

Pakistan Japan Relations and Prospects for Peace and Development in South Asia

Salma Malik

Introduction

In case of South Asia, regionalism in the true sense is yet to gain full momentum. Despite the realization about rising security concerns, albeit of non-traditional nature, the region remains heavily entrapped by long standing traditional problems. Dubbed as a potential nuclear flashpoint, the reasons for enmity often outweigh the incentives for amity in the region. Host to one fourth of the world's population, an alarming number of which lives below the poverty line, the region has not only inherited quite a few traditional problems, such as a flawed legacy of partition; disputed territories, contested borders, sharing of river waters as well as nuclear arms racing which stand in the way of regional cooperation and make the security dilemma more seamless and intractable. The relations between individual member states of South Asia and extra regional actors have traditionally been very good, but major international actors, have often played an important role as conflict mediators as well as developmental partners for countries in the region.

In this capacity, Japan as a champion of global disarmament, pacifism and economic development has, through its positive diplomacy and soft power potential mainly through economic interaction, enjoyed immense good will and strong relations with individual SAARC members including Pakistan. The post WW-II environment, provided both Japan, emerging from a very traumatic post war experience as well as the newly independent South Asian countries, such as India, Pakistan and others to enter into a positive relationship which, as mentioned above, had chiefly been economic in nature. It has been commonly believed that Pakistan Japan economic relations have mostly been one sided, with Japan investing and aiding Pakistan a lot more than gaining in return, however, contrary to this popular belief, both countries have, enjoyed a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship in the last few decades.

Tokyo's Role in Promoting Regionalism

South Asia as a region, and SAARC particularly as an organization, has much to learn from the South East Asian model, the creation of ASEAN and then ARF and the maturity with which the member states have handled their bilateral issues and made South East Asia a model of success despite the divergence, diversity as well as pressing contentious issues. Japan, among the South East Asian nations, stands out as a strong economic power, especially which has long recovered from the ravages of a post WW-II situation. Home to an ancient and proud civilization, Japan worked very hard to build its image as a peaceful, prosperous and globally appreciated power.

Japan was one of the *core nations* of non-Communist Asia. By early 1970s, in overall national strength Japan had become the leading power in Asia.¹ Though far behind China and India in size of population and territory, Japan's gross national product was then almost a half of the whole of Asia including India but excluding China. Following the end of World War II, Japan was occupied for seven years by the US and was too busy with the task of nation-building to become involved in the affairs of other nations. It then took more than a decade for Asians to change their image of *militaristic* Japan and for Japan to find a role in Asia befitting its capacity.

Even in 1952 the perception of the Southeast Asian countries towards even the transformed *New Japan* was hostile. Their sense of fear and suspicion were reflected in a negative attitude toward the *San Francisco Peace Treaty*,² which terminated the US occupation of Japan, and demanded war reparations from the latter. However, the Japanese reparations, which were paid mostly in capital goods, ended up bringing Japan closer to the Southeast Asian countries, as the effect of Japanese reparation payments had been as positive as the direct aid to the economy of a recipient nation. On complimentary basis, it also induced Japan's export expansion.

Subsequently, Japanese premiers and foreign ministers made extensive "good-will trips" to the neighboring Southeast Asian, and other regional countries. These diplomatic overtures were accompanied by aid projects of a technical, economic, educational, and cultural nature and Japan's purchase of the region's products became a major factor leading to better relations with other nations. All

such activities eventually laid the foundation for acceptance of Japanese cooperation, if not leadership. Nearly all parts of Asia that were resentful of Japan and had held claims against her in early post-war years increasingly modified their attitude in the direction of interaction and cooperation. Japan very prudently realized that its long run interests, i.e., peace and prosperity, were tied in good measure to the economic and social development and political stability of East and Southeast Asia. It therefore worked hard to achieve this end goal. By the end of 1960s, Japan started to pursue a *proactive positive diplomacy* which brought it to the center stage of various regional and international configurations.

