



India-Japan Security Cooperation Chinese Perceptions

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Amidst the ongoing goodwill gestures between China and Japan, and the former's expectation of optimistic relations with the latter, China is quite perplexed that two countries such as India, which has traditionally been seen as the leader of the non-alignment, and Japan, traditionally acknowledged to pursue an economic-oriented foreign policy, were able to engage in security cooperation measures.

How, then, does China perceive the joint declaration on the security cooperation between Japan and India? And, how does China view Japan's foreign policy towards China?

I

SINO-JAPAN RELATIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY GROWING POSITIVE SIGNS

2008 was a special year for Sino-Japan relations; Chinese president Hu Jintao's became the first presidential visit to Japan in a decade. It was also the year of China-Japan Youth Friendship Exchange. In October 2008, the reception to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship was held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. China-Japan Joint Statement on Advancing the Strategic Relationship of Mutual Benefit was signed in May 2008.

The standoff in Sino-Japan relations at the start of this new century was broken in October 2006 when Japanese PM Shinzo Abe made an "ice-breaking" visit to China. High level political leader exchanges between the two countries have continued since then. In April 2007, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made an "ice-thawing" visit to Tokyo and Japanese PM Yasuo Fukuda made

his "spring herald" visit to Beijing in December 2007. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), in the 1990s, 4 Japanese VIPs visited China and 5 Chinese VIPs went to Japan. Between 2000 and 2008, VIP visits of Japan to China are accounted as 7 and that of China to Japan as 4. Japan's VIP visits to China have all occurred at the PM level, excepting the years from 2003 to 2005, the period when Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi made visits to China. The PM visits began again in 2006. On the Chinese side, Zhu Rongji, then PM, and Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council, went to Japan in 2001 and 2007, respectively.

The China-Japan Joint Statement on Advancing the Strategic Relationship of Mutual Benefit showed signs of the two countries launching a new era in a bilateral relationship. Newer and more positive terms are endorsed in the document, as compared to the previous three documents. The most significant feature of the document is that China, for the first time, has remarked Japan as a contributor to world peace and stability. It said that by taking a steadily peaceful direction, Japan has contributed to world peace and stability for six decades since the World War II. China further mentioned about the UN Security Council reform and that it considers Japan's position and role in the UN to be of high value and would wish to see Japan taking a bigger and more constructive role in international affairs.

The meeting was fruitful, not only in confirming and improving Sino-Japanese relations, but also in contributing to improving the perceptions of Chinese and Japanese people towards each other. The results of the survey by China Daily and Genron NPO of Japan in 2008, indicated that civilian

populations from both countries think that bilateral relations have improved as compared to the previous year.

Current leaders in both countries acknowledged the importance of their relationship. They have tried to engage each other and have expressed a desire to cooperate in common pursuits. However, despite there being room for cooperation in the larger strategic framework, limitations such as history, territorial disputes and global and regional competition are still hampering significant trust building. Amidst efforts aimed at improving Sino-Japan relations, the Indo-Japanese security cooperation has aroused deep-rooted mistrust among the Chinese .

II INDO-JAPAN SECURITY COOPERATION

On 22 October 2008, with Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation by Japan and India, India became the second country after Australia to have a security cooperation pact. In November 2006, then Foreign Minister, Taro Aso, remarked that "value oriented diplomacy" and "the arc of freedom and prosperity" would form Japanese

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foreign policy's basic pillars. He spoke openly that universal values such as democracy, peace, freedom and human rights were to be promoted and Japan must make firmer ties with friendly nations that share common views and interests. In mentioning likeminded friends, he specifically addressed the US, Australia, India, the EU and NATO.

Li Xiushi, Director of the department of Japanese Studies at Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS), characterized this as a "Quadrilateral

Alliance notion [that] is already in progress, whether Japan has the intention to contain China or not. Because not only has China been ruled out by Japan's 'democratic value policy' but also because of the positions of other countries such as the US, Japan, Australia and India's commonly interested focus". Japan's joint declaration of the security cooperation with India is of further concern to China. Ironically, while the Foreign Minister presented this new Japanese foreign policy direction at home, giving the Chinese a sense of encirclement, PM Abe made an 'ice-breaking' visit to China, trying to warm up bilateral relations abroad.

Two years later, Aso became Prime Minister, and declared a joint security cooperation with India. On announcing a "Joint Declaration on Strategic Security Cooperation," both leaders denied the speculation that it had done keeping in mind a third country as a potential target. However, followed by the US-Indo nuclear deal which was considered by the Chinese as a US encirclement of China, the security cooperation haunted the Chinese as a quadrilateral alliance gradually coming into being. Furthermore, since Japan has been a traditional ally of the US, this gave more weight to Beijing's concern regarding the possible US encouragement behind it. Since China's principle foreign policy drive is to weaken the US' preponderance in Asia, the fact that cooperation had presumed US' encouragement is of more concern to China than Japan and India's cooperation itself.

There have been no opinions or comments on the security cooperation by Chinese officials. In a meeting with Japanese PM Taro Aso two days after the announcement of the security cooperation, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao did not mention it, saying instead that "China is willing to make joint efforts with Japan to build political trust, fully carry out the consensus and push forward the strategic and mutually beneficial relationship." On the day marked to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan, while both Hu Jintao and Taro Aso commended each other's efforts in improving and developing bilateral relations over the years, neither touched upon the Indo-Japan security cooperation pact. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not make any mention of the security cooperation either.

