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Blending Japan's Robust Economics with Foreign Policy Pro-activism in the 1960s: The Hayato Ikeda Years

Dr. Monika Chansoria

Hayato Ikeda (池田 勇人) was a Japanese bureaucrat, and later politician, who served as prime minister of Japan from July 1960 to November 1964, and he is remembered for being instrumental to the nation's phenomenal economic growth in the post-war years. Coming from a humble family of sake brewers, Ikeda graduated in law from Kyōto Imperial University in 1925 and held many prominent economic positions in post-war cabinets. He began his career in the Ministry of Finance, where he sought to stabilize an economy wrecked by inflation by means of a strong deflationary policy. He became closely associated with Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, becoming the finance minister in the third Yoshida cabinet. Premier Yoshida had brought Ikeda into his cabinet in 1949 as a trustworthy fellow bureaucrat who possessed outstanding ability in economic policy and statistics. At that stage Ikeda served primarily as a technocratic minister having no prominent political constituency.

Along with future prime minister Eisaku Satō, Ikeda came to be known as a leading exponent of the 'Yoshida School' of conservative politics. Ikeda also served terms as Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and as the Chairman of the LDP's Political Affairs Research Committee.¹ Ikeda's role in the cabinet became politicized, with his taking on the role of a political advisor in planning the surprise Diet and electoral strategies of 1953 and 1954.² A few years later, while delivering a speech at Hibiya Park in January 1957, Ikeda stated that the Japanese economy had recovered from post-war confusion, and was ready to be moderately stimulated without fear of inflation or balance of payments problems.

1 For further details see, Masaya Ito, *Ikeda Hayato, sono sei to shi* [Hayato Ikeda, His Life and Death] (Tokyo: Shiseido, 1966).

2 George W. Waldner, *Japanese Foreign Policy and Economic Growth: Ikeda Hayato's Approach to the Liberalization Issue*, Department of Politics, Princeton University, March 1975, pp. 136-137.

Domestic Economic Objectives and Foreign Policy Strategy: The Causal Connection

Upon the resignation of Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi in July 1960, Ikeda became President of the LDP and began his tenure as Japan's prime minister. With a stated goal of doubling Japan's national income in a period of 10 years, Ikeda launched a high-rate economic growth policy based on expanded public-sector spending, reduced taxes, and efforts to keep both inflation and interest rates on the lower side. Moreover, he made determined efforts to break down trade barriers to Japanese goods in foreign markets. Ikeda announced his famous *Gekkyu Nibai Ron (Income Doubling Plan)* during a speech in his native Hiroshima Prefecture in March 1959. The following month, he laid out the idea in detail in the Kochikai's monthly publication *Shinro*. Ikeda began the article by proclaiming, "... the economic vitality of the Japanese people is overtaking that of the advanced Western nations."³ Ikeda's Income Doubling Plan catered to national development and individual success among the Japanese elite and masses. He articulated that the proper solution to Japan's less-than-optimum economic performance would be a new version of his 'positive economics' policy. Ikeda's revised version of positive economics extended it beyond the sphere of budgetary policies and included in it the broader notion that the ultimate goal of national economic development should not be export surpluses or national power, but rather the greatest good for the greatest number. In concrete terms, Ikeda stated, the goal should be phrased as "Income Doubling Plan".⁴

It needs to be emphasized that Ikeda's

thinking on policy affairs started from his conviction that rapid economic growth was a kind of all-purpose remedy – a policy that would provide solutions to nearly all of Japan's internal and external problems. None of Ikeda's positions on foreign policy can be understood unless one comprehends his desire to achieve a high rate of economic growth.⁵ In Ikeda's mind, domestic economic objectives and general foreign policy strategy were interlinked by a close causal connection. Foreign policy was conceptualized as a means to realize goals for the domestic economy, rather than vice versa. It was this linkage between domestic economic policy and foreign policy that pulled Ikeda into the debate on trade and investment liberalization policy in 1959 and 1960.⁶ Ikeda urged that a new view of Japan's viability as an economic unit serve as the guiding light for the nation's domestic and foreign economic policies, wherein Japan could prosper domestically and participate positively in the creation of an open international economic order.⁷

