

Japan's Humanitarian Aid to Jordan and the Transformation of Aid Identities and Practices in New Security Challenges

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Abstract: This study measures the changing nature of humanitarian, economic, and development assistance from Japan to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan since the 20th century. First, the research summarises the history of Japanese aid to Jordan from the 1970s. Secondly, we explain how the transformation of Japan's foreign policy since the 1990s has affected its assistance in Jordan. The following sections detail how the concept of human security has been infused into Japanese foreign policy, how changes in Japan's post-Cold War security environment in East Asia have led to the incorporation of security-related issues in the aid provided to Jordan, and which assistance also needed to respond to a rapidly deteriorating regional security environment. Finally, concerning a recent case study, we detail the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Japan's development assistance in Jordan. Another factor noted here is the rapid rise of China's presence in the Middle East and its influence on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Jordan. Interestingly, these new issues emanating from outside the region have had little impact on Japan's aid to Jordan.

Keywords: aid; Japan; Jordan; COVID-19

1. Introduction

Despite their geopolitical importance as a transcontinental transport hub, Japanese diplomacy historically did not pay close attention to the Arab states compared with the United States, Asia-Pacific countries, and Europe. It is perhaps because diplomatic relations were neither good nor bad historically. However, in contrast to the past, Arab states have become vastly more important to modern Japanese foreign policy, particularly national security, in the last three decades.

Security in this paper has several dimensions — the first being economic security. Japan was heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil and natural gas during its post-war economic development. In this context, Japan alternated between hope and despair about energy supplies during political crises in the Middle East. For example, the vulnerability of Japanese energy policy was orchestrated during the oil crisis in 1973, triggered by the Organization of the Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC)'s oil embargo. Japan had to demonstrate its preference for the Arab side in the Fourth Middle Eastern War and the sovereignty of Palestine (Kikkawa, 2018). Secondly, military security has grown increasingly important for the Japanese government in the uncertain post-Cold War era. As discussed in the following sections, Japan debuted in the UN's Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) in 1992. Since then, Japan has participated in several PKO missions worldwide. Further, Japan has become involved gradually in US-led military operations in the Persian Gulf and Iraq, although the roles of the Japan Self-Defence Forces have been limited to logistical cooperation. Today, domestic controversies over Japan's new security role are often associated with Arab states.

This paper focuses on Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (hereafter, Jordan) from the perspectives of diplomacy and national security. It analyses cases in the early twenty-first century, paying attention to social crises such as the Iraq War in 2003, the Syrian Civil War, and the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020. There are two reasons to select Jordan among ODA-recipient Arab countries. Firstly, the monarchy is embedded in some contrasting regions. Jordan bordered Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Israel and occupied Palestine (in this article, this term denotes the West

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Bank). Saudi Arabia is one of the largest oil-producing countries globally and Japan's most crucial oil trade partner. Syria and Iraq have long been in the group of republican Arab hegemony through their post-war/civil war decline and are still on the way to recovery. Palestine has been the most disputed area in many Middle Eastern wars, and Jordan has hosted millions of Palestinian refugees. Jordan's proximity to these areas makes it a strategically important partner for Japan, and Jordan's prosperity contributes to Japan's diplomatic objective of regional stability, directly and indirectly. Secondly, Jordan is one of the stakeholders in the Middle East peace process and has been one of the few non-failed states in the region, particularly since the Arab Spring.

Japan has been one of Jordan's most prominent donors, next to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States and Germany. The Japanese government understands the importance of security-relevant assistance to Jordan. However, since the end of the Second World War, Japan's pacifist policy may present difficulties in providing military aid. To what extent can Japan support Jordan in terms of security? This study explores this question.

This paper consists of four sections. The first summarises the history of Japan's Arab diplomacy and the past relationship between Japan and Jordan. The second section analyses the spill-over effect of Japan's ODA to Jordan, which targets primarily non-Jordanians who reside in Jordan, such as refugees and displaced persons. The third section discusses several new challenges and anxieties about Japanese ODA towards Jordan in the early twenty-first century, mainly concerned with the destabilisation of neighbour states and the issues of refugees and terrorism. The final section briefly tests the current issues with regard to the donor, the China factor for Japanese ODA in Jordan, the recipient's problem, and the current challenges in Jordanian development caused by COVID-19.

2. Jordan in Japan's Middle East Diplomacy

2.1. Transforming Japanese Security Policy and the Middle East

The first upheaval in Japan's Middle East diplomacy occurred in 1973, immediately after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. OAPEC saw the war as an opportunity to pressure oil-importing countries into making concessions to support the Arab side in the war by threatening an oil embargo. The market price for oil jumped immediately to four times the price before the war. More than 70% of Japan's total oil imports were from the Middle East; therefore, the Japanese government sent a special mission led by Takeo Miki (later Prime Minister) to the Middle East and pledged full support for the rights of Palestinians to self-determination, as opposed to the United States' support to Israel.

