

Relax arms export restriction to India

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In Japan's new National Defense Program Outline adopted on December 17, 2010, the Kan administration vowed to enhance cooperation with India that shares common interests with Japan in securing sea lanes from Africa and the Middle East to East Asia. This may indicate that the administration is, if not fully, conscious of China's dangerous rise. Instead of implementing the vow, however, the administration has created an obstacle to the cooperation, disappointing India that has been proactive in working with Japan. I heard India's frustrations with the Japanese attitude when I visited India as a member of a delegation from the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals late last year.

Why does Japan exclude India?

The Japanese government has to relax its three arms export principles (that effectively ban arms exports other than those to the United States) so that Japan can participate in the international joint development of fighter aircraft and other weapons or transfer dual-use technologies to friendly countries. Since last year, the government has considered "countries with appropriate arms export controls" as being subjected to the relaxation. But it has cited only the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Republic of Korea and Australia as being subjected to the relaxation. India has been excluded for the reason that it has not acceded to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). This represents a surprisingly rigid attitude and an utter lack of strategy. (The Kan administration has even shelved this insufficient relaxation measures, giving stupid considerations to the Social Democratic Party.)

Do not impose accession to NPT as a condition

"As uncertainties exist in the international society, nuclear deterrence remains necessary," Prime Minister Naoto Kan said, recognizing that Japan relies on the nuclear umbrella of its ally, the United States. While facing threats from China and Pakistan which developed nuclear weapons with Chinese support, India does not ally with any nuclear power. If the Kan administration urges India to accede to the NPT and abolish its own nuclear deterrence, such approach is nothing but contradiction.

The NPT, which was established at the initiative of the United States, Britain

and the Soviet Union in 1968, admits countries with successful nuclear explosion tests on or before January 1, 1967, as “nuclear-weapon states” and allows any other countries to accede to the pact as “nonnuclear-weapon states.” Had India (with the first successful nuclear test in 1974) tried to accede to the NPT simultaneously with China (with the first such test in 1964) in 1992, it would have been required to unilaterally dismantle nuclear weapons and become a “nonnuclear-weapon state.” Clearly, this was the option no Indian politician could have adopted.

While calling for enhancing the relationship with India, which shares basic values with Japan, in the face of China’s hegemonic expansion, the Japanese government frequently cites India’s refusal to accede to the NPT as a “stumbling block” to bilateral cooperation. Such attitude represents a clear self-contradiction, or a suicidal hypocrisy.

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