The outcomes of foreign policy debates in post-war Japan can be explained in terms of the organizational and ideological characteristics of Japan's politics. The approaches contrast in the conceptualization of Japan's economic capabilities. In particular, the *Sanbon bashira* (or "Three Pillars") theory can be considered a cornerstone of Ikeda's vision concerning Japanese diplomatic relations with great powers. According to the *Sanbon bashira* theory, only Japan among Asian countries could serve the cause of the "free world" alongside the US and Western Europe. The basic principle on which this theory was based was that any division among the "Three Pillars" was to be carefully avoided, given the constant Soviet threat that Moscow could take advantage of any rift

3 Ibid., p. 130.

4 Ibid., p. 132.

5 Ibid., p. 182.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 264.

between Western countries and drive a wedge in the Western bloc in order to destabilize it.⁸ Perhaps Tokyo's main concern was linked to the wedge that could be driven between Japan and the North Atlantic axis, with the consequent isolation of the former. Although the theory of the *Sanbon bashira* was definitely based on the contingencies determined by the Cold War, it drew support from Japan's noteworthy economic success of those years. In a way, it provided Japan with a new identity, turning it into an advanced country with a solid international reputation, marching in the steps of the United States and Europe.⁹

Ikeda, Kennedy, and the New Frontier – New Japan Summit

During his four-year tenure as prime minister, Ikeda maintained a comparatively low profile in the realm of foreign affairs, though he did make quite a few high-profile speeches, including at the US Congress in 1961, which consequently set important goals¹⁰ for the US-Japan bilateral relationship providing direction to policymakers. This was a time when, sweeping away 'the tired, old ideas' of the Eisenhower administration, Kennedy announced his administration's 'first step' policies in early 1961 that would eliminate 'Republican protectionism' in order to meet the economic expansionist plans of 'New Japan'.¹¹ Responding to the vision of American

world dominance expressed by Kennedy at his inauguration, the six-month-old government of Hayato Ikeda announced that Japan had a grand vision for the 1960s as well. Ikeda sought full recognition of Japan's potential and real position in the world economy,¹² and stressed a plan to double Japan's national income by 1970 by means of exports to the US.¹³

Ikeda was among the first foreign leaders to visit the new Kennedy White House in early 1961. Even though Ikeda arrived with a complicated agenda stressing foreign trade issues, Kennedy and his New Frontier 'can do' philosophy welcomed the challenge. In fact, Kennedy's welcoming of Ikeda's 1961 economic mission represented a shift in US policy. At that time, the discussions in Washington centered on the Communist threat that was materializing in two different forms: pacific subversive penetration in Indonesia, and "proxy" guerrilla insurgencies in Laos and Vietnam.¹⁴ For Kennedy, the priority was clear: engineer success for Ikeda's cause and thereby strengthen conservative anti-Communist forces in Japan.¹⁵

In the US view, the problems of the Far East, and of Asia generically, were not only linked to the spread of the "Red Threat" but also to the region's economic, and socio-economic conditions and progress – issues

8 Oliviero Frattolillo, *Reassessing Japan's Cold War: Ikeda Hayato's Foreign Politics and Proactivism During the 1960s*, (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 122.

9 Ibid.

10 For more details see, Midori Yoshii, "Reducing the American Burden? U.S. Mediation between South Korea and Japan, 1961–1965," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, no. 20, 2009, pp. 47 – 65.

11 As cited in, "The US-Japan Relationship, January-June 1961," *State Department Briefing Material* to Kennedy, for the visit of Prime Minister Ikeda, US State Department, June 23, 1961, (Boston, MA: JFK Library).

12 Reischauer to Rusk and Rusk to Frederick P. Dutton, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, October 12, 1961, WHCF/Box 141, (Boston, MA: JFK Library).

