

JAPAN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS IN BANGLADESH

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Introduction

After the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union, the resources of Western Europe and the U.S.A are likely to be divested to that area. Third world countries in Asia and Africa will increasingly come to rely on Japan as their hope. How Japan shapes its economic policies will possibly determine the future of these countries. But to say that Japan today is being considered as the principal source of economic assistance in Asia and Africa is to state only a part of the truth.

Japan is a one of the richest and industrially developed countries of the world. On the contrary, Bangladesh is a developing country with backward economy. Since independence, Bangladesh has been struggling hard to overcome her crisis of development. She has been dependant on the industrially developed countries for aid and assistance to meet her challenging socio-economic problems. Of the industrially developed countries, Japan has become the major source of foreign aid for Bangladesh. Relations between the two countries one the richest and the other the poorest in Asia, have gone from strength to strength ever since Japan was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh on, 10th February 1972, after its emergence as a sovereign independent country. Though Japan is a developed and Bangladesh is a developing country, Japan has some political and economic goals in Bangladesh. In this article would like to discuss the Japanese political and economic goals in Bangladesh and also discuss how Japan achieves her political and economic goals in Bangladesh.

Japan's Political goals in Bangladesh

Japan has some political goals in Bangladesh. These political goals are:

First of all Japan would like to be a permanent member of the United Nations security council. So, Japan seek Bangladesh's support for the draft resolution on the United Nations security council reforms. Japan's Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hatsuhsa Takashima at briefing in Tokyo on July 8 said, Koizumi will seek Bangladesh's support for draft resolution on the UN Security Council Reforms and look in to the possibility of Bangladesh co-sponsoring of this resolution.¹ Bangladesh reaffirmed its support to Japan for becoming a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) through the proposed expansion of the UN police body, now the talk of the world. "We reiterated Bangladesh's support we will not co-sponsor", Bangladesh Foreign secretary Hemayet Uddin told reporters after the official talks between Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.² Mr. Hemayet Uddin also said, "Japan requested to vote for the draft resolution, but we said we will look in to it".³ UNSC reforms that would be mooted in the UN General Assembly sitting in September - 2005.

Second of all, Japan would like to see peace and stability in South Asia. During the last three decades of Japan's vital political interest was to establish peace and stability in south Asia. Since 1945, Japan was tied politically and strategically to the Western Block and has been a close ally of the U.S.A. During the middle 1970's the United States withdrew militarily from the mainland South East Asia. So she is no longer in hegemonic role, and as the Sino - Soviet competition for influence intensified, Japan was called upon to contribute to the stability of the region.⁴

Besides, Bangladesh is a major source of essential raw materials for Japan, and an important market for Japanese manufactured goods. Bangladesh is also an attractive place for substantial Japanese investment. Moreover, in addition, the water ways of Southeast Asia are increasingly vital for Japan's

international transport system,. About 60 percent of Japan's oil imports and 40 percent of its foreign trade are transported via the Straits of Malacca, and the Lombok Straits.⁵

After the independence of Bangladesh, Japan and Bangladesh agreed to maintain peace and promotion of prosperity in the world, particularly in Asia. During the visit of the first prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Japan in 1973, signed an agreement with his counterpart Mr. Kakue Tanaka. The two prime ministers realized the importance of the maintenance of peace and promotion of prosperity in the world, particularly in Asia. Both the prime ministers hoped that in the interest of the establishment of durable peace in the area, the other pending issues would be resolved soon through negotiation among the countries concerned on the basis of sovereign states.⁶ During President Ziaur Rahman's visit to Japan in 1978, President Ziaur Rahman said, "I had discussed with the Japanese Prime Minister about international issues and had similar views on South East Asia, Sub-continent, Middle-East and North-South dialogue, and both the countries had agreed to work together in the next U. N. O. General Assembly session on the question of disarmament."⁷ Japan's interest in security role in South Asia was expressed in a statement made by the Japanese Foreign Minister Tadamichi Kuranari in Dhaka in 1987, "Japan expressed its intention to contribute to the reduction of tensions and peaceful settlement of conflicts, by promoting dialogue".⁸ Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, the Prime Minister of Japan told at Dhaka, "I would like to pronounce clearly Japan's intent to continue its vigorous support for political stability and economic development of the South-Asian Countries as well as the rest of the world by engaging in dialogue and co-operation."⁹ Besides, Japan is considered to be committed to strengthening its assistance to those areas that are important to the maintenance of peace and stability of the world.¹⁰

