

The Cooperation of the Japan towards India from the Perspective of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy"

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Abstract: *The United States has long advocated that the Indo-Pacific region is a matter of its own security and prosperity. On February 12, 2022, the White House released the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy, which aims to build a closer, prosperous, secure, resilient, free and open Indo-Pacific region to contain the rise of China and protect its hegemonic position. Since Japan and India have geopolitical advantages in the Indo-Pacific region and are strengthening their national power. It is necessary to further understand the initiatives and intention of Japan and India in strengthening security cooperation, economic cooperation and diplomatic interaction in the context of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.*

Keywords: *Indo-Pacific strategy; Japan-India relations; strategy toward China*

1. Introduction

The term "Indo-Pacific" (INDO PACIFIC) has long appeared in oceanography and biogeography, but it has become popular in academic circles after 2000, and it has been widely used as a geopolitical concept in recent years. As early as the Obama administration's "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" policy, the United States has highlighted the importance of the Asia-Pacific region and promoted the formation of the "Indo-Pacific" from the side. Until February 12, 2022, the U.S. White House released the "U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy", in which Japan and India are mentioned several times, it is clear that Japan and India play an indispensable role in the process of the U.S. realization of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy".

At the same time, Japan and India have maintained active and frequent interactions with the U.S. In March 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed the SAGAR vision. In June 2018 he outlined the vision of a "Free, Open, Prosperous and Inclusive Indo-Pacific" (FOPI), and in November 2019 he formally proposed the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI). (The two sides issued a Joint Statement during Modi's visit to Japan in 2016. In 2017, the two countries collaborated on the Asia Growth Corridor (AAGC). India is committed to strengthening their relationship while working to further realize the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Japan and India's own geographic advantages have led to a deepening understanding of Japan-India relations, with Japan viewing India as an important partner and strategic ally in realizing the Indo-Pacific Strategy and India viewing Japan as one of its most trusted partners.^[1] During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan in November 2016, Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe jointly stated that they would strengthen the synergy between Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" and India's "Eastward Policy" through cooperation and take initiatives for the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region.^[2] Against this backdrop, the two sides are cooperating closely in various areas, including security, economic, and diplomatic fields. As 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and India, the two sides are committed to a strong partnership in various fields with a promising prospect of further strengthening cooperation in the geopolitical and economic landscape by the pandemic.^[3]

2. Security Cooperation

The changing geopolitical landscape has led Japan to further recognize the importance of India to Japan's maritime access and security. Japan is a major maritime power, and free and secure access to strategic sea lanes in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. It is crucial to Japan's security and prosperity, whether for resource importation or economic trade, the smooth flow of sea lanes is vital to this country.^[4]

2.1. Japan-India bilateral cooperation

Japan and India have been cooperating on defense and security issues since the beginning of the bilateral security dialogue between the two countries in 2001.^[5] In October 2008, Prime Minister Taro Aso and Prime Minister Singh signed the "Joint Declaration on Japan-India Security Cooperation" during Prime Minister Singh's visit to Japan, which was aimed at institutionalizing defense and security cooperation between the two countries by establishing a framework for security cooperation between the two countries. In December 2009, on the basis of the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India, the two sides further strengthened information exchange and policy coordination on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region as well as long-term strategic and global issues, promoted security cooperation, and established the "2+2" dialogue mechanism at different levels. It is among the three levels of the "2+2" dialogue mechanism, the exchange of summit visits mainly provides top-level design for bilateral maritime security cooperation and creates an external environment. Among the three levels of the "2+2" dialogue mechanism, the exchange of visits between the heads of state creates the external environment for bilateral maritime security cooperation. The "2+2" meeting mechanism at the middle level is responsible for bilateral maritime security policy coordination and cooperation path planning. It plays a central role in the process of security cooperation between the two countries. Each substantive mechanism is responsible for specific policy implementation and enforcement work.^[6] In December 2012, during Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's visit to Cambodia to attend the ASEAN Summit, he met with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Singh and agreed to further strengthen relations between the coast guards of the two countries and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Indian Navy. During the meeting between Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi at the ASEAN Summit in November 2015, Prime Minister Abe expressed his desire to further enhance the level of security cooperation between Japan and India. JMSDF ships participate regularly in the Malabar joint maritime exercises led by the U.S. and India. He expressed his desire to promote trilateral cooperation between Japan, the U.S. and India. Prime Minister Modi said that based on the same recognition, the Malabar exercises would be conducted regularly with Japan's participation.^[7]