13 Timothy P. Maga, "The new frontier and the new Japan: Kennedy, Ikeda, and the 'end of US protectionism' 1961–63," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1994, p. 373.

14 Frattolillo, n. 8, p. 40.

15 For further background on the subject of Japanese political factions in the early 1960s, see Robert Scalapino and Junnosuke Masumi, *Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan* (Berkeley, 1962); also see, Nathaniel B. Thayer, *How the Conservatives Rule Japan* (Princeton, 1962).

that would require an enormous effort in international aid programs, even in the absence of a Communist threat. The White House's plan was to be articulated by means of three main points: 1) preserving and protecting individual and collective defense capabilities; 2) providing assistance to countries threatened by Communist forces directly or indirectly; and 3) strengthening development and aid programs in order to improve material standards of living. The last point in particular was to be an "essential ingredient in any effort to resist Communist pressures, whether peaceful or military".¹⁶ In the course of the meeting between Ikeda and Kennedy, Laos emerged as a particularly alarming case. Both the US and Japan hoped that the work of the Geneva Conference would soon lead to the birth of an independent and neutral Laos. To this end, Washington committed to a broad American presence in the country through the establishment of a Commission to monitor its neutrality, a technical and economic aid agency supported by concerned countries, and a military advisory mission to train local armed forces and maintain internal security.¹⁷

The position expressed by Ikeda, however, was unequivocal: Japan's then policy of non-recognition of the People's Republic of China represented a core interest and had to be preserved. Any unilateral action that could jeopardize the balance of power in the region or risk removing Tokyo from the US orbit and the Western bloc was to be avoided. Moreover, as far as Taiwan was concerned, any diplomatic

initiative that could promote its return to Communist China was to be seen as a threat to the peace and prosperity of Japan.¹⁸ Ikeda went to the extent of saying that the main reason for Japan welcoming more imports from America than from any other nation was the need to prove Japan's worthiness as a reliable economic partner.¹⁹ By June 1961, Japan stood second among the trading partners of the United States.²⁰ The June 1961 Kennedy-Ikeda meeting was referred to as the New Frontier/New Japan summit that set the tone and tenor of US-Japanese economic relations for many years to come,²¹ and resulted in both leaders making their 'first steps' in their respective 'new beginnings' policies.

Talking briefly at the US House of Representatives in 1961, Ikeda outlined Japan's plans for economic revival and its commitment to democracy and human rights. What remained notable in Ikeda's speech was a pledge that Japan would "play a more positive and purposeful role in the international community" to contribute to "world peace and human progress." True to his word, Japan became the second largest contributor to the United Nations and a consistent top-five provider of overseas development assistance and co-founded the Asian Development Bank, among other economic and foreign policy contributions.²² Expanding on Ikeda's 1961 pledge, the contemporary US-Japan alliance seeks to cooperate more comprehensively in a manner that adds a substantive security component

16 For further details see, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Français, *Compte rendu de l'entretien entre Monsieur Georges Pompidou et Monsieur Hayato Ikeda*, Tokyo, Avril 7, 1964, Ohira_Ikeda_Pompidou 1964, MAEF, vol. 6, no. 32; also see, Frattolillo, n. 8, p. 40.

17 Ibid., p. 41.

18 Ibid., p. 43.

19 For details see, *Ikeda to Kennedy*, October 25, 1962, and July 31, 1963, POF/Box 120, (Boston, MA: JFK Library).

20 Maga, n. 13, pp. 378-379.

21 Ibid.

22 For details see, James L. Schoff, "The Historic Part of Prime Minister Abe's U.S. Visit," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 21, 2015, available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/21/historic-part-of-prime-minister-abe-s-u.s.-visit-pub-59874>; and for related literature on the late 1950s US-Japan defence ties see, George Packard III, *Protest in Tokyo* (Princeton, 1966).

to its already robust economic and foreign policy coordination.²³ Talks with the US went forward, as in the Joint Trade and Economic Committee established in 1961, to bring about a closer integration of the economic policies of the two countries in the region. In May 1961, an Asian Productivity Organ was set up in Tokyo. Subsequently, in September 1961, Japan became a member of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee.²⁴

