

**“Asian Concert” to Counter China**

Tadae Takubo

The Japan Institute for National Fundamentals and India's Vivekananda International Foundation, known as the VIF, held discussions in Tokyo on June 3 and 4 as part of their joint study on Japan-India cooperation, as reported by JINF President Yoshiko Sakurai in the June 14 issue of Shincho weekly magazine. In this respect, I here would like to discuss two issues surrounding Japan and India on counter-China strategies.

**India recognizes pivotal U.S. shift to Asia**

The first issue is how Japan and India view the United States as the only superpower that can counter China. The United States' attitude on China is fatally important for Japan that has been complacent with the postwar security arrangements where Japan depends on U.S. military forces in exchange for providing them with bases. The Japan-U.S. security arrangements have remained firm despite pending problems such as the proposed relocation of the Futenma U.S. Marine Air Station in Okinawa, because the United States has retained a tough attitude towards China for the past few years. With its traditional non-alignment diplomacy initiated by the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, however, India may be reluctant to easily approach to the United States.

India might have understood that Washington's pivotal shift to Asia is realizing a U.S. grand design covering from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea. The United States is steadily building a counter-China strategy involving such countries as India, Vietnam and Myanmar in addition to five of its allies – Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia. The United States has already stationed 200 Marines in Australia's Darwin and is reportedly negotiating to base naval units at Indonesia's Cocos Island and Sterling in South Perth, the base for Australia's Indian Ocean fleet. The VIF has proposed an “Asian Concert” where India would cooperate with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Japan and some others.

**Northern territory as barrier to cooperation with Russia**

The second issue is India's plan to include Russia into the Asian Concert. India's diplomacy since the Soviet Union age might have included a pro-Russian policy. But Japan has a territorial problem with Russia over the four northern islands. It may not be strange for some Japanese to call for shelving the territory issue temporarily in

order to deepen relations with Russia in a manner to counter China that is tougher than Russia. But we must give considerations to negative aspects of such idea.

If Japan shelves the northern territory issue, its diplomacy may lose a major leverage. Japan then may be fooled not only by Russia and China but also by South Korea that has illegally occupied Japan's Takeshima Island in the Sea of Japan. We would like to change Japan so that India would choose to enhance its relationship with Japan rather than Russia.

*Tadae Takubo is Vice President, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals.*