This so-called oil shock significantly impacted the Japanese government, forcing it to rethink its post-war energy policy. It was also a historical moment for OAPEC, a regional regime in the Global South, as it acquired power and influence in international politics. The Japanese government learned from the experience of the 1973 oil shock and a similarly troubled economy during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, re-configuring its Middle Eastern policy from passive commitment to more active diplomacy, with securing energy supply from the OAPEC states' aggressive assistance for Palestinians as its twin policy pillars. Japan's support for Middle Eastern oil producers and securing energy supply became "common security" objectives among most developed countries. These objectives were promoted simultaneously in new Middle Eastern conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war and the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-1991. This common perception of the need for oil security had a side effect throughout the 1990s because of a series of foreign and security policies of the United States, which kept Iran and Iraq contained and sanctioned them as the spoilers of regional order. However, a group of more moderate authoritarian regimes, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states and Egypt, received strong international support, including military aid.

Nevertheless, Japan's vulnerability in energy supply was not the sole determinant of its aid policy in the Middle East. Instead, energy security is a variable factor in aid today, albeit a significant factor, given Japan's continuing dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Since the 1990s, the Japanese government has expanded its policy into providing Middle Eastern countries with a broad range of aid programmes, primarily grants, loans, and technical cooperation.

Two global trends were behind this policy change. Firstly, worldwide economic growth enabled Japan to enhance its aid to the Middle Eastern and other developing countries. For example, South East Asian states, which were most of Japan's primary aid recipients in the late twentieth century, had already become more developed countries (MDCs) in the 1990s. GCC states were also high-income countries. Secondly, there was a paradigm shift in development assistance. In the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report of 1994, particularly its bottom-up approach to empowering vulnerable people, the concept of human security had a significant impact on the Japanese government. The devastating results of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which left many Southeast Asian MDCs' economies in crisis and raised fears of unemployment and social unrest among their nations, were a severe warning for the Japanese government to be aware of the limitations of the traditional ODA model and the need for the security of the individual. In December 1998, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi discussed his view of human security in his speech in Hanoi entitled "Toward the Creation of a Bright Future for Asia." He identified human security as part of Japan's foreign policy and announced that a Trust Fund for Human Security would be established in the United Nations with contributions from Japan. In this speech, Obuchi mentioned:

What kind of Asia should we build in the 21st century? I believe the 21st century for Asia should be "a century of peace and prosperity built on human dignity". People should lead a creative life infused with individuality without their survival threatened and dignity violated. The state and the market must contribute to that end (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998).

The concept of human security has been translated into the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and Japan's ODAs worldwide, including Jordan. According to Kaldor (2007), the concept of human security has developed in two ways; the former was the approach taken by the Canadian government that "emphasises the security of the individual as opposed to the state, but their primary approach is on security in the face political violence (Kaldor, 2007, p. 183)." However, Japan's human security concept does not necessarily commit Japan to the "Responsibility to Protect," though this was approved in the 2005 World Summit. Instead, as Endo noted:

The Japanese human security concept has concentrated its efforts on economic development and [the] improvement of individual life infrastructure, not like the case of [the] Canadian and Western European approach, with [its] emphasis placed on political and military interventions on human rights abuse. Thus, in its pursuance of human security, Japan's main emphasis was on "freedom from poverty" rather than "freedom from violence" and "freedom from fear" (Endo, 2014, p. 299).

2.2. The History of the Japanese ODA to Jordan

Since its independence in 1946, Jordan has received continuous international aid. Jordan is also a country that receives the most considerable amount of aid. Brand (1995) described Jordan's diplomatic weakness, caused by its persistent lack of state financial resources, as a lack of "budget security" and insisted such a structural vulnerability always forced Jordan into a passive role in regional politics (Brand, 1995).

Japan's ODA to Jordan began in 1974 as an aid in the form of loans. Grant aid to Jordan also began in 1979. Both countries signed the Bilateral Technical Aid Agreement in 1985; this enabled Japan to dispatch Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers under the authority of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan's semi-governmental aid body. Also, the Japanese ODA in the 1980s for Egypt and Jordan was enormous in monetary terms, two US allies in the Middle East (Czin, 2008, p. 202). Today, Japan is one of Jordan's central donor states deeply committed to assisting Palestinians (refugees and former refugees), in cooperation with UN organisations such as the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA). The pillar of the Japanese ODA policy towards Jordan is "to keep Jordan's stability and foster its industrial infrastructure." Japan's Jordanian ODA policy has three priority areas: autonomous and continuous economic growth, poverty reduction and correction of disparities, and regional stabilisation.

