

INDIA-JAPAN DEFENCE COOPERATION BEYOND QUAD

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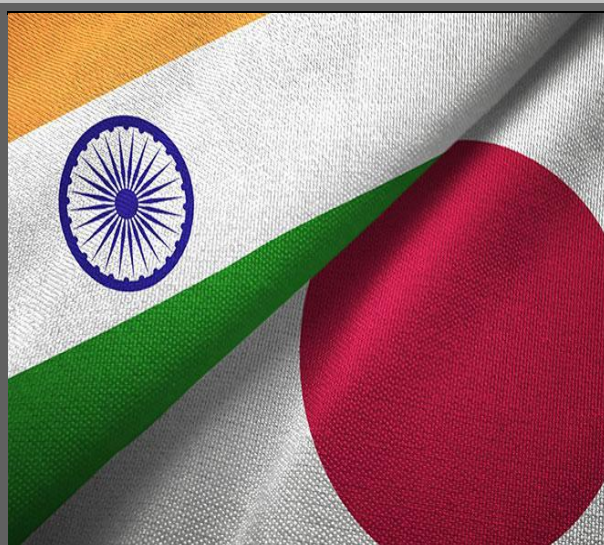


Image Source: ORF¹

Introduction

India and Japan are two prominent countries in today's world. Their mutual importance is primarily accentuated due to their economic prowess, as Japan is the 3rd and India being the 5th largest economy in the world.² Japan is a member of G-20, G-7, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), while India is only a member of the G-20.³ However, a large part of their economic wherewithal lies in their defence industry which is gaining momentum and is likely to further in the foreseeable future. It is equally notable that the enduring relevance of geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region is also responsible for the enhanced collaboration of research and development in the defence sector. Likewise, both states are engaged in a significant level of bilateral collaboration and cooperation, especially in the defence industry.

Currently, according to the *International Institute of Strategic Studies* (IISS), Japan is spending around 50 billion USD on defence.⁴ Whilst, the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI) estimated that India has allocated almost 80 billion USD to be spent on defence.⁵ It is worthy to note here that so far both states have signed 12 major agreements which one way or the other strengthen their mutual defence industry and technology. The defence cooperation between the

1 Harsh V. Pant, "The Rising Sun in India-Japan Relations," *Observer Research Foundation*, May 1, 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-rising-sun-in-india-japan-relations/>.

2 "India," *World Bank*, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/india>.

3 "JapanGov," *The Government of Japan*, 2022, <https://www.japan.go.jp/>.

4 *The Military Balance 2022* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022), 275.

5 Diego Lopes da Silva et al., "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2021," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, April 2022, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/fs_2204_milex_2021_0.pdf.

two goes back to early 1980s when the Japanese economy was at its zenith being the 2nd largest in the world and they signed the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology in 1985.⁶

However, the most significant development took place in 2007, when the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad was established, and the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India was declared during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in 2008.⁷ The Quad members included the United States, Australia, Japan, and India. At the time of its establishment, the Quad had a more security-centred outlook, and the Chinese policymakers branded it as an instrument of containment in the Asia-Pacific. Nonetheless, now, the Quad seeks more cooperation and collaboration in mitigating the non-traditional threats such as "pandemic mitigation, cyber and climate change."⁸ The most recent Quad Summit took place on May 24, 2022, in Tokyo, Japan.⁹ The Joint Statement released at the end of the summit emphasised on resisting the "unilateral attempt at disrupting the status quo" especially in the Indo-Pacific and condemned the Chinese activities in the East and South China Seas.¹⁰

In 2015, India and Japan reached a consensus on 2 agreements i.e., the Agreement Concerning Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information, and the Agreement Concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology. More recently, in 2020, India and Japan signed the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The latter agreement came into force on July 11, 2021.¹¹

Sr. No.	Name of Agreement
1.	Agreement for Air Service (1956)
2.	Cultural Agreement (1957)
3.	Agreement of Commerce (1958)
4.	Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (1960)
5.	Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology (1985)
6.	Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (2008)
7.	Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (2011)
8.	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology (2015)
9.	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of

⁶ "Japan-India Relations (Basic Data)," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, July 27, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *The Military Balance 2022*, 226.

