

# The Evolution of India-Japan Strategic Partnership: A Japanese Perspective

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# INTRODUCTION

- **India** has been **Japan's important strategic partner** since 2006. This is because **regional and global balance of power** is being changed, and also because the two powers share important **values** such as democracy.
- Japan's National Security Strategy clearly states that Japan will remain as **a major global player in world politics**.
- With the enhanced U.S.-Japan alliance, the main goal of Japan's new security strategy is to contribute further **to bring peace and prosperity** in the Asia-Pacific region.
- For this purpose, **Japan needs to enhance security cooperation with like-minded countries** that share basic values such as democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law and make economy, as well as strategic and geopolitical interests.

# 1. Abe's Grand Strategy

## (1) Defending Values

- **Value-oriented Diplomacy:** One of the important aims of Abe's foreign policy has been to defend **basic norms and values** such as liberty, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, for reinforcing peace and stability in international order. Therefore, it is important for Japan to enhance its security cooperation with countries which share these values. Common norms and values are the foundation of stable international order.

Shinzo Abe: ***“Thinking about security and defending Japan mean that we need to defend our institutional foundations. These are liberty and democracy.”*** (Utsukushii kuni he, 2006) 

- **Enhancing the Japan-India Relations:** Shinzo Abe has been regarding India as one of the most important strategic partners for Japan since India shares important norms and values with Japan.

**Shinzo Abe: “*The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity. A “broader Asia” that broke away geographical boundaries is now beginning to take on a distinct form. Our two countries have the ability – and the responsibility – to ensure that it broadens yet further and to nurture and enrich these seas to become seas of clearest transparency. .*”**

*(“Confluence of the Two Seas”, PM Abe’s speech at the Parliament of the Republic of India, August 22, 2007)*

## (2) Abe's Strategic Diamond: Geopolitics and New "Value-Oriented Diplomacy"

- When Abe Shinzo returned to the prime minister's office in December 2012, he revived his own "**value-oriented diplomacy**". The essence of this diplomacy is to enhance Japan's strategic cooperation with the U.S., Australia and India. PM Abe calls this as "**Asia's democratic security diamond**".



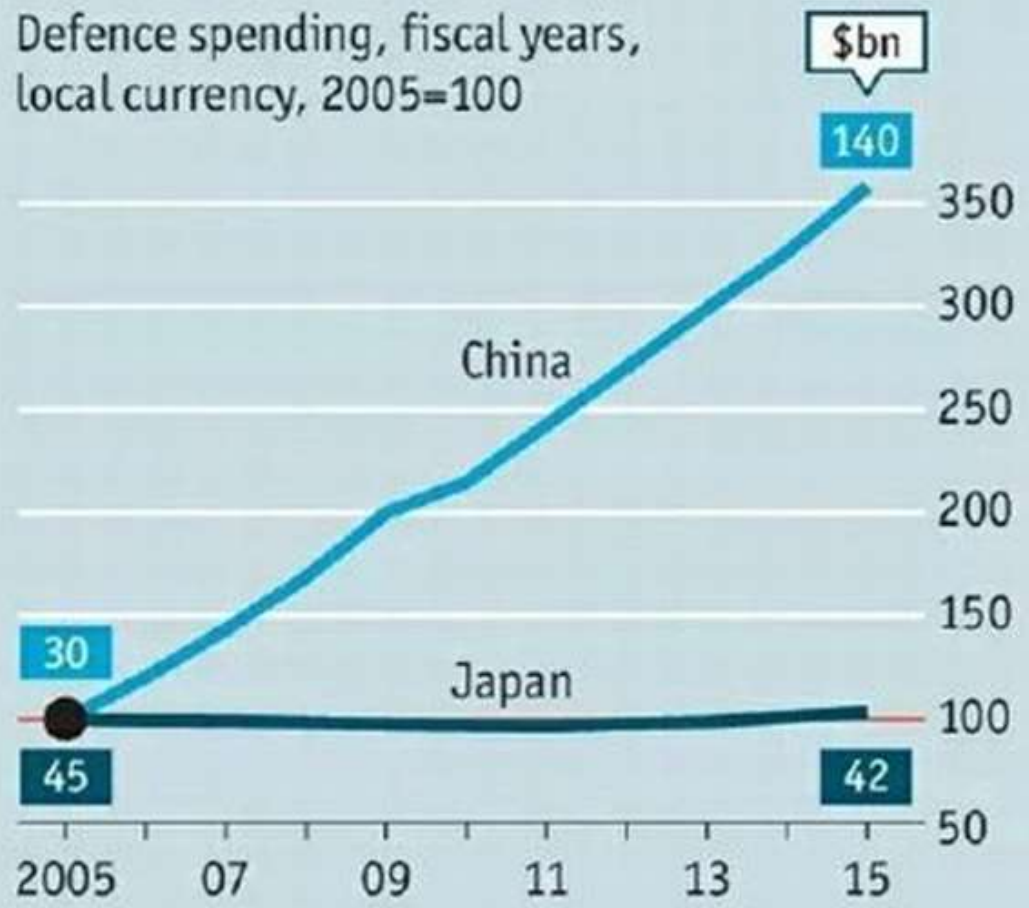
- *“The ongoing disputes in the East China Sea and the South China sea means that Japan’s top foreign-policy priority must be to expand the country’s strategic horizons. Japan is a mature maritime democracy, and its choice of close partners should reflect that fact. I envisage a strategy whereby **Australia, India, Japan, and the US state of Hawaii form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the western Pacific.** I am prepared to invest, to the greatest possible extent, Japan’s capabilities in this security diamond.”*