Japan's role and support in promoting concepts of mutual co-operation based on Asian solidarity resulted in the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the *Asian Development Bank*³ and the overall technical advancement of the region are but a few examples of its stewardship. Japan has occupied a unique position in the world economy since the end of Second Great War. Its higher level of industrial technology has allowed Japan to export value added goods to the less-developed countries. Its relatively skilled labor force on the other hand has been a source of comparative advantage in the export of labor-intensive industrial goods to the developed countries. This has enabled Japan to expand its exports at a high rate; although declining in recent years, with the emergence of other industrial centers such as South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand etc. thus making the region a major manufacturing base for Japanese industry and, hence, a critical element in the maintenance of Japan's regional cooperative outlook.

Though still overwhelmingly economic, the nature of Japan's involvement in South East Asian affairs has grown more multifaceted in recent decades. On the economic front Japan has strengthened its role as the leading provider of aid and private capital flows to the region. Politically Japan has significantly increased its profile and taken a direct, albeit secondary role, in promoting greater regional co-operation and resolving regional disputes. Although Japan's strong thrust into offshore manufacturing has increasingly been matched by similar efforts on the part of the Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), including ASEAN member Singapore, the NICs cannot match the synergistic impact of Japan's investment, aid, and trade roles, or its international political influence. These developments reflect both Japan's reemergence as a major power and changes in the political economy of the Asia-Pacific region. While Japan is still not a "normal"

power, to use the parlance of those in Japan who favour a growing military role, it is well positioned for more influential interaction with Southeast Asia. Moreover, the absence of a military role does not preclude the pursuit of strategic objectives, especially when these have an inherent economic content. If war is the continuation of politics by other means, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, the judicious application of economic power under favorable conditions can also promote national self-interest and security.

Japan - Pakistan Bilateral Relations

Pakistani, Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was the first Asian head of state to visit Japan in April 1957. Japanese Prime Minister, Nibusake Kishi also visited various Asian capitals, the first in the post second world war period by a Japanese head of government. In this context, Pakistan was the first country to open the doors of diplomatic outreach for Japan. As a gesture of appreciation and acknowledgment for this initiative, Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan was accorded unprecedented personal reception by the Japanese emperor Hirohito on his visit to Japan in December 1960. "Japanese Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda's 'heart-to-heart' diplomacy was also Pakistan-centered in the sense that Pakistan occupied a prominent place in Japan's aid diplomacy in the 1960s at a time when Japan had just commenced its development assistance programmes."⁴

Tokyo, opened its first liaison office in Karachi, then the capital of Pakistan, in December 1950. On April 28, 1952, when the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect, Japan and Pakistan established diplomatic relations, and since then both countries have enjoyed friendly relations. The initial engagement Japan made with Pakistan and India was under the Colombo Plan, when in 1952 Japan gave small grants to both the neighbors. By the year 1970, it had become one of the largest donor-cum-trader operating in the subcontinent. Japanese leadership moved with prudence and maturity attained through years of experience and engaged primarily in development activities, and intentionally did not involve themselves in the politics affecting Pakistan. This consolidated Japan's image and role as an emerging great power which was more interested in socio-economic development and positive interaction with other states than promoting its own political or strategic agenda. An approach which was in total contrast to the USA's conditional as well as seasonal engagements. By the 1970s, Pakistan had

experienced, through various episodes, America's uni-dimensional containment policy and clear disregard for Pakistan's security concerns.

Since then Japan occupies a central position for Pakistan with regards to latter's look east policy. Sharing a substantial volume of trade partnership with countries of North East Asia, including China and South Korea, Pakistan also has had long standing strategic engagement with these extended neighbors. Among them China has been highly instrumental in Pakistan's defence buildup and Japan as well as South Korea have been its important sources of foreign economic assistance. Formal diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Japan date back to 1952. Since the establishment of their diplomatic relations, the two Asian countries have cooperated, and worked at various tracks to strengthen and enhance these terms, whether these be political, economic, trade and commerce. They have also had cultural exchanges, and cooperation in the field of education as well as on strategic issues. During the last six decades, the two countries have exchanged a number of delegations, including leaders and ministerial level visits. The most recent of these being by Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari's visit to Japan in February 2011. Japan as a country and nation enjoys enormous goodwill and respect in Pakistan. Whenever Pakistan has been faced with an economic crisis or natural disaster, Japan has openly and unconditionally helped Pakistan. Tokyo's categorical and unequivocal stance on global peace, human security and disarmament is not only appreciated but also followed by Islamabad. At the same time, Japan is very much cognizant of Pakistan's role, sacrifices and limitations in fighting terrorism, a role that it considers a cornerstone of the 21st century security architecture.

