

JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA – A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS OF JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOUR AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Abstract:

This paper analyses Japan's foreign policy towards India, a new initiative in Asian regional integration. For many years, scholarly interest has been scarce but in the past decade, efforts to establish political and strategic ties have demanded attention. The objective of this study is to examine the various influences on Japan's behaviour to explain the recent changes in the relationship. Two conclusions from initial research can be made regarding Japan's rationale behind seeking closer ties with India. As this paper will argue, great power structures are the primary rationale for Japan to improve ties with India with the decline in American presence in Asia and the emergence of India as a future global player acting as additional structural factors. This explanation, however, is far from complete and requires the addition of intervening variables; most notably the perception of the domestic population in Japan and role of top bureaucrats and the Prime Minister.

This analysis will employ the theoretical framework of neoclassical realism, often called the 'third generation' of realism. A recent addition to international relations theory, this approach utilises neo-realism's attention on structural factors with the addition of domestic variables like how policymakers perceive a state's power. Empirical data will be drawn from academic sources, media reports and initial interview-fieldwork conducted in Japan.

Keywords: Japan, India, China, regional integration, neoclassical realism, strategic partnership, East Asia Summit

JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA – A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS OF JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOUR AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION¹

*'A strong India is in the best interest of Japan, and a strong Japan is in the best interest of India.'*²

Shinzo Abe, Former Prime Minister of Japan
Speech at the Indian Parliament, August 22, 2007

*'The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving global and strategic partnership that will have a great significance for Asia and the world as a whole.'*³

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India
Address to Joint Session of the Diet, December 14, 2006

I: Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed several political adjustments. Among the under-researched developments is the upgrading of low-key relations between Japan and India to a strategic partnership. Indo-Japanese ties are at an all-time high⁴ with the potential according to some, to become 'a key driving force in shaping a new international order in Asia based on democratic values and market principles.'⁵ The factors, which have contributed to this shift, are worthy of attention. In this study the objective is to examine the various influences on Japan's foreign policy behaviour to explain the dramatic recent changes in the relationship.

This paper will show that great power structures are the primary rationale for Japan to improve ties with India. As is common in most foreign policy practice, however, a range of factors contributes, with differing influential weight. Initial research of both secondary and primary material suggests that Japan's foreign policy elite see India within the balance of power struggle prism but Tokyo's behaviour towards New Delhi has also been shaped by the perceptions of the executive leadership and public norms.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first provides some context to the topic as well as the author's methodology and theoretical framework. In the second section, an overview of Japan's relations with India from the turn of the twentieth century to the current day is given. In the following section the author will examine the structural factors that have influenced Japan's attention towards India. Among these the rise of China is of greatest significance, followed by America's reduced presence in the region and India's increased geopolitical

¹ The author would like to thank Professor C.W. Hughes for his constructive comments on this paper during its early stages, as well as the feedback received from both scholars and PhD participants at the GIARI Summer Institute at Waseda University, August 2009.

² <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>

³ <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=468>

⁴ Harsh V Pant, 'India Looks East and discovers Tokyo', *Rediff News*, October 21, 2008, <http://in.rediff.com/news/2008/oct/21guest.htm>

⁵ Anirudh Suri, 'India and Japan: Congruence, at Last', *Asia Times Online*, June 9, 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IF09Df03.html

stature. The fourth part concentrates on domestic-level factors that shape Japan's diplomatic behaviour. In particular the role of political leaders and established public norms such as anti-nuclearism act as 'intervening' variables, which can be employed to explain Japan's foreign policy actions. In conclusion, the paper offers some thoughts on the role of the Indo-Japanese relationship in the wider commitment to regional integration by examining the behaviour of Japan towards the East Asia Summit. As will be seen, Tokyo has taken a more active stance on this issue, placing pressure on Sino-Japanese relations in order to include nations like India in the contemporary dialogue on Asian matters. The paper argues that whilst strengthening ties between Japan and India is important, practitioners should ensure they avoid being classified as attempting to 'contain' China. China instead, should be engaged with to truly create an Asian community.

B. Context

The significance of the end of the Cold War has encouraged much attention. Alignments around the world have gone through dramatic changes, not least in the Asia-Pacific region where political, economic and societal factors have brought about the emergence or 're-emergence' of powers. Despite the primacy given to China's emerging economy, 'China is not the only Asian great power with ambitions and aspirations for greater global influence and stature...there is Japan and there is India.'⁶ For the first time, there are three great economic powers in the region.

Whilst the security structure of Asia continues to be characterised by the US-Japan and US-South Korea alliances, various other significant groupings have been formed including ASEAN, APEC,⁷ ARF,⁸ APT,⁹ and the Six Party Talks.¹⁰ Bilateral agreements have also emerged including a 'strategic partnership' between Japan and India.

What can be learnt about Japan's foreign policy strategy from this partnership? Is Japan's behaviour purely one of systemic calculation or are more subtle factors at play? In this paper it is argued that whilst the international system dictates the prevailing reason why Japan is interested in India, there are several other factors which intervene in this process; hindering whilst also helping the relationship develop.

C. Literature Review

⁶ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, (Knopf, 2008) p. 36

⁷ Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation is mainly an economic dialogue body whose statements are non-binding.

