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## Central Asia: Japan's New 'Old' Frontier

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I S S U E S

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**SUMMARY** Japanese Silk Road Diplomacy, launched in 1997 by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, was to become one of the first international diplomatic initiatives appealing to the connectivity and revival of the Silk Road within Central Asia (CA). Subsequently, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi dispatched a “Silk Road Energy Mission” in July of 2002, launched the “Central Asia plus Japan” region-building initiative in August 2004, and visited CA in 2006. Most recently, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited all five CA states in 2015. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate that CA is Japan’s latest “frontier” in Asia, where its presence can be further expanded. For CA states, Japanese involvement in the region represents an attempt to balance Russian and Chinese engagements, while offering access to the technologies and knowledge needed to upgrade their economies’ industrial structures.

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## Introduction

In recent years, the term “Silk Road” has been appropriated by the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Consequently, any reference to the Silk Road now carries the connotation of the Chinese penetration of and engagement with Central Asia (CA) and beyond. However, one of the first countries in East Asia that applied the Silk Road notion to its diplomatic initiatives in CA was Japan.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese usage of Silk Road has since been repeated by the United States, which proposed the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999 to expand US presence in the region, and also by Russia to sustain its regional dominance. South Korea subsequently launched a number of similar strategies in 2009–13 under the “Silk Road” umbrella to connect the country to energy and other resources in Eurasia through Russia, China, and CA railroad networks.<sup>2</sup> India, Iran, Turkey, and other countries have also undertaken various such initiatives, all of which demonstrate the international environment and contested nature of CA engagement in which Japan operates.

Japan has since solidified its presence in CA and contributed significantly to regional development through its Official Development Assistance (ODA). But for various reasons, this remains in the shadows of Chinese infrastructure construction projects (BRI and construction of “land bridges” from China to Europe through the CA region as well as exports of CA natural gas and oil from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) or Russian initiatives (the Eurasian Economic Community, which implies the creation of a customs and economic union).

With the focus on Japanese foreign policy in CA, this paper aims to clarify the following issues. First, it attempts to explain the process of the construction of the Japanese diplomatic initiatives in the CA region in historical perspective. Second, this paper highlights the strengths and weaknesses

of the Japanese approaches to regional issues and problems. And third, this paper sheds light on the areas to which Japanese policymakers and experts need to pay attention in their efforts to make the Japanese engagement in this region more efficient.

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## Evolution of the Japanese Silk Road Narrative

There are significant expectations on the part of CA governments and the public with respect to Japan. For CA states, Japanese involvement in the region represents an attempt to balance Russian and Chinese engagement while offering access to the technologies and knowledge they need to upgrade their industrial base. The public perception of the Japanese influences on CA states is generally positive. According to the AsiaBarometer survey conducted by the University of Tokyo in autumn of 2005, the highest ratings of the influence of Japan on their country (“good” and “rather good”) registered in Kazakhstan (10.4 percent and 30.3 percent, respectively) and Uzbekistan (15.9 percent and 36.3 percent, respectively). Similarly, a poll conducted in 2015 by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) prior to the autumn visit of Prime Minister Abe to CA demonstrated that the sympathy toward Japan registered in 2005 has sustained for 10 years, with the majority of respondents considering their country’s relations with Japan to be good (Uzbekistan 79 percent, Tajikistan 56 percent, Kyrgyzstan 52 percent, and Kazakhstan 59 percent) or rather good (Uzbekistan 13 percent, Tajikistan 24 percent, Kyrgyzstan 23 percent, and Kazakhstan 42 percent).<sup>3</sup>

Such sentiments can be attributed to the fact that CA states never had issues related to the imperial history of Japan, as seen in Japanese relations with East Asian countries. They associate Japan not with imperialism but rather with technological progress, proper manners, and the years of ODA commitments in the onset of the CA states’ independence. Such sympathy toward Japan leads to

*One of the first countries in East Asia that applied the notion of Silk Road to its diplomatic initiatives in CA was Japan*

*For CA governments, Japanese involvement is a way to balance Russian and Chinese engagements while accessing needed technologies*

expectations of larger Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) and corporate participation as opposed to ODA disbursements. In addition, Japan is considered as an alternative to the Chinese and Russian projects, offering smaller CA states some alternatives to the countries feared for their potential for political and economic exploitation and domination.