Japan considers Pakistan a pivotal state in its South Asia Policy, that connects politically, economically, and culturally to other countries in South Asia, Middle East, and Central Asia. The government of Japan considers it important that democracy take roots in Pakistan, in order to make it a moderate and modern Islamic country which in turn will enhance regional peace and stability. Furthermore, it recognizes Pakistan's vast potential for economic development. Through consolidating bilateral economic ties it aims to strengthen cooperative economic relations, which will be mutually beneficial.

Pakistan Japan Economic Relations

As mentioned earlier Pakistan and Japan have been important economic partners. During the decade of 1960s Pakistan received around 18 percent of accumulated Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), offered to Asian countries, and by the mid-1960s, Pakistan's share of Japanese ODA reached as high as 80 percent. According to Ahmed Rasheed Malik, the "ODA was spent on 18 mega projects for the development of natural resources and setting up of industrial plants. Pakistan was not only in favourable position to pay back debts to Japan, but had made the most efficient use of foreign aid."⁵ Besides, Japan signed its first post-war trade agreement with Pakistan in May 1948. Moreover, Japan and Pakistan, given their individual security compulsions were part of US alliance system during the initial decades of the Cold War, and which further enhanced their bilateral trade and commercial relations. The confidence of Japanese leadership in Pakistan's ability to become a major emerging Asian power was evident from its setting up a branch of Bank of Japan in Karachi in 1953 after New York, London, and Calcutta instead of any other European or Asian country.

As for as bilateral trade is concerned Pakistan and Japan have different natural endowments. After the Second World War more than 50% of Japan's industry was in ruins. Its cotton spinning and textile industries were very important factors in the revival and reconstruction of Japan's national economy. During the 1950s, Pakistan extended a helping hand to Japan, by exporting jute and raw cotton, indispensable raw materials for the spinning industry and by importing cotton textiles from Japan under the open General License System. Pakistan also supplied rice and food grain to Japan in the initial decades, as the latter was deficient in that sector. Pakistan's supply of raw cotton and jute to Japan helped in the revival of Japan's only operating industry at that time that which became a locomotive for Japanese economic revival.

Japan has, over the decades, remained one of the largest trading partners of Pakistan with over US\$ 1.5 billion annual trade at present. However, two factors had a significant impact on the bilateral trade between the two countries. Firstly an alarming decline in Pakistan's exports to Japan, and secondly the economic sanctions levied by Japan as a reaction to Islamabad's nuclear testing in May 1998. By mid-2000s, with international community easing up on Pakistan's nuclear stance, Japan and Pakistan also restored the dwindled trade relations and

a substantial hike in the exports from Japan to Pakistan was recorded. Japan is mainly a provider of automotives, spare parts, industrial machinery and chemicals. More so in the initial decades but it still continues to provide technical training and vocational opportunities in its steel mills, fertilizer plants, rayon, ceramic and paper industries and as it had helped develop the agricultural sector in the then East and West Pakistan in the initial years of Pakistan's establishment.

Other area in which Tokyo has extended support to Pakistan are initiatives taken by Japan to facilitate international assistance to Pakistan as a member of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FODP) group, which was established in September 2008. This manifests Japan's commitment to the promotion and strengthening of democratic culture in Pakistan. Japan's emergency humanitarian assistance and response to firstly the 2005 earthquake and then the 2010 disastrous floods has been much appreciated and lauded in Pakistan. This assistance included emergency grant, emergency relief goods, as well as air lift activities by Japan Self-Defense Forces helicopters, and medical support activities. Working on this premise, Japan set three priority areas for its *Country Assistance Program to Pakistan*⁶ which was formulated in February 2005. These are,

- ensuring human security and human development
- development of a sound market economy and lastly,
- achievement of balanced regional socio-economic development.