⁸ ASEAN Regional Forum

⁹ ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea) is the only purely regional body including only Asian countries.

¹⁰ Christian Wirth, 'Japan, China and the case for East Asian Regional Cooperation', *GIARI Working Paper*, Waseda University, Vol. 2008-E-24, February 1, 2009

Literature on Japan's relations with India is in short supply. Studies, which have included both Japan and India, even under the umbrella of 'South Asia', have devoted attention to religious and cultural comparisons,¹¹ democratic parliamentary systems and the frequency of coalition governments (Hirose, 1994; Kesavan, 2004) rather than political relations. During the Cold War and post-Cold War period, studies focused mainly on economic links.¹² Stockwin believes this is 'largely because the substance of the relationship has been comparatively thin'¹³ and indeed for many years South Asia was almost a 'non-entity' from the point of view of Japanese interests' (Kalam, 1996; Hirose, 1994).

The Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in October 2008 and visits like that of the Indian Foreign Minister to Tokyo in July (2009) have prompted further study but the field remains under-developed. Only a handful of scholars currently include Japan-India relations among their expertise (Hirose, Kesavan, Chellenay, Pant).

D. Research Methods

This research is conducted using qualitative data from print sources including academic analysis, media reports and government documents; supplemented by interviews with bureaucrats, academics, journalists and businessmen. This combination incorporates the reality of the situation with academic critique.

E. Theoretical Framework

International relations paradigms have struggled to adequately explain the dynamics of the East Asia region (Cha 2000; Kang, 2003; Katzenstein, 2002, 2004, 2005). Yet realism, dominant for the majority of the Cold War period, remains central to the field despite the addition of identities, norms and international institutions as analytical tools. As Walt articulates, 'it would be fair to conclude that the realist tradition is the worst approach to the study of world politics – except for all the others'.¹⁴

When examining the context of Japan's recent interest in India, the centrality of systemic conditions is clear. My study is therefore fundamentally 'realist' in character. Yet in addition to

¹¹ Bhushan Verma, *Indo-Japanese Relations: Challenges and Opportunities*, (Kanishka; New Delhi, 2004) p. 208

¹² A number of studies have looked at Japan's relations with Bangladesh from the perspective of Japanese aid contributions and Bangladeshi workers in Japan Chowdhury (2008), Moni (2006), Jalal (2002) and Kalam (1996). In stark comparison, very few have explored relations with Bangladesh's immense neighbour on a political level. Malik (2008) has made a valuable addition to Japan's relations with understudied countries, however, with a recent study of Pakistan-Japan relations.

¹³ Cited in Purnendra Jain, *Distant Asian Neighbours: Japan and South Asia*, (1996) Foreword

¹⁴ Stephen Walt, 'The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition' in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner (eds.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline III*, (Norton, 2002), p. 202

seeing primacy in structure, 'intervening' variables like public opinion and the perceptions of the Prime Minister play an important role in how Japan's behaviour operates. The theoretical framework adopted for this study is therefore 'neoclassical realism'.

Neoclassical realism (NCR)¹⁵ represents a progression within the broad research programme of realism, which seeks to extend Kenneth Waltz's structuralist theory by explaining how and why states deviate from balance of power logic. Other analyses of East Asian international relations within the framework of neoclassical realism include Cha (2000), Davidson (2002) Nau (2003) and Stirling-Folker (2009). Katzenstein's 'analytical eclecticism' model shares some similarities with NCR but differs in several significant respects.¹⁶

II: Historical Relations

Japan's ties with India began in the sixth century with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan.¹⁷ At the turn of the twentieth century, cultural exchanges between poets Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin left deep impressions on society. Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 was praised by India for, 'destroying the myth of European supremacy over Asian and serving as a mighty inspiration for Indian nationalists who were struggling to free their country from British rule.'¹⁸ The Japanese Imperial Army, somewhat ironically, further

¹⁵ The term itself was first coined in 1998 in an article in *World Politics* by Gideon Rose, considered the 'father' of the approach. Other terms used to occasionally to describe the approach include neo-traditional realism or neo-traditionalism, motivational realism, modified version of classical realism, modified neorealism, fine grain realism and postclassical realism. Rose himself, asks why the approach needs 'yet another bit of jargon to an already burgeoning lexicon' but agrees that since classical realism lacks a clear definition, a new term is required. Neoclassical realism as defined by Rose will be the term adopted by this study.

Rose's identification of a new stream within realism was a result of work published earlier in the decade by Thomas Christensen, Randall Schweller, William Wohlforth, and Fareed Zakaria. Rose argued that the contributions of these scholars deserved classification as an individual school of foreign policy since they provided a single independent variable; relative power in the international system, common intervening variables; state structure, statesmen's perceptions of their relative power and domestic incentives, and dependent variable; the foreign policy decision. The scholarship also shares the methodological approach of analysing historical situations. (Leobell et al. *The Statesman, the State, and the Balance of Power: Neoclassical Realism and the Politics of Grand Strategic Adjustment* (2009))

¹⁶ Katzenstein rejects what he calls the 'privileging of parsimony', favouring instead 'problem-driven research' over 'approach-driven analysis' (Sil 2004). This involves adopting an 'eclectic approach, not as a substitute but as a complement to well-established styles of analysis'¹⁶ through combining realist, liberal, and constructivist modes of explanation. Whilst both 'analytical eclecticism' and NCR both seek to utilise analytical tools from more than one paradigm, key differences remain. Firstly, 'analytical eclecticism' does not privilege one tool over another. 'Analytical eclecticism' is willing to 'borrow selectively' from any combination of variables and rejects explicitly NCR since it 'privileges a particular set of problems and variables and arbitrarily precludes other lines of enquiry into potentially related domains'. NCR differs fundamentally in unashamedly placing emphasis on the balance of power and primacy of structure.

