies in Asia, such as Japan and Australia. To put it simply, India is not a frontline global partner, not among the top five countries Washington policy officials would call immediately to coordinate on any urgent global issue. India and the United States have not yet collaborated together on any crisis in the United Nations, for example, and on some of the most challenging questions in the Middle East and with Russia, India has been silent. Moreover, US and Indian interests are not fully aligned on these tough questions. India and the United States have differed in response to the Ukraine and Syria crises and divergences over Pakistan, though not as acute as in the past, remain a matter of mutual discord.”<sup>22</sup>

India is also a new entrant in America’s conception of strategic Asia. An important but incomplete turning point was the concept of the “East Asian littoral” articulated in President Bush’s ill-fated 2001 *QDR*. Extending from the Sea of Japan to the Bay of Bengal, the East Asian littoral for the first time brought America’s strategic conception of Asia to the subcontinent—though the 2001 *QDR* did *not* specifically mention India. In the subsequent one and a half decade, India’s inclusion has been given firmer footing through various policy guidance documents (e.g. *National Security Strategy*, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, *Strategic Guidance*) and policy pronouncements such as President Obama’s

<sup>22</sup>Council on Foreign Relations Task Force Report, *Working with a Rising India: A Joint Venture for the New Century*, November 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/india/working-rising-india/p37233>.



“Rebalance” and the usage of “Indo-Asia-Pacific” by Commanders of US Pacific Command. But India’s inclusion is not a fixed or immutable thing: it will be recalled that in 2009 then Secretary of State Clinton did not mention India in her first speech regarding Asia.

And while Japan is most certainly an ally and a key partner for the US, there are ongoing difficulties with the Okinawa base realignment and just how much Japan is able and willing to do (militarily and monetarily) in contributing to US security burdens in the Asia-Pacific remains to be seen. It is possible that the United States has excessively high expectations of what Japan can and should do and that Japan has “over-promised” what it is capable of doing given its constitutional and public opinion constraints. In any case, these are dynamic scenarios that will need to be considered as the new relationships develop.

The point is that the United States’ welcome for enhanced Japan–India ties depends in part on the condition of US bilateral relations with each country. One positive factor is that the gap between United States–India and United States–Japan relations has closed somewhat. In the past, the gap between the degree of substance in United States–India and United States–Japan relations has been tremendous. Today, that gap is narrowing—primarily because United States–India ties have improved economically, diplomatically and militarily. However, it is a gap that is unlikely to be closed. This is because India and Japan regard relations with the United States differently. India basically sees its bilateral relationship with Washington as a way to facilitate achievement of strategic autonomy in a multipolar international system while Japan seeks a greater degree of autonomy within a strategic United States–Japan alliance. For this reason, there will continue to be a persistent gap in United States–India and United States–Japan relations both bilaterally and in the context of trilateral relations.

Third, quite severe dissonances in each country’s approach towards the other have been experienced in recent years. The most notable example was in the aftermath of India’s 1998 nuclear tests. Not only was India displeased with both Washington and Tokyo, but Tokyo–Delhi ties were extremely fraught for almost two years after the tests and at the same time Washington and Tokyo took quite different approaches to India’s nuclear tests, to considerable dismay in Japan.<sup>23</sup> It is true that now both the United States and Japan have approved civilian nuclear

<sup>23</sup>Satu Limaye, “Tokyo’s Dynamic Diplomacy,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 22, 2 (August 2000), pp. 322–339.

cooperation with India so that past hurdle has been overcome. However, very little in the way of concrete cooperation has occurred to generate nuclear energy as a result. Such differences come and go. For example, some Americans expected and worried that Prime Minister Modi, upon being elected to office in 2014, would prioritize relations with China, Russia and Japan due to the United States revoking his visa in 2005.<sup>24</sup> In the event, President Obama moved swiftly to invite India's newly elected leader to the White House and Prime Minister Modi chose to put the past behind him and accepted the invitation to visit Washington not long after taking office. More recently, Prime Minister Modi moved relatively quickly (within the first half year of the new US administration) to visit Washington and the Trump Administration hosted its first working dinner for a foreign leader for Prime Minister Modi.