3. One ODA, multiple recipients

As demonstrated in Section 1 above, Japan and Jordan share a clear agenda and goals for development. The significant challenges in Jordan are water scarcity, shortage of cultivatable land, limited access to the sea, overpopulation, and unemployment. Further, the social strata in Jordan that are the target of Japanese ODA vary significantly. The seven-decade-long influx of Palestinian refugees has resulted in segmented social groups: those who have assimilated into the local society and those who have not and remain refugees. New refugees arriving from Iraq and Syria complicate matters further still.

The problem of water supply is an illustration of these difficulties. Once Jordan was a small society with a population of around 930,000 in 1960; at that time, it was sustainable. However, urbanisation and, most notably, the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and 1967 overburdened the inadequate urban infrastructure in the capital city Amman and its satellite cities, such as Zarqa. Jordan's current population is over 10 million, increasing ten-fold since 1960. Thus, among all the water problems in Jordan, tackling the water supply and sewage systems, particularly in urban areas, is the most urgent issue. Every year, except in 2012 and 2016, Japan allocates enough financial resources to repair the cities' water and sewage infrastructure. These issues have been considered matters of high priority between 2001 and 2021.

Amman and Zarqa suffer from overpopulation and have been the main targets of Japanese water aid. However, northern cities such as Barqa and Irbid have overtaken them in terms of water shortages associated with rapid refugee population growth since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. The Japanese government has launched an urgent aid program in Barqa province, the Program for Urgent Improvement of Water Sector for the Host Communities of Syrian Refugees in Northern Governorates, in association with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Although it is estimated that over a million Syrians are domiciled in Jordan, Palestinians remain the most prominent foreign community. Thus, the Japanese ODA that officially targets Jordan includes many Palestinian Jordanians and Palestinian refugees in its scope. It is almost impossible to categorise Palestinians as a single group because their settlement patterns in Jordan include at least the following:

- (1). The group that came to Jordan before Jordan's gaining its independence – "old-timers" (some families are considered a part of the establishment).
- (2). Refugees who fled from the West Bank to Jordan during the first Middle Eastern war.
- (3). Refugees who fled from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the third Middle Eastern war.

The Jordanian government has never clarified the number of Palestinian Jordanians living in Jordan; therefore, it is difficult to identify which group of immigrants has the majority. However, it is clear that most of the Palestinian latecomers – the people in categories (2) and (3) above – obtain Jordanian nationality and settle in urban areas. Some Palestinian Jordanians have emerged as the hub of entrepreneurship and urban social movements in Jordan; however, there are still poor Palestinians in refugee camps at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid.

Against this background, the Japanese ODA in Jordan often includes refugees as one of the prioritised targets in its policy for poverty reduction and correction of disparities, one of the three priority areas. Almost all projects in this priority area are grant aids. A bottom-up approach called *kusa-no-ne ningen-no anzenhosho* (grassroots human security) is employed for each program: infant education, disability aid, and medical care, usually under the aegis of JICA.

4. Japan's Military Security and ODA in Jordan

4.1. The Changing Nature of Conflict and Japanese Diplomacy Toward the Arab States

Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution (renunciation of war) demonstrates that pacifism has been at the vanguard of Japanese security and foreign policies since the Second World War. Japan had never deployed its armed forces (Japan Self-Defense Forces, JSDF) to foreign countries until its first participation in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) in Cambodia in 1992. Post-Cold War global security challenges, such as the resurgence of armed sub-state actors and the rise of secessionism around the world, have meant that all Japanese administrations since the 1990s have experienced the dilemma of ensuring compatibility between the peace constitution and their new responsibility to cease and deter conflicts and human rights abuses in developing countries.

The concept of human security, set out in the quote by Endo in Section 1 above, was an ideal compromise that allowed the Japanese government to tackle Jordan's challenges without significant difficulty. However, Japan's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations on occasion kindles domestic debates about its "unconstitutionality" in cases where the mission has the possibility of using force. Nevertheless, most Japanese positively evaluate Japan's visible contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. The results of an opinion poll about Japanese participation in peacekeeping operations were conducted by the Japanese Cabinet Office in 2016 (Cabinet Office, 2016). In total, 93 per cent of respondents largely supported Japanese participation in peacekeeping operations. In the first opinion poll on this question in 1994, 83.9 per cent agreed with Japanese participation in peacekeeping operations (Cabinet Office, 1994). Japanese peacekeeping operations have received steady support from most Japanese people. The expanded role of the JSDF in non-UN operations is another significant phenomenon in Japanese contributions to peacebuilding. The fact that the Middle East is the main operational field for the JSDF raises a new question about unconstitutionality, although the JSDF has never committed to frontline combat operations.

