



## **BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY: THE EXPANDING STRATEGIC SYNERGY BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN**

**Dr. D. Chandramouli Reddy**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Public Administration, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapuramu, Andhra Pradesh.*

### **Abstract**

*Sustainable development, which promotes world peace and stability, is an ideal India and Japan today share. The worldwide alliance between the two nations is founded on shared democratic ideals and a dedication to human rights, pluralism, an open society, and the rule of law. India and Japan's worldwide collaboration reflects how their political, economic, and strategic goals, ambitions, and concerns overlap and complement one another. Consistent with their global collaboration, Japan and India see each other as partners who share responsibility for and the ability to address global and regional concerns. Therefore, it is in Japan's interest to see India flourish and grow, and also India's interest in Japan's. Given the above and the state of world affairs, it was determined to give Japan and India's global collaboration a greater emphasis on strategy. In 2005, during a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, the two countries agreed to deepen their cooperation and work towards developing their bilateral relations in every possible way, with an immediate and pressing emphasis on "strengthening economic ties by making full use of the existing and potential complementarities in their economies." To ensure peace, security, and prosperity in Asia, to advance democracy and development, and to examine a new architecture for greater regional cooperation in Asia, the two nations agreed to work toward strengthening their conversation and partnership. Using and expanding upon their strategic convergences, the two nations also committed to increasing their collaboration "on a wide range of issues, including the environment, energy, disarmament, non-proliferation, and security." Many meetings have been conducted between ministers and parliament members, demonstrating this relationship's dynamic development. Businesses and industries in both nations have taken notice of the prospects, and as a result, the number of business delegations traveling between them has increased dramatically. It is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the intricacies contributing to the formation of this strategic relationship if one wants to acquire a full knowledge of the growing bonhomie between India and Japan. Even though strategic connections are still in their infancy, the character of Asian geopolitics in the years to come will determine not just the future of Japan and India but also the route that strategic ties will take.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Relations, Friendship, Geostrategic, Hegemony, Peace, Strategic Alliance.*

### **Introduction**

The foundation of successful foreign policy is not friendship but rather shared and common interests. If Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister had not gone the additional mile, Modi would not have come to Japanese territory in 2014 and given Abe a powerful, warm hug, signifying a larger shared interest in the relationship between their two countries. The atmosphere surrounding Modi's visit, along with the new global order that has emerged in the wake of Donald Trump's election in the United States, has unmistakably injected new life into the cooperation. There has never been a lack of mutual admiration between the two leaders. Still, it is now obvious that both of them know that the moment has come to push the alliance beyond the bounds of common interests and come to a broader geostrategic understanding. The strength of links between India and Japan is at an all-time high, and they have the potential to become an important driving force in the formation of a new global order in Asia that is based on democratic ideals and market economics.<sup>4</sup>

"During the Cold War, Japan and India found themselves in quite distinct strategic positions and, from a military perspective, were completely uninterested in one another. Japan believed it was unnecessary to build security partnerships with other countries outside its partnership with the United States."<sup>[1]</sup> India couldn't build secure connections with friends of the United States due to the country's strategic stance of non-alignment and its engagement with the Soviet Union. It is important to note that "in strategic terms, Asia was not always seen as a



unified area; rather, different regions within Asia, such as Northeast Asia and South Asia, were frequently viewed as having distinct security dynamics and concerns. An integration of Japan's and India's strategic standpoints has occurred as a result of many factors like the end of the Cold War, the rise of economic & military power in China, the breakdown of the Soviet Union, and the associated changes in India's economic policy, which shifted away from transfer and inward-looking development strategies and toward export-oriented development strategies. India and Japan, two significant powers in the Asian region, are investigating the strategic implications of their interactions in this shifting strategic environment. The previous "Prime Minister of Japan, Taro Aso," who served from 2008 to 2009, and the current "Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe," are members of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, which adds a strategic dimension to the nature of this relationship (2012-present). When Japan's Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori officially visited India in August 2000 it marked the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the two countries. This new phase continues to this day in accordance with the shifting geopolitical realities in Asia. The six decades of almost stagnant relations between the two countries seemed to be a thing of the past.<sup>[2]</sup>