Fourth, the United States will also have to consider the fact that at least some in New Delhi and Tokyo see India–Japan relations as something of a hedge against China but also the United States. As Dhruva Jaishankar, an Indian analyst then at the German Marshall Fund has put it, “[i]n fact, skepticism [sic] about the United States’ reliability as a defense partner may be contributing to the growing bonhomie between India and Japan.”<sup>25</sup> India regards Japan’s security normalization as a key to achieving a multipolar or at least less US-dominated world; a world in which Indian strategic autonomy is enhanced. As former Indian ambassador H. K. Singh recently wrote, “PM Abe’s current plans for modest increases in defence spending, and possibly future adjustments to Japan’s traditional interpretation of collective self-defence, are all the more necessary as the reassurance of American power in Asia recedes.”<sup>26</sup> Not all Indian commentators welcome a break in the United States–Japan alliance. For example, Brahma Chellaney argues, “While Japan

<sup>24</sup>Council on Foreign Relations Task Force Report, *Working with a Rising India: A Joint Venture for the New Century*, November 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/india/working-rising-india/p37233>.

<sup>25</sup>Dhruva Jaishankar, “A Fine Balance: India, Japan and the United States,” *The National Interest*, January 24, 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/fine-balance-india-japan-the-united-states-9762>.

<sup>26</sup>Hemant Krishan Singh, “For India and Japan, Both Symbolism and Substance,” *The Business Standard*, February 25, 2014, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/hemant-krishan-singh-for-india-and-japan-both-symbolism-and-substance-113122100639\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/hemant-krishan-singh-for-india-and-japan-both-symbolism-and-substance-113122100639_1.html).

should not abandon its security treaty with the United States, it can and should rearm, with an exclusive focus on defense.”<sup>27</sup>

Japan meanwhile appears to view a rising India as an opening for diversifying its economic opportunities and developing another political and security partner consistent with the US–Japan alliance but also with Tokyo’s more proactive foreign and security policies. A Japan–India relationship that seeks to facilitate each other’s emergence as “normal” countries (an objective that Washington generally shares) will require the US to reconcile these ambitions with more specific and bounded objectives in United States–Japan and United States–India ties. For the United States, the Japanese approach towards India (strategic autonomy within the alliance) will be easier to appreciate than India’s approach towards Japan (strategic autonomy within a multipolar global and Asia-Pacific system). India–Japan cooperation to resist China’s pressures and potential hegemony will be far more palatable to Washington than New Delhi and Tokyo working to create a multipolar Asia. Meanwhile, India and Japan share a degree of anxiety about United States–China coordination and cooperation as a de facto “G2” to the detriment of both.

A fifth factor that might constrain US interest and support for a Japan–India configuration concerns how far forward the trilateral itself can go. Managing the scope and depth of the military and defence cooperation elements of the trilateral is key. A great example is the much ballyhooed 2015 Malabar exercises which Japan joined. But as one analyst notes, “India initially wanted to send only two combatant ships to the drill, as it had last year, until the United States pressed for a third. India also kept its aircraft carrier docked for maintenance despite the United States sending its USS Theodore Roosevelt. The United States wants to make Japan’s participation permanent and perhaps add Australia, but India has so far demurred.”<sup>28</sup> While this constraint was eventually overcome as made clear during Prime Minister Abe’s December 2015 trip to Delhi, coordinating within the trilateral itself could be difficult. As of now, the signs are very promising with the July 2017 *Malabar* exercise

<sup>27</sup> Brahma Chellaney, “Why Japan Should Rearm,” *Project Syndicate*, October 19, 2015, Read more at <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/japan-security-reform-by-brahma-chellaney-2015-10#L6DlswXLSA9K2QGR.99>.

<sup>28</sup> David Feith, “The U.S.–India Strategic Test,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-u-s-india-strategic-test-1449165764>.

bringing together greater respective assets (e.g. Japan's *Izumo* helicopter carrier) and conducting more sophisticated activities.