Japanese diplomacy initiatives in the last 25 years following the collapse of the Soviet Union aimed to rediscover this latest Asian frontier for Japan and establish a Japanese presence in this region. Japanese Silk Road Diplomacy, launched in 1997, has become one of the first international diplomatic initiatives appealing to the connectivity and revival of the Silk Road. This was undertaken under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's administration. Hashimoto's understanding of this region had been informed by the Obuchi Mission<sup>4</sup> and Hashimoto's interactions primarily with Russia. Despite launching the Silk Road/Eurasian Diplomacy, Hashimoto never traveled to CA and the Caucasus, which partly reflects the focus of Japanese foreign policy toward the United States, defined by its strategic alliance with it; toward China, due to Japan's economic commitments to it; and toward Russia, with Japan oriented to resolving territorial disputes with it. Such a foreign policy agenda constrained Japanese prime ministers' visits and did not leave much space for other regions,

including CA. The Obuchi Mission traveled to Russia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan from June 28 to July 9, 1997.<sup>5</sup> While the mission focused extensively on Russia, it also provided some ideas on how to approach CA.

Hashimoto called for a needed "push to enlarge the horizon of our foreign policy" beyond the Asia Pacific, rediscovering a new Asian frontier, of which CA republics and the Caucasus constituted a large part.<sup>6</sup> Hashimoto hoped to integrate Japan and CA states into a network of interdependence through the Japanese corporate community's participation in resource exploration in this part of the world. For Hashimoto, the areas of interaction included, first and foremost, assisting these states in establishing affluent, prosperous, domestic systems under a new political and economic structure. Second, Japan aimed to utilize the great potential of these states to serve as bridges to create distribution routes within the Eurasian region. In terms of particular directions, Japanese Silk Road Diplomacy prioritized three areas of concern: political dialogue; economic cooperation, including cooperation for natural resource development; and cooperation in peace-building, nuclear nonproliferation, democratization, and fostering stability. The ODA assistance commitments of Japan in the CA region increased from US\$ 2.57 million in 1993 to US\$ 24.227 million in 2003, a tenfold increase in 10

**Table 1. Japanese ODA offered to the countries of Central Asia on a bilateral basis by country (in millions US dollars)**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	30.92	40.16	63.22	99.75	60.02	29.60	70.29	64.53	41.92	34.08	31.26	26.25	56.49
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	43.93	30.13	136.27	134.34	69.68	28.19	55.39	56.63	63.38	30.56	19.79	30.89	36.99
<b>Kyrgyz Rep</b>	23.15	8.12	31.23	26.69	20.95	17.22	15.69	12.49	18.06	23.50	30.99	19.98	17.87
<b>Tajikistan</b>	4.61	26.96	4.77	6.58	9.93	8.04	9.43	8.06	26.24	43.42	35.59	32.98	26.66
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	16.42	11.37	6.80	2.22	0.13	0.62	0.38	0.57	1.15	1.55	1.27	0.53	0.56

Source: Compiled from the data made available by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Seifu Kaihatsu Enjyo (ODA) Kunibetsu de-tabuku 2014 (Chuou ajia/kokasasu chiiki)*, [Official Development Assistance By-country Data-book 2014 (Region of Central Asia and Caucasus)], Tokyo, Japan, available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/files/000072593.pdf> (last accessed on July 15, 2015).

years. Eventually, by the same year, the accumulated ODA disbursements bilaterally to the CA and Caucasus states reached US\$ 1.98 billion.<sup>7</sup>

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### **Japanese Region-Building Initiative in Central Asia**

In terms of the principles of engagement, Prime Minister Hashimoto emphasized establishing trust, establishing a mode of “mutual benefit,” and “maintaining a long-term perspective.” These areas and directions were largely inherited by subsequent Japanese administrations in their approaches toward the CA region. Attempts to establish Japan in the CA region have continued after Hashimoto’s departure from office.