Third of all, Japan would like to develop its international leadership, since the mid 1980s. Japan has sought leadership through growing contributions to North-South relations and international peace and security. In developing international

relations and international peace and security. In developing international peace and security. In developing international leadership, Japan cultivates two types of roles:

First, Japan emphasizes economic policy co-ordination with the United States and Europe through G-7 mechanisms, development co-operation through the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In Asia, Japan is trying to bury the past and develop a strong set of bilateral relations.

Second, Japan is working to strengthen regional economic co-operation for, and in the area of regional peace and security. It has pledged to support the cost of peace-keeping operations and future reconstruction efforts in Cambodia, as well as committing peace-keeping personnel in 1992 to assist the U.N.O. peace process. Japan's Asia-oriented Official Development Assistance (ODA) supports this diplomacy.¹¹

Fourth of all, Japan would like to assume leadership in Asia. Such a perception and self-image are based on the following consideration:

First, the basis for such a claim is based on Japan's economic predominance in Asia.

Second, the basis for Japanese leadership rests on its efforts to resolve regional conflicts in Asia. It provided funds and from 1992, peace-keeping personnel to support UNO, peace plan for Cambodia.

Third, the basis for assuming leadership can be attributed to Japan's role as political mediator in Asia.¹²

Fifth of all, Japan would like to establish and patronize democracy in Asia. During the mass upheaval in Bangladesh against the autocratic regime of Mr. Hossain Mohammad Ershad, Japan indicated the possibility of withholding aid to Bangladesh, if political repression continued. During the 1991 general election in Bangladesh a multiparty team of the Japanese Diet visited our

country, Aid programs did develop within the political frame work during the cold war. With strong American urging, Aid flowed only to noncommunist nations in the East and South East Asia. Japan did not provide aid to any socialist country until 1973.¹³

Sixth of all , During the cold war, Japan played an expensive political and military role to contain communism in the emerging Japanese Vision of the future. Japan would like to fashion a foreign policy that exhibits greater activism on a traders diplomacy was sustainable into the mid 1970' s largely because the United States had willingness to play an extensive political and military role to contain communism in the region, hereby leaving little room for Japanese action.¹⁴

How Japan achieves her Political goals in Bangladesh?

Japan is an important development partner of Bangladesh. She is not only a development partner of Bangladesh but also she has some political interest in Bangladesh. Japan achieves her political goals in Bangladesh by following ways:

First of all, Japan achieves her political goal in Bangladesh by using the tool of foreign aid. Aid is a useful convenient and successful diplomatic tool from the Japanese perspective. Specially, it is a way for non-military power to contribute to international society.¹⁵ Japan is considered to be committed to strengthen its assistance to “those areas that are important to the maintenance of peace and stability of the world.”¹⁶

Second of all, Japan achieves her political goals in Bangladesh by promoting political dialogue. Japanese Foreign Minister Kuraonari's statement said, “Needless to say”, one must take into account the situation is South Asia when considering peace and stability of the whole Asia. From this point of view, Japan wishes to further strengthen its efforts for promoting political dialogue in the countries of South Asia. Elaborating the main objective of Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu's visit to Bangladesh, the Japanese official said, “first, it would be an important occasion for him to engage in a political dialogue with president Ershad.” “We feel it is very

important to have the political and economic dialogue at highest level.¹⁷

Final of all, visits of the several top level leaders were exchanged between the countries. Japan and Bangladesh exchanged their views on a broad range of subjects of common interests covering international and regional affairs, and various matters of bilateral interests.