Sixth, in policy terms, American interest in Japan–India and the tri-lateral is relatively recent and comparatively limited. Other regional “bilaterals” (e.g. China–Japan, Japan–South Korea, China–Russia, China–India, Japan–Russia) and “trilaterals” (e.g. United States–Japan–ROK, United States–China–Japan, United States–Japan–Australia, but also China–Japan–ROK and China–Russia–India) are strong competitors for attention with the Japan–India and the US–Japan–India relationships. Both the United States and Japan are involved in much closer trilaterals too (US–Japan–Australia, United States–Japan–South Korea). The reasons are simple: US's upside and downside stakes in these other bilaterals and trilaterals are currently significantly greater, though the potential geo-strategic and geo-economic benefits of more concerted United States–Japan–India ties are beginning to be appreciated. More importantly, mechanisms to push them forward are starting to be designed, as the first trilateral meeting at a ministerial level and plans to regularly include Japan in the United States–India *Malabar* naval exercise indicate. If trends and conditions allow, there is significant scope for enhancing mechanisms for both policy and operational coordination (these are discussed in the recommendation section below).

There are deeper reasons as to why the salience of Japan–India ties has been low in the United States until recently. Japan–India ties have none of the historical resonance of other bilateral relationships with which the United States has been involved or directly affected in its roughly one hundred plus years of engagement with the Asia-Pacific region. As Harold Isaacs' brilliant *Scratches on Our Mind* shows, the “natural” comparative companion of India in the American mind has been China.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps just a few American specialists are aware of what some historians have called the “jungle alliance” between the Indian National Army (INA) and Japan's Imperial Army during World War II.

A seventh factor that could constrain trilateral relations (particularly having the effect of making India less important) is worsening geopolitical conditions in East Asia—the core of United States and Japan interests and secondary to those of India. For the United States and Japan, exacerbating disputes with China, Russia and North Korea could make the

<sup>29</sup>Harold Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958).

trilateral “nice to have” rather than essential when attention, resources and capabilities are deployed to handle situations at key East Asian flash-points such as the Korean Peninsula, East and South China Seas and even the Taiwan Strait. Some Japanese already see their country’s emerging security priorities increasing around the home islands (i.e. the East China Sea, Sea of Japan, North Pacific, South China Sea, the first island chain of the western Pacific and the adjacent straits).<sup>30</sup> If relations with China and North Korea get much worse, Washington, too, will see a need to reprioritize.

An eighth factor that might inhibit closer trilateral ties is commercial and economic factors. The United States, Japan and India are in rough congruence regarding a basket of diplomatic, regional institutional and political-military issues. But they are far apart on such initiatives as the TPP. Until the Trump Administration took office at least Washington and Tokyo were in congruence on the TPP—having worked to reach a deal that was in some senses the most important element of the TPP. But now, as the Trump Administration has left the TPP, Japan has worked with the other ten signatories to keep the deal alive and only recently has the Trump Administration hinted that it might be willing to reconsider its position on the TPP—though the outlook is murky and unlikely in the first term of the Trump Administration. But India in any case would be far from ready to join the TPP.

On the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) organization, Tokyo seems to be keener on India’s entry than the United States. In official statements, the United States has simply taken note of India’s interest in joining APEC whereas in the December 2015 India–Japan joint statement Tokyo evinced enthusiasm and support for India’s membership. Some in the United States are wary of India’s commitments to international trade and regard India as a potential “spoiler” to multilateral trade arrangements. There might also be quite different American and Japanese approaches to integrating India into the regional economic

<sup>30</sup>A Japan Maritime Self Defense Forces (JMSDF) Commander expressed the constraint this way: “Since the end of the Cold War, Japan has consistently expanded its activities towards improving maritime domain security. But this trend is gradually changing, due to budget restrictions and *changes in the security environment surrounding Japan*” (emphasis added). See JMSDF Commander Keitaro Ushirogata, “Japan’s Commitment to Indian Ocean Security: A Vitaly Important Highway, But Risks of Strategic Overextension?” <http://nsc.anu.edu.au/documents/ipmsc-papers/Japan%E2%80%99s%20commitment%20to%20Indian%20Ocean%20security%20-%20Keitaro%20Ushirogata.pdf>.