The most notable among the successors of Hashimoto was Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who pushed forward the most ambitious regional institution-building in CA by first dispatching a Silk Road Energy Mission in July of 2002 to promote closer energy cooperation with the CA states.<sup>8</sup> It is useful to note here the importance of the energy resources of CA for Japan. Discursively, exploration of energy resources (to include rare metals, oil, and gas) always featured as an important pillar that Japan framed in its attempt to diversify from its energy dependency on the Middle East. However, the importance of energy supplies from CA have been overstated due to logistical problems related to delivering these resources, which include, but are not limited to, the region’s geographically distant location and the regional states’ lack of access to seaports, all of which prevent construction of a proper infrastructure for delivering CA energy resources to Japan.

Also, in terms of geopolitical location, countries that are sandwiched between CA states and Japan (China, Russia, and South Korea, to name a few) cannot be considered Japan-friendly in terms of their foreign policies, thus making it

more difficult to construct energy-related infrastructure from CA to Japan. Thus, although this theme has featured prominently in the 2006 “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” speech by Taro Aso, then minister for foreign affairs, and during Abe’s 2015 visit to CA (in particular in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan), the rhetoric of the importance of energy resources to Japan largely remains in the realm of rhetoric and does not produce much in terms of tangible outcomes. The few examples of practical results of cooperation include the Kazakhstan-Japan agreement on the joint exploration and use of mineral resources, which coincided with a radical decrease in the supply of rare metals from China to Japan following a 2010 boat incident between the two countries.<sup>9</sup>

This agreement supported previous corporate plans, such as those signed by Japan’s Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO) with Kazatomprom and contracts between Itochu and Kazatomprom to develop uranium deposits. According to the terms of this contract, Kazakhstan could provide up to 25 percent of the Japanese demand for uranium within the next decade. Similarly, following the visit of Abe to CA a few contracts have been signed for participation of the Japanese companies in construction of processing plants in CA (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in particular). However, these initiatives are not connected to transporting these energy resources to Japan but rather entail corporate participation of the Japanese companies in processing them for further export to China and other states.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the discourse on the importance of using CA regional energy resources as an alternative source of energy for the most part represents wishful thinking as opposed to a realizable and practical goal. The statistics on exports from CA to Japan and roadmaps explained below also demonstrate that energy resources do not feature prominently in the trade between this region

*Prime Minister Hashimoto emphasized establishing trust and a mode of 'mutual benefit' as well as 'maintaining a long-term perspective'*

*Japanese challenges in Central Asia demonstrate both the gaps and great potential for Japanese involvement in this region*

and Japan, further supporting the points above.

Emphasizing Japanese gains from ODA and the positive attitudes toward Japan, in March 2003 a group of Japanese experts concluded that CA was a new “frontier” in Asia where Japanese presence could be further expanded.<sup>11</sup> Later, in August of 2004, Japan launched its “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue forum.<sup>12</sup> Prime Minister Koizumi was also the first Japanese prime minister to visit the CA region, paying visits to the largest regional states of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2006. Koizumi’s region-building initiative has had both integrating and decolonizing aims. It aimed to empower smaller CA states so that they could deal with regional problems by regional means, while providing Japanese know-how and financing as an alternative to Russian and Chinese schemes. At the same time, adhering to Hashimoto’s spirit of open regionalism, the CA plus Japan initiative emphasizes that it was not created to hurt Chinese or Russian engagement in this region. This can be explained by the fact that Prime Minister Hashimoto in his Silk Road speech of 1997 called not only for the development of closer relations between Japan and CA but importantly also for active engagement with Russia and China as new frontiers for Japanese foreign policy. Thus, the spirit of Hashimoto’s initiative was liberalist and aimed to expand cooperation into a broader Eurasia to include Russia and China. The same spirit is inherited by the following initiatives.

