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“Global Perspectives on Japan” focuses on developing a global perspective on the study of Japan and Asia. The journal promotes innovative, interdisciplinary, inter-regional and transnational approaches to Japanese Studies.

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The Middle East in 1973-2001 Japanese Foreign Policy: Why and How does a Pacifist State Secure Energy?

Mürsel Doğrul*

Necmettin Erbakan University

Introduction

Many works have been published on how and for what objectives Japan utilized its economic wealth between 1973 and 2001.¹ However, these investigations did not consider the country's energy needs to be among the most important factors. The application of economic accumulation and equipment beyond expectations was a recurrent theme in Japanese foreign policy from 1973 to 2001. In fact, political discourses, humanitarian aid with strong economic components, and bilateral trade agreements have all been used to help ensure the security of Japan's energy resource supply.

Japan has a reputation of being a 'free-rider' country following WWII, a financial backer since the 1970s, and a contributor country since the 1990s.² Japan also became the largest global donor nation in the mid-1990s as a result of its strong economic improvement in the preceding decades.³ Since the early 1990s, Japanese economic aid has transformed into peacekeeping

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1 Steven W. Hook, "Japan's Aid Policy since the Cold War: Rhetoric and Reality," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 11 (November 1, 1998): 1051-66, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645685>; Eileen M. Doherty, "Japan's Expanding Foreign Aid Program," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 1987): 129-49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.1987.10553645>.

2 Ming Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," *International Studies Quarterly*, 39, no. 1 (March 1995): 94.

3 E. Vogel, "Pax Nipponica?," *Foreign Affairs* 64 (1986): 767.

missions, and human security has become a pillar of Japan's foreign policy.⁴ Some analysts viewed Japan's humanitarian aid policy mostly through the 9th article of the constitution,⁵ finding the following conclusions:

*The Constitution's restriction of military capabilities in this way [referring to Article 9's pacifist character] pushed Japan to seek a new foreign strategy. This condition compelled the state to utilize the economy as a foreign policy tool in order to improve its effectiveness in the international arena, as well as to seek a security alliance with the United States in order to reach the most essential security needs.*⁶

However, while this interpretation stresses the constitutional restriction, it makes no mention of the Japanese government's consent to the limitation. Similarly, it is important that the Japanese seek alternative foreign policy goals through humanitarian aid rather than military means and that they occasionally dismiss the U.S. requests on military and operational matters, overcoming these processes through a variety of civilian ways. The 2015 Security Law Amendment,⁷ on the other hand, showed the possibility of an amendment to Article 9 of the constitution request with securitization discourses. Until recently, the Japanese maintained a pragmatic and utilitarian foreign policy, viewing Article 9 of the constitution as an opportunity rather than a constraint. To conceptualize the pragmatic and utilitarian foreign policy, this research explores Japanese energy security policies toward the Middle East from 1973 to 2001. In fact, thanks to economic and humanitarian aids, Japan's foreign policy in the Middle East has been conducted at a lower cost. The philosophical patterns in the background of postwar Japanese

4 Bahadır Pehlivanlı, "From Peace State to Peacekeeping State: Japan's Changing National Role Conception and Foreign Policy Norms," *Perceptions* 21, no. 1 (2016): 66.

5 Article 9; Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

6 Ali Balçı and Murat Yeşiltaş, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımların Kullanılması: Japonya Örneği (Using Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool: The Case of Japan)," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 2, no. 8 (Kış 2006 2005): 169.