Jordan was one of the few Arab states not to fail after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. This has meant Jordan has had a more significant role as a shelter for refugees and asylum seekers and a frontline state against terrorism, mainly the rising IS threat. In its Diplomatic Bluebook 2017, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) reported that Jordan "remains comparatively stable in the constantly turbulent Middle East region. Jordan has played an important role in the peace and stability of the region, such as with countermeasures against extremists, its acceptance of a number of Syrian refugees, and active involvement in the Middle East peace process. The country's role is highly appreciated by the international community" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017, p. 167). Against this background, disbursements soared from OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries and international organisations, with Japan providing yen loans to Jordan in 2013 for the first time in 13 years. The United States, meanwhile, the largest donor to Jordan, disbursed \$US 11.92 billion to the nation in 2014, triple its total for 2010.

Japan provides its grant aid to developing countries in the lower-income group, setting its "lower-income" criteria as Gross National Income (GNI) under \$US 2,000 per capita. Jordan's per capita GNI rose to \$US 2,120 in 1987 and \$US 3,920 in 2016; thus, Jordan is a lower-middle-income state by Japan's criteria. However, Japan still provides grant aid to Jordan. MOFA explains the reason in its Objectives of ODA in Jordan as follows:

The stability of the Middle East is significantly crucial for our country, which is dependent on oil imports from that region. Jordan is a buffer state in the Middle East that faces several destabilising elements. Jordan also contributes actively to solutions in the Middle East peace process as a moderate actor in the region. Japan contributes to maintaining stability in Jordan and consolidating regional order (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016, p. 315).

The above embodies Japan's normative policy on energy and the Middle East peace process. Remarkably, Jordan is called a "buffer state" without explanation. In terms of orthodox diplomacy, a "buffer state" is a weak state surrounded by regional powers such that the state must retain its potential as much as possible and keep a passive good-neighbour policy to maintain neutrality. For example, the former Jordanian diplomat Muashir (2008) noted that Jordan had endured regional conflicts and pressures from bellicose states such as Israel and Egypt for decades. Thus, Muashir approved the Middle East peace process that placed Jordan successfully as a more stable neutral actor based on a spirit of reconciliation (Muasher, 2008, p. 13–32). On the other hand, Brand focused on Jordan's economic

structural vulnerability, forcing the Jordanian government to remain neutral among donor states (Brand, 1994).

A series of regional conflicts in the early twenty-first century – the Iraq War in 2003 and the following fragmentation of Iraq, the post-Arab-Spring civil war in Syria, and political turmoil in Egypt – have changed the nature of Middle Eastern regional politics completely. The new reality has forced Jordan to take a more proactive role, particularly in refugee support and participation in international anti-terror networks.

Regional turmoil has also prompted a revision of Jordan's security policies. The Jordanian government has raised the alert level for border control and sought a new way to assume a more prominent role in regional security. In the context of the deteriorating situation in Syria and Iraq, Jordan took multiple roles in regional security, supporting US military operations, securing the western defence line of Saudi Arabia (and hence GCC member states), and providing one of the largest sanctuaries for Syrian refugees. The growing military partnership with the US brought a progressive improvement in Jordan's military equipment.

The recent snowballing regional turmoil has made Jordan a more vital buffer state that deters insurgency spillover into GCC states. The Japanese government has also supported Jordan's more assertive role in Middle Eastern security. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's new security concept, "Proactive Contribution to Peace," which was approved by the cabinet decision on 1 July 2014, was based on the principle of international cooperation and Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan. This enabled Japan to facilitate a more active role concerning peace and stability at regional and international levels, for example, through the JSDF's broader role in UN peacekeeping operations and cooperation with its key ally, the United States. Therefore, this decision was favourable for Jordan. As part of the Japan–Jordan Joint Statement on 20 November 2014, this new concept was explained by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and King Abdullah expressed support for Japan's new security policy.

4.2. Japan's Bottom-up Approach in Jordan ODA

Although Jordan has become a comparatively more stable and reliable partner for OECD DAC countries, its vulnerability has not changed due to the increasingly anarchic nature of the Middle East. Consequently, the "regional stabilisation" area in Japan's three priority ODA areas in Jordan and its neighbours consists of three programs: the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, Confidence Building with Neighbours, and Assistance to Syrian Refugees and Refugee-hosting Communities in Jordan. Both Jordanians and non-Jordanians are recipients of the programs.

