

## **Japan-India-US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue on Security Issues in the Indo-Pacific Region**

The Japan-India-US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue on Security Issues in the Indo-Pacific Region is co-hosted by Japan's Okazaki Institute and the Japan Institute of International Affairs, the United Service Institute of India, and the Vanderbilt University US-Japan Center. This Dialogue has thus far been held three times. The first was in Delhi in November 2011, the second in Washington in October 2012, and the third time in Tokyo in March 2013, and it has been confirmed that this Strategic Dialogue will continue into the future. This report summarizes the key points of consensus among the Dialogue participants, and recommends policies that should be taken to further strengthen security and defense cooperation among Japan, India and the US.

### **Principal points of consensus in Trilateral Dialogue**

#### **Assessment of the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region**

The Dialogue participants were agreed that the Indo-Pacific region faces a variety of traditional and non-traditional security issues even as it rapidly develops economically. They also came to the consensus that Japan, India and the US are the key players in security and defense in the Indo-Pacific region, and that they share not only their own many interests but also responsibility for ensuring the region's security and prosperity.

The expansion of China's influence and national power both politically and economically is the most important development in the Indo-Pacific security environment in recent years, presenting both opportunities and challenges to the region as a whole. The Dialogue participants considered it possible that China's military build-up and assertive behavior could heighten tensions over regional maritime disputes in particular and produce seriously adverse effects. The Dialogue participants believed it important to increase transparency regarding the military capabilities of major countries in the Indo-Pacific region. While the Dialogue participants were agreed that a policy of containment against China was inappropriate and counterproductive, they were also in agreement that efforts should be made to improve comprehensive cooperation and ensure that China will conform to, and fulfill its responsibilities under, established international law and practices in the region. At

the same time, they reached a consensus on the need to make the necessary security and defense preparations to hedge against situations developing in undesirable directions.

The Dialogue participants were of the same view that political and military developments in North Korea were the most pressing security issue for the Indo-Pacific region. Given the uncertainties surrounding the Kim Jong-un regime, the Dialogue participants felt it necessary for Japan, India and the US to prepare for more provocations by North Korea in the form of completely ignoring the wishes of the international community, and to pursue talks on responding to future developments in concert in order to resolve such issues as nuclear/missile development and nuclear non-proliferation. The Dialogue participants also share concerns about China-Pakistan-North Korea nexus on nuclear and missile proliferation and recognize the need to make more efforts on nonproliferation.

The Dialogue participants agreed that efforts should be made to involve China in bilateral and multilateral talks in order to avoid the danger of an arms race in the Indo-Pacific region, to prevent inordinate military build-ups and the outbreak/escalation of unintended confrontations, and to foster a habit of cooperation among the militaries of the region. The Dialogue participants regarded greater transparency and confidence-building measures as the keys to achieving these objectives. It was pointed out that, in this context, establishing bilateral hotlines between defense authorities and concluding agreements to prevent contingencies with the involvement of China as well as pursuing multi-lateral strategic dialogue and joint exercises among or centered on Japan, India and the US were all measures worthy of further consideration.

It was also recognized that, with the region's rapid development, economic and energy security have become important issues in the region's strategic environment, above all because the expansion of energy demand and the hunt for energy resources could prompt actions that would destabilize energy markets and maritime security. It was pointed out that stable supply networks must be established for the region and energy resources safely developed as the world's economic center of gravity shifts to the Indo-Pacific region.

The Dialogue participants acknowledged that the Indo-Pacific region faces many security issues of a non-traditional character as well as those of a more traditional type. They

believed that many maritime security issues in particular should be addressed jointly by the three countries as major security and defense players in the region. The Dialogue participants also recognized the fragile nature of maritime security and reaffirmed the need for the maritime law codified in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Dialogue participants emphasized the importance of freedom of navigation and sea lane security in particular. These are critical elements in further expanding trade in this region. It was also agreed that cooperative efforts to tackle common concerns such as piracy and illicit trade (especially trade in materials that could be used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction) must be strengthened. In light of the fact that the Indo-Pacific region is subject to frequent earthquakes, typhoons and other natural disasters, the Dialogue participants viewed Japan, India and the US as playing important roles in disaster countermeasures and relief efforts as well.

The Dialogue participants strongly recommended that the US ratify UNCLOS and join in this agreement as soon as possible. Having all countries connected with the Indo-Pacific region become UNCLOS signatories would serve as an extremely important foundation for resolving disputes in accordance with the rule of law.

The Dialogue participants agreed that the Indo-Pacific region is facing new types of threats to space and cyberspace security, and that it would be useful to take up these issues and consider solutions in all meetings relevant to the security and defense of Japan, India and the US.

