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The India-Japan Partnership in Africa with Regards to The Free and Open Indo-Pacific: A Comprehensive Analysis and Future Prospects

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the strategic significance of the India-Japan partnership within the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) framework, with a specific focus on its implications in an African context. Emphasis is placed on the impact of territorial and sovereign interests, particularly Japan's maritime disputes, on the operational dynamics of the India-Japan partnership within the FOIP. Through a comprehensive examination of diplomatic, economic, and security dimensions, the research provides nuanced insights into the multifaceted nature of this strategic collaboration. Special attention is given to areas of convergence and divergence within the India-Japan partnership's pursuit of FOIP objectives in Africa. By elucidating the interplay between territorial concerns and partnership activities, the study contributes to discourse on regional geopolitics, sovereignty, and the evolving dynamics of Indo-Pacific strategic frameworks, highlighting the imperative of addressing China's influence and Africa's strategic significance.

Keywords: FOIP, AAGC, India-Japan-Africa

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Acknowledgments

The efficacious culmination of this scholarly endeavour would have been unattainable without the indispensable support extended by The Japan Institute of International Affairs and its distinguished personnel. I wish to convey my deep appreciation to Mr. Masao Kochi, the esteemed Director of the Japan Information Center (JIC), for his invaluable leadership and assistance throughout the duration of this program.

My sincere gratitude is extended to the entire team, comprising Ms. Asako Noguchi, Ms. Satoko Owada, Dr. Fumi Yoshimoto, Mr. Yuji Suzuki, Mr. Leo Tamamizu, and Mr. Yuito Kimijima, whose collaborative efforts significantly contributed to the success of this research undertaking. I am also indebted to the individuals who graciously participated in interviews, provided crucial data, and shared their experiences, thereby enriching the study's content and fortifying its findings. Their openness to sharing knowledge and personal insights has unequivocally reinforced the scholarly merit of this paper.

I wish to express my profound thanks to my friends Luigi and Pradeep for the delightful camaraderie I experienced at JIIA. Additionally, my heartfelt appreciation goes to Dr. Ryoko Nakano, Dr. Valerie Niquet, Dr. Robert Eldridge, and Dr. Monika Chansoria for their invaluable guidance and insightful feedback, which significantly contributed to the academic rigor of this work. Furthermore, I extend my gratitude to the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Delhi for their unwavering support and encouragement, which played a pivotal role in facilitating my engagement with this project.

Introduction

The India-Japan relationship under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) framework is closely connected to territorial and sovereign concerns, especially in Japan's maritime conflicts. Looking at the effect of these conflicts on India-Japan engagement in the Indo-Pacific requires a detailed comprehension of geopolitical complexities, historical backgrounds, and diplomatic factors. The 21st century has seen the rise of Asian powers in the new world order as well as the growth of China and its influence, and the implications for the global politics can be seen by looking at its policies such as BRI on the African continent. India and Japan have pledged in promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific to address mutual concerns, based on their historical commitment to a rules-based international system. India and Japan's collaborative efforts, such as the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)¹, demonstrate the blending of territorial and sovereign interests. The AAGC not only deals with maritime issues but also demonstrates a mutual commitment to promoting connectivity and economic growth, therefore indirectly enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Scholarly assessments may explore the rationale behind these projects, focusing on how they function as strategic instruments in addressing regional difficulties related to territorial conflicts. Japan, although not asserting ownership, has substantial economic stakes in the area. Its relationship with India serves to balance power and establish a rules-based system, bolstering the FOIP narrative.² Furthermore, a comprehensive academic analysis must recognise the developing Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) involving the United States and Australia. The Quad functions as a multilateral platform to tackle shared concerns in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly those concerning territory and sovereign rights.³ Japan's participation in the Quad strengthens its strategic position, and its

¹ Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) is a vision document published in the year 2017, after the prime minister of India met the prime minister of Japan in Gujrat, India.

² Hosoya, Yuichi. "FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy." *Asia-Pacific Review* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 18–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2019.1622868>.

³ Insisa, Aurelio, and Giulio Pugliese. "The Free and Open Indo-Pacific versus the Belt and Road: Spheres of Influence and Sino-Japanese Relations." *The Pacific Review* 35, no. 3 (December 23, 2020): 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2020.1862899>

partnership with India in this context demonstrates a shared commitment in upholding regional stability.⁴

Table 1. Grounds for increased India-Japan cooperation in Africa in the 21st century
Deteriorating security environment in the Indo-Pacific region
The changing dynamics of a global order shifting away from US hegemony
The rise and military/maritime expansion of China in the 21st century
Maritime democracy
Supply chain resilience

The 21st century has brought forth distinctive political, economic, and strategic difficulties on a worldwide scale. Domestic events in both nations have been influenced by regional events in the Indo-Pacific. The deteriorating economic situations in various countries caused by sovereign debts, the trade conflict between the US and China, and China's growing assertiveness politically and militarily that poses threats to sovereignty and maritime rights, along with the claims of multiple Indo-Pacific nations, are contributing to the current security landscape. The escalating environmental difficulties and their consequences for human security have become worldwide concerns. These delicate problems also highlight the Indo-Pacific region's role as a geopolitical hotspot (Bhatt 2021)⁵.