(Shinzo Abe, “Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond”, *Project Syndicate*, 27 December 2012)

- Along with the US, Australia and other like-minded countries, Japan is now aiming to become **a stabilizer in East Asian security.**

## Not-so-militaristic Japan

Defence spending, fiscal years, local currency, 2005=100



Sources: National sources; Thomson Reuters



### (3) Three Dimensions of Abe's Grand Strategy

- **Internationalist dimension** : to enhance Japan's security cooperation with like-minded democracies; and to respect the rule of law in international society
- **Nationalist dimension**: to strengthen Japan's defense; to respond to security challenges in the gray-zone area between peace and war; to maintain Japan's position as the major global power
- **Realist dimension**: to restore regional balance of power by enhancing the U.S.-Japan alliance and also by deepening security cooperation with like-minded countries.

Though Abe has nationalist ideology in his political attitude, his foreign policy is basically internationalist in its character.

## 2. Japan's National Security Strategy

- On December 17, 2013, the Government of Japan adopted two important documents on Japan's new security policy. These are **National Security Strategy (NSS)** and **National Defense Programs Guidelines 2013 (NDPG)**.
- Among the two, **NSS** is the more foundational and comprehensive document. NSS sets the basic orientation of Japan's diplomatic and defense policies related to national security issues in the coming decade. The basic philosophy of Japan's NSS is “**proactive contribution to peace**” based on international cooperation:
- *“Japan cannot secure its own peace and security by itself, and the international community expects Japan to play a more proactive role for peace and stability in the world, in a way commensurate with its national capabilities.”* (NSS, 17 December 2013)

# (1) Japan as a Major Global Player

- In NSS, it is stated that Japan is resolute to remain as **“a major global player” in international community.**

“Japan has contributed to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world. In a world where globalization continues, Japan should play and even more proactive role **as a major global player** in the international community”. (NSS, December 17, 2013)

*“In short, China’s leaders should not assume that they own the future, and **American leaders should more forthrightly support their Japanese ally’s attempts to restore its geopolitical and economic competitiveness.**” (Dan Twining, “The Strategic Implication of Japan’s Resurgence”, *Foreign Policy*, 16 January, 2014).*

## (2) Japan as a Maritime State

- NSS defines Japan's international identity as **“a maritime state”**.

