

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JAPANESE GOVERNMENT DIPLOMACY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND STATUS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

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In 2022, 30 years have passed since the diplomatic relationships between Japan and 5 countries in Central Asia had been established. This year 1992 was shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it is an undeniable fact that these Japanese diplomatic actions were ahead of other countries. On the other hand, the Central Asian countries are probably not popular among Japanese people today. Many people don't have an image of these countries, which is not consistent with the activities promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Given this situation, I think that one of the problems in Japan's diplomacy in Central Asia is the lack of interactive diplomacy.

When the diplomacy has started, main policy of the Japanese government was to support the economic development of Central Asia. According to the document from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "The report of diplomacy":

The stable development of the Central Asian region was also very important for the peace and stability of the international community, including Japan. Japan also believed that Central Asian countries could achieve stability and prosperity more quickly and steadily through intra-regional cooperation than by addressing each country's problems individually. The Central Asian countries would play the leading role, and Japan aimed to play a catalytic role in supporting the development of Central Asia based on the three basic principles of "respect for diversity," "competition and cooperation," and "open cooperation".

Based on this policy, Japanese government formed a new framework called the “Central Asia + Japan Dialogue” in 2004. According to some Medias, now Japanese government is planning to hold first top-level conference between Japan and 5 countries in Central Asia. This is not only for political issues, but for economic and commercial issues. In the same year, in Astana, Kazakhstan, “Central Asia + Japan Dialogue business forum” has held and the strengthening of the Japan-Central Asia nexus, including IT, environment of transportation, and tourism, was discussed. In addition, technology transfer from Japan was introduced. Japan's technical development cooperation and other activities are carried out as ODA through JICA, a government-affiliated agency, and its affiliated organizations. On the other hand, in recent years, the financial assistance from the Japanese government has been decreasing in the Central Asian region, especially in Kazakhstan, due to the rapid economic development of the region. It is no exaggeration to say that the main purpose of strengthening relations with the Central Asian region is to bring political stability to a whole of the Asia. And, as the subject of the forum, the establishment of equal economic cooperation as well as support from Japan is becoming a new way. One of the most important factors in stimulating economic activity is to increase private sector interaction, but in the case of Japan, as mentioned at the beginning of this report, this is largely lacking. This is not only a lack of familiarity among the Japanese with the Central Asian countries, but also in the opposite direction.

One major example of this is the withdrawal of Japanese convenience stores from Kazakhstan. “MINISTOP”, a major Japanese convenience store, became the first major Japanese retailer to enter Kazakhstan in 2012, but was forced to withdraw just two years later. Soaring prices and changes in Kazakhstan's government economic policy have been cited as factors, but there are other factors to consider as well. “CU”, Korea's leading convenience store, has been developing new markets, especially in Kazakhstan, where it has increased its number of stores to 24 in the past two years. As a management strategy, the company is not only displaying customized products according to local eating habits, but also taking advantage of global trends

by promoting them along with popular Korean culture. The Japanese “MINISTOP” focused on providing management methods and the store format itself, while operations in line with local customs, such as “CU,” were of secondary importance.

This has something in common with the Japanese government's existing policy toward Central Asia. The policy is to actively help other countries for their development and to deepen future political or economic relations, but prior to this, there is a lack of private-sector exchange and mutual understanding.

For the understanding of culture to be directly linked to economic activity, as Korea and the “CU,” the first step must be to stimulate demand through subcultures and social media. This is followed by the need to share the market value and cultural acceptance of the Central Asian region within Japan. The diplomatic and economic activities of governments are established through a two-way relationship. For diplomatic relations between Japan and Central Asia to advance to a new stage, there are limits to superficial political and economic activities. This is especially true in the Central Asian region, which is currently under-recognized in Japan, and could benefit from a deeper understanding of the region by the public and private sectors working together.

## **THE CONSTITUTION OF JAPAN**

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The Constitution of Japan is the supreme law of Japan, which consists of a preamble and 103 articles. The constitution was adopted on 3 November 1946 and