¹⁷ Among the studies into historical ties, Murthy (1986) offers the most in-depth overview. Other chapter-length pieces, which recount historical links include Kalam (1996), Jain and Todhunter (1996), Jain (2002; 2008) and Dharamdasani (2004).

¹⁸ According to a study by Malik (2008) on Japan's relations with Pakistan over the past century, Japan and British India shared a common defence understanding until the 1920s. The severing of the

endorsed India's liberation from British colonial rule through links with Subhas Chandra Bose who founded the Indian National Army and sought to bring together South Asia and Japan in a common Asian identity.¹⁹

Immediately post-war, relations remained positive. India made a dramatic gesture by refusing to sign the US-drafted San Francisco Peace Treaty instead signing a separate agreement; one of the first Japan signed after WWII.²⁰ India invited then-occupied Japan to participate at the New Delhi Asian Games as an independent nation in 1951 and was a central player in lobbying for Japan's entry into the United Nations and to Japan's participation in the first Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955. Following Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi's visit to India in 1957 Japan began providing its first yen loans to India.²¹

Despite this encouraging backdrop, the advent of the Cold War highlighted the striking contrasts between India and Japan. As India freed itself from colonial rule from Great Britain, Japan restricted its policy for the next sixty years to the world's subsequent hegemon, the United States. Japan, as a newly defeated nation, shied away from involvement in international moral and political issues focusing on economic development, particularly through trade with Southeast Asia. Japan developed a large middle class and technology-focused industry.²² The policy of 'seikei bunri', divorcing politics from economic issues was accompanied by gentle moves into leading multilateral industrial and financial institutions with an influential role.²³

India chose a vastly different course. Invigorated by independence, New Delhi adopted the political stance of championing the voice of newly independent nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America whilst protecting infant industries and shunning international trade. Japan grew increasingly disenchanted with India's 'idealistic' non-alignment movement but before any significant policy changes could develop as a result of the end of the Cold War (in Europe) and India's 'Look East' policy and economic liberalisation, the 1998 Indian nuclear tests severed what ties had accumulated.

Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was based on predominantly commercial and political interests, however, damaged Japan's relations with South Asia.

¹⁹ Abul Kalam, *Japan and South Asia: subsystemic linkages and developing relationships*, (Dhaka; University Press Ltd., 1996)

For an account of the links between the Imperial Japanese Army and the Indian National Army, see Joyce C Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008)

²⁰ Justice Radhabinod Pal was the Indian representative to the International Military Tribunal for the trial of Japanese war criminals. Here he found all the defendants not guilty of Class A war crimes. The extent to which Japanese revere Justice Pal for his conclusion can be seen in the monument in his memory at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo.

²¹ 'Japan-India Relations', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/index.html>

²² Dharamdasani (ed.) *Indo-Japanese Relations: Challenges and Opportunities*, (New Delhi, Kanishka, 2004) p. 9

²³ Jain, *Distant Asian Neighbours: Japan and South Asia*

In August 2000, Prime Minister Mori visited India, sparking a rapprochement between governments and the catalyst of a new chapter in India-Japan relations.²⁴ Annual meetings between prime ministers and VIP visits followed, including exchanges between Defence and Coastguard authorities multiplied. In 2007, both governments held 'Japan-India Exchange Year 2007' to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Cultural Agreement. In October 2008, Japan and India signed a 'Joint Statement on the Advancement of the Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India' and a 'Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India'. This marked only the third time India confirmed a security pact with another country, following the United States and Australia. Among the accords India and Japan agreed to greater security cooperation, trade, investment and economic relations, environmental and energy cooperation, to combat terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation and reform the United Nations Security Council.

III The Importance of Structure: China's Rise

'Among the forces pressing upon Japan, none has changed more since the country's asset-bubble burst in 1990 than its own neighbourhood.'²⁵ The rise of China in particular has emerged as the biggest factor shaping Japan's Asia diplomacy and arguably Japan's attention to India. The ascent of China is indeed accepted as the dominant influence by the majority of scholars who have approached the topic (Jain 1997; Pant 2007; Emmott 2008).

In the past decade progress on Sino-Japanese relations has been slow, particularly during the Koizumi years. China's rhetoric of promoting a 'peaceful development' has not allayed fears over China's military spending, which now exceeds that of all the EU members combined. In 2008 spending increased by 17.6%, in yet another year of double-digit growth.²⁶ Beijing's recently firm stance against North Korea in the wake of provocative missile launches show some commonality in purpose but Sino-Japanese relations remain unsteady. Sino-Indian tensions also remain over border disputes, energy supplies and China's alliance network on India's borders.

