

NEW PLAN FOR A “FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC”:

POLICY SPEECH BY PM KISHIDA

AN EXCERPT

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During his March visit to India, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio delivered a policy speech entitled “The Future of the Indo-Pacific—Japan’s New Plan for a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’—‘Together with India, as an Indispensable Partner’” at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).

1. Introduction

As you all know, a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” or FOIP, was proposed by my esteemed friend, former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo.

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.

2. Why FOIP now?

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 will become an increasingly important issue.

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.

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

Prime Minister Kishida delivering his policy speech at the ICWA. He proposed four new pillars of cooperation for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP): principles for peace and rules for prosperity; addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way; multi-layered connectivity; and the extension of efforts for security and safe use of the “sea” to the “air.”

considerable discrepancies in the attitudes across various countries toward Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

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 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.

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 “law”; and a state in which the principles of the UN Charter 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.”

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. 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.

“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.

Prime Minister Kishida visited Delhi, India in March and held a Japan-India summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As G7 chair, Kishida expressed his hope to work closely with India, which holds the G20 presidency this year.



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

The first pillar is “principles for peace and rules for prosperity,” which is the backbone of FOIP. 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.

On this occasion, I reiterate that Japan strongly condemns Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and will never recognize it. 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. 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.

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.

Rulemaking to prevent opaque and unfair development finance is necessary for nations to grow autonomously and sustainably. Japan will promote the implementation of the G20 Principles for “Quality Infrastructure Investment.” Japan will collaborate closely with India and contribute





An approach focusing on "people" that connects "youth," "knowledge and experience," "laboratories and the field," and "entrepreneurs and investors." For example, the Japan ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund, funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency etc., will invest in microfinance institutions that promote the empowerment of women in ASEAN countries. The photo shows one of nine women who have undertaken a joint-liability group loan together in New Delhi, India. ROBI BOSCH FOR BLUEORCHARD

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

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.

(3) Multi-layered Connectivity

The third pillar is a "multi-layered connectivity," which is a core element of the cooperation for FOIP. In order to achieve growth, countries need to stay connected in various aspects. 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.

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. 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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

The fourth pillar is "extending efforts for security and

Addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way is a new focus of cooperation for FOIP. In regard to climate change, Japan will promote the "Asian Zero Emission Community" concept, take advantage of Official Development Assistance, and provide support, including for the introduction of renewable energy in island countries thereby contributing to the realization of the global Green Transformation (GX). JICA



safe use of the sea to the air." FOIP has consistently focused on the "sea." As we have seen with the aggression against Ukraine, major geopolitical shifts are taking place at the heart of the vast Eurasian Continent. 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.

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.

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.

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. A new framework for grant aid to armed forces and other related organizations of like-minded 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.

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.

4. Methods to Promote Cooperation for FOIP

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 startups by motivated young people in each country.

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.

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

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.

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.

Thank you very much for your kind attention. ●