



JAPAN AND SOUTH AFRICA'S SHARED INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

***JAPAN'S FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC
STRATEGY IN THE CONTEXT OF IORA:
DEFENDING THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER***

YUICHI HOSOYA

**PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
KEIO UNIVERSITY, TOKYO**

**The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)
7 March 2019**

1. THE DECLINE OF THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER

(1) The Absence of American Leadership

- For the first time after the end of the second world war, Japan and South Africa are facing **a serious crisis in the liberal international order.**
- **Authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia** have been expanding their influences in regions such as Central Asia, the Middle East Africa and East Asia. More people present their uncertainty and doubt on the future of liberal democracy.
- **Japan has been expanding its influence globally** for defending the rules-based international order. At present, Japan's strategy is focusing on the rim of the Indian Ocean which is becoming the next centre of economic growth after the Asia-Pacific region. Japan's foreign policy is aiming at integrating the Indian Ocean rim region to the Asia-Pacific region. This is the essence of **Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.**

“Today, **the liberal international order is in crisis**. For the first time since the 1930s, the United States has elected a president who is actively hostile to liberal internationalism. Trade, alliances, international law, multilateralism, environment, torture and human rights – on all these issues, President Trump has made statements that, if acted upon, would effectively **bring to an end America’s role as leader of the liberal world order**”

(John Ikenberry, “The End of Liberal International Order?”, *International Affairs*, 94/1, 2017, p.7).

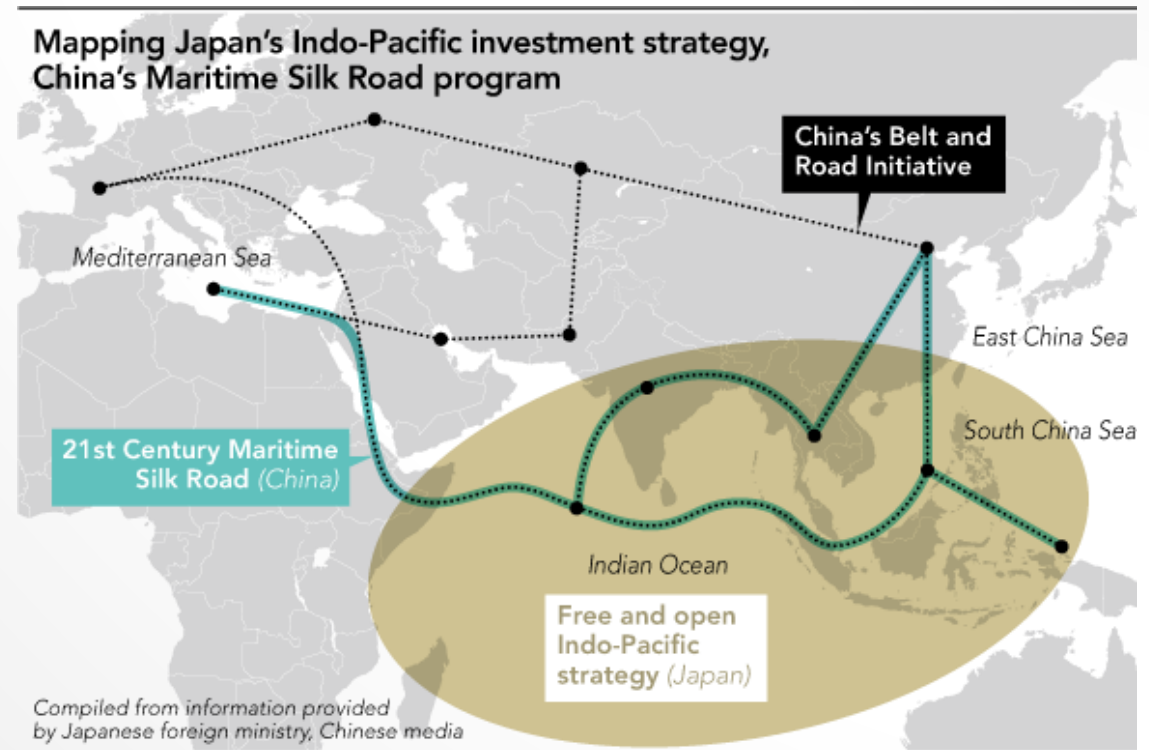


(2) Japan is moving to the Indian Ocean Rim

- **China** is expanding its influence in the Indian Ocean rim region through **the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** by controlling ports and important infrastructures. While China's commitment to this region has brought economic interests, there emerges a larger concern over China's intention and predominance in the region.
- **Japan** is now moving its pivot to the Indian Ocean to enhance openness and transparency there. Japan's strategy is to create **the rules-based order particularly in the Indo-Pacific region**. Therefore, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy in Kenya at **the 6th TICAD Summit meeting** in August 2017.
- As both the US and the EU also increase their engagements in this region, the Indo Ocean rim is becoming the new centre of global politics. **South Africa** has a role to play as a leading power in the region.

2. JAPAN'S “FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY”

- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been initiating to present a new vision of regional order by launching a new “**free and open Indo-Pacific strategy**”.