The Corridor for Peace and Prosperity

The Corridor for Peace and Prosperity programme started in 2006 as a confidence-building measure among three stakeholders: Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. It is based on Japan's continuous support for the UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967). The program contains two concrete projects: establishing an agro-industrial park in the West Bank and facilitating the transportation of goods from the park to a distribution centre to be built in Jordan. Against the challenges presented by the occupation of the West Bank, the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP) was completed in 2015. Two companies have already settled in, and 37 companies have signed up to establish premises.

Confidence Building with Neighbours

Japan co-organises with the Jordanian government the Japan–Jordan Partnership Program (JJPP) for international professional training, chiefly in agriculture, civil engineering and healthcare, as a part of regional stabilisation. The Japanese government considers that Jordan has:

With the comparatively developed educational and technological infrastructure in the Middle East, Jordan can spread and transfer its knowledge and information obtained through Japanese technical cooperation for Jordan across the region. The expected outcome also includes Jordanian human resources contributing to the neighbouring countries' development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016a).

Therefore, the program anticipates a synergetic effect from providing professional training for non-Jordanians via Jordanian resources. In the past, Palestinian, Iraqi, Yemeni, and Afghan professionals were invited to training programs under JJPP. Even so, programs designed for Iraqis figure prominently in recent JJPP programs, including police personnel training.

Assistance to Syrian Refugees and Refugee-Hosting Communities in Jordan

The program warrants greater explanatory detail because of its status as a response to a severe emergency. Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, Jordan has accepted over a million Syrians in total as “guests” or “displaced persons,” not as “refugees,” although over 650 thousand have registered as refugees at the UNHCR office in Jordan. The Japanese government officially recognises UN-registered Syrians as refugees. It has set up a support program for Syrian refugee camps in Northern Jordan and maintains its existing aid programmes for Palestinian refugee camps across Jordan.

Japan supports Jordanian host communities that host Syrian refugees primarily as part of Japan’s ODA objectives to maintain Jordan’s stability and foster its industrial infrastructure. Host communities vary in size, from host families to local governmental units: the primary refugee camps in Zaatari and Azraq host around 20% of all registered Syrian refugees. The rest are accommodated in Amman and other cities across Jordan. In effect, the whole territory of Jordan is a host community for Syrian refugees.

Against this background, Japan’s assistance to Syrians in Jordan is simultaneously humanitarian assistance and part of security assistance to Jordan to assist in regional stabilisation, to which the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity and Confidence Building with Neighbours also contributes.

The rise of the so-called Islamic State (IS) cast a long shadow over Jordan’s stabilisation in 2015. Jordan joined the US-led multinational anti-IS operations and dispatched combat air units to bomb sites in Syria in September 2014. In January 2015, IS announced it had detained two Japanese nationals in Syria and linked them with another abductee, a Jordanian Air Force officer captured in Syria, to issue threats against the Jordanian and Japanese governments. The case had a catastrophic outcome; all three hostages were executed separately, and footage of the executions was broadcast.

Immediately after the incident, Jordan carried out a series of anti-IS cleanup operations in Syria and pledged additional support for Middle Eastern and African countries fighting against the IS. Since the beginning of the intake of Syrian refugees and displaced persons to Jordan, the Japanese government has pledged financial and human support for several programs in Jordan in association with UN organisations: for example, the Anti-Terrorism, Stabilisation and Support for De-radicalisation Programme with UNDP as a part of the assistance to the Syrian Refugees and Refugee-Hosting Communities in Jordan, the Anti-Terror Law Enforcement Program in Jordan, and the Program for Crime-Investigating Ability Improvement in Jordan and its International Cooperation, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Most of these programs continued in 2017 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). In the UNODC programme above, Japan provided x-ray security equipment under the Japan–Jordan Partnership Program to support tightened Jordanian border control at al-Kalama, the sole checkpoint between Jordan and Iraq.

5. New challenges in Japan’s ODA to Jordan

We now turn to two case studies that are relatively new and could have implications for Japan’s policy toward Jordan. The first is the impact of COVID-19 – which has been raging globally since 2020 – on Japan’s ODA to Jordan. Second is the impact of the presence of China – the world’s second-largest economy with growing influence in the Middle East – on Japan’s policy towards the Middle East and Jordan.

5.1. Japan’s Aid to Jordan During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 has been significant in Jordan: When the spread of COVID-19 from China to Europe and Iran was reported in the spring of 2020, the Jordanian

government implemented border closures and urban lockdowns. As a result, the number of daily reported infections in Jordan remained in the single- and double-digit ranges, and most of the infected people were returning students and migrant workers. After six months of restrictions, the government decided to reopen the borders and resume regular classes in public schools as of September 2020. The pandemic in Jordan occurred amid a series of daily life recovery process. The spread of the disease was evident in the densely populated northern areas near the Syrian border and in Amman and other large cities, where the number of new infections reached 3,000 to 6,000 per day – a high enough number for a kingdom with a population of around 10 million people. Therefore, night and weekend curfews were imposed again, and economic activity stagnated (Kikkawa, 2020).