Tracing India-Japan Bilateral Relations over Africa to Enhance Understanding of 21st Century Engagements

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was initiated by the Japanese government in October 1993 as a platform to realise worldwide collaboration for the

⁴ Mukherjee, Rohan. "Japan's Strategic Outreach to India and the Prospects of a Japan-India Alliance." *International Affairs* 94, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 835-59. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy030>.

⁵ For details see Pooja Bhatt, "Emerging Pillars of India-Japan Relations in the Indo-Pacific," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 16, no. 2 (2021): 134-52, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48720486>.

development of Africa in the post-Cold War era. The event fosters collaboration between African governments and development partners, creating a conducive environment for constructive discussions on advancing democracy, good governance, and economic growth in Africa. When developing TICAD, the Japanese government recognised its constraints in directly addressing problems that impact Africa and its people. Additionally, there was a motivation to arrange a conference that deviates in terms of scope and focus from the typical consultative conferences for donors that are often arranged by the OECD/DAC. The Japanese government sought the collaboration of the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (UN/OSCAL), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) in organising the conference. Japan aims to enhance its bilateral connections with African nations by using the TICAD process, an international effort designed to facilitate African development.⁶

In 2023, India bolstered its influence within the international community while assuming the G20 presidency. India's increased prominence in global affairs is driven not only by its fast-paced economic expansion, but also by its strategic approach known as the Global South strategy, which is now the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. During its G20 leadership, India advocated for the African Union to be granted permanent membership in the G20. This proposal was formally approved at the G20 meeting in September 2023. India presented the suggestion to get more robust backing from Africa, a region that is part of the Global South, and also to limit the influence of China, which is actively working to enhance its connections with Africa. The strong bonds between India and African nations originated with the inception of the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in 2005. The positive collaboration built on intangible assistance is expected to provide the basis for further enhancement of diplomatic and economic ties between India and African nations.⁷

China's Growing Presence in Africa

⁶ Srabani Roy Choudhury. *Japan and Its Partners in the Indo-Pacific*. Taylor & Francis, 2023.

⁷ Jun Moriguchi, "India's 'Global South' Strategy – Focusing on Diplomatic Relations with Africa" (Mitsui & Co. Global Strategic Studies Institute, September 2023), https://www.mitsui.com/mgssi/en/report/detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2023/10/19/2309f_moriguchi_e.pdf.

China's exponential economic expansion in the previous decade has resulted in a significant need for substantial resources, namely energy. The nation's increasing domestic energy consumption, decreasing domestic petroleum extraction, and inadequate coal production have prompted it to seek hydrocarbon fuel supplies from elsewhere.⁸ In 2004, China emerged as the second biggest user of oil globally, and it was projected that oil consumption would grow by 10% annually. China's projected oil and gas imports are believed to have risen from 33% of China's overall consumption to 60% by the year 2020. Beijing has targeted African states as hydrocarbon sources to meet its oil and gas consumption requirements. Approximately 25% of China's overall oil imports now originate from Africa, and Beijing has prioritised the maintenance of robust relationships with its African energy providers via investments, high-level visits, and a stringent policy of refraining from interfering in domestic matters. China has made substantial financial investments in foreign currency and used Chinese engineering and building capabilities to establish infrastructure for extracting oil, gas, minerals, and other natural resources in several African nations.⁹

Beijing's Indo-Pacific strategy is founded upon a synthesis of economic, political, and military considerations, including both global and regional dimensions. China has implemented a regional-level policy that focuses on investing in strategically important areas along its borders and in neighbouring nations, including India. In a 2004 paper, Booz Allen Hamilton refers to China's approach as the 'string of pearls strategy' and suggests that China would want to increase its naval footprint by using civilian dual-use marine infrastructure.¹⁰

Starting in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), formerly referred to as One Belt, One Road (OBOR), has been a focal point of Beijing's efforts

⁸ Satake, Tomohiko, and Ryo Sahashi. "The Rise of China and Japan's 'Vision' for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific." *Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 127 (May 25, 2020): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2020.1766907>

⁹ Peter Brookes, "China's Influence in Africa: Implications for the United States," The Heritage Foundation, February 22, 2006, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/chinas-influence-africa-implications-the-united-states#>.

