

# GPJ

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON JAPAN

A Yearly Academic Journal

**Nº 5**

**2022**



## Scope

“Global Perspectives on Japan” focuses on developing a global perspective on the study of Japan and Asia. The journal promotes innovative, interdisciplinary, inter-regional and transnational approaches to Japanese Studies.

The journal aims to be a venue for scholarship in E.M.E.A. region with a special focus on Turkey and neighboring regions. It especially encourages scholars from the Middle East, Balkans, Central Asia and the Mediterranean but also welcomes scholars from other parts of the world.

GPJ invites papers in the fields of history, humanities, and social sciences including topics of the past and the present. In addition to articles, the journal publishes occasional article size translations, book reviews, and surveys of current trends in Japanese and Asian Studies.

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON JAPAN (GPJ)

Publisher: FORUM TAURI Press  
Osmanağa mah. Vişne sok. No:50 K.2 Kadıköy / ISTANBUL www.forumtauripress.com

Sponsored by: Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO)  
www.toshibafoundation.com



Partner Institution: Japanese Studies Association/Japonya Arastirmalari Dernegi (JAD)  
www.jad.org.tr



Editor-in-chief: Erdal Küçükyağın (Ph.D.)

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Design: Ergun Kocabıyık

ISSN: 2687-6132

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No. 5

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日本のアジア戦略と「インド太平洋」\*

## Japan's Asian Strategy and the 'Indo-Pacific'\*\*

Kamiya Matake

National Defense Academy

### Introduction

To define the concept of “region” in the context of international relations, one must focus on three main aspects: geographical proximity, the *density* of interactions among countries, and peoples’ subjective and intersubjective perception of belonging to a region.

The first aspect is geographical proximity. Naturally, the concept of region is related to distinguishing one geographical area on the globe from another. However, this aspect does not suffice to define the concept in the context of international relations since it is not one of static quality. For example, for about a quarter of a century, from the Cold War to the present, the group of countries that include the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific Rim countries that belong to the area that is geographically called East-Asia, was commonly referred to as the Asia-Pacific region. However, the view that these countries form a region has not always existed in the past. In Japan, there have been researchers and politicians advocating Asia-Pacific regional cooperation since the 1960s

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\* This is an abbreviated translation of the following article: 神谷 万丈. (2015年). 「日本のアジア戦略とインド太平洋」、インド太平洋時代の日本外交—スイング・ステーツへの対応—、(113-130頁). The original can be accessed at the following link: [https://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/resarch/H26\\_Indo-Pacific/H26\\_Japanese\\_Diplomacy\\_in\\_the\\_Indo-Pacific\\_Age.pdf](https://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/resarch/H26_Indo-Pacific/H26_Japanese_Diplomacy_in_the_Indo-Pacific_Age.pdf)

\*\* Summarized and translated by Aynur Erzenoğlu



(Takamura, 1984), and even before World War II, there were international NGOs such as the Institute of Pacific Relations, which aimed to conduct joint research on the problems that existed in and around the region that later came to be known as the Asia-Pacific. However, this was only a perception among a limited number of pioneering people. It was only in the late 1980s or early 1990s that the recognition of the Asia-Pacific as a single region started to become widely shared in Japan and the rest of the world. This shows that the concept of region in international relations varies depending on factors other than geography.

The second aspect that one needs to focus on is the *density* of interactions among various actors. There are many actors on the global stage that interact with each other, however, such interactions do not occur equally in all parts of the earth. When the political, economic, and social interactions among various actors within a particular area are more intense, that area can be distinguished as a region (Etō, Watanabe, Kumon, & Hirano, 1989).

Thirdly, the concept of region has both subjective and intersubjective aspects. Whether the people of a country perceive themselves as belonging to a region or whether they wish to form a region with other specific countries is subject to change over time. A region emerges as the recognition and aspiration of each country's people come together (Ōba, 2004). However, it is important to note that the perception of belonging and aspiration of people are influenced by geographical factors, the density of interactions, and nature of relations (e.g., friendly or confrontational) between countries.