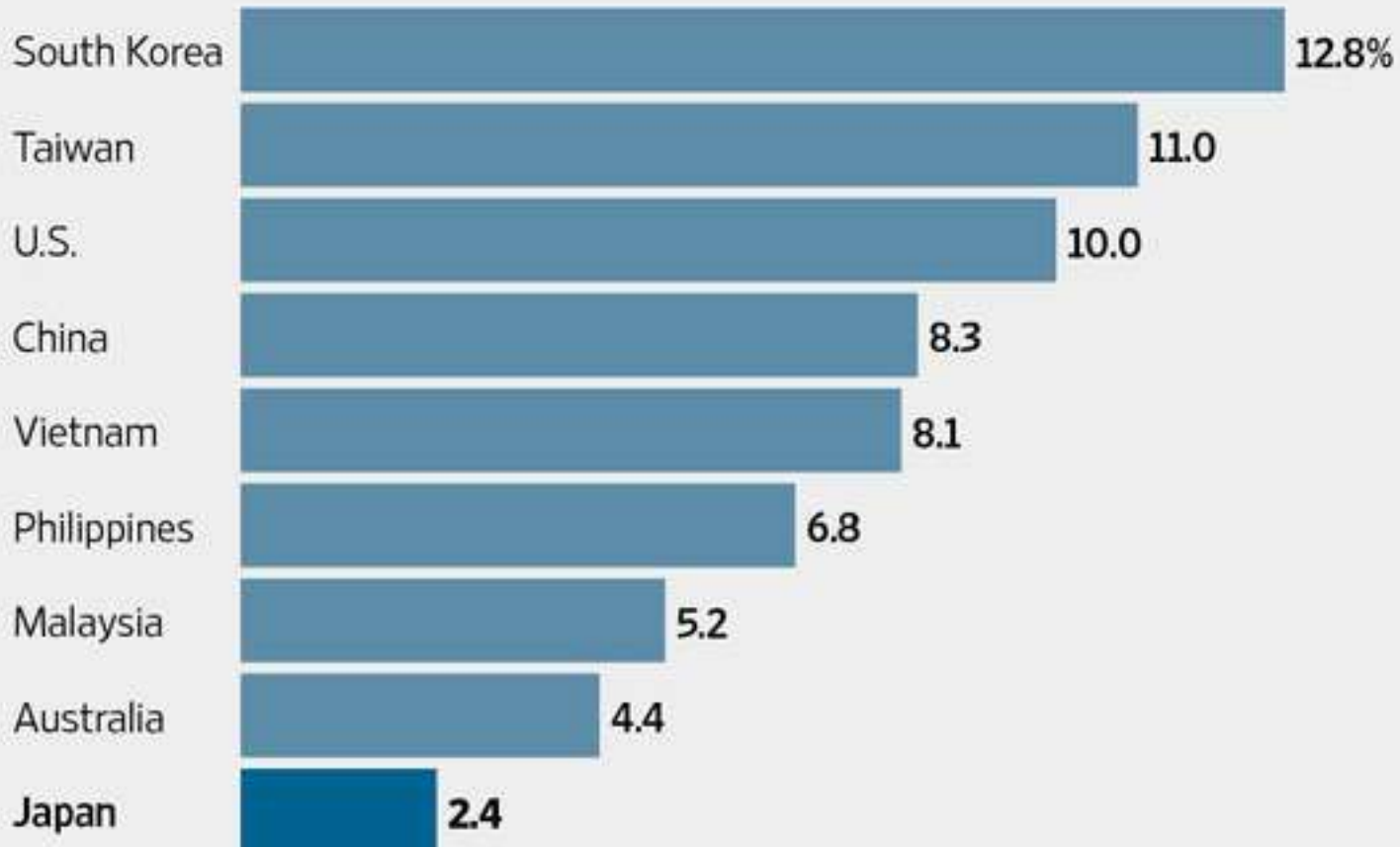
“Surrounded by the sea on all sides and blessed with an immense exclusive economic zone and an extensive coastline, **Japan as a maritime state has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of maritime resources, and has pursued “Open and Stable Seas”**. (NSS, December 17, 2013)

- Maintaining “Open and Stable Seas” and “freedom of navigation” are main goals of Japanese new security strategy.

“As a maritime state, Japan will play a leading role, through close cooperation with other countries, in maintaining and developing “Open and Stable Seas”, which are upheld by maritime order based upon such fundamental principles as the rule of law, ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with relevant international law.” (NSS, December 2013)

# Defensive Positions

Japan's military spending isn't expected to change with the reinterpretation of the constitution. As a share of government spending, compared with the U.S. and other Asian-Pacific nations, 2013:



Note: Data are for fiscal years and include spending by all levels of government.