Koizumi’s efforts were also continued by Foreign Minister (and later prime minister) Taro Aso’s concept of “Central Asia as a Corridor of Peace and Stability,” which he considered to be a consistent part of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” in 2006. These initiatives involved incorporating the CA region into larger Japanese initiatives in the Middle East, along the five main areas of policy dialogue, intraregional cooperation, business promotion, intellectual

dialogue, and cultural and people-to-people exchange as a backbone of these relations.<sup>13</sup>

The search for a pathway into CA for Japan has continued under Prime Minister Abe with his 2015 visit to the CA region, prioritizing functionality and practical outputs over the value-based approach. This shift may be due to a realization by Japanese leadership that, for CA, the process of democratization is a longer-term objective, and in the meantime, the economic opportunities of cooperation need to be taken.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, to frame his political agenda Abe announced a Japanese version of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2016, which largely echoed the US approach but emphasized countries like India, Australia, and the United States as partners in achieving Japan’s objectives.<sup>15</sup> It remains to be seen whether this initiative is relevant to Japan’s CA engagement. However, this initiative demonstrates Japan’s constant search for a new narrative of its engagement internationally, which can be framed as Japanese discursive responses to the Chinese BRI or Russian Eurasian Economic Union ideas, among others.

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**Competitive Advantages of the Japanese Standing in Central Asia**

There are certain features that Japan aims to use as its competitive advantage in approaching the CA region. First, Japan’s relative distance from the region, which is frequently interpreted as a weakness due to logistical problems associated with reaching regional resources and markets, is something the Japanese government aims to use as a competitive advantage (when compared to other countries such as China and Russia). It allows the Japanese government to claim “selfless” commitment to the region by suggesting that its distant geographic location prevents it from dominating and exploiting CA states. Such a claim of “altruism”

Table 2. JICA disbursements to Central Asia (in millions of YEN)

	Total Value of JICA programs	Composition ratio %
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	38,898	73.8
<b>Tajikistan</b>	3,349	6.4
<b>Kirgiz Republic</b>	2,948	5.6
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	155	0.3
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	22	0

Source: Modified by author to include only countries of CA from JICA Activity Report, 2016, East Asia and Central Asia: Towards Sustained Economic Development through Strengthening Regional Connectivity and Diversifying Industries.

in CA engagement, whether genuine or perceived, is part of the discursive construction of competitive advantage with respect to other big players, such as China and Russia. Second, Japan aims to emphasize the decolonization mission of its regional institution-building, exemplified by the CA plus Japan initiative. In doing so, the Japanese government emphasizes that this scheme was designed to encourage CA states to seek intraregional cooperation and ties with each other, while Japan would provide the technical and financial assistance needed to support such alliances. This objective of the CA plus Japan initiative is rooted in the legacy of Prime Minister Hashimoto's Eurasian (Silk Road) Diplomacy.

Third, Japan uses the duality implied by the universal and Asian features of its identity to advance constructive relations with CA states. One point to note here is that Japan is regarded in CA as being a modern society that in the past challenged the West but then became part of it without losing its traditional values, which appeals particularly to the Turkic and Muslim world that CA represents after being under Soviet rule and then in recent years facing potential Chinese economic dominance. In addition, Japan does not completely abandon its commitment to universal values (such as democracy, a market economy, the safeguarding of human rights, and the rule of law) but also does not use them as a precondition

for cooperation, offering CA states an opportunity to adjust and build their domestic conditions for implementation of these universal values.

For example, Prime Minister Koizumi was the first leader of a liberal democratic country to visit Uzbekistan in 2006 when the United States and other European nations were introducing sanctions against Islam Karimov's government for excessive use of force and the eventual massacre of protesters in the city of Andijan in May of 2005. During the visit, Koizumi did bring up the importance of human rights but also expressed understanding of Uzbekistan's developmental concerns and pledged unconditional developmental assistance. Thus, Uzbekistan, despite its poor human rights record has ever since been one of the top recipients of Japanese aid, which for the year 2016 reached 38,898 million yen, constituting 73.8 percent of all the ODA assistance extended through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the countries of CA and the Caucasus (see table 1). Among regional states, Japan has ranked among the top five ODA providers for 2010–15, being the top provider of assistance for Uzbekistan, and ranging between the second and third top provider of assistance for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan over the same period (see table 2 for overall disbursements).