¹⁰ Jochheim Ulrich, "Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific: Major Players' Strategic Perspectives | Think Tank | European Parliament," www.europarl.europa.eu, 2023, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)751398](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)751398).

to enhance its global influence by fostering connectivity and commerce with other countries¹¹. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR), a component of the BRI, serves as a route for Beijing to expand into new international markets, while also introducing strategic vulnerabilities.¹² Chinese foreign assets, especially energy ventures in Africa and the Middle East, need safeguarding. The National Development and Reform Commission and the State Oceanic Administration revealed the Vision for Maritime Cooperation within the BRI on June 20, 2017. This declaration urged MSR member nations to collaboratively protect maritime connectivity, marine environment, and maintain maritime security (Collin 2018).¹³

Strategic Significance of Djibouti¹⁴

A pivotal participant in the BRI/CPEC initiative, Djibouti is positioned strategically. The Gulf of Tadjoura in Djibouti is located at the convergence of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and the Arabian Sea. The Bab-el-Mandeb strait, located on the northeastern coast of Africa, serves as a significant conduit through which 30% of global maritime traffic transits on route to the Suez Canal. Djibouti serves as one of the linking points that offers an alternative and shorter marine route to link Asia with Europe, Africa, South East Asia, the Pacific, and the Chinese Port of Mawei through the Strait of Malacca via Hambantota to Gwadar and Djibouti. It provides the most direct paths linking the Suez Canal and the Strait of Malacca, allowing for the most efficient achievement of desired objectives. Gwadar, Hambantota, and Djibouti are crucial in

¹¹ Gieg, Philipp. “Same Same but Different? India–Africa Relations and Chinese Involvement in the Continent.” *Insight on Africa* 8, no. 1 (January 2016): 40–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087815612291>.

¹² Li, Mingjiang. “The Belt and Road Initiative: Geo-Economics and Indo-Pacific Security Competition.” *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 169–87. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz240>

¹³ Collin, Koh Swee Lean. “China-India Rivalry at Sea: Capability, Trends and Challenges.” *Asian Security* 15, no. 1 (November 2018): 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2019.1539820>.

¹⁴ Huma Siddiqui, “India and Japan Cement Defence Ties! Ink Landmark ACSA Pact, India to Get Access to Djibouti in Africa,” *Financial Express*, September 10, 2020, <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-india-and-japan-cement-defence-ties-ink-landmark-acsa-pact-india-to-get-access-to-djibouti-in-africa-2079896/>

facilitating the effective execution of the BRI project and in offering the most efficient alternative sea routes. The triangle formed by the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca, and the Suez Canal assumes significant importance within a larger context. Reducing the distance between different straits and seaports is of utmost importance. The distance between Hambantota and Djibouti is 4,272 km, while the distance from Gwadar to Djibouti is 2,824 km. From Hambantota to the strait of Malacca is 2,045 km, and from the strait of Malacca to the strait of Hormuz is 5,175 km. Additionally, the distance from Malacca to the Suez Canal is 7,562 km. Gwadar Port, as part of the CPEC project, offers the most direct route to the Strait of Malacca, spanning a distance of 4,570 km.

The primary catalyst for change is the intricate interconnections between multinational military operations and counter-piracy tactics in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. Djibouti has gradually and spontaneously emerged as a testing ground for innovative military and naval collaborations between NATO and EU troops, both inside and beyond their own alliances.¹⁵ It serves as the central location for the European Union's first collaborative naval mission, known as EUNAVFOR Atalanta, which aims to combat piracy. Since 2010, Djibouti has been the location of the first Japanese overseas military facility created since 1945. Additionally, it regularly accommodates ships from various European and Asian naval forces. Notably, China has established substantial regional collaboration, which involves conducting joint operations with the United States, European Union, and other fleets in the area.¹⁶

In 2009, Japan and Djibouti entered into a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), establishing the legal framework for the deployment of Japanese Self-Defence Force (SDF) personnel in Djibouti.¹⁷ After a span of two years, Japan established its first foreign military installation on the land of Djibouti. Subsequently, there has been a significant decrease in the number of pirate attacks, suggesting that the joint efforts of Japan and multiple other countries have successfully deterred piracy activities. However, the Japanese population hardly noticed

¹⁵ Naz, Dr Farah. "Strategic Importance of Djibouti." Global Village Space, August 11, 2022. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/strategic-importance-of-djibouti/>.

¹⁶ David Styan, "Djibouti: Changing Influence in the Horn's Strategic Hub," www.chathamhouse.org, 2013, <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/8681/>.