A peculiar contradiction marks the relationship between India and Japan. On the one hand, there has not been a big disagreement for quite some time, but on the other, the depth of the relationship has not been used to its full potential for several years. To get a full picture of what the future may hold for relations between India and Japan, it is necessary first to investigate India's political and economic capabilities and its perspective on the state of regional security. The ascent of India has been erratic, and many people continue to be doubtful that it can emerge as a global power in light of the significant difficulties it is having with its governance and the recent reduction in its previously double-digit economic expansion rates. India's strategic location "astride Indian Ocean maritime lanes crucial to the world economy, on the one hand, and on land stabilizing the southern Eurasian continent," on the other, as well as its ongoing military modernization and military rivalry with two of the world's biggest armed forces in China & Pakistan, all imply that a growing militarily capable India will be a swing state in the larger Asian balance of power. It is arguable that India, perhaps more so than Japan, contains one of the most complex regional security contexts of any large state. It has a conflict with China over its 2500-mile-long and heavily armed border, which is an asymmetrical fight given that the logic of the topography and resources favor China. India's border with Pakistan, the country with the highest rate of violent Islamic extremism worldwide, is an uninterrupted stretch of land. It also benefits from its status as a land & maritime power, which affords it more freedom for maneuvers and opens up more opportunities for business and trade due to both of these aspects of its dominance. India is not fully integrated into a liberal global order, which prevented it from gaining membership and standing in key organizations throughout its history.<sup>[3]</sup> As a result, India is considered an incomplete great power in the context of the international system. China continues to strategically surround India via the building of port infrastructure along the Indian Ocean littoral and close military connections with India's neighbors. It has been considerably more effective in obtaining access to energy resources in developing countries than India's national security apparatus has been in identifying Pakistan as the country's key strategic adversary. This shift in focus comes as India's national security apparatus increasingly perceives China, rather than Pakistan, as the nation's primary strategic competitor. In a broader sense, China seems intent on being the preeminent power in Asia, and it appears that it sees little room for power-sharing with India. This is attested to by the fact that China has blocked any reform of the United Nations Security Council that would elevate India or Japan to membership. India is forced to split its troops because of the potential for a two-front conflict against Pakistan to the West and China to the northeast. This prevents India from having the strategic luxury of concentrating on just one of its rivals in the geopolitical sphere.<sup>[4]</sup>

India is growing more significant because it is anticipated to become the world's biggest population, as well as due to its economic development and potential. Because of its location in the geographic center of the world's maritime communication routes, India is likewise a vital geopolitical actor for Japan. "Based on the bilateral Strategic and Global Partnership, Japan intends to expand its bilateral ties with other countries in various domains, including maritime security. On the other hand, Japan as a maritime state has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of maritime resources, and has pursued Open and Stable Seas. The sea encircles Japan on all sides, and it is blessed with an enormous exclusive economic zone and an extensive



coastline.” In the face of a strategic environment fraught with unpredictability, Tokyo swiftly recognized India as a valuable “strategic asset.” India, in contrast to much of East Asia, does not have any resentment against the nationalism of Japan, nor does it carry any historical baggage towards Japan.

