

# Fundamentals and Prospects of Strategic Partnership Development of Central Asia and Japan

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**Abstract:** The importance and historical relevance of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Japan's diplomatic ties are examined in this research essay. It also demonstrates the significant impact of ratifying the strategic cooperation agreement between the two nations. The unique characteristics of the Japanese political system are examined, including the composition, organization, and primary duties of the parliament, the process by which parliamentary elections are held, the position and significance of the emperor's institution within the political system, and the function of the cabinet of ministers. The article examines the foundations of the principle of the Cabinet of Ministers, its function in the process of reforming the social structure, the characteristics of the political system, specifically the creation of a multi-party system, the reasons behind the country's Liberal Democratic Party's success as a dominant party, the role of the LDP in the modernization of the Japanese political system, the function of the Cabinet of Ministers in the social structure, the government's economic development plan, the details of its practical implementation, and the efforts of the parliament and cabinet to amend the nation's constitution. At the same time, Japan's foreign policy in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, and bilateral and multilateral diplomacy with the countries of the region were analysed. The stages of development of Japan's cooperation and investment policy with Central Asian countries were studied comparatively. The prospects of Japan's bilateral relations with Uzbekistan are forecasted and development trends are analysed.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is known that since the beginning of 1992, diplomatic relations have been established between Uzbekistan and Japan based on the principles of mutually beneficial and equally friendly cooperation.

On July 29, 2002, a Joint Declaration on Friendship, Strategic Partnership, and Cooperation was signed by Japan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Republic of Uzbekistan's Cabinet of Ministers' August 8, 2002, resolution "On measures to further develop cooperation with Japan" was crucial to the successful growth of the two nations' strategic alliance.


It should be noted that on the basis of these political initiatives and mutual agreements, ample opportunities have been created for the consistent development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Japan. As a result, strong ties have been established

between the two countries, based on the highest political and institutional foundations of modern international relations.

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, "Today, Japan is one of our most important and priority partners in modernizing the economy of Uzbekistan and socio-economic development of our country."

We are grateful for the support provided by our Japanese partners, and are interested in further expanding investment, financial and technical cooperation, developing direct contacts, and fruitful cooperation between the business circles of Uzbekistan and Japan".

It should be recalled that President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated in his speech to the Uzbek Parliament on January 24, 2020, that Japan, among other nations, is a significant player in Uzbekistan's foreign policy goals.

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As stated in the Address of the President, “We will continue the large-scale work begun to intensify the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, the path of open, pragmatic and well-thought-out foreign policy that meets our national interests. We will further strengthen our partnership, long-term and multifaceted partnership with all countries”.

These conceptual ideas put forward by the head of our state, in turn, serve as a source of strengthening the base of new potential opportunities for the development of strategic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan.

It is known that in the development of relations between countries in the political and other spheres, the commonalities in their political system, in particular the closeness of interests in the strategy of political development, will play an important role. Features of the national strategic directions and goals of the political systems of Uzbekistan and Japan, such as based on the principles of democratic development, peace, cooperation, stability, and innovative development, serve as the basis for bilateral relations.

Improving the political system of our society on the basis of the most modern and effective democratic criteria and the implementation of strategic goals for the accelerated development of our country on its basis have been identified today as the leading criteria for the development of our country.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This material was prepared with the assistance of scientific studies, expert comments, international agreements, regulatory frameworks, and legislation. Specially, the Japanese Constitution and laws, the address of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Action Strategy for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and government decisions were significant sources.

The following scientific articles published in scientific journals were also used: Kalmichek P., Pavlenko P. “The political system of modern Japan” (Aspect Press, 2017. p.7.); Inoguti T. “Japan’s political science development” (Polis, 2019, №4. P.60.); Molodyakova E. “Japan: total conservative victory” (Problems of the Far East, 2018.. №1. P.182.); Varyushin P., Tixotsnaya I. “Political Modernization in Japan - Impacts of European and American Practices”(Asia and Africa today, 2016. №7.); Dadabaev, T. Japan’s Search for Its Central Asian Policy: Between Idealism and Pragmatism (Asian Survey, Vol. 53, p. 508.); Len Ch. Central