7 Christopher W. Hughes, "Japan's Strategic Trajectory And Collective Self-Defense: Essential Continuity or Radical Shift?," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 98.

foreign policy may be plainly discerned in its involvements with the Middle East.⁸

Power is characterized in the post-World War II Japanese grand strategy by material and economic resources.⁹ The extent of this power was increased, and foreign aid became a pivotal factor in handling the country's security concerns during the years 1973-2001. The Organization of Asian Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) Oil Crisis in 1973 had one of the heaviest impacts on industrialized countries, mainly Japan.¹⁰ This crisis occurred when the Arab alliance led by Egypt and Syria lost the Yom Kippur War against Israel in October 1973 and the OAPEC member countries laid an oil embargo on pro-Israel foreign nations. The OAPEC cut world oil supplies by 9.8% in two months. The price of crude oil per barrel fluctuated between 12 and 18 dollars between 1973 and 1979. As a result, oil, a sort of energy, has been turned into foreign policy weaponry. The importance of guaranteeing an energy supply to modern society has been demonstrated by the boycott of major energy importing countries such as Europe and the United States by oil-producing countries. During the oil crisis, Saudi Arabia, which was one of the leading members of OAPEC, announced Japan was an "unfriendly" nation and urged Japan to support Muslim Arab countries.¹¹

8 In some ways, the overall concept of the interactions of Japan with the region aligns with that of the Central Asian Muslim countries prior to WWII. The history of Japanese relations with Muslim societies, as well as regional studies, are viewed as the propelling influences behind the Middle East proficiency. I was unable to provide thorough information on this subject because it would go beyond the scope of our article; Selçuk Esenbel, "Japan and Islam Policy during the 1930s," in Bert Edström (Ed.), *Turning Points in Japanese History* (Richmond, Surrey: Japan Library, 2002); Selçuk Esenbel, "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 1, 2004): 1140-70, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/109.4.1140>; Selçuk Esenbel, "The Legacy of the War and the World of Islam in Japanese Pan-Asian Discourse: Wakabayashi Han's Kaikyō Sekai to Nihon," in *Rotem Kowner (Ed.), Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5*, 1 (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2007), 263-80; Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*, E-book. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

9 Christopher W. Hughes, Alessio Patalano, and Robert Ward, "Japan's Grand Strategy: The Abe Era and Its Aftermath," *Survival* 63, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 125-60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2021.1881258>; Michael A. Glosny, "The Grand Strategies of Rising Powers: Reassurance, Coercion, and Balancing Responses" (Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2012); Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," 88.

10 G. John Ikenberry, "Reasons of State: Oil Politics and The Capacities of American Government," *Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London*, 1988, 5, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt207g7cv>.

11 Roy Licklider, "The Power of Oil: The Arab Oil Weapon and the Netherlands, the United King-

Since then, Japan's primary security concern has been the Middle East's energy supplies, on which it depends 70% of the time. The Comprehensive National Security Concept (Sōgō Anzen Hoshō-総合安全保障) was launched on July 17, 1980, during Prime Minister Suzuki Zenkō's term (1980-1982), as a result of the crisis' continuing impact.¹² The primary goal of this initiative was to provide effective economic assistance to countries that may help Japan's international security. The context of security in this case was security of energy supply.

Establishing Multidimensional Relations Network and Japan's Middle East Energy Dependence

The majority of essential energy resources, such as oil, coal, and iron ore, are insufficient in Japan. Apart from farming rice to feed its population, practically every aspect of the country's enormously complex industrial cycle is reliant on foreign resources. This cycle of importing goods from wherever they are, processing them at home, and exporting them necessarily requires strong and diverse trade relations. In order to survive and advance in response to these conditions, Japan has become a master of commerce.¹³ As a result, one of Japan's top foreign policy aims is to strengthen this economic and commercial cycle. In essence, with the Yoshida Doctrine (1948-1954), which shaped its international character after WWII, Japan redefined its international role as a trading state (*shonin kokka*-社士国家) and evolved into an economic superpower by focusing on economic development.¹⁴ Then, in the early 1970s, Japan's burgeoning living standards and exponential economic growth propelled the state to the forefront of world monetary and financial affairs.¹⁵ The network of economic collaborations, which was

dom, Canada, Japan, and the United States," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1988): 214.

12 The first version the proposal report was presented to Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira (1978-1980) in 1980; T. Akaha, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 4 (1991): 324-25, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645387>.

