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[Home](#) > India-Japan Vietnam Strategic Trilateral- An Asian Security Imperative

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By Dr Subhash Kapila

India-Japan-Vietnam strategic trilateral emerges in 2014 as an indigenous Asian security imperative against the contextual background of United States and Russia despite their Strategic Pivots to Asia getting distracted by global and regional events.

United States sustained focus on its Strategic Pivot to Asia Pacific is seemingly becoming diluted by domestic political constraints and revised foreign policy outlooks. US Congressional imposition of budgetary cuts is ending in reduced force deployments on the ground. With change of US Secretary of State American focus is shifting to the Middle East. US hedging strategies and risk aversion in its China policies are confusing Asian powers perspectives on US real intentions.

Russia is being distracted from its declared Strategic Pivot to Asia Pacific by the United States embarking to destabilise Russia's Western peripheries as it recently got manifested in an American inspired regime change in Ukraine through a civilian coup. The aim of the United States is to keep Russia's strategic focus away from the Asia Pacific.

In such a contextual strategic backdrop Asian security focus has to perforce look inwards to develop an indigenous Asian security trilateral to cater for Asian security and stability and the management of Asian conflicts flash-points.

Ideally Asian security demands an Asian Strategic Quadrilateral comprising India, Japan, Vietnam and China. But then the problem is that China in terms of Asian security and stability is a major part of the problem rather than being a part of the solution. Asian security and stability today stands endangered by China-initiated conflictual flash-points.

The imperative that therefore emerges is an Asian Strategic Trilateral comprising India, Japan and Vietnam. Common strategic concerns and strategic convergences amongst India, Japan and Vietnam have resulted in the forging of bilateral Strategic Partnerships amongst these three nations. China is the only Asian power to view the emergence of such a Strategic Triangle with misgivings and read it as a China-centric hostile move.

Notably, neither United States nor Russia as global powers are likely to view such a strategic development with any degree of concern. India, Japan and Vietnam have a record of being stable and benign powers with no record of instigating conflicts against their neighbours.

India, Japan and Vietnam are strategically pivotal nations and powerful ones at that, relatively. What requires to be done in this direction by these three nations is to synergise their respective bilateral Strategic Partnerships into a Strategic Trilateral.

As stressed by me in an earlier Paper, the aim of such a Strategic Trilateral is not to form a China-containment military bloc. The common effort required from all these three nations is to create formal mechanisms to coordinate their diplomatic efforts and initiatives to ensure a unified approach to meet any challenges to Asia Pacific security from any quarter. It would also entail intelligence sharing and assisting each other in capacity building of their respective maritime security postures. They should also work together to sensitise the global community for all countries to respect and honour international conventions especially in the maritime domains.

Such a Strategic Trilateral would not be directed against undermining of the centrality of ASEAN but complimenting it and therefore should not create any alarms in ASEAN as a regional grouping.

It does need to be pointed out that ASEAN unity in recently years is being divided by China for its narrow strategic ends and the vulnerability of smaller ASEAN country reduces the efficacy of ASEAN to deal with conflicts such as South China Sea conflict escalation by China against its ASEAN neighbours.

In terms of political acceptability of the concept of an India-Japan-Vietnam Strategic Triangle one can assess that Japan and Vietnam would be inclined to work towards implementation of such a concept.

India if reluctant has to convince itself that if it has worked towards forging substantive Strategic Partnerships with both Vietnam and Japan and there should not be any misgivings in forging a Strategic Trilateral India has already set a precedent in participating in the US-Japan-India Trilateral and further in a US-Japan-Australia-India Quadrilateral.

Finally, the time has come and the moment has arrived when the idea of such a Strategic Trilateral of India-Japan-Vietnam is vigorously explored and forged in the interests of Asian security and stability.

Tags:

[india](#) [1]

[japan](#) [2]

[Vietnam](#) [3]

[strategic trilateral](#) [4]

Category:

[Papers](#) [5]

Countries:

[East Asia](#) [6]

[SEAsia](#) [7]

[India](#) [8]

Topics:

[Strategic Affairs & Security](#) [9]

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[6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/east-asia>

[7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/se-asia>

[8] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/india>

[9] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/strategic-affairs-and-security>