As noted earlier Pakistan's decision to seek the nuclear route, in response to India's second round of nuclear tests in the summer of 1998, conflicted with Japan's staunch anti-nuclear stance, and as part of the international non-proliferation sanctions regime, there was a substantial decline in Pakistan Japan trade engagement in the late 1990s. Tokyo slipped from the fourth to the tenth largest investment partner of Pakistan with 68.2 million US dollars by 2008-09. Japan suspended all loans to Pakistan which totaled \$231 million in 1997-98, besides grant in aid of about \$55 million.⁷ In the decade of 1990s, Pakistan's exports to Japan constituted 6.8% of its total exports, which by the next decade had declined to 1.1% owing to economic recession. Whereas, Pakistan's imports from Japan were 15.9% of its total imports in the 1990s, which declined to 6.0% in the following decade.⁸ The major Japanese investment to Pakistan remains in the automobile sector which has also significantly shrunk due to several reasons, such as economic recession, rapidly increased international commodity prices,

the world financial crisis and the devastating earthquake in Japan. Besides the automobile industry, the other major import has been that of electronic goods.

Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan dates back to 1954, when Tokyo for the first time, extended technical training to Pakistan in line with the Colombo Plan, and the first financial loan was provided in 1961. However, the ODA loans and grant aid was suspended in 1998. After Pakistan joined the global coalition against terrorism, in the wake of September 11 incident the Japanese grants and ODA loans were once again restored. In April 2009, Tokyo co-hosted the Pakistan Donors Conference with the World Bank to support Pakistan addressing the counter-terrorism and economic reforms and pronounced assistance up to one billion US dollars in two years, premised on the continued steady implementation of the IMF program. In continuation of this, in November 2009, Tokyo announced "Japan's new assistance package to Afghanistan and Pakistan" which was supplemented by emergency and reconstruction assistance in the wake of 2010 floods. The flood relief ODA loan of 19.7 billion yen brought the total amount of Japanese ODA loans to Pakistan, since 1961, to about 971 billion yen. The Assistance package stipulated:

- Japan's continued and swift implementation of the pledge, in April 2009, of assistance up to one billion US dollars in the next two years.
 - Assistance for economic growth (energy sector such as electricity, infrastructure development) and for macroeconomic reform (syndicated loan with the World Bank).
 - Improvement of people's livelihood by providing assistance in poverty reduction (health, basic education, rural development).
 - Improve people's livelihood in regions such as KPK (former NWFP) including Malakand Division, and FATA.
 - Assistance for IDPs and Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.⁹
- In order to fulfill its commitment to consolidate democracy in Pakistan and support the latter in its war against insurgency and terror on its western borders, Japan carried out various measures for ensuring stabilization in the border region with Afghanistan. Japan has provided assistance for the general election in Pakistan in February 2008 to ensure free, fair and transparent elections leading to the consolidation of democracy.
- Firstly, in the shape of program to support general elections and Provincial legislature's elections (approximately \$3.5 million) May 2007.

- Secondly, it granted approximately \$3.5 million, through UNDP, for purchasing half-transparent ballot boxes. And last but not the least,
- By dispatching a fifteen member Election Monitoring Group (February 2008), consisting of the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and private experts and others to monitor the general elections in Pakistan.

Secondly, in order to enhance human security and development, Japan has continuously provided assistance in the fields of education and health, for poverty reduction and regional stabilization in the border region including Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This assistance comprises of:

- Project for the Eradication of Poliomyelitis through the UNICEF (Grant Aid: approximately \$ 400 million)
- Sector Program Grant Aid for FATA residents, (approximately \$ 7 million)
- Support for Maternal and Child Health Nutrition in FATA and Balochistan (WFP) (\$ 0.3 million)
- Scholarship program preferential for FATA (approximately \$ 0.7 million)
- Project for construction and renewal of schools in FATA (approximately \$ 2.7 million)
- Besides, Japan has also garnered support for development and uplift of Pakistan in general and FATA in specific at multilateral fora such as the G-8, where as the chair Japan campaigned with other members to support and strengthen economic development in the areas concerned.¹⁰

Another very pressing and important area, which can have a significant impact on future Pak-Japan relations, is the energy sector. Japanese energy related manufacturers can help in overcoming the present critical energy crisis in Pakistan. Japanese investment in IPPs in 1990s was exceptional. Besides, hydro, thermal and coal sectors, other unconventional areas like wind, solar and biogas sectors having shorter gestation periods maybe explored. Other unexplored sectors in mineral rich Pakistan are mining (oil and gas, coal, copper, graphite, marble, gems and stones), ship-building, mining and housing sectors in which Japan has an edge must be tapped and exploited with Japanese assistance. Similarly, infrastructure development like roads and railways are important areas in which we can improve with Japanese assistance.¹¹

Besides, emphasis on non – traditional items for trade is essential to expand exports of value added items like cotton textiles, ladies designer fashion dresses,

gems, stones, jewelry, mineral salt, hygienic sea food, fruits like apples, watermelons, peaches, mangoes, and citrus fruits having a round the year market. However, this requires transfer of technology from Japan in plucking, preservation and packing of fruits and vegetables to meet the required Japanese standards. Moreover, all these ventures have a greater margin of profit for Pakistani exporters to Japan than to any other country.