13 B. Akgün and Şaban H. Çalış, "Reluctant Giant: The Rise of Japan and Its Role in the Post-Cold War Era," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2003): 1.

14 Pehlivanlı, "From Peace State to Peacekeeping State: Japan's Changing National Role Conception and Foreign Policy Norms," 69.

15 David N. Balaam and Bradford Dillman, *Introduction to International Political Economy* (Routledge, 2013), 167.

not limited to its own region, was what granted the Japan's the status as an industrial superpower.

Energy trade, which is a sub-category of Japan's foreign trade relations, was added to the country's agenda in the mid-1950s. The efforts of businessman Taro Yamashita (Arabian Taro- 1889-1967), the founder of the Japan Arabian Oil Company, which was looking for oil trade in the Gulf region, are regarded as the commencement of Japanese energy relations with the Gulf.¹⁶ According to Taro Yamashita, who witnessed the United States' oil embargo on Japan prior to WWII, a drop of oil was as valuable as a drop of blood.¹⁷ Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, one of Japan's most powerful leaders at the time, backed Yamashita, believing that "Japan would not be regarded a first-class country until it gained control over its own oil resources".¹⁸

With the expropriation of the Suez Canal by Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein (1918-1970) in July 1956, England and France began to lose influence in the Middle East as Arab nationalism grew. At the same time, Taro Yamashita continued his long-term attempts in the Persian Gulf's Saudi-Kuwait Neutral Oil Zone. The oil concession agreement that the French company had to terminate, owing to the Suez Canal problem, was offered to Taro by King Saud bin Abdulaziz (1953-1964). Taro responded by visiting Saudi Arabia and Kuwait three times in 1958, after a year of arduous talks, he was able to acquire oilfield concessions from two Arabian Gulf countries.¹⁹ The cabinet structure of the state, a lack of trained manpower, and economic shortcomings all together played a significant role in this first oil concession offered by Saudi Arabia to a non-Western country. Additionally, the Saudis sought to balance their dependence on the United States in terms of energy technologies and markets by giving Japan an oil concession.²⁰

16 Juzo Kimura, "Japan's Middle East Policy: Impact of the Oil Crises," *Kobe University Law Review* 19, no. 17-37 (1985): 23, <http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/repository/00166912.pdf>.

17 Ahmed Kandil, "Political Economy of International Cooperation Between Japan and Saudi Arabia: The Arabian Oil Company as a Case Study," in *AJAMES*, Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies 22-1 (Tokyo: Dig Printing Co.Ltd, 2006), 32.

18 Kandil, 33.

19 Kunio Katakura, "Taro Yamashita and the Rising Sun Oil; How Resource-Poor Japan Did Deal with the Middle-East and Islamic World, the Major Energy Providers in Modern Age?," Former Ambassador to UAE, Iraq and Egypt, accessed October 15, 2020, <http://www.gipc.akita-u.ac.jp/~tadokoro/lecture/doc/freshman/2015/Akita%20Univ.%20Special%20Lecture%20memo%2020150519.pdf>.

20 Kandil, "Political Economy of International Cooperation Between Japan and Saudi Arabia: The



Image 1. A shot of Taro Yamashita, his team and Saudi executives. Carla Chahrour, "The Evolution of Oil Trade between Japan and the Middle East," Arab News Japan, October 21, 2020, https://www.arabnews.jp/en/business/article_29338/.

With this first attempt in the economic sense following WWII, economic and diplomatic relations with the Middle East region remained limited for a time. After the oil crisis, Taro Yamashita's Middle East-focused perspective was inevitably remembered in Japanese foreign policy and Japan attempted to solve the oil supply problem by altering its energy policies with the following strategies; (1) increasing the range of energy sources, (2) expansion of economic relations with other oil-rich countries, (3) to concentrate on saving energy²¹ and reducing energy density, and (4) increasing exports to meet rising energy prices.²²

These strategies have also gained Japan significance in economic relations with countries in the Middle East. While the Japan's energy dependency on

Arabian Oil Company as a Case Study," 31.