### **The roles of bilateral alliances and multilateral frameworks**

The Dialogue participants recognized that the Indo-Pacific security environment has changed tremendously since the end of the Cold War, and acknowledged continuing elements of instability in this region. The Dialogue participants were mindful that existing bilateral alliances play an extremely important role in the maintenance of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. At the same time, the Dialogue participants also held that the multilateral frameworks in the Indo-Pacific region add value by contributing to the enduring security and prosperity of the region through strengthened trust and cooperation among the participating countries. Periodic dialogue involving institutions connected with security and defense in Japan, India and the US could aid in this progress. The Dialogue participants

viewed steady efforts in developing existing multilateral frameworks in the Indo-Pacific region as being of increasing importance for bolstering trust and promoting cooperation, and saw this as contributing to the region's safety and security. They recommended that the governments of Japan, India and the US pay careful and close attention to these frameworks and broadly participate as much as possible.

Security in the Indo-Pacific region is a composite concept covering economic and energy security as well as traditional and non-traditional security, and it is vital to utilize the various multilateral frameworks mentioned above as well as flexible and multilayered bilateral and trilateral frameworks. Promoting cooperation, exchanging information and building confidence through these frameworks will contribute to the stability of the region by preventing misunderstandings, reducing mistrust, and expanding the scope of common interests.

#### **Japan-India-US cooperation and the role of Track II diplomacy**

Japan, India and the US are major countries willing and able to contribute to the region's security and stability and, despite some differences of opinion regarding maritime jurisdiction, they share a wide range of interests and areas of cooperation. The Dialogue participants were convinced that greater security and defense cooperation can also be pursued within a trilateral framework while taking into account the impacts on economic and energy security.

The Dialogue participants were agreed that the Track II community of non-officials in the three countries plays a key role in proposing specific ideas for security and defense cooperation and confidence-building to their respective governments. They were also of the same mind on the usefulness of Track II dialogue and information exchange in deepening mutual understanding.

#### **Recommendations on future areas of cooperation for three countries**

Reflecting on the discussions at the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, the Dialogue participants identified and recommended areas of security and defense cooperation for Japan, India and the US from the perspective of Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity. In making these recommendations, they agreed that the advantages of Track II diplomacy should be

leveraged to ensure more in-depth discussions at the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and to further research on more detailed and specific proposals for trilateral cooperation.

### **Developing a maritime security coalition**

The Dialogue participants welcomed the progress made in existing bilateral cooperation among Japan, India and the US in the area of maritime security/defense, as well as the ongoing development of this framework into trilateral cooperation. In view of the importance of ensuring that sea lanes transiting the Indo-Pacific region are not blocked and not used for illicit activities, the Dialogue participants regarded it as essential that the three countries enhance and develop cooperation in both traditional and non-traditional areas of maritime security, including anti-piracy operations, HA/DR and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in the form of a “non-alliance” maritime security coalition. This coalition would not resemble a “containment alliance” targeting a particular country as a hypothetical enemy, but would rather be a loose, voluntary association providing universal maritime security as a regional public good.

The Dialogue participants agreed that the three countries must address challenges of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition to continued efforts to develop the Air-Sea Battle concept, the maritime security coalition needs to work on the strategy of Offshore Control to defeat A2/AD threats and its own A2/AD as part of this strategy.

This maritime security coalition would in future go beyond these three countries to seek out the participation of other sensible maritime countries in the region. The Dialogue participants shared the view that building a maritime security coalition should be given the utmost priority within trilateral cooperation, and agreed that the three countries must give more concrete consideration to what form this maritime security coalition should take for the time being and what strategies should be pursued.

### **Deepening and expanding trilateral cooperation**

The Dialogue participants shared the view that trilateral cooperation in the following areas ranks right below the formation of a maritime security coalition in importance, and affirmed that specific research would continue to be pursued within the framework of this Strategic

Dialogue:

- ① ISR cooperation in multilayered domains (need for a GSOMIA agreement)
- ② Strategic-level defense cooperation (nuclear deterrence, conventional (non-nuclear) deterrence, space/cyberspace security, Offshore Control)
- ③ Operational-level defense cooperation (BMD/CMD, counter-A2/AD)
- ④ Tactical-level defense cooperation (various warfare)
- ⑤ Non-traditional security cooperation (anti-piracy efforts, HA/DR, nuclear/ballistic missile non-proliferation, etc.)
- ⑥ Education and training
- ⑦ Logistical support cooperation (need for an ACSA agreement)
- ⑧ Permission to use/access military installations
- ⑨ Cooperation between defense industries