As a result of Japan’s economic revival and developing tensions with China over maritime conflicts, Japanese strategists and investors have become more enthusiastic about India as a partner and market. In contrast to Japan’s more immediate neighbors, Prime Minister Abe has discovered that many Indians share the views and values of his form of Japanese nationalism. The recent deterioration in relationships with the United States has been somewhat compensated for, from India’s point of view, by the advancements made in economic and diplomatic relationships with Japan. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has made it one of his top goals to expand ties between India and Japan. He has succeeded despite a series of internal arguments with officials from the “China school.” These officials are concerned that India’s values-based diplomacy in Asia, built on a powerful strategic alliance with Japan, might cause more friction in relations with Beijing. Senior government officials in Japan and India increasingly consider one another vital ballast in an Asian power balance that stays favorable to democracies. At the same time, each country views the other as an important source of economic regeneration. The results might have significant repercussions not just for the area but also for the whole planet.<sup>[5]</sup>

Both the similarities and differences between these two powers, which are located on opposite extremities of the Asian continent, are noteworthy. India has abundant human capital and the world’s biggest labor pool, whereas Japan is a technical giant that is wealthy in money and has a massive labor force. Japan has the most sophisticated infrastructure in the world, whereas India’s needs for modern transportation & urban networks surpass those of any other nation. Japan has the most advanced infrastructure in the world. Indians readily accept that they do not have the type of “historical problems” with Japan that color the country’s ties with nations throughout East and Southeast Asia. This is in contrast to the countries that endured the repercussions of militarism and where such concerns are prevalent. Both nations have long-standing democracies that are steadfast in their commitment to free expression, respect for human rights, and open markets.<sup>[6]</sup>

India cannot get the same economic, political, & diplomatic connections, technical advancement, and security collaboration anywhere except Japan. The economic assistance provided by Japan is unique in that it can undertake projects in the Indian economy that are of enormous scope and scale. As a result, it provides an alternative to Chinese bids on important infrastructure projects in India that is both competitive and frequently preferred. Japan can assist India in enhancing its national military and defense capabilities because it is an advanced technological, industrial nation with an established defense industry. It can now export weapons platforms & technologies abroad due to the historical evolution in its political landscape. Few nations provide a greater promise for a development partnership than the one that has been at the vanguard of the industrial and technical revolutions that have reshaped the face of Asia. These revolutions have made it possible for India’s leaders to modernize the country.

The rapid expansion of India’s economy has captured the attention of people all over the globe, and Japan is not an exception to this dramatic change in India’s image in the international community. India has been propelled into the world arena due to the consistent economic development it has been generating for more than a decade. As a result, India’s ability to flex its diplomatic muscle has been significantly boosted. India has gained the potential to influence, if not shape, events in the area thanks to its reputation as a “great power,” despite being caught up in the political vortex that dominates the region. From this point forward, India will no longer accept being considered as anything less than a total equal.

Another essential concern for India is to ensure that Japan will continue to provide it with cutting-edge military hardware. India needs Japan’s funds for investment in infrastructure development. India’s burgeoning military image and strategic competencies are becoming more essential for East Asian countries as “India’s economic ties with East Asia” continue to strengthen. India’s involvement in this area has been expanded via several initiatives, including developing active maritime diplomacy and cultivating security alliances with significant regional



powers. Because energy security is so important to Japan's ability to keep its economic engine running, maritime security has become one of Japan's top priorities. It is widely acknowledged that India is an important security partner because of its burgeoning capacity for maritime power projection, which enables it to maintain the safety of vital sea lanes of communication "(SLOCs) and chokepoints that link the Middle East to the Indian Ocean and land further on. The Far Eastern Naval Command & the Eastern Naval Command serve as a vital link between India and East Asia, contributing to the consolidation of India's reputation as a credible naval force with the potential for power projection. It is of utmost importance for Japan to conduct marine transportation safely. The United States of America, Japan, and several other regional actors now see India as a net security supplier."<sup>[7]</sup> Concerned about falling into the entrapment logic prevalent in the United States, Abe is exercising extreme caution. There is a school of thought that contends the United States is concerned about being entangled in the struggle that is taking place in Japan. India offers Japan a security partner with much-untapped potential as a prospective ally. The expansion of India's maritime capabilities will make it possible for New Delhi to assume greater responsibility for the security of the Indian Ocean. "This will make it possible for Japan and the United States to devote a larger percentage of their resources to countering Chinese adventurism in the South China Sea and the East China Sea."<sup>[8]</sup>