21 "Japan Energy Conservation Handbook," 2013, 26-28, <https://www.asiaeec-col.eccj.or.jp/wpdata/wp-content/uploads/handbook13.pdf>; Türkan Arslan, "Emerging Energy Trends in East Asia: The Relationship between Production Levels and World Oil Prices" (Master's Thesis, Institute of Social Sciences, Boğaziçi University, 2019), 79-84.

22 Valerie Yorke, "Oil, the Middle East and Japan's Search for Security," *International Affairs* 57, no. 3 (1981): 428.

the Middle East has decreased since 1985, the regional dependency ratios in Japan's total energy imports have also considerably changed. As Japan's energy import rate of the Middle East fell from 85 percent to 59 percent, the Asia-Pacific region's proportion of energy imports rose to 40%. Japan's preferences in the Asia-Pacific area have shifted to other mostly Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.²³ The import percentage of Australia surged from zero to 15 percent in Japan's energy import model from 1970 to 1999, as the import percentage of other East Asian countries nearly doubled from 13 to 23%.²⁴

Energy types	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1999
<i>Oil</i>	98%	95%	86%	73%	70%	66%	61%
<i>LNG</i>	1%	2%	7%	12%	13%	3%1	15%
<i>LPG</i>	1%	2%	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%
<i>Coal</i>	0%	0%	3%	10%	12%	16%	20%
Proportion of the Middle East	85%	76%	66%	56%	55%	57%	59%
<i>Oil</i>	85%	78%	71%	70%	72%	79%	86%
<i>LNG</i>	0%	0%	12%	8%	6%	9%	18%
<i>LPG</i>	84%	74%	82%	81%	78%	79%	84%
<i>Coal</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 1. Japan's import rates by energy type and share of the Middle East region from 1970 to 1999. Lesbirel, 5

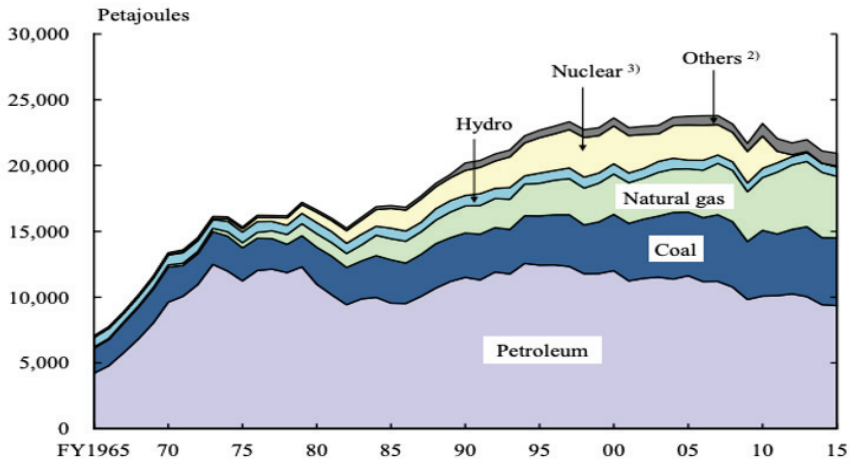
The Japan National Oil Corporation (JNOC) is the most well-known initiative, which was formed in 1967 to diversify oil acquisition sources.²⁵ Yet, as these data show, Japan became highly dependent on Middle Eastern countries for energy resources during the same period. In the 1980s, Japan started to encourage foreign oil investments by private companies due to the inadequacy of JNOC. JNOC was succeeded by Japan Oil, Gas, and Metals

23 B. Bryan Barber, *Japan's Relations with Muslim Asia* (Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 71-73.

24 S. H. Lesbirel, "Diversification and Energy Security Risks: The Japanese Case," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2004): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S146810990400129X>.