¹⁷ Jay Maniyar, "India-Japan Maritime Cooperation," *Diplomacy and Beyond Plus (D&B)*, May 22, 2023, <https://diplomacybeyond.com/india-japan-maritime-cooperation/>.

that Japan is now sending soldiers to a foreign country in East Africa. The uneven character of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) agreed between Japan and Djibouti is not often acknowledged in Japan.¹⁸

Examining the Individual and Joint Strategies of India and Japan towards Africa

Japan is advocating for cooperation with India to mitigate market risks in Africa. By combining India's expertise and knowledge of the African market with Japan's technical prowess and financial resources, a mutually beneficial outcome may be achieved in unlocking Africa's economic potential. During a special session of the AfDB, stakeholders discussed the potential for advancing African industry through private-public partnerships. The goal is to promote sustainable development and connectivity between Asia and Africa to support the African Union's Agenda 2063 and foster a free and open Indo-Pacific region. India established the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) to enhance its involvement with Africa, while Japan's connections with Africa are pursued mostly through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Tokyo is focusing on three key regions aligned with Japanese business sectors: the Northern corridor, the Nacala corridor, and growth areas in West Africa (resources and energy development as well as urban development). Japanese investment in Africa will be largely influenced by utilizing the Enhanced Private Sector Assistance for Africa (EPSA) developed in collaboration with the AfDB. Under the Abe Initiative 2.0, Japan was encouraging the training of "manufacturing and maintenance service personnel" and enhancing the skills of technical professionals in natural resource development. In addition to its economic reasons, Japan seeks African nations' backing for its objectives at the UN Security Council. Japan's Africa strategy is based on resource and economic diplomacy, with a focus on exporting infrastructure. Africa faces an annual infrastructure finance shortage of \$100 billion. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promised to contribute \$30 billion by 2018 to support a high-quality, strong, and steady Africa, with \$10 billion designated for infrastructure development. Japan intends to enhance high-quality infrastructure collaborations and support development into

¹⁸ Jio Kamata, "Why Does Japan Have a Military Base in Djibouti?," thediplomat.com, April 28, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/04/why-does-japan-have-a-military-base-in-djibouti/>.

developing markets.¹⁹ The June 2013 Japan Revitalization Strategy emphasized the importance of expanding into the international infrastructure industry to stimulate growth. The proposal advocated for tripling infrastructure sales by 2020. The strategy focuses on Africa while considering strategic attempts to secure foreign markets. Keidanren, better known as the Japan Business Federation, has designated African nations as a priority zone in their policy proposal titled "Toward Strategic Promotion of Infrastructure Exports."²⁰ India has made investments on the continent using a cooperative approach that is free of conditions, focusing on the requirements of African stakeholders. The Delhi Declaration 2015, adopted at the IAFS and titled "Partners in Progress: Towards a Dynamic and Transformative Development Agenda," is in line with the goals of Agenda 2063.²¹ India's Africa policy is based on its backing of democracy, its opposition to colonialism and racism, as well as its provision of developmental aid and involvement in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. During the 2015 IAFS, India pledged \$10 billion for development projects over five years and provided \$600 million in grant support, which included a \$100 million India-Africa development fund. Indian involvement has centred on education, capacity enhancement, skill and human resources development, and the Pan-African e-network, which aids tele-education, tele-medicine, and e-commerce.²² As Africa's economic expansion accelerates, India's interests are influenced by the growing African markets. The FICCI study "The Rising Africa" states that resources, a growing customer base, and favourable economic forecasts are factors that attract interest in the continent as a business and investment destination. The goal is to reach \$100 billion in bilateral commerce within the next two years, with a concentration on power, medicines, ICT,

¹⁹ Hirono, Miwa. "Asymmetrical Rivalry between China and Japan in Africa: To What Extent Has Sino-Japan Rivalry Become a Global Phenomenon?" *The Pacific Review* 32, no. 5 (February 8, 2019): 831–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2019.1569118>.

²⁰ Bharti Chhibber. "India–Japan Relations: Breaking New Ground in the Strategic Partnership." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 22 (2018): 94–103. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48520082>

²¹ Nantulya, Paul. "Africa-India Cooperation Sets Benchmark for Partnership." Africa Center for Strategic Studies, December 12, 2023. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-india-cooperation-benchmark-partnership/>.

²² Mawdsley, Emma, and Gerard McCann. *India in Africa: Changing Geographies of Power*. Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011.

and services. India's energy interests significantly influence New Delhi's strategy towards Africa. The hydrocarbon sector in Africa is important for powering the Indian economy. In 2014, India imported 32 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude oil, with 16% coming from Africa. Specifically, three MMT were obtained from North Africa and 29 MMT from West Africa, mostly from Nigeria and Angola. India and Japan have collaborated to enhance coordination in Africa based on their interests and goals in the Indo-Pacific region.²³ India has invested in enhancing connections with nations that have common interests. New Delhi is collaborating with Washington and Tokyo to aid with African development. They must combine their resources and capabilities and ensure efficient implementation of these projects to showcase bilateral cooperation.²⁴

India-Japan Trade Facilitation in Africa

India and Japan have achieved significant advancements in several aspects of trade facilitation in recent years. Both nations have taken several steps to enhance customs operations and streamline commercial requirements. Recently, India has made substantial progress in improving the ease of doing business as well as corporate climates. India's rating in the World Bank Global Ranking of 'Ease of Doing Business' has steadily improved. In the 2020 Report, India's rating improved to 63rd position in 2019 out of the 190 nations that participated in the ranking, showing a gain of 14 places compared to the previous year. Indian customs have introduced the Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) project to offer a unified interface for the efficient clearance of products in a timely manner. The technology has eliminated the need to get clearances from several government bodies by consolidating procedures into a unified platform (CII 2017).