A similar example of duality is the case of good governance and transparency in Japan's ODA

*Among regional states, Japan has ranked among the top five ODA providers for 2010–15*

Table 3. Japan's Assistance in the Central Asia (calendar year 2015, in millions US dollars)

Country	Grants				Loan aid			Total (Net disburs.)	Total (Gross disburs.)
	Grant aid		Technical	Total	Amount	Amount recovered (B)	(A)-(B)		
	Total	Through multilateral institutions							
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	6.50	-	6.19	12.68	141.46	27.48	113.98	126.66	154.15
<b>Kyrgyz Rep.</b>	33.79	6.12	8.72	42.51	-	0.39	-0.39	42.12	42.51
<b>Tajikistan</b>	14.21	3.87	3.61	17.82	-	-	-	17.82	17.82
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	0.36	-	1.34	1.70	-	34.93	-34.93	-33.23	1.70
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	0.06	-	0.46	0.52	-	1.81	-1.81	-1.29	0.52

Source: Modified by author to include only countries of CA from White Paper on Development Cooperation 2016, List of Charts Presented in the White Paper, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, available at [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page22e\\_000816.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page22e_000816.html), last accessed on August 24, 2018.

practices. Some Japanese companies, in particular Nihon Koutsu Gijyutsu (Japan Transportation Consultants)<sup>16</sup> were caught paying bribes to Uzbek (and to Vietnamese and other states') officials during the decision process for ODA disbursements. Although Japan condemned such practices,<sup>17</sup> it nevertheless continued its ODA assistance without imposing punitive measures against the Uzbek government, again displaying a certain degree of understanding with respect to various problems of transition in CA. In this sense, such duality

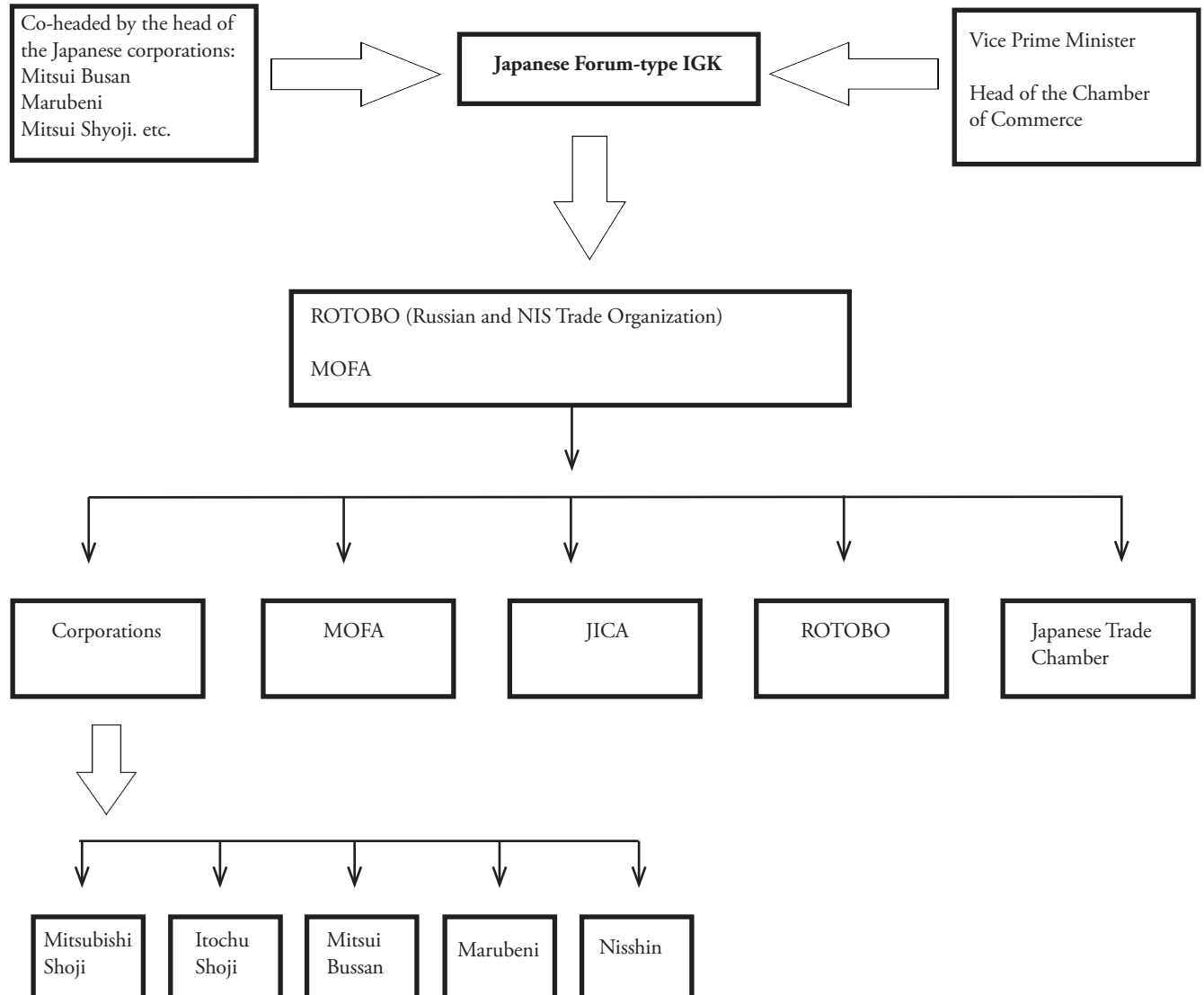
represents the pragmatism of the Japanese approach toward CA states and the Japanese understanding that the issues of governance and transparency can only be dealt with through constructively engaging CA states over the long term and not through sanctions or other punitive measures. As a channel for influencing the behavior of these states, Japan emphasizes human resource development, in line with which by 2014 Japan accepted 10,878 trainees from CA and the Caucasus and dispatched 2,603 experts to these states.<sup>18</sup>