order—though with the Trump Administration having taken office it is not clear that even the United States will be as committed to the global and regional economic orders as previous administrations. Indeed, both Japan and India might find themselves in congruence (and at variance with the United States) in the fact that they are both listed as among the sixteen priority countries for the Trump Administration to address significant trade deficits with. Meanwhile, Japan and India are clearly forging greater cooperation on Indo-Pacific economic and commercial initiatives such as the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor as a way of deflecting and compensating for China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The United States, Japan and India are all so far outliers on BRI though they have different positions on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). India has been an especially strong advocate of “Japanese efforts to finance an east-west corridor of roads, railways, and pipelines across Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar in order to develop Indo-Japanese connectivity over land and prevent China from dominating the commerce of mainland Southeast Asia. India also seeks entry into the APEC forum to end its exclusion from global supply chains centred on Southeast and East Asia and deepen trading ties with key markets like Japan.”<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

American interest in and support for the Japan–India relationship is real and consistent with two key structural drivers: growing “strategic distrust” about a rising and assertive China among all three countries and at least a two-decade-old priority on networking not only US allies, but also US allies with US regional friends and partners. Hence, the core of the US approach to the Japan–India relationship is to integrate the alliance with Tokyo and the growing alignment with New Delhi into Washington’s Asia-Pacific security network. To date, the American priority has been on the Japan–South Korea and Japan–Australia relationships and on the trilaterals with each. But with the steady development of US relations with both India and Japan and of Japan and India with each other, a new matrix helpful to US long-term interests has emerged. The fact that

<sup>31</sup>Daniel Twining, “Abe, Modi Exercise Their Right to Help Shape Asia’s Future,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 10, 2015, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Abe-Modi-exercise-their-right-to-help-shape-Asia-s-future>.

Japan, India and Australia have also now formed an alignment makes the Japan–India relationship even more attractive. Political and leadership dynamics have buttressed the strategic underpinnings of these ties. Whether these will continue is uncertain, though the structural factors driving the trilateral have shown themselves to be sustainable over the past decade in which the trilateral has taken shape.

As the process of regular dialogue and closer coordination occurs among the respective United States, Japanese and Indian Asia-Pacific policies and through regional organizations and bilateral and trilateral military exercises, there is scope to further refine and develop mechanisms to make the United States–Japan–India relationship more robust and effective. For example, the countries could consider building on the “2+2” model of meetings of foreign and defence ministers. A “2+2” now exists between the United States and Japan, between Japan and India, and between the United States and India (the last agreed on in August 2017). Going forward, there may be scope to trilateralise the “2+2” among the three countries. If this is yet a bridge too far, perhaps there is also an interim solution. The trilateral thus far has been among foreign ministers and ministries and equivalents. The time has come to consider at a minimum having a separate trilateral defence ministers’ discussion (even on the sidelines of an event such as the Shangri-La Dialogue or ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus or ADMM Plus gathering).

Apart from creating mechanisms to institutionalize, broaden and raise the profile of the trilateral further, it will also be useful to undertake a serious examination of the regional focus of the trilateral arrangement. Thus far, for example, the *Malabar* exercise has alternated between being held in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. Given India’s “Weighted West” maritime strategy, capabilities and diplomacy,<sup>32</sup> Given Japan’s new facility at Djibouti, and of course the United States’ considerable commitments through both the Central Command and Africa Command structures, the three countries could consider new efforts in the western Indian Ocean. On the commercial infrastructure front, the launching of the Japan–India Asia–Africa Growth Corridor is such a step.

<sup>32</sup>See Satu Limaye, *Weighted West, Focused on the Indian Ocean and Cooperating Across the Indo-Pacific: India’s New Maritime Strategy, Capabilities and Diplomacy*, Center for Naval Analyses, April 2017, [https://www.cna.org/cna\\_files/pdf/DRM-2016-U-013939-Final2.pdf](https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/DRM-2016-U-013939-Final2.pdf).