25 "A Fresh Start," *Petroleum Economist*, June 1, 2004, <https://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/asia-pacific/2004/a-fresh-start>.

Total Primary Energy Supply ¹⁾



1) A different statistical method was used for the figures for FY1989 and prior. 2) Photovoltaic, wind power, geothermal energy, etc. 3) In fiscal 2014, the domestic supply of nuclear energy was zero due to the suspended operation of all nuclear power plants in Japan.
Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Figure 1. Total primary energy demand of Japan (1965-2015). *Statistical Handbook of Japan 2017*, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2017, 76, <https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/pdf/2017all.pdf>; Joule is a unit of energy. Petajoule is equal to 1 quadrillion (10¹⁵) joules. 210 PJ is equivalent to about 50 megatons.

National Corporation (JOGMEC) in the 1990s.²⁶

When looking at the energy import diversification (table 1), which has altered as a result of the aforementioned initiatives, the shift of Japan's hub from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region is notable. It is necessary to mention the following detail here; after the oil crisis, Japan continued its actions to ensure its oil supply while also promote vehicles with high energy-saving technologies.²⁷ As a result, the oil crisis was partially turned into an opportunity, and many Japanese products, particularly automobiles,²⁸ widely purchased on international markets.

²⁶ "JOGMEC-Japan Oil Gas and Metals National Corporation," February 29, 2004, <http://www.jogmec.go.jp/english/index.html>.

²⁷ J. Ogawa, F. Noda, and Y. Yamashita, "Japan's Energy Management Policy Experiences and Their Implications for Developing Countries," *The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan-IEEJ*, September 2010, 2.

²⁸ J. D. Hamilton, "Causes and Consequences of the Oil Shock of 2007-08," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, no. 1 (2009): 29.

Japan's strategy of diversifying its energy resource acquisition, which dates back to the 1960s, became more essential following the oil crisis and has had some consequences since the mid-1980s.²⁹ Efforts to diversify these energy sources ushered in an economic-based foreign policy. A new multi-layered Japanese resource diplomacy (*shingengaikô* 資源外交) that focused on economics and humanitarian help had launched. In this regard, Japan has begun to approach the Middle East as a potential export destination as well as a source of oil imports. To take advantage of the region's various markets, Japanese companies outside the energy sector have begun exporting Japanese products to the region. For example, Japanese manufacturing businesses such as Toyota, Honda, and Mitsubishi have gradually increased their automobile sales over the years in the region. Furthermore, Japanese construction companies have invested in a variety of infrastructure projects as well as engineering and technology in the region. For instance, the building for the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry was designed by the Japanese architectural firm Nikken Sekkei. Panasonic, Sharp, Toshiba, and more than 300 other Japanese firms took part in the construction of high-tech parts of the United Arab Emirates' telecommunications infrastructure. Toyobo has become the leading fabric manufacturer in exporting the famous Japanese thobe fabric to the Middle East region. On the other hand, other products such as aluminum, iron and steel were also exported to this region.³⁰ Since the 1970s, the Gulf countries have taken a lead role, accounting for around 80% of Japan's commerce with the Middle East.³¹ In the context of energy sources, OAPC member states supply 87.2% of Japan's total oil imports of which Saudi Arabia (37.4%) is first and the United Arab Emirates (23.7%) comes in second.³²

29 Lesbirel, "Diversification and Energy Security Risks: The Japanese Case," 29.

30 "An Oasis for Japanese Investment in the Gulf Region," The Japan Times, April 29, 2011, <https://info.japantimes.co.jp/international-reports/pdf/20110429-wer-uae.pdf>.

31 Kimura, "Japan's Middle East Policy: Impact of the Oil Crises," 17-18.

32 Loftur Thorarinnsson, "A Review of the Evolution of the Japanese Oil Industry, Oil Policy and Its Relationship with the Middle East," *Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, 2018, 5, <https://doi.org/10.26889/9781784671020>.

