

The Future of the Indo-Pacific

—Japan’s New Plan for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”—
“Together with India, as an Indispensable Partner”

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1 Introduction

H.E. Dr. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India,
Ambassador Singh, Director-General of the Indian Council of
World Affairs (ICWA),

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

(1) I cannot help but feel a sense of destiny that I am here in India to speak about my vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". As you all know, a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", or FOIP, was proposed by my esteemed friend, former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo. Here in this country, former Prime Minister Abe delivered a speech that linked the Pacific and the Indian Oceans for the first time. India is the place where FOIP came into being.

(2) I also traveled here in 2015 as Minister for Foreign Affairs and spoke at an event hosted by the same ICWA as today. I spoke about how Japan and India should jointly lead the region and the world in the "Era of the Indo-Pacific". In 2016, former Prime Minister Abe delivered a vision called “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. Seven years since then, the international community has seen major events that could be described as paradigm shifts including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. I would like to speak today about how Japan further develops the vision and how it makes efforts for the future of the Indo-Pacific.

(3) I have two points to deliver to you today:

(a) First, why is it necessary to develop FOIP now? At a time when the international community is at a history’s turning point, I

would like to clarify the concept of FOIP once again to propose a guiding perspective to be shared by the international community which, if left unchecked, could drift towards division and confrontation.

(b) Second, Japan will expand cooperation for FOIP. Russia's aggression against Ukraine oblige us to face the most fundamental challenge; defending peace. Various challenges related to "global commons", such as climate and the environment, global health and cyberspace, have become more serious. I will incorporate these new elements of addressing peace and the global commons-related issues into FOIP. Also, I will take further measures in areas such as connectivity and freedom of the seas that have been the focus of FOIP thus far.

2 Why FOIP now?

(1) As I mentioned earlier, the international community is at a history's turning point. The balance of power is shifting dramatically in the international community today. The remarkable rise of India is one such example. In my speech in the United States in January, I stated that, as the so-called "Global South" grows and the world becomes more diverse, we need to have a good understanding of their historical and cultural background, and that the means of sharing responsibility for global governance has become an increasingly important issue.

(2) The international community has entered an era in which cooperation and division are intricately intertwined. We are seeing an entanglement of different issues including geopolitical competition, global challenges such as climate change, and the impact of scientific and technological developments on nations, societies and individuals. This situation could be described as a compound crisis. In a world like this, the more vulnerable the nation, the greater the sacrifices, and the more they are at the

mercy of different issues.

(3) One characteristic of this turning point is the lack of a guiding perspective that is acceptable to all about what the international order should be. This was clearly demonstrated by the considerable discrepancies in the attitudes across various countries toward Russia's aggression against Ukraine. I think this is an indication that a strong centrifugal force is working within the international community at the most basic level of a "perspective".

(4) Thus, with the changing paradigm in international relations, and in the current situation where there is no consensus on what should be the underlying perspective for the next era, FOIP is a vision that is in fact gaining in relevance. In this sense, FOIP was a visionary concept.

(5) In particular, the concept of FOIP has been flexible in evolving in a way that embraces various voices, along with the growing support and endorsement from the international community. I believe that this vision, nurtured by the voices of different countries and which can be characterized as "our FOIP", is becoming more important than ever toward the goal of leading the international community in the direction of cooperation rather than division and confrontation.

(6) Even at this turning point, the fundamental concept of FOIP remains the same. It is simple. We will enhance the connectivity of the Indo-Pacific region, foster the region into a place that values freedom, the rule of law, free from force or coercion, and make it prosperous. With this backdrop, we should reaffirm and share the understanding that at the root of the concept of FOIP is defending "freedom" and "the rule of law". In other words, vulnerable countries are in greatest need of "the rule of law"; and a state in which the principles of the UN Charter, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful resolution of

disputes and the non-use of force are upheld, is the important premise on which “freedom” is enjoyed in the international community. Another equally important principle of FOIP is respect for “diversity”, “inclusiveness” and “openness”. In other words, we do not exclude anyone, we do not create camps, and we do not impose values.

(7) Based on these principles, the approach we should take going forward is "rulemaking through dialogue" that respects the historical and cultural diversity of each country, and "equal partnership" among nations. I believe these are the new core elements of FOIP. There are various views on what the international order should be, such as unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar, but it is not about "poles" of a single or multiple major powers. I believe that we should aim for a world where diverse nations coexist and prosper together under the rule of law, without falling into geopolitical competition.