The aim of this article is to draw up a desirable future Indo-Pacific vision for Japan based on the premise that this geopolitical construct is currently being formed and it includes Japan, and also to consider what is required to realize this vision. The following will examine the regional concept of the Indo-Pacific from Japan's perspective, according to the three aspects previously explained, and provide policy recommendations based on the assumption that Japan will pursue this desirable 'Indo-Pacific' vision for the future.

## **1. The 'Indo-Pacific' as a Geographical Space**

From the perspective of Japan, merging South Asia to the traditional Asia-Pacific region and viewing the area as a single Indo-Pacific region is not

unnatural in the geographical sense. This is because the distinction between the Pacific and Indian Oceans as two separate oceans is artificial. In fact, they constitute a single, connected body of water. Japan is located almost equidistant from both the western edge of the Indian Ocean and the eastern edge of the Pacific Ocean (Agawa & Asari, 2013), and the country has already been operating in the maritime region formed by these "Two Oceans" in a way that links the two.

Currently, Japan relies on foreign sources for 9.6% of its oil, of which around 85% is imported from the Middle East. The transportation from the Persian Gulf to Japan is carried out through the sea lanes in the Indian and the Western Pacific Oceans. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Jakarta speech,<sup>1</sup> that was scheduled shortly after his second inauguration, states that "strengthening ties with maritime Asia" is "a geographical necessity for Japan: a nation surrounded by the ocean, deriving its sustenance from the ocean, and considering maritime safety as its own safety" (2013). By considering Japan's oil import routes, it is clear that the "maritime Asia", with which Japan is associated, includes not only the countries of the Asia-Pacific region but also the countries of the Indian Ocean.

## **2. The Density of Interactions Between Japan and Indian Ocean Countries**

In recent years, advocates of the 'Indo-Pacific' regional concept have emphasized that the interactions between the traditional Asia-Pacific countries and the Indian Ocean countries are rapidly becoming *denser*. The prime example of this is Rory Medcalf's following statement "...the accelerating economic and security connections between the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean are creating a single strategic system." (2013)

On the security front, China's rising assertiveness is acting as a catalyst for interaction between Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean countries. The sea lanes from the Middle East through the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific Ocean mentioned above are important not only for Japan, but also for the world economy. Since about two-thirds of the world's crude oil is transported by

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1 This speech did not take place as planned on the date given because of an inconvenience, however, a draft of it was published on the Prime Minister's Office's website.

sea, their stability is of vital importance to the world economy and to world order.

In recent years, the decline of the U.S. as a maritime power, and the growing assertiveness of China as it builds up and modernizes its military capabilities and expands its maritime reach, have led to concerns about the destabilization of these waters. To some extent, it is natural for a nation to become more assertive as it obtains more power. However, China's strong tendency to assert power through activities and statements that do not fully respect the existing liberal, open, rule-based international order appears as a threat of interest or otherwise a challenge to the status quo in maritime Asia from the view of other countries like the U.S. and Japan. China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean is also arousing the alarm of other countries. The Chinese navy has begun to gradually expand the scope of its activities in the Indian Ocean for anti-piracy reasons. Also, based on a strategy known as the 'String of Pearls', China is reportedly trying to secure a foothold for its own expansion into the Indian Ocean by providing support for the development of ports along the Indian Ocean including the Sittwe Port in Myanmar, the Chittagong Port in Bangladesh, the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, and the Gwadar Port in Pakistan.

Stimulated by China's actions, Japan, the United States, and some other countries are increasingly seeking to build on the Japan-U.S. alliance which has traditionally been the cornerstone of security in the Asia-Pacific region, and to forge alliances with Australia, India, and other South Asian countries that face the Indian Ocean. The consistent enthusiasm Prime Minister Abe showed for cooperation with Australia and India after his return to office in December 2012 was an indication of this. During his visit to South Asia in September 2014, Abe also set out to strengthen ties with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

India also has suspicions that China's 'String of Pearls' strategy is an encirclement strategy. (Medcalf, 2013) This is one of the reasons why Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who came to power in May 2014, is more enthusiastic about security cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries than his predecessors. In a December, 2014 article, Cronin and Baruah argue that Prime Minister Modi "breath[ed] new life into the concept of Indo-Pacific security in just his first six months in office" and that a "Modi Doctrine"

is taking shape that seeks to vigorously pursue political influence through increased maritime power by strengthening ties with "other regional maritime powers". In fact, Prime Minister Modi chose Japan as his first destination to visit outside South Asia after taking office (August 31-September 3, 2014).