Table 4. Central Asian countries' exports/imports to and from Japan

Country	Trade			Japanese Companies in the Country
	Export to Japan	Import from Japan	Balance	
	2013 (in millions US dollars)	2013 (in millions US dollars)	2013 (in millions sUS dollars)	
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	9.88	10.4	-0.54	-
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	53.73	67.71	-13.98	8
<b>Kyrgyz Republic</b>	0.1	9.15	-9.05	-
<b>Tajikistan</b>	0.81	1.55	-0.74	-
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	0.05	3.79	-3.74	-

Source: Compiled from the data made available by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Seifu Kaihatsu Enjyo (ODA) Kunibetsu de-tabuku 2014 (Chuo aia/kokasasu chiiki), [Official Development Assistance By-country Data-book 2014 (Region of Central Asia and Caucasus)], Tokyo, Japan, available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/files/000072593.pdf> (last accessed on July 15, 2015).

**Table 5. Typical scheme of actors involved in the inter-governmental economic cooperation committee scheme between Japan and Central Asia states**



Source: Composed by author from interviews with officials in respected Central Asian governments.

The Japanese direct investments and commitments are less impressive, leaving a large potential to fulfill. The largest investments were made to economically larger and energy-resource-rich Uzbekistan (US\$ 900 million) and Kazakhstan (US\$ 357 million) according to 2017 data. Japan largely exports to CA states machinery and industrial goods (13.56 billion

yen to Uzbekistan, 30 billion yen to Kazakhstan, 662 million yen to Tajikistan, and 2.4 billion yen to Kyrgyzstan) while it imports from them textile yarn, fabrics, and nonferrous metal (500 million yen from Uzbekistan), radioactive material and nonferrous metals (141.1 billion yen from Kazakhstan), fruits, and non-metallic ware (163 million yen from



*There are a number of challenges that Japan still faces in approaching this region*

Tajikistan and 153 million yen from Kyrgyzstan).

In terms of major actors in these interactions, the intergovernmental committee on economic cooperation between Japan and CA states is composed of the Japanese MOFA, Japan Association for Trade with Russia & NIS (ROTOBO), JICA, Trade Chamber, and representatives of the Japanese corporations.