Following the socioeconomic insecurity, the unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of FY2020 was 24.7% (22.6% for men and 32.8% for women). This meant a significant decrease (i.e., 5.7%) compared to the same period of the previous year (a decrease of 4.9% for men and 8.7% for women) (Department of Statistics, 2021). The tourism industry in rural areas was particularly devastated. The Jordan Tourism Board had focused on developing resorts in the Dead Sea area and in Aqaba and promoting southern tourist destinations, such as Petra and Wadi Rum. In fact, the inbound demand had been vital for the local economy. Since the spring of 2020, the government has been easing entry restrictions for foreign tourists, although strict lockdowns are implemented every few months (Jordan Tourism Board, 2021). The groundwork for a recovery in tourism demand, mainly from the GCC and Europe, is far from a full-fledged recovery.

The COVID-19 infection in Jordan exploded in the second half of 2020, and its after-effects are continuing into 2022. So how has this pandemic affected Japan's aid to Jordan? The aid package in the fiscal year 2020 naturally reflected the situation prior to COVID-19, with the central pillar of aid being the provision of X-ray inspection equipment at Aqaba Customs in the southernmost part of Jordan. This policy implementation resulted in a 100 per cent inspection rate of targeted vehicles travelling to and from the southern Jordanian border and significantly prevented the inflow of arms, explosives and drugs – a severe security problem for decades. This project extended the policy of supporting Jordan's security following the provision of equipment at Iraqi border checkpoints in 2017. In FY2021, however, COVID-19-related health and medical equipment worth 400 million yen (around USD 3.5 million) were provided to Jordan as part of its Economic and Social Development Programme scheme.

Nevertheless, the central pillar of assistance in the same year was a plan to improve the Zai Water Supply System, a multi-year project that provides water supply for Amman and surrounding area. There was a policy to support living infrastructure by ensuring a stable water supply to the metropolitan area with an ever-growing population and reducing the system's electricity consumption. The programme in 2021 had a budget of approximately 2.38 billion yen (around USD 20 million), a clear difference from the budget related to COVID-19. However, eventually, at the end of 2021, the government of Japan granted an emergency yen loan worth USD 100 million to Jordan as a COVID-19 measure (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022a).

In short, the emergency response to COVID-19 became the only pillar of aid to Jordan in FY2021. Concerning the global shortage of the COVID-19 vaccine, Japan provided approximately 42 million doses, mainly domestically produced AstraZeneca vaccines, mainly to friendly countries through the international vaccine donation framework COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX). Many Asian countries, such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Taiwan, received vaccines directly from the Japanese government, while in the Middle East, Iran, Egypt and Syria received vaccines from Japan via COVAX. Japan has also provided financial assistance to Last One Mile, an international cold chain transport network for refrigerated vaccines, via UNICEF or JICA. In the Middle East, Japan provided transport assistance to Palestine via JICA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022b). However, Jordan has not requested either assistance.

On the other hand, Japan's ODA policy to Jordan formulated in the 2010s has been implemented as planned, even in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and there have been no requests for changes from the Jordanian side. It is noteworthy that the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation, which has continued since the beginning of the 21st century, has been reinforced even during the COVID-19 outbreak. For example, the Politico-Military Dialogue, an annual director-general-level meeting between the Ministries of

Foreign Affairs and Defence of the two countries, has been held since 2019 to exchange views on bilateral security cooperation and the situation in the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022c). In a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and King Abdullah in January 2022, cooperation on COVID-19 was also on the agenda. However, the main discussion topics were still strengthening cooperation based on the strategic partnership between the two monarchies, support for the Middle East Peace based on a two-state coexistence between Israel and Palestine, and cooperation with UNRWA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022d).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has plagued the Jordanian people for nearly two years, is ending, and “normal life,” including individual life and social movement that had been banned throughout the period, is expected to return to the streets. Nevertheless, various grievances are expected to erupt, including economic and employment issues, which have already entered a serious phase, and the government’s ability to respond prudently will be tested.

5.2. China’s Rising Presence in the Middle East

As already discussed in this paper, the Middle East is the region where Japan considered relatively low priority area rather than the Asia-Pacific region. However, the dramatic increase in the military presence of Japan’s only military ally, the United States, in the Middle East at the beginning of the 21st century and the continued tension in diplomatic relations between Japan and China over the past decade has extended to the Middle East. In other words, the complex relationship between Japan, the US and China in the Asia-Pacific region has been brought to the Middle East.

