

## Focus: India as a Rising Superpower and the ‘Global South’ (Summary)

### Essay: Rising India: Past, Present, and Future Prospects

**Takenori Horimoto** (Visiting Professor, Gifu Women’s University)

India’s progress is remarkable. After gaining independence from Britain in 1947, India embarked on a grand experiment in democratically-based economic development. For a long time it remained little more than a major power in South Asia, but it has gradually developed since around the 1990s and appears to be on its way to becoming a world power in the 21st century. This change may be the result of a shift in ideology from its initial ambition of achieving freedom and equality simultaneously to a focus on the first of these. India is on the path to becoming an economic superpower, and the policy being pursued since 2014 by the Bharatiya Janata Party, which took over power from the Indian National Congress, is to make India a Hindu nation domestically and a superpower diplomatically. General elections are scheduled to be held in April to June this year, and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is expected to win. If this happens, India’s policy of making itself a major power will be further accelerated. Developments in India have major implications for Japan, which will need to continue to monitor India’s progress closely.

### 1 Globalization and India as the “Most Advanced Democracy”

**Osamu Yoshida** (Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University)

While India, “the world’s largest democracy,” has made institutional progress in establishing seats reserved for women in the lower house of the federal parliament and in state legislatures, it is also suffering from serious democratic deterioration concerning the rights of religious minorities and minority opinions. While deterioration is a phenomenon that can be observed even in developed countries as economic globalization paradoxically calls for strengthening competitiveness on a national basis, the case of India, the country most advanced in the “use of democratic institutions” by various forces, can be seen as indicative of the future of democratic institutions worldwide. The change from inclusive consensus building during the Jawaharlal Nehru era to the development of caste-based state parties as well as the advance of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which places “Indianness” at the core of its nationalism, are symbolic of this change. The half-plus-one requirement for acquiring political power and its use to legally suppress minorities, if stemming from a scarcity of resources to appease them, are suggestive of phenomena that emerge after democracy has been thoroughly exhausted.

### 2 Indian Diplomacy at a Crossroads:

**An Evaluation of the Last Decade under the Modi Administration and the Challenges Ahead**

**Toru Ito** (Professor, National Defense Academy of Japan)

Looking at diplomacy under the Modi administration since 2014, a major change in the process and style of policy making and a bold approach to the West stand out, but the emphasis on strategic autonomy as a pillar of Indian diplomacy has not changed. India has abandoned its former non-alignment stance, and in its place adopted omnidirectional multi-alignment.

Amid China's expanding influence, however, India today finds itself in a difficult geopolitical situation in which it cannot take its own superiority for granted even in its immediate neighborhood, and in which the ideological differences between India and its extended neighbors are shrinking. Surrounded on all sides by potential foes, India is re-evaluating the strategic significance of its relationship with Russia while at the same time taking steps to pursue cooperation with the West, including the Quad, in the Indo-Pacific region.

Growing nationalism within the country has nonetheless tended to hinder pragmatist diplomacy aimed at realizing India's national interests. Moreover, there is growing concern in the West about India's position in the current international order. In light of developments in China and Russia, the West thus has no choice but to maintain ties with India.

### **3 India-China Relations Today: From Cooperation to Competition?**

**Marie Izuyama** (Senior Research Fellow, National Institute for Defense Studies)

The ambivalent nature of cooperation and competition between India and China has been debated among scholars and experts. Since the military clashes in the Galwan Valley in June 2020, however, India's response toward China, at least in the security field, has become even "firmer". This paper focuses on the changes in India's security policy since Galwan, particularly its signaling and its approaches to economic security.

India had been trying to separate border issues from great power politics (US-China competition) and had continued to send the message that security cooperation with Japan, the US, and Australia did not mean containment of China. Since the Galwan crisis, it appears to show less concern for Chinese sensitivity that had been restraining Indian cooperation with the US and its allies. It has also put forth the vision of a "self-reliant India," aiming to reduce economic dependence on China and to substitute China in certain global supply chains. The shift of Quad agenda toward economic security is consistent with India's interests.

### **4 The Indian Economy and Economic Policy under Narendra Modi Administration**

**Takahiro Sato** (Professor, Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration, Kobe University)

Formed in May 2014, the Narendra Modi administration solved stagflation, the biggest economic problem the Indian economy faced at the time, in just two short years. However, it decisively implemented policies that cannot be understood in terms of economic rationality, such as suddenly abolishing high-value banknotes in November 2016 and imposing the world's strictest lockdown from the end of March 2020, and since 2015 it has adopted protectionist trade policies that support uncompetitive domestic industries. As a result, India was overtaken by Bangladesh in 2018 in per capita GDP, and the Modi administration over the past decade has failed to realize economic performance commensurate with the country's true potential.

### **5 The Global South in Contemporary Japan-India Relations**

**Kazutoshi Tamari** (Professor, School of Policy Studies, Chukyo University)

In December 2022, the Indian government began to make use of the concept of the Global South, and the Japanese government took the lead among major countries in expressing its commitment to cooperation. At the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023, India succeeded to reach consensus on the Leaders' Declaration despite previous concerns, leveraging the relationship among the Global South. It is expected that India will continue utilizing the Global South now that it has lowered the priority it gives to the BRICS, which had been at the core of its diplomatic strategy at the global

level. Relations between Japan and India, which have traditionally taken divergent positions on the international order as a whole, are now open to possible cooperation on the Global South. However, Japan-India ties are centered on security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region against a backdrop of confrontation with China, so the Global South's impact is limited. The Global South serves as a diplomatic tool for India, which essentially regards itself as a new world power on the rise. For its part, therefore, Japan should focus on the realities of India and Japan-India relations rather than the Global South's perspective.

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