The economic cooperation roadmaps produced by this intergovernmental committee mostly consist of the intergovernmental framework agreements and mutual understanding memorandums and agreements regarding Official Development Assistance projects, mainly because the Japanese enterprises have not yet expressed an overwhelming commitment to involvement in projects in CA. The Japanese corporations remain rather passive in CA due to the concerns related to the protection of their prospective investments and governance practices, as demonstrated in the case of JTC mentioned above. Put into comparative perspective, in 2010 there were only 18 Japanese companies operating in Uzbekistan (demographically the largest country of CA) compared to 410 Korean and 480 Chinese companies.<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates both the weakness of the Japanese corporate presence in the region and the great potential that it may explore in the future.

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### **Challenges and Tasks Ahead**

There are a number of challenges that Japan still faces in approaching this region. First, the task of “defining” the importance and place of the CA region for Japan has been and remains one of Japan’s greatest challenges due to its relative distance from the CA region, which makes it more difficult for Japanese policymakers to frame this region’s importance for Japan in practical terms.

While Japan always emphasizes the importance of Asia for its foreign policy, CA is not treated in

line with Japan’s Asia policy. The vague status of the CA region for Japanese foreign policy is notably neither treated as a part of Japan’s Asia policy nor conceptualized as a region of its own. Foreign policy issues related to CA are being dealt with in the MOFA of Japan by its Central Asia and Caucasus Division of the European Affairs Bureau, rather than by its Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau. Second, this lack of definition of the importance of the region to Japan impacts the intergovernmental economic cooperation roadmaps of Japan with the CA regional countries. For instance, the 2017 roadmaps of Japanese cooperation with Uzbekistan (by far the most important country of CA for Japan) emphasize the Japanese commitment to development of the country through its human capital development and large ODA disbursements. However, they do not clearly demonstrate how the Japanese corporate community and the Japanese taxpayers benefit from Japanese engagement through implementation of these roadmaps. This then brings into question the sustainability of the Japanese initiatives in this region.

The third problematic area is the lack of contacts between the political leadership of Japan and the CA states. While the frequency of interactions between the governments does not necessarily relate to the quality of those interactions, the cases of China and Korea demonstrate that increased frequency of interaction often results in particular projects. The Chinese and Korean heads of state and governments are frequent visitors to CA, while the leaders of Japan have visited CA only twice over the period of these states’ independence. Such lack of personal interaction does not contribute to the expansion of cooperation between these states. This then connects to the fourth issue for Japan in CA, which is the limited agenda of cooperation. As is demonstrated by recent economic cooperation

roadmaps between Japan and Uzbekistan, the cooperation agenda is dominated by a large number of projects and initiatives related to humanitarian cooperation, while economic cooperation between corporate communities is very limited.

The Japanese grants for educational activities and education-related projects through JICA and other institutions do not necessarily relate to immediate income generation, but they contribute importantly to human-capacity development, thus indirectly increasing economic potential. In such a structure, public institutions of government and developmental assistance agencies lead the way in establishing cooperation. However, at this stage, such activity by the government does not necessarily translate into the involvement of private enterprises. Accordingly, the misbalance in favor of such humanitarian engagement and away from economic projects demonstrates the gaps in the Japanese involvement in CA that need to be filled.

### Acronyms

<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>CA</b>	Central Asia
<b>FDI</b>	foreign direct investment
<b>KEPCO</b>	Kansai Electric Power Company
<b>MOFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper builds on Timur Dadabaev, "Japan Attempts to Crack the Central Asian Frontier", AsiaGlobal Online (Asia Global Institute The University of Hong Kong), August 30, <https://www.asiaglobalonline.hku.hk/japan-central-asia-uzbekistan-kazakhstan/>.

<sup>2</sup> For details, see Timur Dadabaev, "Silk Road' as Foreign Policy Discourse: The Construction of Chinese, Japanese and Korean Engagement Strategies in Central Asia," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9 (1):1–12.