In the popular media, major newspapers focused heavily on news related to the cooperation between the two countries. However, these were mainly citations of previously published articles in the Japanese or Indian media. More expressive Chinese views came from local newspapers. Shijie Xinwenbao (World news journal) on 28 October talked of the cooperation as a containment effort on China with India and Japan expanding 'value oriented diplomacy' and by implication 'Quadrilateral Alliance' notions. Around the same time, Nanningwanbao (Nanning Evening Paper), Chinareview News and Huaxiajingweiwang (Ancient term on China and Chinese - Longitude Latitude News) cited the same article, implying that they shared similar perspectives. People's Daily-Tianjin mentioned briefly that though Japan and India tried to keep the security cooperation low key, China seemed to be a sure target of this alliance. China views Japan's ODA and the use of economic power as part of its strategies. While the Chinese state-run media merely cited the fact itself, some local media revealed more aggressive explanations. China Economic Net and Star Island Global News depicted the security cooperation as India's selling its dedicated freight corridor (on the Del-Mumbai industrial corridor) to Japan for 450 billion yen, in return for the security cooperation.

The Chinese media has historically been wary of deepening relations between India and Japan. In December 2006, Zhejiang Online mentioned that 'Japan and India's deepening relationship is trying to 'contain China.' Later in August 2007, the People's Daily, widely recognized as the official government mouthpiece, commented on the 'Joint Declaration on Strategic Cooperation' that despite Japan's argument of the cooperation's main focus as being one of economic cooperation, it seemed likely to have deeper implications beyond it.

From 2001 to 2006, while Sino-Japan relations cooled further, Japan and India embarked on a warmer relationship. Since 2003, India became the biggest recipient of Japan's ODA, overtaking China. Bilateral mutual visits between India and Japan also increased dramatically. In 2000, Japanese PM Yoshiro Mori visited India for the first time in a decade and announced "Global Partnership between Japan and India in the 21st Century." In return, in 2001, India's PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Japan, the first Indian prime

ministerial visit in 9 years. Since then, high profile political visits have occurred on a frequent basis. The Security Dialogue between the two countries was arranged in 2001 and since then, five rounds of dialogue have taken place.

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While the SOG model is likely to be effective both in defensive and offensive ways to deal with urban terrorism, at the national level, instead of having a grand institution, it will be useful to have exclusive teams, like the SIT, which are self sufficient to pursue the perpetrators to the logical end.

Japan to India were 4 and from India to Japan were 11 in the 1990s. The numbers increased between 2000 and 2008 as 25 Japanese VIPs visited India and 22 Indian VIPs visited Tokyo. Considering that in the 1990s, Japanese VIP visits to China and India recorded as equally 4, but between 2000 and 2008, Japanese VIP visits to China were accounted as 7 while to India as 25, there is a clear implication that India is becoming more significant for Japan in the new century.

III JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TRAJECTORY CHINESE INTERPRETATIONS

China's current view of Japan-India's future trajectory is still cautious. Though Japan's 'value oriented diplomacy' in tandem with 'the arc of the freedom and prosperity' and the new right wing's emergence are fairly deeply studied by Chinese academia, China has taken a more cautious approach to it as the major media's hesitation to critique the security cooperation has revealed. Chinese experts on Japan issues regard Japan's foreign policy as uncertain – it is now in the progress of reviewing the previous foreign policy and shaping the new one to fit its role in the world today.

According to Liu Junhong, a senior researcher at the Japan Center of the China Institute for Current International Research, in the "third rising period" of Japan's foreign policy since the 60th

anniversary of the World War II, its relationship with China is still uncertain. According to Liu Jianguyong, Professor of International Relations at the Institute of International Studies, Tsinghua University, regardless of the frank Japanese foreign policy, the political right wing of Japan has its own limitations and there exists an inside debate about this foreign policy. China is required to look into it with a long term perspective. Jiang Lifeng, Director of the Institute of Japanese Studies, China Academics of Social Sciences, views the most unstable element in Sino-Japanese relationship as the latter's domestic political instability. As the mutual VIP visits shows, stalemate under certain administrations and growing contacts under certain other administrations implies a lack of continuity in Japanese policy making. Li Xiushi, director of the Department of Japanese Studies at SIIIS, consider that since Japanese 'value oriented diplomacy' has regional limitations and is the only pragmatic foreign policy contingent on the situation, China does not need to overreact to it.

IV CONCLUSIONS

If one takes a quick look, Beijing's quiet stance and the state-run media's mere citation of the security cooperation as an afterthought might suggest either China's high sensitivity or indifference to it. China is sensitive to the security cooperation as it views it as a possible encirclement tool around China. However, since China views Japanese foreign policy as having been transformed and in the process of review to fit into a new world, China is still cautious about reacting towards it.

Realistically, though India and Japan are getting closer in a more systemic way, there are limitations to applying the security cooperation into a more visible reality: not only is Japan prevented from practicing its military power in a real way but also, neither country can embrace each other's security concerns. Japan can hardly touch on Kashmir and the Sino-Indian border dispute and India also can scarcely support Japanese territorial issues with China.

Strategically, there are two things that can be drawn out of the security cooperation. First, India and Japan have started looking at each other more seriously. Both now have more room to

cooperate in a broader way, including in the security arena. Second, India, which has traditionally been viewed as the leader of the non-alignment league, and Japan, which has traditionally pursued an economic oriented foreign policy, have begun the process of reviewing and revising their old foreign policy frameworks. Until Indo-Japanese foreign policies take a more concrete form, China will remain watchful but uncertain as to whether or not India and Japan can succeed in implementing their new foreign policy initiatives. In the process of adjusting and re-structuring geopolitics, this cooperation will influence China, and at the same time, China will influence the shape of this relationship.

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