(8) Furthermore, it is important to adopt an approach focusing on “people”, being not limited to national level. I believe that the survival, welfare and life with dignity of individual people are a goal that should be pursued anywhere in the world. A nation prospers when its people prosper. Japan will carry out diplomacy to create conditions necessary to achieve this goal.

(9) “Our FOIP” needs to be undertaken together with various countries and stakeholders. Japan will strengthen coordination with the United States, Australia, the ROK, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. Of course India is indispensable. We will expand the networks among countries that share the vision, including ASEAN and the Pacific Island countries, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and direct efforts in the spirit of co-creation.

3 New Pillars of Cooperation for FOIP

That said, we newly set forth the “four pillars of cooperation for FOIP” that are suited for the history’s turning point we face.

(1) Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity

(a) The first pillar is "principles for peace and rules for prosperity", which is the backbone of FOIP. The people who suffer the most from the erosion of the rule of law in the international community are vulnerable countries and people in vulnerable environments. My question is this: Can we not collectively reaffirm and promote the minimum basic principles that the international community should uphold? And by doing so, can we not build the “peace” of the international community, which can easily collapse if not attended to? These principles include respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo by force. These principles pointed to in the UN Charter should be adhered to in every corner of the world.

(b) On this occasion, I reiterate that Japan strongly condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine and will never recognize it. Prime Minister Modi too, expressed to President Putin that "today's era is not of war". Japan opposes any unilateral changes to the status quo by force anywhere in the world.

Moreover, Japan has extended a helping hand to any country in need. For example, over the past two decades, it has supported the Philippines in its fight against poverty and terrorism, and has helped achieve peace in the Mindanao region. It will continue to proactively support the efforts of each country to build peace and reconstruct itself, including providing assistance to Ukraine, based on the tenets of "dialogue" and "cooperation".

Japan will also provide support that caters to the needs of women, taking in the perspective of Women, Peace and Security.

(c) Creating a free, fair and just economic order that does not foster division is also essential. While maintaining the WTO rules as a

foundation, we will promote further efforts, such as the CPTPP, with countries that have the will and ability to pursue a higher level of liberalization. Further to the degree of liberalization, the renunciation of unilateral changes to the status quo by force and of economic coercion is also an essential condition for building economic relations based on trust. Furthermore, Japan has not forgotten to take vulnerable countries into consideration. Bangladesh, India's neighbor, will soon graduate from being classified as a least developed country, and we have already launched the Joint Study Group on the possibility of an Economic Partnership Agreement with Bangladesh. This also reflects the important FOIP principle of "excluding no one".

(d) Rulemaking to prevent opaque and unfair development finance is necessary for nations to grow autonomously and sustainably. The failure of a nation has enormous impact on the lives of ordinary people. Japan will promote the implementation of the G20 Principles for "Quality Infrastructure Investment". It is essential that Sri Lanka's debt restructuring advances in a fair and transparent manner. Japan will collaborate closely with India and contribute to stability in the South Asian region. There are many excellent Japanese companies that can provide quality infrastructure. We will encourage their overseas operations that excel in providing quality infrastructure, thereby revitalizing both local economies and Japan's economy.

(2) Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way

(a) The second pillar is "addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way, which is the new focus of cooperation for FOIP. In this era, the importance of "global commons" including climate and the environment, global health and cyberspace is dramatically increasing. We will address various challenges related to them in a realistic and practical Indo-Pacific way and expand cooperation for FOIP, thereby enhancing the resilience and sustainability of each society and achieving an "equal partnership" among autonomous nations.

(b) On climate change, Japan will lead a clean market and cooperation in innovation in order to realize the global Green Transformation, GX. It will promote the “Asia Zero Emission Community” Concept as a regional platform, which aims for achieving both decarbonization and economic growth. It will also take advantage of ODA and provide support including for the introduction of renewable energy in island countries.

(c) Regarding food, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has caused food prices to rise, and the stable supply of food around the world is a matter of emergency. We recently decided to provide 50 million US dollars in emergency food aid to support vulnerable countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, as well as corn seeds and other assistance to support vulnerable farmers in Ukraine. In addition, Japan has proactively worked on the ASEAN+3 Rice Reserve Initiative. It will continue to develop this visionary mechanism for countries to pool their stockpiles in the event of an emergency.

(d) Witnessing how COVID-19 has exacerbated division and disparity in the international community, we are keenly aware of the necessity to respond to global health issues worldwide. Japan remains committed to achieving universal health coverage. Japan continues to support the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases to become the core of infectious disease control in the Southeast Asian region.