Indian customs have reintroduced the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Gateway known as Indian Customs and Central Excise Electronic Commerce/EDI Gateway (ICEGATE), now with improved integrated processes. An integrated RMS facility with automated risk

²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. "Japan-India Relations (Basic Data)," n.d. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html#:~:text=Japan%20and%20India%20signed%20a>.

²⁴ Titli Basu, "Thinking Africa: India, Japan, and the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor," [thediplomat.com](https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/thinking-africa-india-japan-and-the-asia-africa-growth-corridor/), June 3, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/thinking-africa-india-japan-and-the-asia-africa-growth-corridor/>.

management methods has also been introduced.²⁵ Under the new system, the ICEGATE portal will determine the extent of inspection and testing using risk management principles to enhance efficiency and transparency. Project Saksham has been initiated to merge customs IT systems with the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), creating a one-window system and enhancing the 'ease of doing business' for those engaged in international commerce.

According to OECD trade facilitation measures, Japan's Risk Management System (RMS) has the highest score based on worldwide best practices. Enhancements in risk assessment skills since 1999 have led to decreased operational expenses despite a considerable rise in export and import transactions, with workforce numbers remaining constant. Japan Customs effectively manages risks by maintaining integrated and structured import records and essential information on importers. Japan is on par with the best practices worldwide in automating customs operations. It possesses one of the longest-established automated customs clearing systems globally, having commenced operations in 1978. This system automated customs procedures, facilitated electronic information sharing, and automated other services such as cargo storage and administration. The system is named Nippon Automated Cargo Clearance System (NACCS) and was created using a Public–Private Partnership (PPP) paradigm. African peers can benefit from the valuable experience gained under the PPP paradigm to accomplish automation by utilizing the local private sector.

Japan has extensive expertise in talent development and enhancing capabilities domestically and internationally. Japan mostly relies on company-based skill building through on-the-job training, although the influence of big private training providers external to the industry is growing (Curtain 1994).²⁶

The public human resource development facilities primarily offer vocational and technical training in industries such as manufacturing and construction. In contrast, the private sector provides training in a wider range of subjects including computers and social welfare. Japan's Polytechnic University is a public institution that focuses on vocational capacity

²⁵ Shimizu, Hiroshi. "The Indian Merchants of Kobe and Japan's Trade Expansion into Southeast Asia before the Asian-Pacific War." *Japan Forum* 17, no. 1 (March 2005): 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955580052000337459>.

²⁶ Richard Curtain, "Skill Formation in Japan: The Broader Context and Recent Developments," *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work* 6, no. 1 (October 1994): 67–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10301763.1994.10669128>.

development by providing training and instruction for public vocational training teachers and publishing textbooks for this purpose.

Japan has been providing technical support in Risk Management Systems (RMS) to developing nations independently and in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO). Assistance is generally directed through the AAGC. India has a more sophisticated system for customs clearance and border processes compared to several African countries. Enhanced trade facilitation is essential for boosting cross-border commerce. India and Japan can provide technical support and collaboration to Asian and African nations to enhance connections between various economic centres in the AAGC.

Japan's entire commerce with African nations in 2015-16 amounted to \$24 billion, whereas India's total trade with African countries was \$56.5 billion.²⁷ The primary Japanese effort in Africa is the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), established by the Japanese government in 1993 to enhance Africa's development and security via multilateral collaboration. Japan is a more prominent global contributor than India. It became a member of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in the 1960s. Japan's development cooperation practices diverge from those of other DAC contributors. Japan and India hold to similar principles such as "non-interference, self-help, and request-based assistance that is mutually beneficial." Africa is second to Asia in terms of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) distribution.²⁸ Japan's development aid policy emphasizes private sector-driven economic growth, backed by investments in human resources and infrastructure.

Japan listed agriculture, education, infrastructure, and health as areas for development collaboration with African countries during the most recent TICAD.²⁹ Japan has been focused

²⁷ Brian Bonner, "Japan's Valuable Footprint in Africa," GIS Reports, August 16, 2023, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/japan-africa-footprint/>.

²⁸ Mofa.go.jp. "Chapter 1 Japan's ODA in Terms of Disbursements | Japan's ODA White Paper 2005 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan," 2023. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2005/ODA2005/html/honpen/hp201000000.htm>.