Japan's Economic Goals in Bangladesh

Japan is one of the important sources of foreign aid in Bangladesh and she is the important development partner of the country. By the early seventies, Japan's post war diplomacy toward South East Asia as elsewhere had been labeled a “traders diplomacy.” It was, in the to words of one prominent Japanese scholar, “a diplomacy of the economy by the economy and for the economy.”¹⁸ Japan has some economic goals in Bangladesh. These economic goals are:

First of all, Japan is interested to secure supply of essential raw materials from Bangladesh. Being one if the most highly-industrialized countries and consequently, of the largest exporters of industrial goods, Japan needs to import huge quantities of raw materials from Bangladesh.

Second of all , Japan is interested to have continued access to markets in Bangladesh for its finished goods. In order to preserve its prosperity and employment levels, Japan must export a tremendous amount of industrial goods of very high quality with modest price.

Third of all, Japan would like to protect and promote the present international trade regime that includes, by and large, the preservation of the present monetary order, institution of aid and free trade. The Japanese can be expected to lend a helping hand in preserving the present world economic order and if requires more aid, the Japanese will come up with it. Their political democracy and peace orientation powerfully reinforces this priority. But the obverse is also true. If the world economic order fails to sustain free trade, both raw materials and industrial goods with a reasonable

degree of expansion every year the whole apple cart will be upset. Kuranari's said, "I also believe important to make active contributions, co-operating with other peace loving nations in Asia, to the realization of tensions and peaceful settlement of conflicts, by promoting dialogue. Needless to say, one must take into account the situation in South Asia when considering the peace and stability of the whole Asia. From this point of view, Japan wishes to further strengthen its efforts for promoting political dialogue with countries in South Asia.¹⁹

Fourth of all, Bangladesh is an important place of Japanese product. The cost of production is less than that of any other countries of the world. "Ample scope and opportunities also exist in Bangladesh for marketing their (Japan's) products." The South Asian free trade arrangement (SAFTA) will have ample scope to provide the willing Japanese entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh.

How Japan achieves her economic goals in Bangladesh?

Though we have political, economic and cultural relations with Japan, but our main relation with Japan is economic. Japan achieved her economic goals in Bangladesh by providing aid, developing trade and by making infrastructural investment. The following discussion will tell us to how Japan did achieve her economic goals in Bangladesh.

First of all, aid is a vital tool of achieving Japanese economic goals in Bangladesh. Some features of Japan's aid program which derive from this Asia - centric approach are that, it is project based (particularly for high profile projects). With a predominance of bilateral loans, and that there is an emphasis on infrastructure developments. It focuses on low-income countries (and not the best developed countries for example) as recipients, gives close attention to technical skills human resource development, and is aligned with the concept of "heart to heart" democracy and co-operation rather than "charity".

Second of all, trade is another important way of achieving economic interest of Japan from Bangladesh. In many respects, international trade is the life blood of Japanese economy. The trend

of the three decades and a half of Japan Bangladesh trade balance can be seen as negative balance of trade.²⁰

Last of all, Japan fulfilled her economic interest in Bangladesh by making investments. As a developing country, Bangladesh welcomes flow of foreign investment in the country for an introduction of new technology to help improve the job market and the economic growth. Japan is one of the largest investors in Bangladesh. In 1961, Japan's first investment was in Bangladesh, a joint-venture textile mills.²¹ Till now more than 14 Japanese companies inside EPZ's and 40 outside EPZ's are operating in Bangladesh.²² According to board of investment sources up to June 2004 Japanese companies registered with BIO invest in Bangladesh 1,188. 647 Million US dollar.²³ Japanese investment in Bangladesh ranks 4th among the foreign investing countries after the U.S.A., U. K. and Malaysia. There are presently about 120 projects with 100 percent Japanese investment or joint venture between Bangladesh.²⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Japan is one of the richest countries in the world and important development partner of Bangladesh. She is the significant source of foreign aid to Bangladesh and a member of G-8 countries. Japan has some important political and economic goals in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is an important source of raw materials and trade partner of Japan and significant place of investment. Japan and Bangladesh has been maintaining cordial relationships in an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation during the last three decades and a half. This relationship is being strengthened and reinforced through bilateral relations between- the two countries.

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