Ikeda and Japan's Outward-looking Policy towards Southeast and South Asia

The various stages of Japan's post-war Asian policy characterized during the Kishi period saw Japan as a middle power whose goal was to establish an economic base in Asia. Under Ikeda, Japan began to consider itself, at least in economic terms, as a great power whose goal was to integrate its economy as an equal partner with the advanced industrial economies of the Pacific beyond Asia.²⁵ Nevertheless, Ikeda's Asia diplomacy did not find as much success as perhaps his administration would have hoped for. Although regional trade expansion had occurred, the rate of increase was less than Japan's trade in general.

The rethinking of Japan's position in Asia was stimulated to a large extent by the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC), and the apprehension in Japan that its goods might be at an even greater competitive disadvantage in European markets and markets elsewhere, including underdeveloped Asia. It was against this backdrop that the Ikeda Administration began addressing the root of

Japan's economic problems: the incomplete state of its own development. Consequently, Ikeda put his greatest efforts into his "10-year income-doubling" and trade liberalization plan, by means of which he hoped to restructure the Japanese economy for equal competition with the most advanced economies in the world.²⁶

Given that aid was vital in promoting Japan's export-based growth, its Official Development Assistance (ODA) loans were closely linked to Ikeda's Income Doubling Plan. This plan encouraged exports of Japan's heavy industrial products to Asia, envisaging a 10 percent annual increase in the total volume of Japanese exports and a 13 percent annual increase in the exports of heavy industrial products. The goal of this export-oriented policy was to redirect Japan's industrial structure from light to heavy industry.²⁷ Led primarily by the then Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), ODA became an important tool to assist Japanese heavy industry firms in finding large markets in Asia. As a result of strong governmental support and backing, Japanese aid within and beyond Asia increased rapidly in the 1960s. Japan's bilateral loans grew from US \$48 million in 1960 to US \$191.3 million in 1968. During the same period, Japan's bilateral grants and grant-like flows (including reparations) expanded from US \$67 million to US \$117 million, and multilateral aid increased from US \$30 million to US \$48 million.²⁸

The core of Japanese foreign aid rested on three primary policies: 1) war reparations from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s; 2) aid to promote Prime Minister Ikeda's Income

23 Ibid.

24 James W. Morley, "Japan's Position in Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1963, p. 151; also see, *Visit of Prime Minister Ikeda to Washington, June 20-23, 1961; Japanese Desire for Membership in the OECD*, (Declassified E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4, NLK-92-138, (Boston, MA: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library).

25 Ibid., p. 154.

26 Ibid., p. 153.

27 For more details see, I.M.D. Little and J.M. Clifford, *International Aid*, (Chicago: Aldine, 1966).

28 A. Rix, *Japan's Economic Aid: Policy-making and Politics*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980).

Doubling Plan; and 3) “resource diplomacy” in the 1970s. These policies, including war reparations, were designed to promote Japanese economic development in the post-World War II era. By the 1960s, Japan had achieved post-war recovery and double-digit economic growth rates. Economic assistance to developing countries was by then no longer limited to the reparations programs. In 1958, Japan distributed its first bilateral loan aid as part of the World Bank Consortium for India. Subsequently, Japanese bilateral loans began in other countries, such as South Vietnam and Brazil in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.²⁹