Moreover, Japan's elite has bluntly stated the role of China in Japan's India strategy. According to Japan's former Deputy Head of Mission, Wataru Nishigahiro 'the relationship with India is important, partly because of the factor of emerging China. We are not confronting against China, but we have to manage the relationship with China carefully. And

²⁴ Kapur cited in Rajaram Panda and Yoo Fukazawa (eds.) *India and Japan: In Search of Global Roles* (2007)

²⁵ 'New East Asia, old enmities' *The Economist*, October 6, 2005

²⁶ Brahma Chellaney, 'Security and Strategic Challenges in Asia – Prospects of Japan-India Cooperation', *Proceedings from Observer Research Foundation, Chennai India Symposium*, August 2008

in that process, our relationship with India becomes more meaningful.' Even Aso during his tenure as Foreign Minister admitted that India served a useful function in balancing against China.²⁷ Sino-Japanese tension has, however, existed for decades so cannot fully account for Tokyo's rapprochement towards New Delhi.

B. The Role of the United States

The alliance with the United States represents the centrepiece of Japan's foreign policy. American policy towards India has therefore provided significant influence over the attitudes and decisions of policymakers in Tokyo. It is no coincidence that when the US was embroiled in Cold War strategic power politics, favouring Pakistan over India, Indo-Japanese political relations were weak. When in 2000, America shifted its focus in the region towards India, Tokyo dutifully followed suit. Indeed, the landmark visit by Prime Minister Mori to India tracked almost the exact same itinerary as that of President Clinton earlier in the year.²⁸ Over the past decade the US has encouraged Japan to forge closer ties with India whilst also seeking a role for itself in a trilateral or even quadrilateral grouping including Australia.

The new Obama administration's policy towards Asia remains unclear. Whilst President Bush framed his policy towards individual states within a geo-strategic framework,²⁹ President Obama has stated that America's 'most important bilateral relationship in the world' is with China.³⁰ Hillary Clinton's decision to visit Japan first on her trip to Asia was welcomed in Tokyo but the absence of India on the programme suggests Obama will pay less attention to the sub-continent than his predecessor.³¹ Clinton's July 2009 visit, six months after Obama's inauguration, failed to relieve the disappointment felt by many in India. Washington again appears to consider India through the 'Pakistan prism'. This has had the effect of unnerving many in India as well as those in Japan keen to continue de-hyphenating India from the 'War on Terror'.

²⁷ Takako Hirose, 'Japanese Emerging Nationalism and Its New Asia Policy', in V.R. Raghavan (ed.) *Asian Security Dynamic: US, Japan & the Rising Powers* (New Delhi and Chicago: Promilla & Co. Publishers, 2008), p. 59

²⁸ Rajaram Panda, 'India and Japan in the new century', *South Asia in 21st Century: India, Her Neighbours and the Great Powers* (New Delhi, South Asian Pub., 2003), p. 266
Rajaram Panda

²⁹ Brahma Chellaney, 'Dancing with the dragon', *Japan Times*, June 25, 2009,
<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/eo20090625bc.html>

³⁰ Obama's choice of Ambassador to these three countries has been identified as a further indication of the administration's priorities; 'While Obama named John Huntsman — the Utah state governor and a rising Republican star seen even as a potential 2012 rival to the president — as his ambassador to China, he picked obscure former Congressman Timothy Roemer as envoy to India and a low-profile Internet and biotechnology lawyer, John Roos, as ambassador to Japan. Obama underlined China's centrality in his foreign policy by personally announcing his choice of Huntsman. In contrast, Roemer and Roos were among a slew of ambassadors named in an official news release.' Chellaney, 'Dancing with the dragon'

³¹ Several commentators believe Bush's India nuclear deal to have been his greatest foreign policy success. See David Frum, 'Where Bush Was Right', *Newsweek Special Edition*, (January 2009), p. 25

C: The Emergence of India

India's international standing has changed spectacularly. Whilst poverty remains endemic, the 1991 economic liberalisation policy of Prime Minister Rao has sent India's economy on a remarkable upward trajectory.

India has shown positive signs that it has abandoned its non-alignment policy, which previously posed an obstacle to regional integration. India's nuclear deal with the United States in October 2008 is the most apparent demonstration of this shift. In exchange for greater multilateral responsibility on issues such as trade, peacekeeping and climate change, India was given the green light for nuclear research without signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). According to the *Times of India*, 'If the Beijing Olympics was China's coming-out party, the NSG waiver was India's.'³² For Bill Emmott, it marked Bush's 'Richard Nixon moment'.³³ India is now part of the 'nuclear club' with countries like France, the UK, China and Iran.³⁴

Today India no longer shows the same contempt for 'power politics' as was the case in the latter half of the twentieth century. Economic liberalisation and unprecedented growth has provided India, as it did for China during the 1980s, with the financial support to flex greater diplomatic muscle in the region and beyond. As Kagan noted, India has discarded the 'power of the argument', promoting 'woolly notions of promoting democracy and human rights' in favour of the 'argument of power'.³⁵ Almost fully de-hyphenated from Pakistan, India is now seeking the international prestige of 'great power status'.³⁶ Once a recipient of aid, regarded as a poor developing country, India is now a provider with significant strategic importance.