The three capitals should consider whether they can also coordinate defence capacity building (especially maritime capacity) and conduct exercises in the western Indian Ocean.

Over the long term, it will be especially important to think seriously about how the three countries will coordinate on commercial ties, including international and regional economic rules, norms and institutions. So far, Japan has been a major provider of investment and aid to India and, increasingly, Tokyo and New Delhi see a shared interest in integrating their economies within wider Indo-Pacific integration—as the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor effort suggests. With India not prepared or eligible to join TPP, the United States unwilling to join the TPP for now and Japan upholding TPP while seeking ways to compete with China on infrastructure, the three countries should consider how they can encourage India’s economic reforms, modernization and integration with the global economy through high-standard arrangements. At a minimum on the economic front, the three countries have to be careful not to let their respective bilateral trade difficulties, such as deficits, detract them from the wider implications of changing economic relations at the global and regional levels. Just improving defence relations will not be sufficient to build the long-term, sustainable United States–Japan–India relationship that is in the interests of all three countries.

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## Conclusion

*Rajesh Basrur and Sumitha Narayanan Kutty*

**Abstract** The editors pull together the main analytical threads of the volume in this concluding chapter. They review the key security and economic features of the India–Japan strategic partnership, placing it within the triangular relationship with the United States. They address its future prospects and emphasize that the volume provides both a clearer sense of the trajectory of the relationship and a deeper understanding of the post-alliance strategic landscape.

**Keywords** Strategic · Partnerships · Post-structural

The preceding four chapters have illustrated in some detail the content of a characteristic feature of the post-structural era of international politics, namely, strategic partnerships, within the specific framework of India–Japan relations and, by extension, the triangular India–Japan–US relationship. We use the term “post-structural” to distinguish our understanding of the core dynamics of interstate relations from the typical approach of most realist-based analyses. The standard mode of thought

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looks at the international system as one centred on two central features— (a) the absence of sovereignty, which makes states self-centred since they cannot rely on others to attend to their interests, including survival; and (b) the distribution of power, which generates competitive politics among states perennially concerned about their security in an uncertain world.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the politics of power balances has been the foundational element of the self-help system. But, slowly and steadily, the system itself has changed and states no longer enjoy the degree of autonomy that realists attribute to them. In particular, the growing interdependence fostered by economic interaction and changes in the technology of war (notably, the advent of nuclear weapons) have altered states' choices. War being no longer a reasonable option, interdependent states may from habit ingrained by millennia of experience *think* in terms of the balance of power, but they no longer practice it in the ways they used to. Specifically, alliance politics, wherein states commit themselves to fight for their allies, is diminishing because they cannot afford any longer to fight and because economic integration has generated strong incentives to avoid war. In this changing world, the formation of strategic partnerships has become the central strategic game. In Chapter 1, we delineated the key traits of strategic partnerships. Essentially, they may be utilized to build resistance among friends to protect them from the undesired expansion of influence by a strong state. More specifically, India and Japan, along with the United States, view the rise of China as a threat not because they see major war as likely, but because they fear Beijing might impinge on their economic and strategic interests and more generally on systemic stability. Beijing thinks in a similar way despite the reality that both sides have strong common interests. Strategic partnerships are designed to help states cope as best they can with the uncertainties surrounding a system where fundamental interests are in sync, but many other interests are not.

The authors in this volume have identified a pattern which involves limited realist politics that stops well short of the threshold of the older phenomenon of alliance politics. In brief, the key points that emerge from their discussions are:

<sup>1</sup>For classic statements of the realist approach, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1948); and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979).