Asian Diplomacy: Motivations, Implications and Prospects for the Region (The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly.vol.3, № 3, p. 130.); Fumitaka Furuoka. A History of Japan’s Foreign Aid Policy: From Physical Capital to Human Capital. (School of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 2007. p. 21.); Nazarmuhamedov B. “Japan’s ODA Policy Toward Central Asia and the Caucasus. An Analysis of Japanese Assistance to Economic Development in Kyrgyzstan and Armenia” (Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies, Vol. 10, March 2018, p. 183.); Information on the topic in the media was also used.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A synthesis of peer-reviewed literature and recent reports and documents pertaining to our issue inform our qualitative, systematic, comparative, sociological, institutional, and case study approach, which forms the basis of our core methodology. By identifying the relationships between nations, the system approach assisted in determining the part that each political system plays in the international political process. It was feasible to compare different nations' foreign policy approaches thanks to the comparative technique. The sociological approach was required to determine how foreign policy agendas and national economies interacted with other facets of society, including national and international policies, geopolitical features, the overall economy, etc. The institutional method was applied in analyzing the institutional and legal framework of relations between the two countries. The historical method helped to study the evolution of the development of the Japanese political system, the stages of the process of political modernization and to identify the main stages of the development of diplomacy and investment policy of Japan, and to make predictions about the future course of the country. The case study technique allowed researchers to examine specific instances of both transient and permanent situations and circumstances that impacted the development of mechanisms for investment and diplomacy, as well as the degree of dependency among different players in this process.

## 4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The article shows that the foreign policy of countries is inextricably linked with their political system in the

example of Japan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study examines the dynamics of Japan's political modernization process and the significance of Japan's experience for Uzbekistan. Analysis is done on Japan's investment strategy, economic and energy diplomacy, and Central Asian and Uzbek foreign policy strategies. Consequently, forecasts are made on the future of bilateral ties.

## 5 DISCUSSION

At present, the Japanese government is in the process of further improving the country's political system and expanding and modernizing its democratic foundations.

It should be highlighted that the political structure of Japan is distinct in a number of aspects. "Japanese are tolerant of political processes based on the cultural and geographical features of their country". This aspect is important in the political development of the Japanese state and the improvement of the political system of society. The Constitution, adopted on November 3, 1946, served as an important legal basis for the formation of the modern Japanese political system. It is known that this document came into force on May 3, 1947, and is still in force today.

The Constitution of Japan has the status of the Basic Law of the country, according to which the Japanese people are designated as the leading entity exercising state sovereignty. According to the Japanese Constitution, democratic principles of political power apply. Based on the advanced ideas of constitutional law, "in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the process of democratic renewal in Japanese society has reached its peak. During this period, the third wave of democracy will intensify".

Reforms in the Japanese political system are playing an important role in achieving such results.

The role of parliament in the Japanese political system is immense. In fact, Japan has the oldest tradition of parliamentarians among Asian countries. Of course, the political processes that took place after the Second World War, and the measures taken to implement democratic reforms had a strong impact on the formation of the Japanese political system, including the parliament, which is an important part of it.

According to Article 41 of the Japanese Constitution, "Parliament is the supreme and sole legislative body of state power and consists of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the House of Advisers.

The House of Representatives is the lower house of the Japanese parliament and is elected for 4 years. The House of Advisers is the upper house and is elected for 6 years. At present, every three years, half of the deputies of the upper house are re-elected in accordance with Article 46 of the Constitution.

The House of Representatives consists of 480 deputies and is responsible for reviewing and approving key bills.

The Constitution of Japan provides for a very wide range of powers of the Parliament. In addition to its main functions in the field of legislation, finance, and oversight, the parliament has the authority to ratify international treaties, initiate amendments to the country's constitution, establish an impeachment court, and participate in the formation of certain executive bodies.

At the same time, it should be noted that the appointment of the Prime Minister of the country, as well as the adoption of laws and the state budget, are the most important tasks of parliament.

The role of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers in the Japanese political system is unique. The Cabinet of Ministers is the leading body exercising executive power. That is why the cabinet is often referred to as the Japanese government. The level of participation of the executive branch in the legislative process is much higher. Ninety percent of the bills passed by the Japanese parliament are bills submitted by the government.