India of course, has its own priorities autonomous from those of with the United States and Japan. New Delhi is determined not to join an anti-China coalition and play a similar role to Britain in the EU; being in and out [of Asia] at the same time.³⁷ Within the Asian region, India

³² 'India elsewhere: A special report on India', *The Economist*, December 11, 2008, http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12749743

³³ Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle Between China, India and Japan Will Shape Our Next Decade*, (London; Allen Lane, 2008)

³⁴ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, (London; Atlantic Books, 2008) p. 41

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ As Mohan argues, 'India has always had a sense of its own greatness' but their economic growth has encouraged further confidence. Furthermore, 'Even when India was weak, it was not willing to play a subordinate role so why should it be a junior partner to the US now?'; 'India is always sensitive to any hint it is being treated as anything less than an absolute equal'. C. Raja Mohan, 'India's New Foreign Policy Strategy', *Paper presented at a Seminar in Beijing by China Reform Forum and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Beijing, May 26, 2006, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Mohan.pdf>

³⁷ Charu Lata Hogg 'India and its Neighbours: Do Economic Interests have the potential to build peace?' *Chatham House Report*, (October 2007), p. 11

also seems among the most willing to acknowledge Japan's centrality in shaping the evolving Asia-Pacific security architecture.³⁸

IV: The Role of Executive Leadership

The above structural factors are fundamental to understanding the context for Japan's interest in India. They fall short, however, of explaining the exact timing and nature of Tokyo's decision-making. In order to gain a greater appreciation, it is necessary to employ intervening variables from the domestic arena. In this case, the role of the anti-nuclearism norm and role of executive leadership are considered key.

Foreign policy decisions whilst reliant on material power, are mitigated by how that power is perceived by those who orchestrate it; statesmen.³⁹ This human factor; perceptions of physical resources, technological achievements, geographic location etc. can be as significant as genuine capabilities.⁴⁰

By looking briefly at Japan's recent executive leadership one can appreciate the salience of prime minister preferences. Prime Minister Mori's visit to India in 2000 it has been noted, represented the catalyst for the strengthening of ties. Yet since Japan's initiative followed that of Clinton and considering evidence that Mori himself had little specific enthusiasm towards India,⁴¹ limited concrete progress resulted in the immediate months and years.

Koizumi's tenure (2001-2006) marked a significant break from previous administrations and demonstrated the potential impact of the prime minister's office. His interest in India can be attributed to predominantly populist concerns, however, rather than a desire to construct a meaningful alliance. As relations with China became their most sour by 2005 with widespread nationalist protests, Japanese policymakers were forced to reassess the political landscape around them. India, with no historical baggage or border disputes provided a suitable opportunity. In this context, Koizumi visited India towards the end of his time in office in 2005.⁴² Japan's attention to India also suited US foreign policy at the time; an important consideration for Koizumi.

Shinzo Abe who succeeded Koizumi maintained India in his foreign policy strategy. For Abe, the reasons were more personal. Justice Pal's favourable view of Japan's wartime past at

³⁸ Pant, 'India Looks East and discovers Tokyo'

³⁹ Classical realism acknowledged the impact of individuals, just as they have noted domestic factors but as Juha Mononen (2008) recognises, whilst in classical realism human nature is a constant, for NCR it can shape other factors as an intervening variable.

⁴⁰ Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro, 'Norms, Identity and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise', in Katzenstein, Peter J., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, (New York; Columbia University Press, 1996)

⁴¹ Author's interview with Professor Takako Hirose, June 13th, 2009

⁴² Author's interview with Professor Takenori Horimoto, June 25th, 2009

the conclusion of the Second World War suited Abe's nationalist leadings and there us is also evidence that Abe's grandfather, PM Nobusuke Kishi's visit to India eft a deep impression on his association with the sub-continent.⁴³ In this period Japan-India ties accelerated as can be seen in one instance by the exchange of official visits. During the 1990s, there were only four recorded visits by Japanese officials to China and India but between 2000 and 2008 whilst visits to China only increased to seven, those to India surged to twenty-five. Twenty-two Indian VIPs made reciprocal visits to Tokyo.⁴⁴ Whilst official visits and rhetoric might not appear significant in themselves, they send strong messages to the political and business communities about the stability of relations. Fukuda's short period in office (2007-08) limited the foreign policy influence he could weld but his concern for improving relations with Beijing and shelving of the 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity' initiative indicate that India-Japan relations would have continued to slip down Japan's agenda should he not have resigned unexpectedly in September 2008.

As Foreign Minister during the Abe government, Taro Aso, played an key role in orchestrating Japan's India policy. In a July speech in Tokyo, Aso showed signs of continuing to support the initiative. The quagmire of political uncertainty, which has characterised Japanese domestic politics since the end of Koizumi's term, however, has limited Japan's foreign policy ability.⁴⁵ As Japan waits in limbo for another administration following the forthcoming election at the end of August, the foreign policy direction of Tokyo is a matter of debate. The approach of the DPJ who are widely predicted to win, could either promote greater independence in foreign policy or maintain the status quo. Both scenarios have implications for Japan's India policy.

Despite internal Japanese distractions, Japan-India ties have nonetheless made progress in the past year with the monumental signing of the strategic agreement in October 2008. Domestic leadership and debate are therefore non-determinate but contributory factors in understanding the character Japanese foreign policy making.