Japan in the Middle East with Japan Official Development Assistance (ODA)

While the Pacific War is still fresh in people's minds, Asian countries have long been cautious of Japan's economic strategies. That is why Japan has made generous and effective efforts to win Asians' 'hearts and minds' through Official Development Assistance (ODA) aids. Thus, relations with the region's countries were maintained through major businesses³³ like Mitsubishi and Fujitsu, as well as government institutions, group investors, employer holdings, and large family businesses.³⁴ Unlike in Asian countries, these businesses have had a chance to easily make investments and provide aid to Middle Eastern countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia. There was no historical animosity, and the Japanese were regarded as representatives of a model nation. As a result, it would not be incorrect to infer that the Japanese found a more flexible field of activity in the region. Furthermore, notwithstanding the problematic nature of the military dimension of Western security policies toward the Middle East, the most popular feature of Japanese foreign policy, as a result of the Japanese constitution, has been the choice of economic help to developing countries. Yet, ODA aid, the primary tool of Japanese foreign policy, has been criticized in the past for the lack of a general ODA philosophy or ideology.³⁵ This criticism stems from a simplistic point of view, and these aids are more of an extension of the Japanese political economy than a political and ideological viewpoint. In fact, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlined Japan's constant reliance on energy in order to justify the aid to the Middle East. Cultural, commercial, and political engagement with other Middle Eastern countries have been achieved to some extent as a result of these economic aids. Furthermore, ODA aids have functioned as a powerful foreign trade vector.

Another criticism leveled against Japan is that it leverages foreign aid to further its own goals. However, the same can be said of every state;³⁶ this is

33 In Japanese, these groups are referred to as keiretsu (系列), zaibatsu (財閥), and zaikai (財界).

34 Thiago Corrêa Malafaia, "Japanese International Relations: An Assessment of the 1971-2011 Period," *Brazilian Political Science Review* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2016): 11.

35 Akaha, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment," 333.

36 W. Steven Hook and Guan Zhang, "Japan's Aid Policy since the Cold War: Rethoric and Reality," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 11 (November 1998): 1053-56; Balcı and Yeşiltaş, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımların Kullanılması: Japonya Örneği (Using Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool: The

an undeniable trend. Japan is believed to conduct this more systematically. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI / Tsūshō-sangyōshō / 通商産業省) and the Ministry of Finance (Zaimu-shō / 財務省) use this mechanism to maximize how much aid is delivered based on the country's budget. Through the Economic Planning Agency (it handed over this task completely to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimu-shō / 外務省) determines how and to which countries the aid will be given. This strategy has led to Japan's achievement in acquiring, maintaining, and sustaining the reputation of being one of the countries that provides the most aid in the world.

Following the 1973 oil crisis, which clearly revealed Japan's fragile energy dependence, Japan changed its aid strategy as a global economic actor. Immediately following the crisis, Arab countries were promised \$3 billion in aid. As a result of the crisis, Japan has focused its attention on the Middle East region, which is rich in energy resources.³⁷ The first actor that comes to mind as having an impact on Japanese aid policy is the United States. Because it is well known that Japan's attempts to assist Cambodia (1979) and the Philippines (1992) from the ASEAN countries were delayed by U.S. criticism.³⁸ However, the consideration that Japanese foreign aid in the Middle Eastern region was made in line with U.S. wishes may not reflect the reality because the amount, method, and quality of this aid in the region have progressed at Japan's discretion. Japan operated in compliance with its own national interests by neglecting American concerns regarding aid in the Middle East, particularly regarding the Palestine conflict. As an exceptional example of this, when Japan wanted to send economic aid to Iran in 1993,

Case of Japan)," 174.

37 Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," 93; Akgün and Çalış, "Reluctant Giant: The Rise of Japan and Its Role in the Post-Cold War Era," 10.