This means that in Japan, the executive branch serves as the leading subject of the political process, although it operates within the framework of the democratic division of power into sectors.

The role of political parties in the exercise of political power in Japan and in the Japanese political system in general is enormous. It is political parties that are an important political institution that develops strategies for changes in Japanese political life and ideas of political development.

The party, which has a majority in parliament, forms the central and local authorities. At the same time, it will have the right to lead the Cabinet of Ministers.

In the process of reforming Japan's political system, the country's top political leaders have sought to create a unique model of governance in recent years, as well as to adopt progressive aspects of the European and American political systems. At the same time, the Japanese political system does not deny the national traditions and values of the Japanese people.

The role of the country's constitution in the Japanese political system is incomparable. At the

same time, the Constitution, which came into force in 1947, is being seriously amended to make changes and additions to it, based on the needs of the country's political development.

“In 2019, the Japanese government has begun to take concrete steps to review the constitution. In particular, the task of amending the electoral norms, expanding the powers of the authorities, reinterpreting Article 9, which sets the norms for the organization and use of the Japanese armed forces, is becoming more urgent”.

At the same time, the issues of modernization of relations between political parties in Japanese society, and the introduction of effective institutional mechanisms that ensure the consensus of political parties on leading issues of national importance are also on the agenda.

Indeed, the political parties operating in Japan are ideologically very close to each other. Therefore, experts conclude, that Japan can achieve a two-party system of government based on a relentless pursuit of an effective political system.

At the same time, the foundations of "consensual" democracy in Japanese society are being strengthened on the basis of modern principles of coalition government. Today, the Japanese government is in the process of increasing the efficiency of the country's political institutions and reforming the country's political system in line with modern needs.

This means that today the Japanese political system is going through a period of significant improvement. The modernization of the political system, in turn, paves the way for the opening of new sources for political development.

Uzbekistan and other Central Asian nations are significant players in Japanese foreign policy. Furthermore, the area serves as a vital geopolitical "bridge" between the East with the West. Situated between Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, Russia, and China, Central Asia was formerly the route of the Great Silk Road.

For Japan, the strategic and geoeconomic importance of the region is as important as other regions of Asia, including Southeast Asia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs defines Central Asian diplomacy as follows in the 2018 revisions to Japan's Blue Book on Foreign Policy, which is a crucial strategic conceptual document:

"Central Asia is strategically significant to Japan; maintaining regional peace and stability, fostering socioeconomic growth, and fostering investment activities are all crucial facets of Central Asian diplomacy. Japanese diplomacy in Central Asia has set the following priorities:

- Developing stronger bilateral ties;
- Expanding regional cooperation and helping to resolve regional issues through the "Central Asia + Japan" conversation;
- Expanding global collaboration.

A comparison of the Central Asian version of this document in previous years shows the strategic importance of the region, the priorities of Japan's regional diplomacy have gradually developed and significant results have been achieved at various stages. Based on the priorities of Japan's Central Asian diplomacy, the chronology of relations can be divided into the following five periods:

- Diplomatic relations were established between 1992 and 1997 when the first delegations were sent. The initiation of the Japanese government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) program, the support Japan provided for Central Asia's membership in regional development banks, the acceleration of market transition reforms in the region, and the interest of Japanese companies in Central Asia's energy infrastructure projects all contribute to the explanation of this period. Central Asian and other energy resource diversification is emphasized in Japan's 1993 White Paper on Energy Policy.
- 1997–2001: Japan's strategy in Central Asia was formulated with the adoption of papers such as Prime Minister Hashimoto's Eurasian Diplomacy and Prime Minister Obuchi's Silk Road Action Plan. The strategic orientations of collaboration with the Caucasus and Central Asia were outlined explicitly for the first time. June and July of 1997 saw K.S. Obuchi headed a sizable group of intellectual, commercial, and political circles that traveled to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The direction of investment in the energy industry was one of the key subjects of discussion.
- 2001-2009. Japan's policy in Central Asia has changed in the wake of US military action in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The Koizumi-led government's foreign policy vector has focused on peace stability and security in the region. Established in 2004, the CA + J communication format remains the central platform for multilateral cooperation to this day. In 2005-2006, a foreign policy group led by Taro Aso, the foreign minister of the Koizumi and Abe



governments, promoted the concept of “Freedom and Prosperity” calling for the promotion of democratic values in various regions of Eurasia and the Middle East. As per the notion, Japan has conveyed its support for Western nations in bolstering democratic principles around the globe. China's influence in the region has diminished as a result of the shifting power dynamics, and Tokyo has been forced to explore the potential for economic initiatives—mainly related to energy—in the area. Japan has started to give the countries in the area more consideration in its energy policy. Japanese businesses are now actively involved in the region's oil and gas developments.

