



CENTRE FOR
JOINT WARFARE
STUDIES

GL/31/24

INDIA JAPAN STRATEGIC COOPERATION: FUTURE CONTOURS

BY

DR ULUPI BORAH, SENIOR FELLOW, CENJOWS

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
21ST NOVEMBER 2024

INDIA-JAPAN STRATEGIC COOPERATION: FUTURE CONTOURS
BY DR ULUPI BORAH, SR FELLOW, CENJOWS
ORGANISED BY CENJOWS ON 21ST NOV 2024

Japan is witnessing a significant shift in its security policies in the Indo-Pacific, moving from a defensive to an offensive posture. Reinterpreting its pacifist constitution, including Article 9 and enacting Security Legislation (2015), Japan now embraces a proactive contribution to peace and collective self-defence. It advances cutting-edge defence technologies through Acquisition Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA), emphasizing dual-use innovations and arms exports to friendly nations under its "Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment." The 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) highlights counter strike capabilities and increased defence spending, targeting threats from China, North Korea, and Russia, while strengthening alliances, particularly with the U.S., and investing in AI, hypersonic, and space technologies.

Meanwhile India adopts a strategic autonomy and multi-alignment policy, engaging major powers while preserving independence, especially as a QUAD member. The Indian Armed Forces are undergoing comprehensive modernization, focusing on defence management, restructuring commands, and revitalizing the defence industry.

At the same time India and Japan share a strong strategic partnership and they have initiated defence technology cooperation including agreement through Tokyo Declaration for India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, India-Japan Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology, India-Japan Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology etc. Based on these agreements the two countries are nurturing their relationships in the positive direction.

Despite such agreements, deals such as the acquisition of US-2 amphibious aircraft from Japan failed to materialise, as did the Japanese Ultra-quiet Soryu class submarine. India and Japan have also initiated collaboration on innovative technologies such as semiconductors, as well as in the maritime and space sectors. India actively supports Japan's Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP) initiative. There are several challenges and gaps that must be addressed for the two countries' collaboration in these sectors to be successful. Some of the challenges include high

INDIA-JAPAN STRATEGIC COOPERATION: FUTURE CONTOURS
BY DR ULUPI BORAH, SR FELLOW, CENJOWS
ORGANISED BY CENJOWS ON 21ST NOV 2024

cost, Japan's export regulations, long procurement procedure, strict compliance and documentation.

There is lack of transfer of technology. Japan is dependent on the US for military hardware and transferring it to a third party becomes difficult for Japan. There also exists mismatch in regional focus with India focusing on the Indian Ocean Region and Japan's focus remains in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Infrastructure gap is one of the major challenges which needs to be addressed.

In order to mitigate the existing and the upcoming challenges, both New Delhi and Tokyo need to focus on enhancing their financial mechanisms and ensure that both nations are on equal footing in terms of investments. They could consider forming groupings dedicated to developing advanced defence technologies, leveraging shared interests and capacities. Access to advanced technology and expertise would significantly benefit both nations, while cost-sharing and resource optimization can make large-scale defence projects more feasible. Expanding defence industrial cooperation under the QUAD framework offers opportunities for co-developing and co-producing advanced defence technologies, ensuring resilient supply chains, and sharing expertise in areas such as cybersecurity, unmanned systems, and maritime security. Diversifying import partners is also essential. Indian defence industries should actively introduce advanced defence technologies not only from the U.S., France, Russia or Israel but also consider Japan as a valuable partner. Similarly, Japan should expand its defence procurement beyond its traditional reliance on the U.S. and consider India as a key collaborator in its defence ecosystem. These measures will strengthen the India-Japan partnership, fostering a mutually beneficial and resilient defence collaboration.