B: Anti-nuclearism

Domestic concerns also play an intervening role in the manner of how Japan's foreign policy elite behaves. Among the issues that most stir the Japanese public is the nuclear issue and concern for Japan's position as the champion of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

⁴³ PM Kishi also received Jawaharlal Nehru in Tokyo later in 1957. Vibhav Kant Upadhyay, founder-chairman of the NGO India Center, is also reported to have close ties with Abe
Sudheenra Kulkarni, 'When 80 000 Japanese said Namaste Indiá', *Indian Express*, September 24, 2006, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/when-80-000-japanese-said-namaste-india/13340/>

⁴⁴ Hayoun Ryou, 'India-Japan Security Cooperation: Chinese Perceptions', *IPCS Issue Brief*, No 89 (January 2009)

⁴⁵ Pant, 'India Looks East and discovers Tokyo'

The salience of this norm on Tokyo's international behaviour can most clearly be seen in Japan's stern response to India's Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998.⁴⁶ Structural issues alone here cannot explain Tokyo's behaviour.

When Japan-India relations showed the potential to advance with the end of the Cold War and development of India's economic liberalisation policy and 'Look East' approach, Japan reacted with one of its most defiant policy decisions. Independent of the response of the United States, Japan adopted various initiatives to demonstrate its opposition, including condemnation, the suspension of aid, interference in the Kashmir issue and support for Pakistan in the ASEAN Regional Forum.⁴⁷ Japan-India relations henceforth entered their darkest era.

This behaviour, however, was far from typical of Tokyo and has been widely accepted since as irrational. Whilst policymakers are aware of the public mood of Japan on the nuclear issue being the only nation a victim of nuclear attack, Tokyo no longer takes such proactive steps to voice its concern. Japan's uncomfortable acceptance of India's nuclear deal with the United States in 2008 following lobbying from Washington indicates that whilst Japan remains anti-nuclear and opposed to nuclear energy cooperation with India, Japan now recognises India as a nuclear power. The American nuclear umbrella also still secures Japan. The role of norms therefore should not be overstated.

V: Indo-Japanese Relations and Regional Integration

Regional integration can be defined as the attempt by states to branch out from purely sovereign state status to form regional groupings to promote greater economic, social and political stability. Economic cooperation is considered the 'first step' in promoting a wider integration but between India and Japan bilateral trade figures have been meagre and where efforts have been among their weakest. There is, nonetheless, considerable potential for both economies. Trade between Japan and India has been on the steady rise since 2003 doubling from a mediocre US\$ 4.0 billion in 2002 to US\$ 8.6 billion in 2006 (see below).⁴⁸ Negotiations are in place to increase this to \$20 billion by 2010.⁴⁹ Japan has taken the initiative with several infrastructure projects in the region⁵⁰ but ultimately it will only be once

⁴⁶ For a detailed analysis of Tokyo's reaction see Satu P. Limaye, 'Tokyo's Dynamic Diplomacy: Japan and the Subcontinent's Nuclear Tests', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (August 2000)

⁴⁷ Satu Limaye, 'Japan and Indian after the Cold War', Satu Limaye and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *Japan in a Dynamic Asia – Coping with the New Security Challenges*, (Lanham; Lexington Books, 2006), p. 225

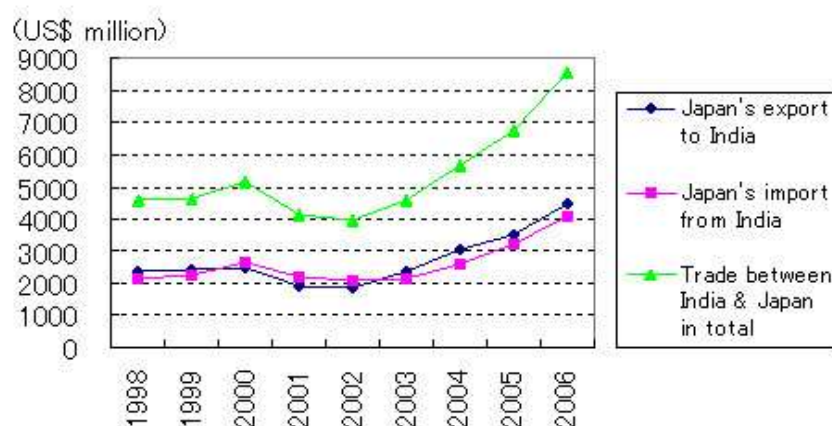
⁴⁸ 'Japan's Active Engagement in Business Cooperation with India II', *Embassy of Japan, New Dehli*, April 2007, <http://www.in.emb-japan.go.jp/Japan-India-Relations/JapanActiveEngagement2007.html>

⁴⁹ Jain, 'New roadmap for Japan-India ties', *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, <http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2514>

⁵⁰ Among the most significant have been the Delhi Metro, financed by Japanese ODA and the Delhi-Mumbai Freight Corridor announced in 2007.

trade and investment flows increase further that Japan-India relations will contribute significantly to the integration of the region.⁵¹

Trade between India and Japan, from 1998 to 2006



(Resource: Ministry of Finance, Japan)