- 2009-2012. Japan's abandonment of the concept of "freedom and prosperity" has led to some improvement in relations with China. The government, led by Yoshihiko Noda, has given priority to Japan's resource diplomacy in Central Asia. Abroad, uranium mining and nuclear cooperation have developed rapidly. However, since the Fukushima events in March 2011, the country has undergone significant changes in domestic and foreign energy policy.
- The contemporary era spanning from 2012 to the present can be described by Japan's resource diplomacy and increased pragmatism. During this time, Japan's approach to forging commercial relationships and stepping up significant energy and investment projects in Central Asia diverged.

The policy of the Japanese government for Central Asia is being implemented conceptually. Japan is now a significant worldwide ally for the nations in the area that are pursuing diverse foreign policies. Japan and Central Asian nations have agreements on friendship, collaboration, and strategic partnership. One of the favorable elements fostering the fruitful growth of political ties between Japan and Central Asian nations is the lack of an unsolved international issue or conflict.

There are two primary means by which Japan has bolstered its influence in Central Asia. Grants, technology collaboration, low-interest and interest-free loans, and other forms of financial aid were used to carry out the first directive. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) program of Japan has made a substantial contribution to the development of the social sector, democracy, and the

transition to a market economy. It has also laid the groundwork for sustained economic growth. Under the second strategy, Japanese companies were encouraged to actively support regional economic interests. Tokyo has assured the export of these energy supplies to Japan in this way by working to support the development of energy-related projects in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, which contain uranium, gas, and oil.

Japan proposed a new Charter on the Basic Principles of Official Assistance for Development to the world following the conclusion of the Cold War.

These principles include: - The growth of the defense industry in the host nations should be supervised; - The principles of democracy and market economy should be developed;

- The use of military assistance is prohibited;
- Growth and environmental preservation are connected.

In general, Japan's foreign policy in Central Asia has served not only as a key tool to ensure regional development but also to establish bilateral relations and support Japan's foreign policy goals in the countries of the region.

Currently, modernizing regional infrastructure and promoting Japanese infrastructure exports with an emphasis on human resource development are the two most significant aspects of Japan's diplomacy in Central Asia. The other is economic and resource diplomacy.

It should be noted that the long history of cultural ties between our peoples has had a great positive impact on the development of friendly and cordial relations between Uzbekistan and Japan during the years of independence. Today, due to the consistent democratic reforms implemented by both countries and the commonalities in their enormous results, the positive prospects of modern cooperation are showing.

Interparliamentary ties are actively developing through holding forums with the participation of the parliamentary friendship leagues "Japan Parliamentary League for Friendship with Uzbekistan" and "Democratic Party of Japan - Uzbekistan". Regular political meetings between the foreign ministries of the two nations have taken place since 2002. Japan and Uzbekistan work together to resolve a range of international issues and share similar perspectives on a wide range of global political concerns. Japan's appointment as a permanent member of the UN Security Council has the backing of Uzbekistan.

Today, Japan's relations with Uzbekistan have reached the level of strategic partnership. Japan

recognizes Uzbekistan as a regional state influencing the situation in Central Asia. In relations between Tashkent and Tokyo, special attention is paid to cooperation in the "Japan + Central Asia" format. Japan supports Uzbekistan's regional policy aimed at creating a reliable and close neighborly environment in Central Asia.

The Uzbek-Japanese and Japanese-Uzbek committees on economic cooperation have a significant impact on the growth of trade and economic relations.

Between 1991 and 2007, Japan proposed the following projects.