- The India–Japan relationship carries the distinctive features of a strategic partnership as outlined in Chapter 1. First, it is aimed at circumscribing a perceived threat emanating from Beijing, but at the same time does not expressly identify China as the adversary. This (a) implicitly acknowledges the positive aspects of the economic relationship that each has with China; and (b) leaves open space for potential compromise with it, which is always on the cards since India and Japan both have much to gain from their relationships with China, particularly in the economic sphere. Second, though Tokyo was obliquely critical of China during the India–China border crisis of June–August 2017, it did not go beyond saying that “all parties involved should not resort to unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force.”<sup>2</sup> In short, as is typical of strategic partnerships, there is no strong commitment to support a partner in its disputes with another state. Third, as is common to all strategic partnerships, India and Japan have put in place a regular system of political–strategic coordination through periodic meetings at the highest level. Fourth, they have begun to expand their defence relationship through discussions on arms sales in addition to building a stronger military-to-military relationship. And fifth, their economic relationship has received a massive infusion of Japanese finance with the launching of a number of substantial economic initiatives. The partnership, in short, falls well short of being an alliance, but carries much more strategic content and value to both than an ordinary friendship.
- Bilaterally, India has much to gain from its relationship with Japan in its endeavour to rebuild its creaking infrastructure. On the military side, there is considerable potential for India to strengthen its infrastructure, particularly through Japanese investment in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as through future arms transfers. Besides, India’s arms import policy is designed to hedge against dependence on any one source, so the addition of Japan as a potential supplier alongside other strategic partners is bound to be viewed positively in New Delhi.

<sup>2</sup>Shubhajit Roy, “India–China Standoff at Doklam: Japan Throws Weight Behind India and Bhutan, Says No Side Should Try to Change Status Quo by Force,” *Indian Express*, August 19, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/standoff-over-doklam-tokyo-throws-weight-behind-delhi-4801881>. The Indian media’s interpretation of this as being strongly pro-India was clearly wishful thinking, as is evident from this and similar reports. See also “On Doklam, Japan Backs India, Says ‘Must Not Change Status Quo by Force,’” *India Today*, August 18, 2017, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/on-doklam-japan-backs-india-says-must-not-change-status-quo-by-force-1738977>.

On the economic side, major Japanese investments in railways, ports and economic corridors promise a transformation of the Indian economy.

- India and Japan, concerned by the rise of China, have come closer strategically through regular political dialogue, defence cooperation by means of military-to-military interaction such as military exercises, and the beginnings of negotiations on arms transfers. These features are already embedded in the US–Japan and India–US relationships. Forward movement on them is likely to develop a stronger trilateral relationship, with prospects of a fourth player, Australia, joining them since Canberra has already developed defence cooperation links with all the other three. The revival of the democratic “Quad,” the four-nation network that faded after a hesitant start a decade ago, seems very much on the cards. While formal coordination has barely begun at the time of writing in early February 2018, the prospect of coordinated two-pronged pressure on China by India and Japan will bring pressure on China to modify its approach to disputes in East and South Asia.
- A second tier of cooperation that India and Japan are seeking to build relates to weaker states across the Indo-Pacific region. China has demonstrated the ability to leverage its financial power in significant ways. It has weakened the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) by preventing a unified ASEAN response to China’s expanding role in the South China Sea. In South Asia, it has made major inroads through bilateral arms deals and extensive foreign direct investment (FDI), especially in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. All of this has brought a relatively limited response from the United States, which is preoccupied with the Middle East, Afghanistan and North Korea. India has the interest and connections to counter rising Chinese influence, but limited economic capacity; Japan has the capacity, but not the links essential to set a counter-response to China in motion. Thus India and Japan are attempting to synergize their relative strengths to build an alternative to China’s unfolding Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through infrastructure investments in Myanmar (Dawei port), Sri Lanka (Trincomalee), Iran (Chabahar) and East Africa (the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor). Given some of the difficulties recipients of Chinese FDI have experienced, notably in Sri Lanka, the enlargement of the cooperative network from the putative Quad to a far

wider range of states spread across the Indo-Pacific is on the cards. The India–Japan strategic partnership clearly has much potential to limit Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean region by expanding the Quad to encompass a much wider network of influence.