There are several areas in which Pakistan and Japan can cooperate and strengthen economic, trade and social relations. Pakistan is interested to do so and it has very soft policy towards Japan. Pakistan has opened up almost all sectors of its economy for international investment, including agriculture and services. Pakistan has cheap labour, energy and soft investment policies. Japan has surplus capital, modern technology and good management skills. Combining the above can lead to produce competitive goods. Both the countries can benefit from such cooperation.¹²

It will however, not happen automatically. Public sectors of both the countries will have to play a proactive role by providing the necessary guide-lines to the private sectors of both the countries and help them come together. Close and constant contact with Japanese businessmen and investors is essential. Barriers of language and distances need to be removed through consistent liaison and regular communications through frequent bilateral visits of businessmen, holding of trade fairs and exhibitions in both the countries. Initiative to translate into Japanese language all the information about investment and business opportunities, regular visits to chambers of commerce in Japan and holding of seminars for dissemination of information can pay huge dividends. Ironically, despite a long standing and historically deep relationship Pakistan and Japan enjoy at official level, and a relatively high level of public interest in Japanese culture, there are very few Pakistani and Japanese nationals residing in each other's country. Pakistani nationals living in Japan are only a few thousand. According to a late 1990s figure this number was around 7000. The corresponding number for Japanese nationals in Pakistan however was under 1000.¹³

The future course of Pakistan's trade with Japan would largely depend on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). Pakistan has already signed PTA with China, USA, SAARC, and the ECO (Economic Cooperation

Organization) to reduce tariff by 10 percent in five years. Negotiations are also underway with several East Asian countries. With PTA signing Pakistan can get a better market access in Japan. So can Japan in Pakistan. A study group is working on FTA possibilities between the two countries. Pakistan has also proposed to set up a Joint Study Group to work for bilateral market access. Pakistan is already pursuing this strategy with USA, China, and Singapore. If Japan gives a positive nod to this proposal, this would also help promote Pakistan's trade with Japan. With the full revival of bilateral economic ties, it seemed that the ground has been leveled for the signing of FTA and PTA between the two countries.¹⁴

Diplomatic Revival and Cultural Engagement

Pakistan's nuclear testing of May 28, 1998, had cast a major dent in the otherwise smooth and healthy six decades old bilateral relations. The August 2000 visit by Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to Pakistan was a significant step as it paved the way for opening a dialogue on vital issues suspended for over two years. Premier Mori's visit was reciprocated by General Pervez Musharraf, who visited Tokyo in March 2002.¹⁵

Another watershed event was the 9/11 incident which again reconfigured the entire terms of global engagements, affecting bilateral relations, just as much. However, it proved to be more an opportunity, as the two countries got closer on a common platform to act as close US allies to fight "global war against terrorism," much reminiscent of the Alliance politics which were the hallmark of Cold War era. Under this backdrop, prime minister level meetings were held between the two countries, in which issues such as trade, investment, economic assistance, and nuclear proliferation dominated the agenda of the talks. Proposed UN reforms and question of Japan's permanent membership on the UNSC, and Pakistan-India composite dialogue were also part of mutual consultations between the Pakistani and Japanese leaders.

Regardless of the type of regime Pakistan has been supportive of and sensitive to Japan's bid for UN Security Council permanent chair and its agenda for UN reforms. Besides, Islamabad has always respected Japan's stance on global and comprehensive disarmament issues. Despite the sanctions, Japan imposed on Pakistan post nuclear test, Pakistan was alive to Japan's sensitivities but had to take the nuclear route in order to safeguard its security interests.