The positive trend in the economic interactions between the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region is considered to be important, along with the increase in the density of security interactions. Rory Medcalf maintains that the 'Indo-Pacific' is becoming a center of gravity for the global economy. He also states: "With the recent opening of Burma, an 'Indo-Pacific economic corridor' (traversing land and sea) is being hailed as the next Silk Road" (2013) Japan's political leaders are also emphasizing this fact. For example, in his keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on May 30, 2014, Prime Minister Abe referred to the economic importance of the 'Indo-Pacific' by using the expression "this great growth center that stretches across Asia, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean". In 2015, Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio acknowledged that "the Indo-Pacific region is becoming the center of the world's prosperity" in a speech he delivered during his visit to India. (2015)

India's "Look East" policy is a policy that aims at strengthening economic and strategic relations, and increasing interactions with the nations of Southeast Asia. The Obama administration in the U.S. was especially pleased with the idea of India's participation in the formation of an "Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor". For example, in a speech he delivered at the Tokyo Institute of Technology on April 15, 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry stated that "India, the world's largest democracy and a nation with a booming young population, is building an Indo-Pacific economic corridor that can promote development, trade, and security in a crucial part of the world". (Kerry, 2013)

However, it is important to note that despite the trend toward rapid intensification of economic interaction between the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean, Japan's economic relations with the Indian Ocean region have lagged behind the rest of the world. In his 2014 essay, Professor Makoto Kojima states that the cooperation between Japan and India is progressing in the economic sphere as well as the security sphere. He also argues that Japan-India trade, despite the expansionary trend it has shown in the previous decade, "is still far behind India-China

trade and India-ASEAN trade, and it is far from the level corresponding to the complementarity potential of Japan and India. (Kojima, 2014) A report issued by Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting in 2013 states that India is “very popular” among Japanese companies as an investment destination, indicating that India’s long-term growth potential is “highly valued” by Japanese companies. On the other hand, the report also points out that actual FDI by Japanese companies in India has been “sluggish” due to inadequate infrastructure, complexity of tax collection system, excessive government regulations, and lack of information on investment destinations, and has “languished at a level far below that of FDI in China and lower than that of FDI in South Korea and Indonesia”.

To summarize, in recent years, the interaction between Asia-Pacific countries and countries of the Indian Ocean region has rapidly become more active and denser in terms of both security and economics. And since the Modi government came to power in India, in May 2014, the density of security interactions has risen particularly. This trend may lead to the formation of a “single strategic system” as Medcalf calls it, combining the Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region. In this context, Japan is playing a key role in increasing the security interactions between the Asia-Pacific and India. However, it should be noted that Japan’s economic interaction with the Indian Ocean region remains less intensive than its security interaction.

### **3. Japanese People’s Perception of Belonging to the Indo-Pacific Region**

As previously stated, it is not unnatural for the Japanese people to recognize the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region as a single region from a geographical perspective, and also by looking at the density of interactions among the countries. In reality, however, there is still little sense among the Japanese people that they belong to the ‘Indo-Pacific’ region. A clear indication of this is the frequency with which the term ‘Indo-Pacific region’ appears in major newspapers.

According to @nifty’s *Newspaper and Magazine Article Cross Search*, the number of times the term “Indo-Pacific region” appeared in the four national newspapers (The Asahi Shimbun, The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Mainichi Shimbun, and The Sankei Shimbun) during the three-year period from 2011

to 2012 was only two. During the one-year period from January 1, 2014, to December 31, 2014, the number increased to seven, which is a very low number compared to the 871 results that show when "Asia-Pacific region" is used as the keyword. This indicates that unexpectedly, the term remains unfamiliar to most Japanese people.