Regional integration also requires governments to enter into dialogue to promote common goals together. In this respect, Japan's attention to India can be drawn upon to decipher trends in Tokyo's approach to regional integration. Here, managing China's rise, discussed above, is Japan's top priority. In contrast to Japan's initial post-Cold War hostility towards regional frameworks,⁵² Tokyo today sees benefit in various fora and frameworks to engage with China. The East Asia Summit, which in 2005 invited India to participate, is one such example.⁵³

The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis sparked interest in creating an East Asian Community. Feeling abandoned by the West and US-dominated financial institutions, notions of regional identity grew.⁵⁴ Leaders from China, Japan and the Republic of South Korea, met ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) leaders on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur to discuss

⁵¹ Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) are currently in their 10th round of negotiations. The recent visit in July 2009 by Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna as part of the third round of the Japan-India strategic dialogue in Tokyo did not confirm a timeline for the completion of a 'comprehensive economic partnership agreement' further signalling delay.

⁵² In 1991, under the influence of Washington, Japan rejected the East Asia Economic Caucus concept

⁵³ Another reading of the inclusion of India, Australia and New Zealand suggests that it was ASEAN who wanted to expand participation to ensure they own dominance in the face of attempts by Premier Wen Jiabao of China to offer to host the second summit. (Barry Desker, 'Why the East Asia Summit matters', PacNet, No. 55B, Pacific Forum/CSIS, Honolulu, Hawaii, 19 December 2005)

⁵⁴ The formation of the European Union (EU) in 1992 and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 also encouraged Asian countries to consider developing a third 'bloc' between Europe and North America. (Jain, Purnendra, 'Japan's vision of an East Asian Community: Responses from Asia', *Japanese Studies*, 26:1, pp.1-4 (2006))

such a proposal.⁵⁵ The ASEAN Plus Three initiative developed in 1999 followed by a call from the East Asia Vision Group, established in 2001, for the eventual goal of establishing an East Asian community. Among the recommendations provided, was the formation of an East Asia Summit.

Despite the initiative's objective to provide an opportunity for informal confidence building and discussions issues of common concern, tensions over membership and potential blocs of strategic interests have dominated discourse.⁵⁶ This has primarily been centred on Sino-Japanese rivalry;⁵⁷ again demonstrating the argument of this paper that structural considerations have formed the basis of Japan's strategy towards forging closer ties with India.

In seeking the inclusion of India (as well as Australia and New Zealand) and promoting the EAS as the key vehicle to promote Asian community-building over the ASEAN+3 forum, Japan has taken a potentially contentious position vis-à-vis Sino-Japanese relations. Japan is no longer satisfied with American interest in the region, a feeling Secretary of State Rice's absence at the ARF meeting in July 2005 only served to confirm.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Tokyo has become increasingly concerned by Beijing's attempts to employ the APT as the structure from which to build free trade agreements with Southeast Asian nations with whom Japan has held a 'special relationship' during the post-war era.⁵⁹ Japan's vision of the region, as a result, has begun to look further afield than APT for potential partners, running the EAS against APT in opposition rather than in parallel to each other as was the initial intension.⁶⁰

Beijing strongly opposed the addition of non-Asian nations to the proposed EAS, perceiving India, Australia and New Zealand as US allies positioned to weaken China's voice.⁶¹

⁵⁵ 'East Asia Cooperation: ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Process and East Asia Summit (EAS)', *Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ASEAN Department, Government of Thailand* (April 2009)

⁵⁶ Mohan Malik, 'The East Asia Summit: More Discord than Accord', *YaleGlobal Online*, 20 December 2005

⁵⁷ Tomotaka Shoji, 'Pursuing a Multi-dimensional Relationship: Rising China and Japan's Southeast Asia Policy', Jun Tsunekawa (ed.), *The Rise of China: responses from Southeast Asia and Japan*, The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, No. 4 (2009) pp. 157-184

⁵⁸ In order to become a member of the East Asia Summit, ASEAN has set three conditions; members must be full ASEAN dialogue partners, have 'substantive' relations with ASEAN and be signatories to ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. The United States has refused to fulfill the latter obligation and is therefore not involved in the EAS. According to some, America's preoccupation in the Middle East has distracted Washington from an important development in East Asia (Ibid.)

⁵⁹ This spurred Japan in 2007 to propose its own series of agreements in an attempt to counteract China's influence. China's decision not to devalue the yuan and provide aid to affected countries contributed to the positive feelings towards them in the region.

Hughes, 'Japan's response to China's rise: regional engagement, global containment, dangers of collision', p. 840

⁶⁰ Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, 'Strengthening Cooperation in East Asia: Towards an East Asian Community', *Paper presented at the 1st Korea-ASEAN Cooperation Forum*, 10-12 November 2006

⁶¹ Malik, 'The East Asia Summit: More Discord than Accord'

Attempts to lobby Southeast Asian states to reject their membership failed since most ASEAN members favoured bringing in counterweights to China's influence but Beijing was, however, still able to dislodge the formation of EAS. On the eve of the first summit, Wen Jiabao, declared that ASEAN+3, not EAS should continue to take the lead in forming the objective of an East Asian Community,⁶² sending a clear message that that it was the role of East Asians, ie. excluding India, which Beijing considers a periphery nation.⁶³

In contrast Japan has continued to push for two-tiered structure which would also give weight to (democratic) powers in the immediate neighbourhood.⁶⁴ Japan is clearly attempting to balance, or to use a less antagonistic term, dilute China's influence by expanding the scope of the Asia region beyond that of the Yoshida-doctrine; relying solely on the United States for stability.⁶⁵ Tokyo's stance is therefore becoming more dynamic on regional issues.