(e) The scale and frequency of disasters are becoming more serious due to the effects of climate change and others. To help countries build resilient societies, both in terms of disaster prevention and recovery, Japan will harness its expertise and technology to provide support including for improving disaster prevention and response capacity.

(f) The proliferation of disinformation is a common challenge in all

countries that hinders people's political self-determination and threatens the autonomy of nations. With a view to ensure a free and fair cyberspace, we will hold a workshop or other events this year to expand knowledge throughout the region on countermeasures against disinformation.

(3) Multi-layered Connectivity

(a) The third pillar is a “multi-layered connectivity”, which is a core element of the cooperation for FOIP. No matter how times may change, our need for economic growth will remain. In order to achieve growth, countries need to stay connected in various aspects. However, the kind of connection that relies solely on one country could be a breeding ground for political vulnerability. By connecting, we aim for increasing each country's options, help them overcome their vulnerabilities and pursue economic growth in a way that benefits everyone.

(b) Here I would like to mention three important regions. One is Southeast Asia. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, AOIP, and FOIP are visions that resonate with each other. Japan will make a new contribution of 100 million US dollars to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund, being mindful of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit to be held in Tokyo in December.

We will also renew by December the comprehensive Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative, which promotes efforts to strengthen both hard and soft connectivity.

The next horizon is South Asia, including India. The Northeast India, which is surrounded by land, still has unexploited economic potential. Viewing Bangladesh and other areas to the south as a single economic zone, we will promote the Bay of Bengal-Northeast India industrial value chain concept in cooperation with India and Bangladesh to foster the growth of the entire region.

And then, the Pacific Islands region. The waters that connect Japan and the Pacific Island countries have no borders. The Pacific Islands region is exposed to many challenges such as rising sea levels due to climate change, infectious diseases such as

COVID-19, and natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions.

The new Palau International Airport Terminal project supported by Japan is a true example of connectivity, in that it has not only vitalized tourism in the economic sense, but also facilitated the transportation of COVID-19 relief supplies. The undersea cable that is being supported by Japan, the U.S. and Australia will also play an important role in overcoming vulnerabilities. We will further step up our efforts in preparation for the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting which Japan will host next year.

Of course, countries in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and other regions are also important partners in realizing FOIP, and we will advance cooperation in various areas.

(c) I would like to add to FOIP an approach focusing on “people”, being not limited to national level. We will strengthen the "knowledge" connectivity that, focusing on “people”, helps "human resource development", creates new innovations, and underpins the vitality of the region.

We will strengthen various exchange programs such as JENESYS and the Asia Kakehashi Project, and connect the "youth" who will lead the next generation.

Next year, if all goes well, a branch of the University of Tsukuba will open in Malaysia. We will support Japanese universities' expansion overseas, and connect "knowledge and experience".

Recently, ICU services have been provided to ICUs in developing countries remotely by medical experts in Japan. We support such efforts, and connect "laboratories and the field".

In addition, we will connect "entrepreneurs and investors", through supporting startups in Africa and the Japan ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund.

(d) In a post-Covid-19 world, digital connectivity is also increasingly vital. We will promote reliable digital technology including Open RAN, and develop information infrastructure including submarine cable laying projects. We will also cooperate in the materialization of smart cities utilizing digital technology.

We believe that there is a great potential to utilize Japanese technology and India's strength in the IT field, as well as to provide support for infrastructure development through Japanese ODA.

(4) Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the “Sea” to the “Air”

(a) The fourth pillar is “extending efforts for security and safe use of the sea to the air”. FOIP has consistently focused on the "sea". The oceans are becoming more important and significant. As we have seen with the aggression against Ukraine, major geopolitical shifts are taking place at the heart of the vast Eurasian Continent. One could say it is a tragedy. I want to free the oceans from such geopolitical risks. There is an imperative to protect and nurture the public ocean bounty that we all share. Also, we will work on issues in entire “public domain” including ensuring safe and stable use of the air.

(b) In order to protect the oceans from various risks, I would like to once again call for the "three principles of the rule of law at sea" that Japan has long advocated: (1) States should make and clarify their claims based on international law, (2) States should not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims, and (3) States should seek to settle disputes by peaceful means. This year, Japan officially adopted the position that it is permissible to preserve the existing baselines and maritime zones, notwithstanding the regression of coastlines caused by climate change. The law is there to protect the weak. The position mentioned above, by way of the three principles, protects the oceans of the islands region from risks.