- The Official Development Assistance Program (ODA), among other forms of financial and non-financial assistance, was made possible for the Central Asian countries in 1993 by the Initiative for the Inclusion of Central Asian Countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;
- 1997 - Eurasian diplomacy, which envisaged the intensification of economic and political cooperation between Japan, Russia, and Central Asia. Three main principles: mutual benefit, trust, and long-term perspective;
- 1998 - Program of Action on "Silk Road Diplomacy" aimed at supporting democratic reforms, promoting economic reforms, reconstruction of transport infrastructure, and exploration of natural resources;
- 2004 - Central Asia plus Japan Initiative - regular meetings at the level of heads of ministries and departments to promote cooperation and regional interaction;
- 2006 - "Transformation of Central Asia into the corridor of peace and stability" - an approach to Central Asia taking into account the long-term perspective, supporting open regional cooperation, and searching for a partnership based on common universal values.

Together with ODA support, which is presently valued at almost two billion dollars, these projects have really been quite important for the nations in the area and have played a significant role in the development of Central Asia.

August of 2008. On September 24, 2009, the intergovernmental agreement "On liberalization, mutual protection and promotion of investments" was signed and became operative. Eleven recognized Japanese company representative offices have been created in Uzbekistan, along with ten joint ventures,

one of which has 100% Japanese capital. Japan and Uzbekistan's mutual commercial turnover is increasing at a rapid rate. The total value of bilateral commerce in 2014 was 189.5 million US dollars.

Over \$3.4 billion worth of financial and technical support was provided to Japan in total. Numerous socially significant infrastructure projects in the fields of health, education, energy, transportation, telecommunications, and other sectors have been developed in Uzbekistan as a result of the financial and technical support of Japan.

The primary objective in the advancement of our nation's economic ties is to increase collaboration in the areas of international commerce, investment, and finance. Although direct air travel between our two nations occurs twice a week, the amount of international trade currently does not match the potential that exists. The expansion of collaboration in the tourist and energy sectors is especially crucial.

The area of innovation is now a new focus in the development of Uzbekistan-Japan economic cooperation. With the cooperation of institutions in both countries, a great deal of effort was made to establish the Japanese-Uzbek Youth Innovation Center after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Uzbekistan in 2015. With Japan's cutting-edge technology and creative ideas combined with Uzbekistan's abundance of natural resources, this center has exceptional prospects for the growth of mutually beneficial relations between our two nations.

After the Central Asian and Japanese foreign ministers met in the spring of 2017, a "road map" for regional collaboration in the areas of logistics and transportation was approved.

At the same time, Japan attaches great importance to Uzbekistan in implementing its regional policy in Central Asia. For example, Uzbekistan accounts for 57% of Japan's aid to the region. Japanese companies are closely cooperating in the processing of mineral resources in Uzbekistan. It should be noted that as a result of measures taken by the governments of the two countries in the energy sector, the oil refineries in Bukhara and Fergana have been restored, and the Kokdumalak gas compressor station has been built.

The main areas of our economic cooperation are electricity, oil, gas, and chemicals. The supply of turbines and other energy technologies for Uzbekistan's energy systems is one of the important areas for Japanese business.

During his official visit to Japan, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev also touched upon the issues of energy cooperation between the two countries. Currently, 11 Japanese companies have representative offices in Uzbekistan.

To date, 65 billion yen has been invested in the development of Uzbekistan's energy sector through Japan's Eximbank.

Uzbekistan is an important transit center in the region, and special attention is paid to projects in the field of communications. Toyota Tsusho has signed a \$ 100 million loan agreement with the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity to finance data transmission and Internet speed projects.

*Japanese Assistance to Economic Development in Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies, 10, March, 183.*

## 6 CONCLUSION

After evaluating the outcomes of Japan's economic and diplomatic efforts in Central Asia, we can say that the region is not only strategically significant for Japan but also rich in natural resources and a growing market.

Japan's investment strategy envisages special attention to loans, grants, economic and technological assistance, infrastructure, and energy mining and processing projects in Central Asian countries. Additionally, Japan actively seeks to advance market linkages and democracy in the Central Asian area through its foreign policy.

At the same time, the analysis of the country's regional policy in recent years requires a transition to a more active foreign policy in Central Asia and the widespread use of socioeconomic and financial investment tools.

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