²⁹ Ruchita Beri, "AAGC: Towards India-Japan Development Cooperation in Africa," accessed November 11, 2023, https://www.ris.org.in/sites/default/files/Publication/DP%20213%20Ruchita%20Beri_0.pdf.

on increasing agricultural productivity, especially in rice farming on the mainland. Japan initiated the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) in 2008 with the goal of increasing rice output twofold. Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Gambia are participating in this initiative. Japan participated in many agricultural initiatives focused on agricultural technological advancement and rural infrastructure in Kenya and other African nations.

Japan has participated in schemes to enhance elementary school education, such as the "School for All" initiative in West African nations, as part of its education and human resource development efforts. This initiative has also advanced scientific and mathematics education in Africa, built elementary schools, offered assistance to higher education institutions, and participated in management training in Ethiopia to enhance quality and productivity in the workplace. The "Abe Initiative" was further introduced to sponsor the business education of 1000 African students at Japanese colleges.

Japan has assisted African nations in constructing "quality infrastructure."³⁰ In addition to building, other factors such as planning, management, and maintenance have been addressed, contributing to the advancement of infrastructure for power production and transportation, including highways, ports, and bridges.

Japan is participating in corridor development projects in Africa such as the Nacala Corridor in Mozambique, the Northern Corridor connecting Mombasa in Kenya and Kampala in Uganda, and the West Africa Growth Ring joining Burkina Faso, Togo, and Cote d'Ivoire. Japan has also helped improve health institutions in Africa. Japan initiated a Universal Health Coverage Initiative in Africa during the sixth TICAD meeting in Nairobi, with backing from the World Health Organization and the World Bank, and prioritized universal health care during its G20 chairmanship in 2019.³¹

Specific Projects and Suggestions for Cooperative Endeavours

³⁰ Rob Floyd, "Quality Infrastructure in Africa: Japan and the Compact with Africa," ACET, May 2, 2019, <https://acetforafrica.org/research-and-analysis/insights-ideas/commentary/quality-infrastructure-in-africa-japan-and-the-compact-with-africa/>.

³¹ "TICAD8: Japan's Contributions for Africa: 'Green Growth' looking towards structural transition to decarbonization; support for social-challenge-solving, including start-up support

India and Japan have been establishing robust development cooperation projects with African nations. Both countries' development cooperation approaches are converging, giving them greater motivation. Engaging in triangular collaboration. Japan has been a significant development ally of India for many years. Japan has not only participated in the creation of industrial corridors but has also invested in the advancement of the automotive, telecommunications, pharmaceutical, and electrical equipment sectors in India.

The collaboration between India and Japan in the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor was envisioned to play a vital role in guiding the development process in the corridor. While the full extent of collaboration could not be materialised under the umbrella of AAGC, certain industries may be readily pinpointed for commencing this alliance. Africa is a crucial continent that provides endless chances. Indian engagement with African countries is based on continuous consultation. The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor was expected to adhere to the same criteria and prioritize projects that are demand-driven and aligned with African interests. India might enhance comprehension of the African viewpoint on the AAGC by establishing a network of think tanks from Asia and Africa to foster collaboration. India benefits from historical connections with African nations. Over two million individuals of Indian descent have resided in Africa over the past 150 years. They might serve as a valuable resource for increasing collaboration between Asia and Africa.³²

India's main emphasis in collaborating with Africa was on improving human resource development and capacity building in African nations. The AAGC was visioned to enhance this strategy. India and Japan should collaborate with several Regional Economic Communities (RECs) throughout Africa to pinpoint distinctive development goals in each area. Intermittent conversations can be started with the RECs, and Japan's expertise in financing and high-quality infrastructure should be integrated with India's extensive experience in trading and project implementation in Africa through AAGC.

According to Ruchita Beri, India and Japan could examine five models of collaboration under the AAGC for effective implementation and optimal results. Japan could plan to allocate more cash to support successful ongoing Indian programs in Africa, such the Pan Africa E-Network project in tele-education. Japan could also offer financial support for Indo-African projects, such as the Kukuza Project Development Company. This firm would assist in the

³² Ruchita Beri, "AAGC: Towards India-Japan Development Cooperation in Africa," 2017, https://www.ris.org.in/sites/default/files/Publication/DP%20213%20Ruchita%20Beri_0.pdf.

initial design and preparation of infrastructure projects throughout Africa. Thirdly, India and Japan could collaborate to finance projects in Africa, with businesses from both countries working together to carry out the projects locally. Japanese and Indian corporations have participated in developing hydro power projects in East Africa. Japanese firms could supply the equipment while Indian companies could carry out the work. Indo-Japanese joint enterprises in the automotive or electronics sector might establish an assembling factory in Africa with a local partner.³³ African skilled labour could finish or assemble semi-finished items that are shipped by Indian enterprises. Furthermore, a Japanese business located in India could export goods or carry out projects in African nations. The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor was expected to create new linkages among India, Japan, and African countries.