#### **4. The Future Indo-Pacific Vision That is Desirable for Japan**

The above analysis suggests that there is considerable validity in the assumption that the regional concept of 'Indo-Pacific' is currently being formed with the participation of Japan as well as other countries. So, what kind of regional vision of the 'Indo-Pacific' is considered desirable for Japan in the future?

It is clear that one of the main reasons for the growing interest in the concept of the "Indo-Pacific" in Japan is the expectation that it will be useful for Japan to respond to the rising assertiveness of China. Japan's post-Cold War diplomacy in Asia has mainly revolved around the Asia-Pacific framework. However, under the circumstances of China's growing power, its increasing expansion in the Indian Ocean and other oceans, and its repeated provocations over the Senkaku Islands and the Spratly Islands, Japan has come to the conclusion that in order to maintain a 'peaceful' surrounding environment for the country, it is more advantageous to focus on the diplomatic strategy and security strategy within the framework of the 'Indo-Pacific', adding the Indian Ocean to the traditional Asia-Pacific. What is thought to be decisive for the future 'peacefulness' of Japan in the surrounding international environment is whether the existing liberal, open, and rule-based international order can be maintained in the future in the face of China's rise. This order was built and maintained by advanced democracies such as Japan, Western Europe, and Australia under the leadership of the United States after World War II, and it has greatly contributed to the peace and prosperity of the entire international community. The foundation of this order are the liberal values and ideals such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law that the United States, Japan, Western Europe, Australia, and other countries all espouse. However, China does not share many of these values and ideals at this time. This, combined with the question of whether China intends to pursue a path of international cooperation within the framework of the current rule-based international order, or whether it intends to transform the current

order into something more in line with its own vision, is raising international concern. (Rudd, 2013)

If China were to seek to change the existing international order, Japan could counter it by strengthening international cooperation with the United States, EU countries, and other advanced democracies to protect the liberal, open, and rule-based order. To this end, the Abe administration recognizes the importance of cooperating with India, the world's largest democracy that shares Japan's liberal values and ideals. There is a growing expectation that placing the Indo-Pacific concept at the core of Japan's Asian strategy could provide an important opportunity to achieve the protection of the current order. The second Abe administration's vision of the Indo-Pacific also aligns with that of the first. This vision was emphasized by Prime Minister Abe in his speech to the Australian Parliament:

Let us join together all the more in order to make the vast seas from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian and those skies open and free. In everything we say and do, we must follow the law and never fall back onto force or coercion. When there are disputes, we must always use peaceful means to find solutions. These are natural rules. I believe strongly that when Japan and Australia, sharing the common values, join hands, these natural rules will become the norm for the seas of prosperity that stretch from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian. (2014)

## **5. Various Conditions for Realization**

What conditions must be met in order for such a desirable vision of the 'Indo-Pacific' to become a reality for Japan and a cornerstone of Japan's future Asian strategy? This will be discussed in the following based on the results of research and studies so far.

### **5.1. India's Support and Active Involvement**

Japan's desired vision of the Indo-Pacific cannot be realized without India's support and active involvement. Whether India sides with Japan and the United States or with China will have a profound impact on the global balance of power. In particular, this will have a decisive impact on the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

Figure 1: GDP share of major countries in the world economy (market rate basis)  
(Govt. of Japan Cabinet Office, 2011)

Country / Year	2009	2030 (expected)
USA	24.9%	17.0%
Japan	8.8%	5.8%
Germany, France, UK and Italy together	17.7%	10.2%
USA, Japan, Germany, France, UK and Italy together	51.4%	33.0%
China	8.3%	23.9%
India	2.2%	4.0%