(c) Further, to protect the free oceans, we will support the strengthening of maritime law enforcement capabilities of each country through human resource development, strengthening cooperation among coast guard agencies, and joint training with the coast guards of other countries. Especially, damages caused by illegal fishing is becoming increasingly serious, including in the

Pacific Islands region. Japan is no exception. We will strengthen our efforts to combat so-called IUU fishing.

(d) We will also expand our efforts for maritime security. My administration has been working on the joint training between the Self-Defense Forces and each country's armed forces, and the development of legal infrastructure such as the RAA and ACSA. The RAAs with Australia and the UK have been submitted to the current session of Japanese Diet while ACSA with India is already in operation. A new framework for grant aid to armed forces and other related organizations of friendly countries has also been established. We look forward to cooperating with India in the future, too. The Maritime Self-Defense Forces is a "Force for Peace" that contributes to regional maritime peace and stability. We will promote joint training with India and the U.S., and goodwill training with ASEAN countries and Pacific Island countries.

(e) In addition, it is important to ensure the safe and stable use of the air and to enhance the maritime domain awareness from the air. In order to improve the capacity for grasping situation of the air, we will proactively promote transfer of warning and control radars, and human resource development and exchange. It is also important to take advantage of satellites for the maritime domain awareness, and we will promote human resource development and information sharing. Further, we will enhance cooperation among aviation authorities to address new technologies including drones.

4 Methods to Promote Cooperation for FOIP

(1) I have spoken about the "four pillars" of cooperation for FOIP. In expanding cooperation for FOIP, the key will be to implement an optimal combination of various methods. We will further strengthen diplomatic efforts including by expanding our ODA in various forms, while engaging in a strategic use of it. From this viewpoint, we will revise the Development Cooperation Charter and set forth guidelines for Japan's ODA for the next 10 years. In this context, we will strengthen coordination among agencies

that handle ODA and other official flows, and launch an "offer-type" cooperation which will enable us to develop and propose attractive plans tailored to development demands while taking advantage of Japan's strengths.

We will also introduce a new framework for "private capital mobilization-type" grant aid that will attract investments. This is a new menu to support start-ups by motivated young people in each country. It will help mobilize private capital which seeks to contribute to economic and social challenges. This is a new attempt to generate synergy effects of public and private funds, and Japan will work together with regional partners that support this idea.

(2) In terms of mobilizing private capital, a draft amendment to the JBIC Law is under Diet deliberation. By adding foreign companies that support Japanese companies' supply chains to the loan portfolio, and by making it possible to invest in startups with overseas operations, it will encourage private companies to expand in growth areas such as digital and decarbonization while ensuring economic security.

(3) Through these efforts, and with the public and private sectors working in tandem, we will respond robustly to the needs of each country. Japan will mobilize a total of more than 75 billion US dollars in public and private funds, through private investments, yen loans and other means, in the Indo-Pacific region by 2030 in infrastructure, for which there are major demands from each country. Japan will grow together with other countries.

5 Conclusion

(1) Up to this point, I have described Japan's plan to develop a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". To achieve this, India is an indispensable partner. I believe that Japan and India are in an extremely unique position in the current international relations and, furthermore, in the history of the world.

(2) India is the largest democracy in the world. I have always viewed with great respect at the way such a huge and diverse country as India has developed democracy. Japan, for its part, was the first country in Asia to achieve the modernization and embrace democracy. It is fair to say that both countries are naturally receptive to and fully committed to the idea of electing governments through general elections and deciding policies through public debate. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no voices at all in either Japan or India that said that a totalitarian system of governance would be better.

(3) At the same time, both Japan and India have unique historical backgrounds. The people of the two countries humbly acknowledge that there are diverse values, cultures and histories on this planet, and that fully understanding them is not an easy task. We are the kind of people who understand intuitively that the best way forward is to respect the other party and cooperate through dialogue.

(4) It follows that Japan and India have a great responsibility for maintaining and strengthening "a free and open international order based on the rule of law". This year, as Japan holds the G7 presidency and India holds the G20 presidency, my hope is that, through working together with ASEAN and other many countries, we will bring about peace and prosperity to the international community, which faces a time of challenges. The vision for achieving this is FOIP, a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" based on the rule of law. I believe that this region will be "a place where freedom and the rule of law are valued, free from force or coercion".

(5) Japan will spare no efforts to cooperate with India for the success of the G20. I am looking forward to welcoming Prime Minister Modi to Hiroshima in May and visiting India again in September.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.