Although becoming an economically advanced country was a post-war achievement, Japan’s ‘new reality’ had yet to be defined and confirmed by the decade of the 1960s. It would therefore perhaps have been premature to expect an outward-looking attitude in international affairs from Japan, which opted for “low-posture diplomacy”. However, once Ikeda became prime minister, Japan began to adopt a slightly “higher posture”.³⁰ The process was certainly easier in places that were not too close to the homeland, since in fairly remote areas there need seldom be any serious contradiction between Japan as “the third pillar of the Free World” and Japan as “the dynamic leader of an economically-awakening Asia”.³¹ As an ally of the United States, and as the most highly-industrialized Asian power, Japan had achieved the potential to exert a considerable degree of influence in the region. During the 1950s, however, it did not adopt a positive, consistent, or particularly outward-looking policy towards Southeast Asia, at least until the beginning of

the 1960s.³²

Japan under Ikeda sought cooperation with free Asia and partnership with the free world. Towards the beginning of his tenure as PM, Ikeda continued to execute a forthcoming approach towards Asia. The Ikeda Government continued the policy of close cooperation with various international efforts in Asia, with Japanese representatives being particularly active in the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East [ECAFE]. Following his November 1961 tour of India, Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand, Ikeda turned focus and worked hard to resolve two outstanding issues that had refused to stay settled: the Thai special yen account, and Burmese reparations.³³ Ikeda also continued the policy of modestly expanding the overseas loan program beyond the requirements of reparations. In November 1960, a year before his South Asia and Southeast Asia tour, Japan extended a credit of \$20 million to Pakistan; in December that year it added \$10 million more to its loans to India and donated 2 million yen for relief to Laos. At home, an Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of 10.4 billion yen was set up in March 1961 to offer long-term financing to development projects which had difficulty securing loans on a commercial basis.³⁴

Following his Asia visit, a semi-governmental Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (*Kaigai gijutsu kyōryoku jigyōdan*) was formed in June 1962 to conduct an expanded program of technical cooperation, formerly entrusted to the Asian Society (*Asia kyōkai*). In particular, the expanding political interactions between India and Japan through the 1960s was highlighted

29 For further details and reading see, T. Yanagihara and A. Emig, “An Overview of Japan’s Foreign Aid,” in S. Islam, ed., *Yen for Development: Japanese foreign aid and the politics of burden sharing*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), pp. 37–69.

30 As cited from, Frattolillo, n. 8, p. 115.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Morley, n. 24, p. 150.

34 Ibid., p. 151.

by the state visit of Premier Ikeda, in addition to the November-December 1960 visit of Japan's Crown Prince and Princess to India and Nepal and the royal couple's visit a year later, in January-February 1962, to Pakistan and Indonesia.³⁵

Premier Ikeda's 1961 State Visit to India

The decade of the 1960s saw a transformation in the way Japan perceived India. The post-war era played out in the shadow of a new kind of imperial development – the Cold War.³⁶ India sought to remain independent and avoided joining either power bloc during the Cold War, favoring neither the US nor the Soviet Union. Against this backdrop, the visit of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda to India and that of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Japan became touchstones highlighting the inherent changes and continuity in the India-Japan relationship during the tumultuous decade of the 1960s in Asia. Significantly, two successive Japanese prime ministers, Nobusuke Kishi and Hayato Ikeda, visited India in 1957 and 1961, each within three months of taking office.

In 1958, the first president of the Republic of India, Rajendra Prasad, visited Japan. Crown Prince Akihito returned the official visit and a mutual climate of amiability was created. Premier Ikeda's visit happened following the historic first-ever visit of Japan's Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko. Notably, former Emperor Akihito was the first Japanese

monarch-in-waiting to visit India in 1960 as Crown Prince, welcomed there by the first ring of independent India's leadership.³⁷ Besides their 1960 visit, Their Imperial Highnesses also stopped over in India twice—in 1962 enroute to Pakistan, and in 1975 enroute to Indonesia. The decade of the 1960s was also significant for Japan in that it was this decade in which Japan celebrated the 100th anniversary of the accession of the Meiji emperor, who granted a modern constitution to the Japanese people in 1889. The Imperial (or Meiji) Constitution of 1889, which declared the sovereignty of the emperor, also provided that the emperor would rule “according to the provisions of the present Constitution.” Because the 1889 Constitution was flexible enough to permit the emergence of parliamentary democracy in the 1920s, Prime Minister Shidehara had said in 1945 that it would be possible to democratize Japan without amending the Imperial Constitution.³⁸ State-building is an essential component of political modernization, and the importance of the Japanese imperial institution in this connection is undeniable. In Japanese tradition, the imperial dynasty preceded and established the state, and there is no hard historical evidence to disprove this theory.³⁹ Though Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko played a role in helping define the monarchy as though it were “natural”, the fact remains that, for the most part, social change was pushing the monarchy rather than the monarchy driving social change.⁴⁰