The protection of Japan's maritime lanes of communication (also known as SLOCs) is a crucial security issue because of the country's heavy reliance on energy supplies originating in the Middle East. "Because the Indian Navy maintains a powerful presence in the area from the Straits of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca, Japan needs India's assistance to ensure the security of its sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)."<sup>[9]</sup> As a result, Japan considers India to be an active participant in many marine activities. Katsuya Okada, the Foreign Minister for the Democratic Party of Japan, reaffirmed "Japan's commitment to cooperating with India on various economic and security problems. Japan, as one of the oldest sea-faring democracies in Asia, needs to play a larger role in maintaining peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Pacific Ocean."<sup>[10]</sup> This is similar to how peace, stability, and freedom of navigation are maintained in the Indian Ocean. Because India and Vietnam presently share many of the same Russian military systems, India can aid Vietnam in developing into a security partner for Japan in Southeast Asia. This is because India and Vietnam own many of the same Russian military equipment. This does not imply that India is eager to join any alliance against a third nation to increase its strategic influence; on the contrary, the opposite is true. Instead, "India would like to work with other countries in the area in the spirit of cooperation to establish peace & stability in the region. In India's Japanese policy, the significance of Japan in creating the growing Asia-Pacific security architecture is a critical variable." As a result, the deepening of security and economic connections between India and Japan is an objective that is meant to be attained.

The strategic dimension of Japan's relationship with India has only recently begun to improve, even though Japan has long recognized India as an important strategic partner. However, Japan's limited awareness of the importance of security issues has, until recently, prevented this dimension from improving. The realization that Japan's "dependence on the United States for its security" cannot be maintained indefinitely was the impetus for the country to reevaluate its position. In the study of "Japanese strategic thinking, the resilience of the India-Japan relationship" is considered a good development and is seen as a positive development in the analysis. Those in Japan who adhere to the "Pan-Asianist" school of thought are the most ardent advocates for a close strategic engagement with India.<sup>[11]</sup>

Following the end of the cold war, three possible reasons played a beneficial role in promoting a global and strategic alliance between India and Japan. These aspects were as follows:<sup>[12]</sup>

- i. Among other factors, India's economic and geopolitical influence in the Indo-Pacific Region rose directly from implementing the Look East Policy in 1991. The newly elected government of India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has proposed a new strategy known as the Act East policy. This policy is intended to be a tool for forging strategic partnerships and enhancing "security cooperation with countries in the East Asia region, Vietnam, and Japan."
- ii. The United States of America, Japan, and other regional players are becoming more anxious due to "China's growing military and economic prominence. The ongoing tensions in the South China Sea and



the East China Sea as a result of China's military overtures," as well as China's long-standing and ongoing border disputes with India and Japan, have pulled India and Japan closer together in terms of their strategic alliance.

iii. The "United States of America has always been the resident power in the Indo-Pacific Region." The United States of America (USA) began Pivot Asia to offset China's influence. Pivot Asia allows for the deployment of not less than 60 percent of US naval forces in the Indo-Pacific Region. In addition, it paves the way for developing strategic partnerships with regional partners such as India and Japan.

iv.

On the other hand, getting to a strategic collaboration wasn't exactly a walk in the park. At first, India approached the potential advantages of a closer military or strategic alliance with Japan with some trepidation. At first, there was the contention in New Delhi that this would make the already tense relationship between India and China even worse. In exchange for very little value, considering Japan and India are geographically far apart. "Second, the idea of the "Indo-Pacific" as a geopolitical framework was viewed with suspicion." At one time, the former Indian national security adviser publicly questioned whether or not it should even be considered.