Maritime Cooperation between India and Japan

Ensuring the security of sea lines of communication (SLOC) is a fundamental responsibility of any navy. The term 'SLOC-security' has traditionally been associated with military strategies in naval doctrines, emphasising the control of crucial maritime 'choke points'. However, the events of 9/11 have drawn greater attention to non-conventional dangers such as terrorism and organised crime (Khurana 2007). There is a widespread belief that marine lifelines have become attractive targets for terrorists due to their potential for generating significant profits. In addition, the possibility of illicit transfers of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to non-state actors should not be overlooked. States have recognised the urgent need for cooperative-security due to the simultaneous significance of SLOC and the increasing terrorist threats. India and Japan should form a strong relationship to improve the security of the maritime domain and ensure stability and safety in the Asian sea routes.³⁴

In 2001, prime ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Junichiro Koizumi recognized the importance of collaboration in global maritime traffic safety and security. They promoted cooperation between coast guards and agencies in combating piracy, search and rescue

³³ Kato, Hiroshi. "Japan and Africa: A Historical Review of Interaction and Future Prospects." *Asia-Pacific Review* 24, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2017.1320162>.

³⁴ Khurana, Gurpreet S. 2007. "Security of Sea Lines: Prospects for India–Japan Cooperation." *Strategic Analysis* 31 (1): 139–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160701355485>.

operations, and joint exercises. They pledged to team up through a regional cooperation agreement on anti-piracy. Japan sent five Maritime Self-Defence Force vessels to the Indian Ocean to combat terrorism, facilitating defense interactions between the two nations. Both nations have engaged in goodwill visits to enhance maritime safety and maintain security along sea-lanes from the Indian Ocean to the Strait of Malacca. In 2007, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe discussed the potential of the Pacific and Indian Oceans as interconnected sources of freedom and prosperity. He advocated for a Strategic Global Partnership between India and Japan, focusing on fostering transparency and enhancing the richness of these seas.³⁵ The two countries have mutual interests in ensuring the safety and security of maritime routes in the Asia-Pacific area and the Indian Ocean. They have committed to promoting cooperation between coast guards, aiming to achieve joint exercises, regular meetings, and the signing of a memorandum on cooperation between the Japan Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard. The vice-minister of defence of Japan and the defence secretary of India met to discuss increasing marine and defence cooperation between the two nations. This led to the establishment of strategic cooperation mechanisms, such as the annual strategic dialogue at the foreign minister-level, regular consultations between India's national security advisor and his Japanese counterpart, and the annual Subcabinet/Senior Officials 2+2 dialogue involving the foreign and defence ministries of Japan and India. The Annual Comprehensive Security Dialogue resulted in the development of synergies in marine relations, facilitating a greater degree of dedication in the sphere of maritime security and collaboration.

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was launched in February 2008 to promote peaceful relations, enhance maritime cooperation, and establish a robust maritime security framework in the Indian Ocean Region. Japan highly praised the Indian Navy's approach of prioritizing maritime cooperation. The Maritime Security Dialogue served to advance maritime relations, focusing on an annual track 1.5 strategic dialogue. In 2013, Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso delivered a speech titled "Japan's Revival and the Japan-India Global Strategic Partnership," emphasizing the importance of the Indian Ocean

³⁵ Mohammed Badrul Alam. *India-Japan Relations in the Era of Globalisation*, 2018.

Region and the extension of the two countries' influence into the Pacific.³⁶ He proposed investment in port infrastructure, collaboration between maritime industries, and enhanced naval exchanges.

In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe discussed bilateral and multilateral collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region. They agreed to conduct a joint exercise off the coast of Haneda in October 2014 and held an India-Japan summit meeting in November 2014. In 2015, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida highlighted the importance of the Indo-Pacific region as a global development focal point, emphasizing the concept of 'Open and Stable Seas'. India and Japan also participated in maritime exercises and collaborated on multilateral initiatives. In November 2015, Prime Minister Abe discussed the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership" to enhance security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, aiming to enhance disaster response and mitigation capacity, strengthen dialogue in security and defence, and advocate for trilateral ties among Japan, India, and the United States. They launched a Japan-India-Australia trilateral conversation and discussed the importance of the South China Sea's sea-lanes for regional energy security, trade, and commerce. They emphasized the need for effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and establishing a code of conduct for the region to contribute to peace and stability.³⁷ In 2016, the Japan Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard collaborated in various exercises and activities, including the International Fleet Review-2016, the 7th Search and Rescue Workshop and Exercise-2016, the 2016 MALABAR exercise, and the HACGAM. The Japanese and Indian coast guards also participated in East China Sea and South China Sea exercises. In 2017, they issued a joint statement focusing on establishing a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, adhering to international law, respecting sovereignty, and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight. They committed to aligning with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy and India's Act East Policy, prioritizing maritime security cooperation, enhancing connectivity, strengthening cooperation with

³⁶ Wallis, Joanne, Sujan R. Chinoy, Natalie Sambhi, and Jeffrey Reeves. "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities for Engagement." *Asia Policy* 27, no. 4 (2020): 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2020.0051>.