- This network may also be expanded through military interactions with states apprehensive of China’s intentions. The United States already has close relationships with several regional states, while India has developed significant defence links with specific states, notably Singapore and Vietnam in Southeast Asia and Mauritius in the Western Indian Ocean. Japan has the technology, but has only recently begun to overcome traditional constraints with respect to arms transfers. A coordinated effort by all three toward capacity building in East and South Asia as well as the Western Indian Ocean is likely at least partially contain the Chinese challenge in the Indo-Pacific. Collaborations can encompass arms transfers, training, exercises and coordinated or joint patrols in the region. The overall effect of the economic and defence coordination outlined here would be to build an expanded security-cum-economic network that constrains China’s strategic power. How Beijing will react is anybody’s guess, but it cannot fail to notice that its closest friends are North Korea and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, to be sure, but with little to offer as value addition to Chinese goals. Russia, too, is drawing closer to China, but the depth of this relationship—with much historical and cultural baggage of a negative character—is still to be tested. Given the fact that Chinese interests too are shaped by economic and military interdependence with its adversaries, some modification of China’s strategic behaviour is possible.
- The India–Japan partnership and their potential triangular one with the United States carry more specific benefits for each of the three states. First, given the American sentiment that the United States has borne a lopsided share of the security burden in the region over the years, Washington is bound to welcome the sharing of the burden by the burgeoning of both these relationships. Second, for both India and Japan, the partnership offers a degree of room for manoeuvre that avoids too much dependence on the United States even while cooperating extensively with it. This also means that the risk of “entrapment” arising from unilateral US initiatives is likely to diminish. Third, for both India and Japan, an enhanced profile will carry status benefits. Their growing role as contributors

to regional security will draw greater recognition of their leadership roles and thereby bolster their claim to higher status through such institutions as the United Nations Security Council. To the extent that there is a trend toward multipolarization, even Beijing can draw some comfort from the partnership.

- Finally, where is the India–Japan strategic partnership headed? While the current dynamics of interstate relationships make predictions more difficult than before, and while it is true that changes in several variables—domestic priorities and leadership preferences, for instance—might alter its trajectory, the likelihood of a strengthening nexus between the two countries is considerable. With the United States less in a position to lead, Tokyo and New Delhi are obliged to take up the slack and coordinate with Washington in a concerted effort to maximize regional stability. Indeed, the area to watch is India–Japan cooperation in capacity building, both bilaterally for augmenting Indian capabilities and in partnership to develop resistance and resilience in weaker states. A trilateral arrangement with the United States in this respect carries considerable scope.

None of this is preordained in the way that a strict balance-of-power analysis might be inclined to argue. Each of our authors in this volume has been careful to point out the limitations to cooperation in the bilateral and trilateral relationships reviewed above. The central point, moreover, is that the commitments made by strategic partners have inherent limits owing to their mixed interests. Not only are system-endangering military and economic actions rationally undesirable, but there is much to be gained from economic cooperation and, overall, there are strong incentives among states in conflict-of-interest situations not to antagonize their interlocutors beyond a point. Thus, strategic partnerships are likely to shape the “architecture” of the international system along lines that are less certain, but are by that very nature more flexible and resilient.

This volume has, we hope, generated food for thought with regard to the content of an institutional arrangement that has come increasingly to occupy a central role in contemporary international politics. Further lines of inquiry may briefly be touched upon here. First, a more careful classification of strategic partnerships and their content and trajectories by means of comparative studies would be useful. Is the India–Japan

partnership typical or are there significant variations across cases? Second, the phenomenon of multilateral concert-like institutions, relatively briefly considered here, requires closer analysis in the context of the post-alliance world we have collectively examined. In particular, a deeper understanding of multiparty partnerships and their scope is likely to be instructive given the increasing visibility of this phenomenon. And third, it is time to take stock of the value of power- and state-centric approaches to analysis and consider how the analytical tools widely employed thus far, which are unable to explain many of the complexities in the world we inhabit, might be strengthened. The balance of power still carries meaning but how far can it be a foundational concept when there are stark limits to the employment of power among the major players?

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