Third, "in the wake of the nuclear agreement between India and the United States, New Delhi has made the presence of such civil nuclear cooperation accords the litmus test for the strategic interest of other nations. In general, India argued that military and other strategic ties with a country would be limited if the government of that country was unwilling to end the nuclear and dual-use technology sanctions imposed on India due to its previous nuclear tests. These sanctions had been imposed on India because of India's past nuclear tests. However, because of the prevalence of anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan, fulfilling this desire has proven challenging for the Japanese government. Because India has refused to accept any more constraints on its nuclear activities than it has surrendered to the United States, Japan has no political support for signing such an agreement because of India's stance."

Even though they have significant localized security problems, such as North Korea "in the case of Japan and Pakistan in the case of India, they share wider regional concerns, including freedom of the seas (SLOCs), nonproliferation (which connects the DPRK and Pakistan), and counterterrorism. Delhi saw its partnership with Japan as a crucial prop to its 'Look East' Policy of involvement in the Indo-Pacific region."<sup>[13]</sup> Because of the powerful presence of the Indian Navy in "the area between the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits of Malacca, Japan relies on India for assistance in maintaining the security of its sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)." In the past, India has worked with other nations in the area to undertake joint patrols in the Malacca Straits. These patrols were carried out with India's participation. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are part of India, and they are located not far from the troubled region of Aceh in Indonesia. The island that is the southernmost part of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands is just around 90 nautical miles away from the Aceh province of Indonesia. As a result, "Japan and India have shared interests in such domains as safeguarding the safety and security of the maritime lanes in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, as well as battling against transnational crimes, terrorism, piracy, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction." This is evidence of a "wide convergence of their long-term political, economic, and strategic interests, ambitions, and concerns," as stated in the previous sentence. These marine partners are held together by system of principles which is the product of the values and interests that they share in common.

Following a trip to Japan in 2006 by "Indian Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee," the relationship started to take on a genuine security dimension. During this trip, "the two countries agreed to the significant expansion and formalization of defense ties, particularly in maritime cooperation."<sup>[14]</sup> On the other hand, the relationship developed a "strategic direction" when Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, for the first time in their joint statement, affirmed that: "The worldwide partnership between India and Japan represents a broad convergence of their long-term political, economic, and strategic interests, goals, aims, and concerns."<sup>[15]</sup> In line with their global collaboration, India and Japan consider one another partners who share responsibility for and are equipped to react to issues on a global and regional scale. Therefore, it is in Japan's interest for India to be robust, wealthy, and vibrant, and the same can be said for India about Japan.



This demonstrated the converging nature of their political, economic, and strategic interests over the long run. After Manmohan Singh's trip to Tokyo for the second summit in December 2006, the global partnership was elevated to the level of "strategic and global partnership."

The strategic partnership "between India and Japan reached a new level when Prime Minister Naoto Kan and his Indian counterpart decided that India and Japan have committed to cooperate to enhance their capacity in responding to security challenges such as maritime security which entails the safety and freedom of navigation and counter-piracy, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and response, among other things, through bilateral and multilateral exercises, information sharing, training, and dialogue."<sup>[16]</sup> This commitment was made in light of India and Japan's agreement to "steadily expand security and defense cooperation between the two countries." The developments that took place on the strategic fronts between India and Japan while two different prime ministers led the DPJ gave the impression that both parties share support for "the bilateral relationship between the two countries" and that a change in leadership will not impact the nature of the relationship. The establishment of a "Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India" in August 2007, which led to the "Joint Statement on the Advancement of the Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India" in October 2008, is one of the major symbols of closer relations between the two countries in recent years in the strategic realm. This partnership was one of the major symbols of closer relations between the two countries in recent years in the strategic realm. To reiterate the notion that "as important nations in Asia that have shared values and interests, (both) must enhance bilateral collaboration as well as cooperation in regional and multilateral sectors" was one of the essential parts of this joint statement. This was a reference to developing common responses to global concerns like terrorism and the World Trade Organization, amongst other things. Institutions such as the EAS and the United Nations were examples of such global issues. After an absence of more than half a century, "Emperor Akihito, and Empress Michiko, traveled to India from November 30th to December 6th, 2013." This visit was a strong statement from the Japanese political establishment that India was a valued partner for Japan. Not only was this the first state visit of the Japanese emperor to India, but it was also the first state visit of the Japanese emperor to any country in South Asia.<sup>[17]</sup>