³⁷ Palit, Amitendu, and Shutaro Sano. "The Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy and Uncertainties for India & Japan," October 10, 2018

ASEAN, and expanding defence and security collaboration.³⁸ The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Indian Navy have been actively collaborating in areas such as anti-submarine operations and maritime domain awareness. The Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting among Japan, the United States, and India in September 2017 focused on maritime security and regional connectivity in the Indo-Pacific area. In November 2017, consultations on the Indo-Pacific focused on strategies to establish a free and open international order in the region, based on the rule of law. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) held several meetings in 2018, including their 17th meeting in New Delhi in January 2018. The Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in March 2018 highlighted India's role in achieving a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, emphasizing strategic collaboration in maritime security. The Shangri La Dialogue on June 1, 2018, addressed India's strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region, focusing on freedom, openness, inclusivity, and shared commitment to prosperity. The 13th Japan-India Annual Summit in October 2018 focused on strengthening maritime security cooperation, expanding awareness of maritime activities, and providing mutual support in logistics. The Indian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) established a plan for increased collaboration, initiated talks for an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and established a system for sharing information and conducting joint exercises. The 10th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) took place in Kochi in November 2018, focusing on cooperative capacity-building to address shared security concerns in the region. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) among Japan, Australia, India, and the United States in November 2018 discussed maintaining and enhancing the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.³⁹ The First Japan-India 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting in November 2019 discussed various defence-related matters, including the Malabar 2019 exercise off the coast of Japan.⁴⁰ Japan participated as an observer in the "Cope India 2018" exercise in December 2018. Current India-Japan maritime relations have

³⁸ Panda, Jagannath P. *India-Japan-ASEAN Triangularity*. Taylor & Francis, 2022.

³⁹ Panda, Jagannath P, and Ernest Gunasekara-Rockwell. *Quad Plus and the Indo-Pacific: The Changing Profile of International Relations*. London; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. "Japan-India Summit Meeting," 2019. https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/id/page3e_001036.html.

significantly strengthened, with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force engaging in a goodwill training session with the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean on June 27, 2020. This exercise was significant due to China's aggressive behaviour in maritime affairs, particularly in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

Conclusion

The security collaboration between Japan and India has subsequently seen consistent progress. Multiple significant agreements have been signed, including the 2015 Agreements Concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology and Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information; the 2021 Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA); and the 2022 Memorandum of Cooperation in the Field of Cybersecurity. The 2015 "Japan and India Vision 2025" outlined the joint dedication of the two countries to establishing a peaceful, open, fair, stable, and rule-based Indo-Pacific region. It also emphasised their goal of enhancing connectivity in the region via the development of high-quality infrastructure.

**The India-Japan Partnership in Africa with Regards to The
Free and Open Indo-Pacific: A Comprehensive Analysis and
Future Prospects**

Table 2 Areas of convergence for Japan and India in Africa
India's historical relations with African countries
India's footprint in Africa
South-South cooperation
Rules based international order
Capacity building
Africa's increasing population and growth as a future market
JICA's presence, JETRO, Japanese technology
Sea lines of communications
"Confluence of two seas"
Maritime democracy

Table 3. Areas of divergence for cooperation between Japan and India in Africa
Geographical distance from Japan
Debt sustainability
Political and social instability in Africa
Complicated administrative procedure
Environmental concerns
Human rights violation
Development and implementation of regulation or legislation
Budget issues
No pledge or commitment for spending USD 10 billion and funding patterns under the public-private partnership for AAGC have been made by the governments of India and Japan

Japan has pursued a policy of maintaining a balance in its relations with China since the Cold War ended. Subsequently, Japan has endeavoured to achieve a balance both within its own borders and with other countries by assuming a greater share of security responsibilities alongside the United States. This has been accomplished by loosening Japan's constitutional

and political limitations on its military capabilities and strengthening security partnerships with other regional nations, including Australia and India.⁴¹

India-Japan engagement in Africa takes place within the context of an international order based on the rule of law, national interests, historical linkages and the growing geostrategic and geoeconomic significance of Africa. India and Japan need to realise more areas of convergence for their engagement on the African continent with regards to the idea of Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

⁴¹ Koga, Kei. 2016. “The Rise of China and Japan’s Balancing Strategy: Critical Junctures and Policy Shifts in the 2010s.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25 (101): 777–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1160520>.

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