The rhetoric of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda

35 For details on this see, Monika Chansoria, “Role of the Monarchy in Expanding Japan's Diplomatic Reach: Tracing Emperor Akihito's visits to India in 1960 and 2013,” *Policy Brief*, Japan Institute of International Affairs, Tokyo, September 12, 2022, available at https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/policybrief/pdf/PolicyBrief_Chansoria_220912.pdf

36 K. Hara, *Cold War Frontier in the Asia-Pacific: Divided Territories in the San Francisco System*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).

37 Chansoria, n. 35.

38 Theodore McNelly, “The Role of Monarchy in the Political Modernization of Japan,” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3, April 1969, p. 372.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 368.

40 Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Japan's Imperial House in the Postwar Era, 1945–2019* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2020), p. 352.

during his visit to India in 1961– that Tokyo and Delhi were the ‘natural pegs’ of a security system in Asia – spoke volumes about India’s evolving diplomatic and strategic importance to Japan at the time,⁴¹ even though Ikeda regarded India as part of undeveloped Asia.⁴² Nevertheless, while the two nations were strategically inclined to each other, the reasons for their mutual inclination remained somewhat out of sync, which soon became apparent post-1961. Hiroshi Sato observed that India was phased out of the Japanese diplomatic horizon after the 1950s, as Tokyo began to shift its focus increasingly towards Southeast Asia. However, Sato simultaneously argued that India’s goodwill never dissipated, and was invoked whenever Japan wanted to revitalize relations with India to extend its diplomatic horizon beyond Southeast Asia.⁴³

Economic Relations

During the periods when Kishi and Ikeda visited India, the economic relations between Japan and India were expanding on a stable basis. While Japan’s exports to India came to a temporary standstill after reaching their peak of \$144 million in 1957, they recovered to the \$112 million mark in 1960, aided by the progress of economic cooperation between the two countries.⁴⁴ Japan’s imports from India dropped to \$54 million in 1958 after reaching a post-war

record of \$58 million in 1957. Post that, however, Japan’s imports rose rapidly, soaring up to \$72 million in 1960. For that matter, even in the most unfavorable year, 1958, the two-way Indo-Japanese trade surpassed the \$150 million mark, thereby proving that Japan and India would remain important to each other as markets.⁴⁵ In 1960, India ranked ninth as an importer from Japan and 11th as an exporter to Japan. On the other hand, Japan was the third-largest buyer of Indian products and the fourth biggest supplier to India.⁴⁶

Economic Aid

Apart from the \$50 million loan extended in 1958, Japan, as a member of the Consortium of Governments and Institutions interested in development assistance to India, made its first extension of a \$10 million credit to India in 1958, and its second extension of a credit of an equal amount in 1959.⁴⁷ In 1961, an additional \$11 million credit was provided. In the successive years of 1959 and 1960, Japan pledged to extend loans of \$8 million and \$21 million to India and, in August 1961, Japan again pledged to grant a \$80 million loan to India in order to cover the first two years of India’s third five-year plan as a member of the Washington Consortium.⁴⁸

At the political/diplomatic level, there was a gap of 23 years between the 1961 state visit of

41 Sourabh Gupta, “Article 9 Reinterpreted: Can Japan and India collaborate in a ‘Broader Asia,’” in Shihoko Goto, ed., *The Rebalance within Asia: The Evolution of Japan-India Relations*, (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, 2014), p. 47.

42 For further details see, Purnendra Jain, “Twin Peaks: Japan’s Economic Aid to India in the 1950s and 2010s,” *JICA-RI Working Paper*, no. 139, February 2017, (Tokyo: JICA Research Institute), p. 14.

