

Limitations of Japan's Postwar Regime Surfacing at Symposium

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An international symposium is to be held on June 4 in Tokyo to discuss how best to expand security cooperation between Japan and India, the two major Asian democracies exposed to China's growing military pressure. While India places great expectations on such cooperation, Japan has little she can do in this regard under the present circumstances. The symposium is likely to provide opportunities to pinpoint problems with Japan's postwar regime that has turned a blind eye to its military responsibility.

Room for expanding Japan-India cooperation

Organizing the symposium are the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals and India's Vivekananda International Foundation, known as the VIF. The two institutes have agreed to study jointly on Japan-India security cooperation and planned the open symposium for an interim report on the study conducted since last year. The VIF is a new think-tank where former Indian intelligence, military and diplomatic officials hold key posts. It puts emphasis on security and strategic studies among others.

The VIF submitted a detailed report consisting of more than 50 pages before the symposium, giving analyses on the international situation and China's military expansion as well as specific bilateral cooperation measures in such areas as defense technology and cyber defense. But the report particularly notes that Japan's constitutional constraints and political self-restraints including the three principles for banning arms exports hamper its security cooperation with India, effectively urging Japan to shift away from its postwar regime.

Japan and India share democratic values as well as interest in checking China's rise and have historically maintained close bilateral relations. They thus have great room for security cooperation. But the Japanese participants in the joint study agree that there are limitations on bilateral security cooperation unless Japan fundamentally revises its postwar regime including the current constitution.

Difference over U.S., Russia

Leading Japanese and Indian politicians have become co-patrons for the joint study. They are former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former Indian House of Parliament Speaker Purno Sangma. Before the symposium, Abe congratulated the Indian delegation including VIF Director Ajit Doval, who has once served as director of

the Intelligence Bureau. Abe also is to make opening remarks at the symposium. Following the interim report at the symposium, the JINF and the VIF will compile a final report next spring. The Japanese and Indian politicians' endorsement of the joint study should increase the significance of policy proposals that the final report will offer.

Japanese and Indian perceptions about the United States in the security field are somewhat different from each other. India has little confidence in the United States and serious concern on a U.S.-China coalition. This is one of the reasons India seeks cooperation with Japan. Meanwhile, Japan has no choice but to place the Japan-U.S. alliance at the core of any security arrangement and incorporate Indian help into it. Japanese and Indian senses of intimacy towards Russia also differ. I am looking forward to seeing the final joint study report that will be produced with these differences overcome.

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