38 Dennis T. Yasutomo, "Why Aid? Japan as an Aid Great Power," *Pacific Affairs* 62, no. 4 (Winter -1990 1989): 492-93; Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," 92; Jr. Robert M. Orr, "The Rising Sun: Japan's Foreign Aid to ASEAN, The Pasific Basin and the Republic of Korea," *Journal of International Affairs* 41, no. 1 (1987): 41; William L. Brooks and Jr. Robert M. Orr, "Japan's Foreign Economic Assistance," *Asian Survey* 25, no. 3 (March 1985): 326; Balcı and Yeşiltaş, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımların Kullanılması: Japonya Örneği (Using Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool: The Case of Japan)," 177.

it was subjected to a U.S. warning.³⁹ While attempting to relaunch this aid, they were halted in 1995, when the United States stated that it would impose double tariffs on expensive Japanese automobiles.⁴⁰ After a while, Japan maintained its help to Iran with the aim of maintaining its own oil supply security. In some ways, this circumstance demonstrates the autonomy of Japanese foreign policy in the Middle East.

Another conclusion to be derived from Japan's ODA investment policies from 1973 to 2001 is that ASEAN countries, which have significant commercial ties with Japan, trailed behind as compared to Middle Eastern countries. In the 1970s, Japan provided 98 percent of total aid to Asian countries; by the 1990s, this had reduced to 65 percent.⁴¹

The importance of economic cooperation as an effective instrument for protecting national security was stressed in a White Paper issued by MITI in December, 1980. The Japanese Council of Ministers agreed in January 1981 that the amount of ODA aid for the period 1981-1985 should be at least twice that of 1976-1980. In 1980, Japan provided 160 million dollars to Pakistan, 100 million dollars to Turkey, and pledged to expand technical collaboration with Egypt. Furthermore, Japan's 85 million dollars contribution to U.N. agencies in 1988 was the second largest member contribution (9.9 percent of total), after the U.S.. In 1989, Japan's contributions to peacekeeping operations accounted for 11.4 percent of total member contributions, placing it third of behind United States (30.8 percent), and the Soviet Union (12.3 percent). In 1988, Japan provided a five-million-dollar voluntary contribution to the Afghan Mediation Commission and a ten-million-dollar donation to the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). Japan provided 14.1 million, followed by 3.1 million dollars to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).⁴²

While the Middle East region ODA ratio was 0.8 percent in 1972, it soared after the oil crisis to 24.5 percent in 1977. When the emergency loans supplied

39 Orr, "The Rising Sun: Japan's Foreign Aid to ASEAN, The Pacific Basin and the Republic of Korea," 54.

40 Akitoshi Miyashita, "Gaiatsu and Japan's Foreign Aid: Rethinking the Reactive-Proactive Debate," *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1999): 696.

41 Miyashita, 704.

42 Balcı and Yeşiltaş, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımların Kullanılması: Japonya Örneği (Using Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool: The Case of Japan)," 180.

to Egypt, Syria, and Jordan during the Gulf Crisis in 1991 were considered, the region's share of ODA aids remained at 20.4 percent. This proportion of the Middle East region has declined to 10% due to the stability and structural changes in the energy markets throughout time. Since 1992, this percentage has fluctuated between 6% and 7%. In comparison to other regions in same time period, the Middle East ranked fourth, behind Asia (54.5%), Africa (12.6%), and Central and South America (10.8 %).⁴³ As a result, the Middle East region's proportion of Japanese aid has increased significantly during times of regional crisis, but has reduced since 2001.