43 Hiroshi Sato, “India Japan Peace Treaty in Japan’s Postwar Asian Diplomacy.” *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asia* 17, 2005, p. 14; and see, R. Das Gupta and L.M. Lüthi, eds., *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

44 *State Visit to India: Hayato Ikeda, Prime Minister of Japan*, Dispatch by Embassy of Japan, (National Archives of India, New Delhi: Digitized Document), November 1, 1961, available at <https://indianculture.gov.in/archives/pamphlet-containing-details-hayate-ikeda-japanese-prime-ministers-visit-india>

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

Prime Minister Ikeda, and the May 1984 visit by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. The period following Ikeda's India visit was a difficult phase in Indo-Japan relations. The stagnation was attributed primarily to India's refusal in 1968 to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of which Japan has been a committed supporter. Japan held its focus during this period on Asia, but Tokyo did not appear to regard India as part of its Asia strategy. Studies and archival records of Japan-India relations through this period have noted this apathy and low-level interaction,⁴⁹ with research on Japan's interaction with Asia in that era not finding/including any analysis of Japan's relations with India.⁵⁰

However, Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's epochal economic reforms of 1991, which altered the destiny of India's economic health, also changed the course of India's relations with many countries, including Japan. The economic reforms of 1991 managed to etch India's positioning in Japan's Asian diplomacy like never before. India's high and continually growing economic profile and, more importantly, the future prospect of a robust and rising economic chart became a sturdy determining factor for Japan to rethink and reposition India in its strategic thinking.⁵¹

Conclusion

Though Ikeda resigned in November 1964 on grounds of ill health, his subtle and conciliatory posture and politics went a long way in putting

in place an economic growth framework and a blueprint for realizing that growth. From managing to bring relative stability in Japanese politics, Ikeda's trademark Income Doubling Plan proved to be a landmark success that went a long way in extending the lifecycle of Japan's post-war economic marvel. In fact, the *Gekkyu Nibai Ron* managed to enshrine 'economic growth' as Japan's economic and foreign policy pivot and gospel goal for nearly all post-Ikeda governments and leaderships.⁵² Managing to etch his name as perhaps among the most prominent politicians in Japan's rapid economic growth story in the post-war decades, Ikeda brought about a circumstance that was effective, both for the government and governance.

Japan took a long time to modify the parameters of its foreign and security policies in the post-war period. Ikeda's economic policies influenced Japan's foreign policy conversations and approach rather significantly, with Japan successfully managing its foreign economic policy flows across borders and becoming predominantly influential in the global economy scenario during the said era. The economic success chart generated confidence, which in effect transformed the way Japan began to craft its re-engagement within and beyond Asia. By means of Ikeda's concept of *Sanbon bashira*, Tokyo sought to serve as the third pillar of the international political architecture, catering to both international politics and economics.⁵³ To a large extent, this enabled a new lease of pro-activism in Japan's foreign policy in the 1960s

49 For further details and references on this see, Toshio Yamazaki and Mitsuru Takahashi, eds., *Nihon to Indo: koryu no rekishi* [Japan and India: A History of Their Interaction], (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1993).

50 Akihiko Tanaka, *Ajia no naka no Nihon* [Japan in Asia], (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2007).

51 *The Japan-India New Partnership*, Remarks by Ambassador of Japan to India Yasukuni Enoki, cited in *USI Journal*, July 2004 – September 2004, available at <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/the-japan-india-new-partnership/>

52 Ikeda declared that Japan sought to develop its own distinctive role in foreign affairs during the 1960s. Growing Japanese economic interest in Southeast Asia proved the point; for further reading and details on this subject see, Timothy P. Maga, *John F. Kennedy and the New Pacific Community, 1961-63*, (University of Maryland, Asian Division), 1990.

53 Frattolillo, n. 8, p. 122.

with full awareness of the strategic benefits that it could generate, including in terms of reaching out to Southeast Asia and South Asia apart from the US and Europe.