Figure 1 shows how the share of GDP (on a market-rate basis) in the world economy of major countries is expected to change from 2009 to 2030, using numbers announced by the Cabinet Office in May 2011. According to the Cabinet Office's projections, China's GDP will exceed that of the United States by 2030. However, the combined GDPs of the United States, Japan, and major European countries are expected to exceed that of China's by about 9%, indicating that China's GDP cannot exceed the GDPs of the major industrialized groups of countries that are the makers of the current global international order if there is sufficient policy coordination between the United States, Japan, and Europe. In the Asia-Pacific region, however, the situation may be quite different. This is because the combined GDP of the US and Japan is expected to be slightly less than that of China in 2030. If such a balance of power were to become a reality, it could shake the foundations of the liberal, open, rule-based international order in the Asia-Pacific region. India's GDP share in 2030 is projected to be 4%, and if Japan and the U.S. succeed in strengthening ties with India, the combined GDP of Japan, the U.S., and India will exceed that of China. On the other hand, if China succeeds in strengthening its ties with India, their total GDP will be much higher than that of Japan and the United States. It is obvious that whether India sides with the advanced democracies or with China will have a significant impact on the regional balance of power.

Turning from the economic to the political and security spheres, many of the recent regional cooperation frameworks in the Asia-Pacific that have been



formed in part due to the stimulus provided by the rise of China have included India, such as the East Asia Summit and the annual meetings of ADMM Plus. This is despite the fact that in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, when India was eager to join a series of regional cooperation frameworks in the Asia-Pacific, many countries in the region took a cold attitude.

Despite the fact that the term 'Indo-Pacific' is still not widely used internationally, its existence indicates that the regional concept of 'Asia-Pacific' is already changing into 'Indo-Pacific', which includes India. In the face of this change, it is urgent for Japan to make India share the vision of the Indo-Pacific region that is desirable for Japan, and to make efforts to attract India to the side of advanced democracies such as Japan and the United States, rather than the side of China. But this can be quite difficult. Many Indians are wary that the Indo-Pacific concept advocated by Japan, the United States, and Australia would be detrimental to India's national interests if adopted carelessly. (Chacko, 2013) There are still objections and differences of opinion in India when it comes to the recognition of the regional concept of the 'Indo-Pacific' which originated in Japan and the United States. One of the main reasons for this seems to be that it is not clear what benefits India would derive from adopting this concept and having closer security interaction with Japan, the United States, and other Asia-Pacific countries. The rise of China and its growing assertiveness has India on edge, as well. But at the same time, India wants to approach the idea of adopting the Indo-Pacific concept in responding to China's rise cautiously, as it may overstimulate China. So far, the Modi government's cooperative behaviour, that they have displayed in many occasions, is favourable to Japan.

The intensification of security interactions between the Asia-Pacific countries and India cannot be sustained in the long term if the relationship is unilateral, with the former benefiting from the latter. It is necessary to seek a form of mutual benefit for both parties. If Japan wants India to accept to cooperate in the 'Indo-Pacific' region in a favourable way to its future vision, Japan needs to work with the United States and other countries, to demonstrate more clearly that this concept is beneficial to India, as well.

Hitherto, the theory of the 'Indo-Pacific' in Japan has tended to focus on the Indo-Pacific Ocean (the Pacific and Indian Oceans), and little attention has been paid to the problems in South Asia. If the 'Indo-Pacific' concept is to be the pillar of Japan's foreign and security policies, Japan must take a more

proactive stance than in the past in envisioning how it can get involved and play a role in various issues in South Asia (such as the nuclear issue between India and Pakistan, the Kashmir issue, and the Sino-Indian border dispute).

## 5.2 Strengthening Ties with the other Indian Ocean Countries

Up until now, discussions of the Indo-Pacific region in Japan have focused on strengthening Japan-India ties and cooperation. However, no matter how much the relationship with India is strengthened, this alone will not lead to the formation of an Indo-Pacific region. Japan needs to pay more attention to other countries in the Indian Ocean such as Indonesia and Australia. These two countries are not likely to have the same level of power as the major powers now or in the future. However, in considering the future order of the Indo-Pacific, it is important to pay attention to the movements of these 'swing states' that are not major powers like the United States, China, and Japan, but have a certain degree of influence on international relations in the region. It is a challenge for Japanese diplomacy to guide these states in a direction that is desirable for Japan. (Kikuchi)

Australia re-introduced the 'Indo-Pacific' as a regional concept in its 2013 Defense White Paper, for the first time in four years, since 2009. The content of the report has much in common with the vision of the 'Indo-Pacific' region that is considered desirable for Japan. The 2013 White Paper argues that "China's continued rise as a global power, the increasing economic and strategic weight of East Asia and the emergence over time of India as a global power are key trends influencing the Indian Ocean's development as an area of increasing strategic significance. In aggregate, these trends are shaping the emergence of the Indo-Pacific as a single strategic arc." (Australian Govt. Dept. of Defence, 2013) Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who came to power in September 2013, not only pledged to focus on the 'Indo-Pacific', but also made good on this pledge after coming to power, considering many positive developments ever since.