⁹ "QUAD Leaders' Meeting Tokyo 2022," *Prime Minister's Office of Japan*, May 24, 2022, <https://www.kantei.go.jp/quad-leaders-meeting-tokyo2022/index.html>.

¹⁰ "Quad Joint Leaders' Statement," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, May 24, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1e_000401.html.

¹¹ "Japan-India Relations (Basic Data)."

	India Concerning Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information (2015)
10.	Agreement between Japan and the Republic of India on Social Security (2016)
11.	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (2017)
12.	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) (2020)

Figure 1: The timeline of bilateral agreements between Japan and India.¹²

The Divergent Strategic Cultures of India and Japan

Besides the India-Japan defence cooperation, it is important to explore their distinct strategic cultures from which they heavily draw their overall security orientation. After the independence from Britain in August 1947, India remained busy in a constant struggle for power and domination in its immediate neighbourhood and did not hesitate to use its armed forces in violating the sovereignty of other nations and annexing territories. For instance, India fought wars and entered into armed military conflicts with all of its immediate neighbours and aimed to create vassal states. However, the beating of Indian armed forces at the hands of China in the 1962 war, and later by Pakistan in 1965, are taken as classic examples to mock the Indian armed forces for their inability to overwhelm its neighbours.¹³ Indian policymakers also illegally and unilaterally annexed Goa, Daman, and Diu, which were Portuguese overseas territories in 1961, and did the same illegal action against the princely state of Hyderabad in 1948.¹⁴

On the other hand, the post-Second World War Japan abolished its classical militarism and adopted an entirely peaceful approach in settling its disputes. One can take the example of the Kuril Islands dispute between Russia and Japan, where the latter is hesitant to use hard power. Its peaceful approach was enshrined in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which prohibited its policymakers from waging war to settling disputes. Article 9 stated that:

“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

¹² *The Military Balance 2022*, 219; “Japan-India Relations (Basic Data).”

¹³ Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan*, The Armed Forces of Asia (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 69–70.

¹⁴ Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming: India’s Military Modernization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 3–4.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”¹⁵

Conclusions

One can well assume that the Republic of India and contemporary Japan gained their respective independent outlook in the post-Second World War period. And during the past seven decades, both adopted an entirely different approach in their foreign policy dealings. Japan resorted to international law and peaceful means to settle its disputes and did not enter into military conflicts. For instance, the Kuril Islands dispute is the legacy of the Second World War between Russia and Japan, where the latter is hesitant to use hard power.

History reveals that the concept of “strategic restraint” in Indian foreign policy is nothing short of a fallacy and Indian policymakers have successfully used it time and again as a smokescreen.¹⁶ One must not forget Operation *Blue Star* of June 1984, when the Indian Army indiscriminately killed innocent Sikhs using main battle tanks, gunship helicopters, and heavy artillery.¹⁷

Overtly, the Quad is a multilateral platform that has the potential to mitigate non-traditional threats looming over today’s world and it should not become a soft or hard military alliance having an overt or covert anti-anything orientation. The significance of the defence industry is undeniable and cooperation and collaboration in defence technology could strengthen national economies. Nonetheless, the defence-offence paradox and the uncertainty of state intentions are two very important elements which continue to alarm nations and states about the growing defence cooperation among other states.

¹⁵ “The Constitution of Japan,” *Cabinet Public Affairs Office, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of Japan*, 2022, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html.

¹⁶ For a detailed account on ‘strategic restraint’ in Indian foreign policy, please see: Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen P. Cohen, “Is India Ending Its Strategic Restraint Doctrine?,” *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 163–77, doi:10.1080/0163660X.2011.562442.

¹⁷ W. H. McLeod, *The A to Z of Sikhism* (Lanham, Maryland, USA: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 94–95; Louis E. Fenech and W. H. McLeod, *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, Third Edition (Lanham, Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 233–34.

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