The increased US military presence in the Middle East, mainly after 9/11, prompted Japan, one of the US’s key allies, to transform Japanese aid programmes in the Middle East into logistical support to the US military. This phenomenon was typical during Junichiro Koizumi’s administration. Koizumi supported the George W. Bush Jr. administration’s invasion of Afghanistan under the interpretation of UN Charter 51 as collective defence and passed a new law commonly called Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in October 2001. The anti-terrorism law enabled the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels to back up the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean by radar detection and refuelling assistance. Koizumi’s successors extended the anti-terrorism law by a two-year period to 2009, and JMSDF finally ended its operation in January 2010. After the US invasion of Iraq, Koizumi also passed special legislation with a four-year term limit called the Act on “Special Measures concerning Humanitarian Relief and Reconstruction Work and Security Assistance in Iraq” in July 2003 to support the US-led multinational forces logistically. JSDF amphibiously operated in Iraq and Kuwait between December 2003 and December 2008. JSDF experienced the downsizing of its foreign operations during the liberal government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) from 2009 to 2012.

However, JSDF saw an expansion of its operation scale again following the birth of the second Abe administration. Abe’s diplomatic legacy highlights the well-balanced outputs that ensured the compatibility with the two paradoxical policies: his unwavering quest for national interests and consistent support for the values-based and rules-based international order. As Hosoya (2020) argued, it was unprecedented because Abe was the first prime minister who successfully repositioned Japan in the centre of the Asia-Pacific power games, compared with his predecessors’ short-sighted efforts to maintain the patchwork-like bilateral relationship with the United States, China or Russia, and to mediate domestic conflict of interests (Hosoya, 2020). The re-awakening of security reform in Japan was implemented concurrently with the rapid presence of Chinese naval power in the East and the South China Sea and the US’s decreased engagement in its security cooperation with the democratic administrations. China’s rapid rise in its military expenditure, which surpassed that of Japan in the mid-2000s, had a tremendous impact on Japanese policymakers, including Abe, to boost the additional budget for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in its values-based diplomacy promotion, including international democracy assistance as soft power (Ichihara, 2018, p. 79–87).

In addition to Iraq, JSDF’s foreign operations in the Middle East increased; for example, JMSDF dispatched its replacement oilers and destroyers to the Indian Ocean to support the War on Terror between 2001 and 2010. The Japan Ground Self Defense Forces (JGSDF) and JMSDF sent a joint unit to East Africa to join counter-piracy operations after 2009. JGSDF’s

detachment of peacekeeping units to South Sudan as part of the United Nations Missions in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) between 2011 and 2017 faced a Japanese parliament battle because the Japanese unit's vital concern might be embroiled in a local civil war. The Middle East has also attracted the Japanese public's attention due to the deaths and injuries of several Japanese civilians in a series of terror and criminal attacks in the region, including the murder of a Japanese man in Iraq in 2004 and a massacre in Algeria in 2013. In addition, the Arab Spring and its subsequent turmoil negatively impacted Japanese public opinion of JSDF's operations in the Middle East. Consequently, in 2013, JGSDF ended its mission with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in Golan Heights dating back to 1996 because of the increased security concern caused by the Syrian Civil War after 2011.

It is noteworthy that, after the establishment of his first administration, Abe and his cabinet members frequently visited the Middle East, particularly the GCC states and Iran. Iran was a friendly power to Japan, so the two states had a summit and foreign ministerial dialogues every year during the second Abe administration. In the late 2010s, Abe found his role in the region through parallel efforts in the US–Iranian dialogue and mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the worsening security risk, culminating with a series of oil tanker attacks in the Persian Gulf by unidentified armed groups in May and June 2019, prompted the Japanese government to send a JMSDF destroyer to support its commercial ship navigation and intelligence in the region.

What is the extent of China's influence in the Middle East and Jordan? Over the past decade, relations between Japan and China have been less than friendly, but that has not led to conflict between the two countries in the Middle East. Besides, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China can exert influence without actually demonstrating military power, as seen during the four times it exercised its veto power over the Syrian Civil War issue. So there is no need for China to work directly with PKOs or local governments to improve their security capabilities, as shown in the case of Japanese ODA. In this respect, it is unlikely that Japan and China will compete with each other (Evron, 2017, p. 193). As for Jordan, China has not achieved any notable results in ODA. Historically, China has not been a significant donor to Jordan, and the fact that Chinese aid is based on loans means that China is currently unlikely to become a significant donor to the monarchy. The Jordanian government tends to avoid foreign loans and paid aid; at best, it introduced a limited number of Chinese vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, China's interests in the Middle East have been aligned with its long-term foreign policy, the New Maritime Silk Road, since 2013, and its policy focus has been on the Indian Ocean coast. Therefore, as discussed in this paper, China has been nervous about the recently intensifying US–Japan security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and might be wary of expanding the SDF's quasi-military activities in the Middle East and North Africa. In this sense, the overlap between Japanese and Chinese national interests is probably most visible in Djibouti.