It cannot be denied that the ever-shifting geopolitical circumstances are influencing the India-Japan relationship. Japan is an essential component of India's Look East, Engage East, and Act East strategies, even though the "China menace" idea and the United States' waning influence in the area are driving Prime Minister Abe to investigate potential alternatives such as India. Many Western observers assume that Prime Minister Abe exaggerates when he declares that Japan's "most significant bilateral relationship" is with India. Not only do they lack what officials in India and Japan refer to as the "perfect chemistry" between Modi and Abe, but they also lose the sense that each leader has that the other nation is essential to the successful execution of its aspirational programs on the domestic front. The addition of China is just the cherry on top.

The development of Indo-Japanese ties is most noticeable when seen through the lens of matters about security. The two sides made clear their mutual consideration about China's rise and its imperialistic policies, in particular by reiterating their shared worries about "maritime security and as freedom of navigation" and stressing the need for international law to prevail in the resolution of international disputes. In addition, the two sides emphasized the need for international law to prevail in resolving international disputes. Improved relations between India and Japan may enable Washington to achieve its goals of achieving regional stability, expanding economic possibilities, and providing a check on China's growing influence.<sup>[18]</sup> The bilateral connections between Asia's two largest democracies would not be robust enough to counterbalance the impact of China. This is mostly attributable to India's non-alignment strategy and its commitment to having a foreign policy.

It's possible that Japan and India have more in common regarding their worries and vision for Asia. The protection of maritime space is an important focus of the partnership. India and Japan are brought together into a single arena under the Indo-Pacific, which has consistent security architecture. Except when dealing with Japan, New Delhi has the propensity to divide its maritime concern areas into "the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region. As was just said, Japan and India have solidified their strategic alliances and are working together



in several important areas. Fear of abandonment by the United States was the impetus behind Japan's consideration of forging new strategic alliances." The United States of America is also doing all in its power to use the current security framework between India and Japan to further its interests. It has been advocating for a network of security alliances throughout Asia. Japan is anticipating a relative decline in the United States' power in East Asia. It is also aware that the United States concentrates less on regional security because it is militarily inhabited at different fronts in other regions. As a result, Japan will still require a partner that shares its values, such as India. This is because Japan understands that the United States is devoting less attention to the region's security due to its military commitments in other regions. India is unlikely to get involved in any form of a hedging strategy against either the United States or China because it is not in India's best interests to do so. Instead, India would prefer to coordinate with other states within a multilateral structure to address regional issues that affect more than one state. This does mean that the strategic cooperation between India and Japan may be eroded in the future. On the other hand, improving communication between the two parties will lead to improved coordination, resulting in profits for both parties. There is a consensus within India's strategic elite that the country's position on strategic autonomy is not in conflict with its security cooperation with Japan and that India does not anticipate any tension between the two countries. India is an opportunistic nation willing to dialogue with other nations on issues about their shared interests. In its pursuit to develop as a global power, India has discovered a stable and trustworthy partner in Japan. It will continue to extend interaction and deepen its bilateral special strategic relationship. While there is a delicate line between balancing & countering, New Delhi has been able to tread it. When Manmohan Singh & Shinzo Abe were holding hands and dipping their toes in the notion of the Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Modi & Shinzo Abe is now planning to cruise inside these seas together. India and Japan have strategic perspectives that complement one another rather than are identical. When looking at the economic, political, and strategic spheres of India and Japan's connections, one might see enormous chances to reap profits. It is improbable that the strategic alliance would have progressed as far or as quickly without the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose participation has been a catalyst in the rapid expansion of the strategic relationship between the two countries. Great pull reasons for Japan include the notion of India's strategic relevance to Japan due to the country's expanding economic and political might as well as the geopolitical atmosphere in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region (particularly the growth of China). Given the events that are now taking place on the geo-strategic landscape of "the Indo-Pacific region," it is probable that the resulting new momentums in the bilateral relationship between the two countries will continue regardless of who leads the government in Japan and India. Progress rate may be slowed if either country's administration or political leaders are replaced. However, it is improbable that the trend towards embracement would be reversed since the Japanese and Indian government awareness of their shared ambitions and the potential advantage of stronger connections is reciprocal. This recognition makes it improbable that the move towards adoption will be reversed. It is in the best interests of both nations to grab the initiative and move their strategic partnership to the next level to maximize their potential benefits. India gives a high level of importance to its relationship with Japan "Look-East Policy, and in the days to come, it is going to rise in relevance for India given that they share many issues, such as the desire to see a multi-polar Asia and India's increasing proximity to the United States. The significance of the Look-East Policy will likely expand for India because of these shared worries. Because of this way of thinking about strategy, there is now a much greater degree of and more regular communication between the governments of Japan and India. This engagement even extends to questions of military and security. It is still very early in developing more formal, and maybe even more extensive, security agreements between Japan and India on both a bilateral and multilateral level, especially "in the context of the ever-evolving security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region." India would be delighted to have help from Japan in legitimizing its dominating naval preeminence in the Indian Ocean and would see this as a step toward achieving its goal of becoming a great power.