2.2. Small Multilateral Cooperation

In addition to the bilateral dialogue between Japan and India, Japan and India have established a multi-channel mechanism to strengthen dialogue and cooperation, and have made certain achievements in the security field. In 2007, after Shinzo Abe formed his cabinet, then Foreign Minister Taro Aso immediately proposed a four-country security dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India; in 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe published an article "The Diamond of Democratic Security in Asia" through the World Press Syndicate, calling on Australia, the United States and other countries with common values to form a "democratic security rhombus" to counter the growing power of China. In 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called on Australia, the United States and other countries with common values to form a "democratic security rhombus" to counterbalance the growing strength of China and establish a summit security dialogue. Later, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe further called on the three countries to establish a summit security dialogue mechanism through his "values diplomacy. However, the idea of a four-nation alliance was aborted due to the negative attitude and withdrawal of Australia and other countries. In July 2018, the four countries, Japan, the United States, Australia and India, held consultations in Singapore, where they reaffirmed their common support for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and confirmed their shared commitment to maintaining and strengthening a rules-based order in the region and achieving common goals through regional security and maritime cooperation. In March 2021, the Quadrilateral Mechanism held its first leaders' summit, with U.S. President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Australian Prime Minister Morrison participating by video and issuing a joint statement. In September of the same year, the second Japan-Australia-India-US summit was held as scheduled, and the leaders of the four countries committed to building a secure and prosperous "Indo-Pacific region" based on shared values, and initiated dialogue and cooperation in various areas.^[8] The cooperation mechanism has been upgraded from ministerial meetings to summits, the mode of cooperation has been upgraded from military as the main means to a combination of military and diplomatic means, the content of cooperation has been upgraded from "virtual" to "real", and the membership of cooperation has been upgraded from "4" to "4+N", and the continuous upgrading of the quadrilateral mechanism has led to the expansion of the channels of dialogue between Japan and India and the strengthening of the alliance.^[9]

On October 8, 2021, on the fifth day of Fumio Kishida's term as Japan's new Prime Minister, the

Japanese and Indian leaders held a teleconference summit with a clear vision to take the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership" to a higher level on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and India in 2022, to further strengthen Japan-India relations, and to cooperate closely for the realization of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy".

3. Economic Cooperation

Due to the convergence of national interests and strategic convergence between Japan and India, the economic relations between Japan and India have steadily expanded and deepened. Trade between the two countries has been increasing, while Japanese aid to India has been growing simultaneously, and cooperation between the two countries in the economic field has reached an unprecedented depth and breadth.

3.1. Official assistance

After Japan adjusted its foreign economic policy in 2003, India replaced China as the largest recipient of Japanese government development assistance (ODA) to developing countries, with the Delhi Metro being a typical example of Japan's ODA to India.^[10]The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's official report "Country Assistance to India Assessment (2017)" specifies enhanced cooperation in three areas: strengthening connectivity, enhancing industrial competitiveness and supporting sustainable and inclusive growth, and assistance in health care and sanitation, rural development, disaster management and tourism development, which will contribute to improved, job-creating conditions.^[11]In the JICA Country Analysis Paper - India (JCAP) 2017 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that Japan's public and private investment and financing of 3.5 trillion yen (approximately \$35 billion) in India, including official development assistance (ODA), will be realized over five years to fund appropriate public and private projects of common interest (2014). Japan's loans to India of ¥356.3 billion and grants of ¥5.02 billion in 2020 alone, technical cooperation with India of ¥8.7 billion in 2019, and Japan's loans to India of ¥30 billion in 2021 to help India cope with the social security crisis caused by COVID-19 will further effectively guarantee stable and sustainable social and economic growth in India.^[12]