The viability of the EAS to foster greater regional cooperation is currently unclear.⁶⁶ The inaugural meeting was certainly far from 'as significant as the first ASEAN summit held in Bali in February 1976'.⁶⁷ Few concrete results have emerged from previous Summits⁶⁸ and the last, scheduled for Bangkok in 2009, was unable to be held due to domestic unrest in Thailand. The suitability of the EAS as an example of Japan's policy towards integration is therefore in its early stages. The inclusiveness beyond the traditional geographic boundaries is noteworthy and it should be remembered that participants at the East Asia Summit represent countries with almost half the world's population and account for one-fifth of global trade.⁶⁹ The intensification of Sino-Japanese rivalry as a result of forming the EAS, however, has been a far from favourable outcome.⁷⁰

⁶² Ibid.

After arriving in Kuala Lumpur for the summit, Premier Wen Jiabao insisted that "[t]he East Asian Summit should respect the desires of East Asian countries and should be led only by East Asian countries."

⁶³ Malik, 'The East Asia Summit: More Discord than Accord'

⁶⁴ Hitoshi Tanaka, 'The ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit: A Two-Tiered Approach to Community Building', *Japan Center for International Exchange*, No. 1, January 2006

⁶⁵ It should be noted that Japan has not been alone in this effort; Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore have also been keen to stem China's influence.

⁶⁶ 'The First East Asia Summit: Towards a community – or a cul-de-sac?', IISS Strategic Comments, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, vol. 11, issue 10, December 2005

Should Russia for example make further moves towards becoming a member then serious questions as to the scope and purpose of the EAS would have to be raised. This would also be the case if the United States abandons its previous position and also seeks membership.

⁶⁷ Desker, 'Why the East Asia Summit matters'

⁶⁸ Chu, 'The East Asia Summit: Looking for an Identity'

⁶⁹ 'The First East Asia Summit: Towards a community – or a cul-de-sac?'

⁷⁰ According to Terada (2006), the leadership competition between Japan and China actually helps to foster the formation of an EAC by prompting ASEAN to be a more unified actor and encouraging South Korea to pursue a path similar to that of ASEAN, but evidence of such behaviour in this way has so far been limited. (Jain, Purnendra, 'Japan's vision of an East Asian Community: Responses from Asia', *Japanese Studies*, 26:1, pp.1-4 (2006)) Several other scholars have argued that in order for there to be progress in Asian regionalism, the issue of Sino-Japanese rivalry must be addressed (Acharya, Van Ness)

VI: Conclusions

Japan's relations with India have considerable potential. The relationship is far from mature and remains very much in the developmental stage but New Delhi and Tokyo are no longer the 'distant neighbours' they were once considered.⁷¹

The structural reality of the Asia-Pacific region will in all likelihood continue to shape Japan's policy towards India as countries adjust to China's rise and China's own policy towards its neighbours becomes more apparent. Established alliances, in particular that between Japan and the US and the US and China will be the model through which Tokyo will have to mould its foreign policy with consideration for domestic political concerns and the preferences and perceptions of Japan's executive leadership.

The primacy of external geo-strategic factors in Indo-Japanese relations thus far demonstrates the limitations of a purely bilateral agreement. Japan, India and the United States are now interdependent with China. In order for both Tokyo and New Delhi to benefit from a partnership, consideration and inclusion of other regional states is required. Japan's relations with India should be part of a wider initiative to include China, ASEAN, the US, Australia and South Korea to tackle the shared concerns like those of energy, climate change and piracy.

Japan should tread carefully in its pursuit of strengthening Indo-Japanese ties. Tokyo should consider how the partnership is perceived by China. Japan's recent foreign policy strategy of seeking new interactions with its neighbours and those further afield may well benefit the formation of an East Asian community; but this will only be the case if Beijing is persuaded that such measures are not an attempt to 'contain'⁷² or 'curb' China's development.⁷³ Of course Beijing too has a role to play here and must make similar efforts to dissuade its neighbours it is forming any adversarial alliances but Tokyo and New Delhi should continue to engage with their shared neighbour. Tit-for-tat preferences for the EAS by Japan over China's favour of APT will do little to provide stability and harmony in the region; a key purpose of the East Asian community mission. Should Japanese policymakers be able to manage the delicate balance between assuring their presence and interests in the region

⁷¹ Ahmad Rashid Malik, *Pakistan-Japan Relations: Continuity and Change in Economic Relations and Security Interests*, (London; Routledge, 2008)

⁷² Arjun Asrani, 'A Budding Strategic Partnership: India-Japan Relations in a New Asian Era', Keynote Address, *The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation*, http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/programs/program_pdfs/india_japan_keynote.pdf

⁷³ Hughes, 'Japan's response to China's rise: regional engagement, global containment, dangers of collision', p. 855

without antagonizing their influential neighbour, the prospects for India-Japan cooperation for community building are likely to be great.

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