Simple upkeep of the existing power dynamics concerning China is not the only factor influencing India and Japan's bilateral ties and foreign policy. China's influence is limited. Many people interpreted such Japanese measures as an attempt to deepen strategic-political connections. India may be seen as arising from the "former's unease with China's expanding economic might, which seems to be being converted into increased strategic-political weight locally in East Asia and worldwide." Both sides are preparing for a strategic struggle in the core



of the Asian continent, not intending to gain preeminence for them but rather to prevent China from achieving that status. Over the last several years, both nations have made efforts to provide a robust groundwork for constructing a robust basis for growing the relationship into a strong strategic partnership. To get a full picture of the growing friendship between India and Japan, one must do an in-depth investigation into the complexities influencing the bilateral connection between the two countries. The economic partnership between India and Japan has remained its primary pillar despite recent developments that have expanded it to include military and strategic cooperation. “More importantly, Japan’s initiatives, such as its eagerness to invest heavily in India, the amendment of its constitution to allow defense relations with India, playing a role in India’s high-end infrastructural development, and making drastic exemptions to enter into an extremely important and significant civil nuclear deal with India, are all signs of a much stronger India-Japan relationship in the future.” This is especially true when taken together.

In a nutshell, the partnership has been going from strength to strength since it was formally established in 2001, but more specifically, ever since the enhanced activity initiated in 2005–2006. The current interest that Japan has shown in India started from a very low foundation but is expected to pick up speed shortly. The path India and Japan’s ties will take is firmly established, and this calls for the coordinated execution of the roadmap that has already been laid up. The Japan–India strategic partnership (JISP) has made significant progress in establishing “and codifying collaboration between Japan and India; nevertheless, the most ambitious initiatives (economic and security) are still in the research or planning stages of development.” In light of this, there is “still enormous untapped potential for the continued growth of bilateral ties.” It is not a coincidence that India and Japan’s collaboration in economics and development is progressively growing to encompass concerns of strategy and security as part of their purview; both countries are driving this expansion. In the next few days, it is anticipated that the existing Indo-Japanese alliance will be strengthened due to the strategic environment that now prevails in East Asia and south Asia. The good synergy of this collaboration is shown not only in the regular “exchange of high-level visits between the two nations” but also in the variety of themes addressed in their continuing cooperation. Both of these factors contribute to the positive synergy of this partnership.

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