3.2. Project cooperation

Following fourteen rounds of EPA negotiations in 2007, the Japanese government decided to sign the Japan and Republic of India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IJCPEA) with Japan in February 2011, which promotes the liberalization and facilitation of trade in goods and services and establishes a useful framework for further strengthening cooperation between the two sides in various fields.^[13]In May 2017, Prime Minister Modi launched the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) Sustainable Innovation Development Partnership Vision Document (AAGC) at the African Development Bank Conference, which aims to develop high-quality infrastructure, complemented by digital connectivity, through India and Japan in Africa to This document aims to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific region through the development of high-quality infrastructure and digital connectivity between India and Japan in Africa. In November 2021, following the October telephone talks between the heads of Japan and India, the foreign ministers of both countries together will further develop the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership." In February 2022, Mr. Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and H.E. Mr. Jashankar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of India, met in Melbourne at the Japan-Australia-India-United States Foreign Ministers' Meeting and expressed their intention to further strengthen relations between Japan and India on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Foreign Minister Jashankar is willing to expand cooperation with Japan in various fields, promoting economic cooperation including digital, climate change countermeasures, healthcare, and economic security cooperation in areas beyond 5G, submarine cables, and supply chain resilience, in addition to cooperation in Northeast India and the North East India region. Steady progress on the Japan-India flagship high-speed rail project.^[14]

4. Diplomatic interaction

The year 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and India, which have grown increasingly close over the past 70 years, with the establishment of the Global Strategic Partnership in 2006; the upgrade to the Special Strategic and Global Partnership in 2014; and the

culmination of Japan-India relations in 2015. When the relationship was transformed into a deep, broad-based and action-oriented partnership with a vision of a Special Strategic and Global Partnership by 2025, it serves as a new guide for action in the new era of Japan-India relations.

4.1. Small Multilateral Diplomacy

In 2007, when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office, the Japan-U.S.-Australia-India Quadrilateral Security Dialogue mechanism came to prominence, but the plan was aborted due to Australia's withdrawal. In 2015, the Japan-Australia-India Senior Officials Meeting was held to discuss the management of the Indo-Pacific region and cooperation among the three countries. At the meeting, the three foreign ministers recognized their partnership, exchanged views on regional affairs of common interest and cooperation in related fields based on fundamental values and common interests such as freedom, democracy and human rights. It clarified the deepening of the strategic partnership between the three countries. Until 2018, the Japan-U.S.-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting was elevated to the level of summit talks, and the leaders of the three Indo-Pacific partners, Japan, the U.S. and India, who share the fundamental values and strategic interests of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, met for the first time on the sidelines of the G20 Summit, where the three leaders reaffirmed that tripartite cooperation is vital to the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. The two sides expressed their views on strengthening cooperation, especially in maritime security and enhancing regional connectivity, and had a frank exchange of views on common interests in regional affairs and security.^[15] Since the first meeting between the diplomatic authorities of Japan, the United States, Australia and India in Manila in 2017, rising to a ministerial meeting in New York in 2019, until the first video conference of the leaders of Japan, the United States, Australia and India held in March 2021 at the initiative of the United States, the four countries have thus far agreed to work to strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. They based on their shared fundamental values, and to further enhance quadripartite cooperation in support of principles of the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful settlement of disputes, democratic values and territorial integrity. Ultimately, the Japan-Australia-India, Japan-U.S.-India trilateral dialogue between the two groups rose to a four-nation meeting at the leaders' level, which means the establishment of a four-nation cooperation mechanism between Japan, the U.S., Australia and India for the growing influence of the Indo-Pacific region while continuously enhancing allied forces to contain and slow down the rise of China.

4.2. Regional and multilateral mechanisms

In addition to Japan-India bilateral relations and the Japan-U.S.-Australia-India Quadruple Dialogue mechanism, Japan and India are actively engaged in strategic coordination in regional and multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Expanded Meeting, the ASEAN Maritime Expanded Forum, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation and the United Nations.^[16] The Vientiane Declaration on Promoting Cooperation in Infrastructure Development in East Asia, adopted at the 11th East Asia Summit in Vientiane in September 2016. It shares the same proposition of promoting quality infrastructure development, addressing social and environmental impacts to improve people's living standards, strengthening intra-regional connectivity, and expanding partnerships.^[17] In 2019, Japan and the United Nations Environment Programme jointly announced an initiative called "Promoting countermeasures against marine plastic waste in Southeast Asia and India", which aims to develop the oceans in a controlled manner and test to identify leakage hotspots along the Ganges and Mekong rivers in order to stop plastic pollution, while the Japanese government emphasizes its determination to work with the international community to solve the problem of marine pollution.^[18]

5. Conclusions

In the context of the Indo-Pacific strategy, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and India should provide an opportunity for closer relations and closer cooperation in the fields of security, economy, diplomacy and military, which means that the containment of China will become stronger. Whether and how Prime Minister Fumio Kishida can further develop Japan-India relations in the future depends on how he chooses to do so.

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