*“Japan has been promoting the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.” **The Indo-Pacific Ocean links rapidly growing Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and North America. It is indispensable for Japan, US, and like-minded countries such as India and Australia to maintain and develop a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law in this region. ... Japan also intends to pursue economic prosperity through the reinforcement of connectivity** by improving infrastructures, such as sea ports and railways and roads.”*

(Speech by Foreign Minister Taro Kono at Columbia University “Diplomacy in Creeping Crises”, September 21, 2017).



A New Foreign Policy Strategy: "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy"

"Diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map"

"Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation

Based on the accomplishments of the Abe Administration, Japan intends to further improve and expand these diplomatic concepts

"Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy"

A key for stability and prosperity of the international community is dynamism that is created by combining

"Two Continents" : Asia that is rapidly growing and Africa that possess huge potential of growth; and

"Two Oceans" : Free and open Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean

⇒ broaden the horizon of Japanese foreign policy by envisioning the above as an overarching, comprehensive concept

Africa

- Full of potential
- population around 1.1 billion (15% of global population)
→ around 2.5 billion in 2050
- account for 30,000,000 km² (22% of global area)
- high economic growth rate (4.2% on average (2002-2013))
- rich in natural resources and promising markets
- ⇒ progressing as a "developing continent" whereas still challenged by poverties and terrorism etc.

Japan will provide nation-building support in the area of development as well as politics and governance, in a way that respects the ownership of African countries, and not by forcing on or intervening in them

Improve "connectivity" between Asia and Africa through free and open Indo-Pacific, and promote stability and prosperity of the region as a whole



※ To make the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" into shape, Japan will strengthen strategic collaboration with India, which has a historical relationship with East Africa, as well as the US and Australia.

Asia

- Increase of awareness of confidence, responsibility and leadership, as well as democracy, rule of law and market economy taking root in South East and South Asian countries
- ⇒ Currently expanding its success to Africa and bring out the potential of Africa as a "global main player" through a free and open Indo-Pacific

Japan will expand infrastructure development, trade and investment, and enhance business environment and human development from East Asia as a starting-point, to the Middle East and Africa

(2) The Three Pillars of Japan's FOIP

- ① Freedom of navigation and the rule of law;
- ② Connectivity;
- ③ Capacity building.

*“The Indo-Pacific region, which extends from the Asia-Pacific through the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and Africa, is **the core of global development** where **more than half of the global population resides**. I am sure that maintaining and strengthening **a free and open maritime order of the Indo-Pacific region** as a “global commons” will bring stability and prosperity equally for all countries in this region.*

(Foreign Minister Taro Kono, Foreign Policy Speech to the 196th Session of the Diet, January 22, 2018).

(3) American Response to Japan's Initiative

- The U.S. government under President Trump echoes Japan's initiative to create "free and open Indo-Pacific region" in its National Security Strategy. American strategy is more military oriented and **more confrontational to the rise of China.**

*"A geopolitical competition between **free** and **repressive visions of world order** is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region. The region, which stretches from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States, represents the most populous and economically dynamic part of the world. The U.S. interest in a free and open Indo-Pacific extends back to the earliest days of our republic. ... **We welcome and support the strong leadership role of our critical ally, Japan. We will seek to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India.**"*

(The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States, Washington, D.C., December , 2017).

3. THE CO-EXISTENCE OF TWO STRATEGIES

(1) PM Abe's Support for China's BRI

*“**Reversing his position**, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has indicated that **Japan is ready to cooperate with China’s “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) initiative** for cross-continental infrastructure development under certain conditions. He is also now willing to consider **Japan joining the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** — of which Japan, along with the United States, sat out when it was set up in 2015 — once doubts about its governance and operation are cleared.”*

*(“The Editorial: Japan and ‘One Belt, One Road’”, *The Japan Times*, June 24, 2017)*

(2) Japan-China Summit Meeting, July 2017

-At the Japan-China Summit meeting on July 8, 2017, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Xi Jinping shared the following view;

*“Japan and China will discuss **how to contribute** to the stability and prosperity of the region and the world, **including the One Belt, One Road initiative.**”*

-Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Li Keqiang reaffirmed the importance of coordinate Japan's and China's strategy for the regional stability and prosperity at the summit meeting on November 13, 2017;

*“Both sides shared the view that they will discuss approaches for Japan and China to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region and the world, **including “the Belt and Road Initiatives.”**”*

(3) The Partial Merger of Japan's FOIP and China's BRI

*“Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to promote cooperation in China’s cross-border infrastructure development project, in a shift in diplomatic policy to check Beijing’s growing territorial assertiveness in the region, government sources said Sunday. The Japanese government has briefed China on **Abe’s current goal of promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region** and the policy’s positive effects on **Beijing’s so-called One Belt, One Road cross-border infrastructure initiative**, according to the sources.*

*Since **the two countries’ policies have overlapping areas**, Japan is considering supporting joint infrastructure development and business promotion by companies of the two nations, the sources said.”*

(The Japan Times, December 17, 2017).