The JSDF base in Djibouti is an iconic example that has provided a strong point for various JSDF operations since 2011. Initially, JSDF built a base for its anti-piracy mission in Somalia, which started in 2009 following the enactment of the Anti-Piracy Law. Contrary to its temporal and supportive role, JSDF's base in Djibouti has experienced significantly increased numbers in its operation, covering Somalia and the Indian Ocean. The increased security risk for Japanese trade activities in the Persian Gulf encouraged Abe, in a cabinet approval in December 2019, to proceed in the new stage of security commitment in the region and dispatch a JMSDF destroyer Takanami and patrol aircraft P-3C in their maritime research operation in the area of the northern Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman, excluding the Persian Gulf. The Prime Minister's decision was swift, but the immediate motive was a series of oil tanker attacks in the Persian Gulf by unidentified armed groups in May and June 2019. Abe's already concrete diplomatic network in the Gulf contributed to this improvident protocol. He met the Iranian president in Japan in December 2019; visited the Saudi, UAE, and Omani leaders in January 2020; and secured their support for the new JMSDF activity (Prime Minister's Office of Japan 2021). JSDF also enabled its cooperation with the US Naval base in Bahrain, while it did not participate in the US-led maritime security initiative in the region aiming at containing Iran. The JSDF base in Djibouti was also used for the new operation's forward operation site. Ironically, Djibouti is one of the crucial hubs on China's New Maritime Silk Road and is also becoming a base for the country's navy (Gresh, 2017). In this respect, Japan's links with China in its military activities in the Middle East must be acknowledged.

6. Conclusions

This article analysed Japanese ODA in Jordan, focusing primarily on areas of security concern. As described in the introduction, the oil shocks between 1973 and the early 1980s, security concerns in the Middle East, and the rise of GCC power in international politics affected Japan's economic security policy-making. However, as discussed in Sections 1 and 3, Japan's long-lasting vulnerability in energy supply was not the sole determining factor in its aid policy in the Middle East. Instead, a paradigm shift in the Japanese government's aid policy in the 1990s—the introduction of the human security approach that focuses on the empowerment of vulnerable people in addition to some push factors, namely the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 and the 1997 Asian financial crisis—had a more significant impact than economic security on subsequent Japanese ODA policies. Today, Japanese ODA to Jordan in several fields – water and sewage – clearly targets the infrastructure and people in poor urban areas.

In addition, Japan has provided more assistance to areas relevant to military security in its ODA to Jordan, particularly after increased security concerns about the Middle East from the early twenty-first century on. The two phenomena – Japan's more aggressive commitment to Middle Eastern security, including its deployment of JSDF in the region by carefully limiting its military power under Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution, as well as Jordan's greater responsibility for regional security – occurred coincidentally because of a series of crises after the Iraq War. In addition to war-torn Iraq, Syria became a fragile state, and the IS rose and fell in conflict zones in these countries. As discussed in Section 4, security challenges in Asia, namely the strengthening of the US–Japan alliance and the tensions between this alliance and China, have affected Japan's security commitment in the Middle East and its ODA policy. However, the security interests of Japan and China are far apart. The former is mainly related to human security, while the latter is concerned with expanding national interests. For both of these global commonwealth states, the only issues of contention are maritime transportation routes and energy security, and in this sense, there is little room for conflict between the two countries in Jordan.

Jordan's current problems are exclusively domestic socioeconomic issues caused by COVID-19, as argued in Section 4. As outlined in this paper, despite the onslaught of COVID-19 in Jordan, there has not been any significant impact on the Japanese aid policy. However, Jordan will have to deal with two years of economic stagnation and a disaffected population. Still, countries around the world, including Japan, evaluate Jordan as a critical buffer state with the potential to deter the expansion of anarchy into the kingdom and the GCC states, the largest oil producers in the world. The very unusual nature of Jordan today – with almost all local societal units, from host families to local governments hosting refugees and displaced persons coming from different Arab countries – means the new Japanese ODA approach in Jordan also has to deal with more diverse aid recipients than ever, as the small kingdom itself is becoming a host for a massive community of refugees and displaced persons, as it is one of the very few stable Arab countries.

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