On the other hand, guiding Indonesia in a direction that is desirable for Japan's Indo-Pacific diplomatic view proves to be a more difficult task. There is no doubt that Indonesia has been paying more attention to the 'Indo-Pacific' concept in recent years. For example, in a series of speeches,

Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marti Natalegawa, advocated the signing of an Indo-Pacific-wide treaty of friendship and cooperation. (2013) According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (APSI), the Foreign Minister has advocated for an “Indo-Pacific treaty” at least three times in different conferences. (Sambhi, 2013) In December 2013, President Susilo Yudhoyono proposed a binding framework for Indo-Pacific cooperation in his speech in Tokyo during his visit to Japan (Kyodo News, 2013). The Joint Communiqué issued by the 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in August 2014, welcomed Yudhoyono’s proposal. (asean.org, 2014)

However, the “Indo-Pacific Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation”, being advocated by Indonesian political and diplomatic leaders, is quite distant from Japan’s Indo-Pacific view. In a speech in Washington on May 16, 2013, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Marty Natalegawa, argued that there are many challenges in the region and that, in order to meet these challenges and achieve a “peaceful Indo-Pacific”, a “new paradigm” that is “not unlike the one that has developed in Southeast Asia through ASEAN” is needed. What he and President Yudhoyono advocated in response to China’s rise was the implementation of an “ASEAN-style” confidence-building framework in a vast region that included China and incorporated India into the traditional Asia-Pacific region.

As the previous examples show, despite that the reference to the concept of Indo-Pacific is increasing in ASEAN countries, at least so far, the understanding of the concept by these countries can differ significantly from Japan’s, and this could pose a challenge to the realization of Japan’s vision of the Indo-Pacific. More policy initiatives are needed to assess how this can be overcome.

Furthermore, for Japan to establish the ‘Indo-Pacific’ region as a single entity, it will be necessary to make efforts to include South Asian countries other than India, such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The Indo-Pacific theory in Japan to date has tended to perceive the ‘Indo-Pacific’ as exclusively maritime-centered, and little attention has been paid to the problems of East Asia. Along with other positive developments, Prime Minister Abe visited Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in early September 2014, following the visits of Indian Prime Minister Modi to Japan at the end of the previous month and beginning of the same month, and it is important to continue these diplomatic efforts.

### 5.3 Promoting Economic Relations

In order for Japan to realize its desired vision of the 'Indo-Pacific' region, it is necessary to further deepen the interaction between the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and those of the Indian Ocean region not only in terms of politics and security but also in economic terms. Japan needs to cooperate with India in the future to expand economic relations to a scale appropriate for the national strengths and strategic interests of both sides. In this sense, one positive development is that on the occasions of Indian Prime Minister Modi's visits to Japan in late August and early September 2014, the leaders of the two countries agreed to set a common goal of doubling the amount of Japanese direct investment and the number of Japanese companies entering the Indian market. Prime Minister Modi also announced that the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry would launch a special team called Japan Plus to strengthen Japan-India economic ties, which was inaugurated on October 8. This has led to other positive developments, as well. Convinced that "joint efforts by Asia's two leading democracies will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region", in the Japan-India Business Leaders Forum, the business leaders of Japan and India called for greater bilateral cooperation in areas such as combating piracy in the Indian Ocean, securing sea lanes, strengthening the cyber security network and combating terrorism. (Japan-India Business Leaders Forum 2014 Report, 2014)

In the future, Japan needs to think about developing a strategic economic partnership between Japan and India, as well as between Japan and other Indian Ocean countries, that goes beyond the mere economic interests advocated in this report.