In the rapidly changing security landscape both countries need to engage with and learn from each other's experiences. The unfortunate nuclear plant leakage resulting from the devastating earthquake of 2011 provides a sobering lesson for nuclear energy generation. Despite many safety measures, the impact of radiological leakage and the ensuing health and public safety hazard should be closely studied by countries such as ours with aging nuclear power plants. Pakistan can also cooperate on security and governance sector reforms and development. Of late, Japan sent its special defence forces (SDF), to the Indian Ocean, to join the US led task force, a coalition of the willing countries for jointly countering and fighting against global terrorism. This was a critical decision by Japan as it had to go against its constitutional stance on not bearing weapons and pursuing a pacifist approach in global affairs.¹⁶ Countries across the world had many speculations regarding Japan's change of position and what impact it could have on future security scenario. However for Pakistan, having neutral countries such as Japan, as part of the task force was greatly welcomed, as it provided space for rational and balanced approach when looking at such critical issues.

Both the countries are proud of their ancient civilizational roots and cultural bearings. Cultural exchange and cooperation is an important cornerstone of any bilateral relations. Pakistan and Japan inked their initial cultural agreement in 1957, which is a basic instrument to broaden and deepen cultural relationship. As a result exchanges in culture, sports, youth and education have steadily increased through demonstrations; public performances, exhibitions and human exchanges etc. The *Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)*, the *Japan Foundation* as well as the diplomatic and consular offices have been proactive in promoting and bringing to Pakistan the true spirit of Japanese culture. Ikebana, food festivals, calendar exhibitions, arts and craft exhibitions, children speech contests, youth exchange, Haiku Mushaira as well as film festivals are very popular amongst Pakistanis. The Gandhara civilization and Buddhist relics are sites of pilgrimage for Japanese nationals and Pakistan must develop and preserve these places. The Japanese government has been a keen partner in preservation of these world heritage sites.

Over the years many institutions in Pakistan have started to teach Japanese language of which the National University of Modern Languages based in Islamabad remains the most noteworthy. Besides, in recent years, the number of

Pakistani students seeking higher education in Japan has increased substantially and both governments promote educational exchange programs for their respective citizens. At citizens level the six decade long relations have resulted in the creation of Pakistan Japan Cultural Associations that have enormously helped in promoting and building an understanding of familiarizing about each others' culture and societies. The devastation and enormous loss of precious human lives in Japan due to the 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami was deeply felt by Pakistanis and the grief shared by all. Pakistan's government and people joined hands in providing relief assistance to Japan.

Investment in the future leaders is not only at the bilateral level, but also at the regional and multilateral level. The Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth, JENESYS program¹⁷ announced by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 was meant to,

- Promote and establish research activities and acquaint graduate students with Japan's advanced technology and establish a network with Japanese human resource. This program also intends to encourage personnel exchanges for science and technology among the SAARC member countries.
- To promote mutual friendship and understanding among the young students of SAARC region the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan invites the high school students of the SAARC region to visit Japan. By providing such a forum for the exchange of opinions to the members of this diverse group the Program not only aims to overcome the barriers of language and culture but also promote international mutual understanding.

Conclusion

This paper enlists the wide gamut of cooperation, mainly at the bilateral level, between Japan and Pakistan. It provides us with an immense hope and optimism that through goodwill and mutual recognition of needs and the will to progress countries of the regions can beat all odds and move collectively on a path to progress. Japan is and will remain extremely critical for Pakistan's Look East policy, which requires major diplomatic, political, economic and commercial investments. With pressing energy needs which need to be addressed at most immediate basis Pakistan needs to engage with countries such as Japan which have proved reliable allies in the times of need.

Whether individually or collectively, in order to survive and progress, each member state of SAARC, needs to overcome barriers of parochial national interests as well as individualism. South Asia has not only lagged behind but is now faced with pressing and existential security threats which are more often non-traditional in manifestation, and have a much damaging and lasting effect than any traditional problem. The entire region and Pakistan specifically can learn enormously from Japan in adopting best practices and pursuing global end goal for disarmament both in the conventional as well as strategic realms; beside disaster management, risk reduction, security and justice sector, governance reforms and also the best and most sustainable lesson of turning regional discord into a positive synergy through positive proactive diplomacy, trade, commerce and policy of neutrality and amity than hegemony and domination.

*Salma Malik is Assistant Professor
Department of Defence and Strategic Studies
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.*

Endnotes

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