A Different Approach to the Search for Soft and Hard Power in the Middle East

Humanitarian diplomacy and peacebuilding initiatives became key instruments in Japanese foreign policy's search for security in the 1970s.⁴⁴ In characterizing Japanese foreign policy, Holsti used the word 'developer'. He attributed this to Japan's foreign policy practices being based on peacekeeping and humanitarian security policies.⁴⁵ Humanitarian diplomacy and economic instruments have largely superseded military instruments in Japan's approach to the Middle East.⁴⁶

Ali Balcı and Murat Yeşiltaş concluded in their related article that "... *foreign aid has been used to advance the Japanese national interest and guarantee Japanese national security since the 1950s*" and "*Japanese foreign aid policy has been shaped in line with a perception of economic and security-based interests, and humanitarian concerns have remained secondary*".⁴⁷ These findings support my view of Japanese foreign policy as being concentrated on the economy and security. Apart from pure pacifist or militarist Japanese foreign policy analysis, the importance of the 'third-way' approach emerges once more here

43 Akaha, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment," 328-29.

44 "Japan's Economic Cooperation in the Middle East," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 27, 2018, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/relation/coop.html.

45 Pehlivan Türk, "From Peace State to Peacekeeping State: Japan's Changing National Role Conception and Foreign Policy Norms," 64.

46 K. J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 296, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3013584>.

47 Yukiko Miyagi, "Japan's Middle East Security Policy: Rethinking Roles and Norms," *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 3, no. 1 (July 2011): 12.

in terms of understanding the political economy of Japanese foreign policy.

The Middle East crises provided Japan with the opportunity to evolve into a normal state with a partially independent foreign policy and an active participation in global politics using its own methods. During the energy crisis, the Japanese properly considered the implications and long-term repercussions of the process, and economic priorities were secured by humanitarian policies.⁴⁸ Yet, while it is partially true that Japanese foreign policy in the Middle East has progressively shifted from a non-military to a military axis over time,⁴⁹ it is not conceivable to say that this military status has exceeded the more active economic participation. Actually, military engagement in peacekeeping missions has been severely restricted once it comes to the use of armaments. Japan's peaceful identity has not been endangered. Japan became more assertive and clearer about its national interests and priorities during the 1990s. While doing so, it has sought to maintain its close political, economic, cultural, and costless relations with the United States and other nations that have developed over the last half-century.⁵⁰ In this respect, it has limited its policy toward the Middle East region to political discourses and energy securitization. This constraint prohibited many such Japanese foreign policy approaches from expanding beyond the normal reach. As a result, in comparison to other countries, Japan has become a reasonable actor in the Middle East region as a country that avoids the use of force. Japan's position as a welcome nation in the region has set the precedent for other countries seeking soft power in the Middle East.⁵¹ Finally, Japanese diplomacy, crowned with aid to Middle Eastern countries and active UN involvement, has progressed towards Japan's long-held ambition⁵² to be a member of the United Nations Security Council.

48 Balcı and Yeşiltaş, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Dış Yardımların Kullanılması: Japonya Örneği (Using Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool: The Case of Japan)," (167)-(192).

49 Miyagi, "Japan's Middle East Security Policy: Rethinking Roles and Norms," 15.

50 Miyagi, 9.

51 Wan, "Spending Strategies in World Politics: How Japan Has Used Its Economic Power in the Past Decade," 87.

52 Mürsel Doğrul, "Filistin-İsrail Sorununun Muhtemel Arabulucu Aktörü Olarak Japonya'nın Kapasitesi/İmkanları," *FAD- Filistin Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5 (Yaz 2019): s.81-101.

Conclusion

This article examined the political economy of Japan's foreign policy and the strategy of leveraging foreign aid to secure energy supply from 1973 to 2001. Japan's energy dependence on the Middle East region during the period of 1973-2001 has been sought to be managed through technological partnership and the adoption of a policy of orientation to alternative markets and resources. Although Japan's dependence on the region's energy resources has reduced in part, the critical threshold has not been surpassed. The 1973 Oil Crisis expanded the areas for Japan's aid program. Japan's ODA aid has been used more effectively in the Middle East region than in Asian countries with the help of no historical enmity between Japan and the Middle East region countries. Japan was recognized as a developer state in the international arena with the help of the method of using economic power and humanitarian aids. It has achieved this by following a balanced policy between the concerns of oil supplier countries of the Middle East and the demands of the United States, without compromising its national interests.

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