<sup>3</sup> For details of the data and analysis, see Timur Dadabaev, "Japan's ODA Assistance Scheme and Central Asian Engagement," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 7 (1): 24–38.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see Zaidan Hojin Kokusai Koryu Senta [Japan Center for International Exchange], "Roshia Chuo Ajia taiwa misshon hokoku: Yurasia gaiko he no joshu" [Report of the Mission for Dialogue with Russia and Central Asia: Introduction toward Eurasian Diplomacy], (Tokyo: Roshia Chuo Ajia taiwa misshon, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent interpretation of this mission see, Takeshi Yuasa, "Japan's Multilateral Approach toward Central Asia," in *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia: Russia and Its Neighbors in Crisis*, ed. Akihiro Iwashita (Sapporo: Hokkaido University Slavic Research Center, 2007), accessed September 8, 2018, [http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no16\\_1\\_ses/04\\_yuasa.pdf](http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no16_1_ses/04_yuasa.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Ryutaro Hashimoto, "Address to the Japan Association of Corporate Executives," Tokyo, July 24, <http://www.Japan.kantei.go.jp/0731douyuukai.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Gaimusho Keizai Kyoryokukyoku, ed., *Seifu kaihatsu enjo (ODA) kunibetsu deta bukku, 2004* [Japan's Official Development Assistance: Annual Report, 2004] (2005):199–204.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Shirukurodo Enerugi mishon" [Silk Road Energy Mission], Tokyo, accessed August 24, 2018, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/fuku/sugiura/af\\_asia02/silkroad.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/fuku/sugiura/af_asia02/silkroad.html).

<sup>9</sup> For example, see "Rea a-su: Kazahu to kyoudo kaihatsu" [Rare Metals: Joint Development with Kazakhstan], *Nikkei Shimbun*, May 2, 2012, [https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS0102C\\_R00C12A5EE2000/](https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS0102C_R00C12A5EE2000/) (accessed on August 24, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> See Marat Gurt, "Japan, Turkmenistan Sign Deals Worth over \$18 bln in Chemicals, Energy," *Reuters*, October 23, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-turkmenistan/japan-turkmenistan-sign-deals-worth-over-18-billion-in-chemicals-energy-idUSKCN0SH1AN20151023>.

<sup>11</sup> See Japan Institute for International Affairs, *Chuo Ajia ni kansuru teigen* [Recommendations regarding Central Asia], Tokyo, March 2003, accessed August 24, 2018, [http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/russia\\_centre/h14\\_c-asia/03\\_kasai.pdf](http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/russia_centre/h14_c-asia/03_kasai.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Central Asia plus Japan’ Dialogue,” accessed September 7, 2018, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/dialogue/index.html>. <sup>13</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Central Asia plus Japan’ Dialogue-Action Plan,” accessed August 24, 2018, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/dialogue/action0606.html>.

<sup>14</sup> For details see, Timur Dadabaev, “Engagement and Contestation: The Entangled Imagery of the Silk Road,” *Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2 (2018), doi:10.22261/CJES.Q4GIV6.

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Seifu Kaihatsu Enjyo (ODA) jigyou ni Kanren shita Fusei Fuhai no Soushini Muketa Nichi/Uzbekisutan ryoukoku no Torikumi” [Prevention of Corruption and Illegality in the Official Development Assistance: Japanese/Uzbek mutual measures], August 6, 2014, accessed August 24, 2018, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/press4\\_001142.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/press4_001142.html).

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<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Official Development Assistance (ODA),” Section 2, accessed September 7, 2018, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2016/html/honbun/b2/s2\\_2\\_3.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2016/html/honbun/b2/s2_2_3.html).

<sup>19</sup> “Uzbekisutan kyowakoku no seizou gyou no shinkou to Nihon kigyuu ni totte no no Jigyou no kikai” [Development of Industry of Uzbekistan and Opportunities for the Japanese Companies], *NRI Public Management Review*, 161 (December 2016):1–6, accessed August 26, 2018, <https://www.nri.com/-/media/PDF/jp/opinion/teiki/region/2016/ck20161203.pdf>.

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