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

The Wall Street Journal

### 3. Debates on Japan's Security Policy Reforms

#### (1) Abe's Policy to Reform the Legal Basis for Security

*“In light of the increasing severe security environment surrounding Japan, **it is necessary to reconstruct the legal basis for security** so that Japan can take appropriate responses to these changes”.*

(PM Shinzo Abe, February 2013)

*“With regard to the issue of the right to collective self-defense, imagine that US vessels on the high seas were being attacked and an armed ship, say an Aegis-type destroyer from Japan, America's treaty ally, was just passing by. The arrangement we currently have in Japan does not allow the destroyer to make any response whatsoever. That is insane.”*

(Shinzo Abe, “Japan is Back”, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2013)

## (2) The Report of the Advisory Panel

- On May 15, 2014, the **Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security** submitted the Final Report to PM Shinzo Abe.

*“The Panel was instructed to reexamine the legal basis for security, what Japan should do in order to maintain the peace and security of Japan, including for the most effective operation of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, taking into account the changes over the past four and a half years as well as potential changes in the security environment in the future”.*

(“Introduction”, Report of the Advisory Panel)

### (3) Abe's Cabinet Decides to Reinterpret the Constitution

- On July 1, 2014, Shinzo Abe's Cabinet decided to reinterpret the Constitution by publishing a document "**Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People**".
- This Cabinet Decision includes **three pillars** of reinterpretation;
  - ① **response to an infringement that does not amount to an armed attack; (relating to individual self-defense)**
  - ② **further contribution to the peace and stability of the international community;(relating to the PKO and the logistical supports);**
  - ③ **measures for self-defense permitted under Article 9 of the Constitution. (relating to collective self-defense).**



## 4. India-Japan Strategic Cooperation

### (1) India in Japan's National Security Strategy

*“India is becoming increasingly influential, due to what is projected to become the world’s largest population, and to high economic growth and potential. India is also geopolitically important for Japan, as it is positioned in the center of sea lanes of communication. Japan will strengthen bilateral relations in a broad range of areas, including maritime security, based on the bilateral Strategic and Global Partnership.”*

*(National Security Strategy, 17 December 2013)*

## (2) The Evolution of Japan-India Security Cooperation

December 2006: Japan-India relationship was elevated to the **“Global and Strategic Partnership”**.

October 2008: Prime Minister Aso and Prime Minister Singh issued **“the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India”**.

December 2011: Prime Minister Noda and Prime Minister Singh signed a joint statement entitled **“Vision for the Enhancement of Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership upon entering the year of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations”**.

December 2011: Prime Minister Noda and Prime Minister Singh affirmed that they would expand cooperation in the area of **maritime security**, including **safety and freedom of navigation**.

September 2014: Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi agreed to elevate the partnership between the two countries to a “**Special Strategic and Global Partnership**”.

- **Japan have only two “special partnerships”**. One is with **Australia** and the other is with **India**.
- PM Abe is enhancing *strategic cooperation* among **four leading democracies** in the Asia-Pacific, namely the **U.S., Japan, India** and **Australia**.

### (3) The Interconnection between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Oceans

**“11. The two Prime Ministers affirmed their shared belief that at a time of growing turmoil, tensions and transitions in the world, a closer and stronger strategic partnership between Japan and India is indispensable** for a prosperous future for the two countries and for advancing peace, stability and prosperity in the world, **in particular in the inter-connected Asia, Pacific and Indian Ocean Regions.** Prime Minister Abe briefed Prime Minister Modi on Japan’s policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” and Japan’s Cabinet Decision on development of seamless security legislation. Prime Minister Modi supported Japan’s initiative to contribute to peace and stability of the region and the world.

(Tokyo Declaration of 2014)

## **(4) Public Opinion Supporting the Cooperation**

**(February/March 2013)**

- 80% of respondents perceived the current state of Japan-India relations either as being “very friendly” or “friendly”. In 2009, the number was 76% and is increased by 4%.
- 95% of survey participants responded positively when asked whether Japan is reliable friend of India. Asked about which countries are important partners for India, 42%, 26% and 17% of respondents chose the U.S., Russia and Japan respectively.
- Asked about Japan’s international contributions, 71% of survey participants responded positively on the question of whether Japan is playing an international role commensurate with its economic power.