### 5.4 Raising Awareness among the Japanese People

In order to achieve Japan's 'Indo-Pacific' vision, it is also essential to create a sense among the Japanese people that they belong to the 'Indo-Pacific' region. To this end, the prime minister and other political leaders must step up their efforts to talk to the public about the necessity and relevance of this concept for Japan. After his return to power in December 2012, Prime Minister Abe often promoted regional cooperation, linking the traditional Asia-Pacific region with the Indian Ocean region. However, the usage and

explanation of the term 'Indo-Pacific' were neglected in his policy speeches. This is one of the reasons why the concept of the 'Indo-Pacific' is not familiar to the Japanese people. If this point is not improved, it may be difficult for the Japanese government to gain public support for its 'Indo-Pacific' Strategy in the future.

## 5.5 Fostering a Common Understanding with the United States

It goes without saying that it is necessary to foster a common understanding with the United States and to coordinate policies in order to make the desired 'Indo-Pacific' vision a reality for Japan. However, since fostering a common understanding with the United States and promoting policy coordination are issues that apply to Japanese diplomacy in general, they will not be analysed in this paper.

## 6. Policy Recommendations

To conclude, some policy recommendations will be provided based on the analysis and discussion so far on the assumption that Japan will pursue an 'Indo-Pacific' diplomacy that aims at realizing its desired 'Indo-Pacific' vision in the future.

### 6.1 Promoting Track II Dialogue with Ally Countries Including the US and Other Countries Concerned to Develop a Common Understanding of the Concept of 'Security Order in the Indo-Pacific'

Under the second Abe administration, the regional concept of the 'Indo-Pacific' has become increasingly important to Japan's foreign policy and security policy, especially in its Asian strategy. However, a common international understanding of the desired regional security order has not been fostered sufficiently. In the future, it would be desirable to have active Track II dialogues between Japanese international politicians, security experts and experts from the US, other allies and Indian Ocean countries in order to promote the development of such common understanding. Governments should strengthen their support for activities at the non-governmental level by financial means, as well as other means.

## 6.2 Taking a Leadership Role with the Ally, the US, to Promote International Cooperation Among the Countries Concerned

What is essential to achieve the goal of maintaining the existing liberal, open, rule-based maritime order is the strengthening of cooperation among relevant countries in the region, especially democratic countries. Together with its ally the United States, Japan should lead the way in cooperating with countries that value the maintenance of such international order. Particular emphasis should be on cooperation with India, the world's largest democracy that shares liberal values and principles with Japan and the United States, and with countries in the Indian Ocean such as Australia and Indonesia.

## 6.3 Developing the Necessary Foreign and Security Policy Tools to be Utilized in Building and Maintaining a Security Order in the Indo-Pacific

Japan will not be able to take upon a leadership role unless it is willing to take the actions necessary to build and maintain the security order that it considers desirable in the 'Indo-Pacific', under the banner of positive pacifism based on international cooperation, and in accordance with its own national strength. As a prerequisite for this, Japan must hasten the preparation of the necessary policy tools, including the development of military capabilities, particularly the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).

## 6.4 Promoting Economic Relations with Countries in the Indian Ocean Region.

Japan should interact more closely with the countries of the Indian Ocean, not only in terms of politics and security, but also in economic terms. In the future, it is expected that the economies of the countries in the Indian Ocean region will account for an increasing portion of the world economy, and the development of economic relations with these countries will undoubtedly bring economic benefits to Japan. However, beyond this perspective, Japan should envision and implement measures to develop a strategic economic partnership with India and with other Indian Ocean countries.

## 6.5 Educating the Japanese People

In order to make the desired vision of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ region a reality for Japan and a pillar of its future Asian strategy, it is also essential to foster a sense among the Japanese people that they belong to the Indo-Pacific region. To this end, the prime minister and other political leaders must step up their efforts to talk to the public about the necessity and relevance of this concept for Japan. The government should use the opportunity of the Prime Minister’s policy speeches and statements to educate the people on why it is necessary to strengthen relations with countries in the Indian Ocean and why this will be beneficial in the long term.

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