THE OIL CRISIS AND JAPAN'S NEW MIDDLE EAST POLICY, 1973

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1973年石油危機と日本の新中東政策

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要旨

1973年十月戦争にともなって生じたエネルギー危機における日本の対アラブ外交の推移、ことに二階堂官房長官のステートメントに至る過程を、入手し得る諸資料に基づいて分析し、マイケル・ヨシツ氏の研究で紹介された法眼外務次官（当時）の認識を批判的に吟味するとともに、日本の親アラブ政策への転換なるものの内実を検討した。

"If we take the posture you ask us to take towards the Middle East, and as a result if the Arabs view us as their enemy, ending all shipments of oil to Japan, will the United States supply the oil Japan needs?"

Prime Minister Tanaka responded to Dr. Kissinger's request to stay with the United States on the Middle East issue on November 15, 1973 [1]: "No, we cannot" was his answer to which Tanaka said: "Well, then, Japan has no choice but to choose its

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own diplomatic stand." Japan's new Middle East policy was announced by the Cabinet Chief Secretary Susumu Nikaido on November 22, a week after this encounter between Tanaka and Kissinger.

The present paper represents an effort to shed light on how Japan's new policy towards the Middle East conflict came about in the aftermath of the OAPEC's decision to use oil as a political weapon in 1973. How did the subsequent energy crisis affect Japan? In so doing, it will suggest how and to what extent the U.S. affects Japan's resource diplomacy.

Although Japan did not take any part in the passage of the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 181 (II) of November 29, 1947 to partition Palestine into two parts apart from Jerusalem, it did take direct part in the San Remo Conference of 1920 [2], where the establishment of the British Mandate over Palestine was formalized in 1920. These two measures were decided by major powers of the world without any regard to the will of the majority of Palestinians. Thus, Japan's hand is not totally clean in dealing with the Palestinian question. Following Japan's independence in 1952, it joined the United Nations.
Since then, Japan has been voting along with the United States on most issues at the United Nations, including Middle East issues. For example, along with the United States and Western European countries, Japan voted for UN Resolution 242 (November 22, 1967), which called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from "territories of recent conflict." This recognizes the legitimate existence of Israel while it totally disregards the right of the Palestinians to form their own government. It only recognizes all existing nation states and makes no reference whatsoever to the refugees' right of return. It only advocates a "just settlement of the refugee problem," without spelling out what it entails. The fact that Japanese officials had difficult time in realizing that they were not considered by the Arabs to be their friends may be attributable in part to their way of conceptualizing world politics as being heavily influenced by the United States. However, we must note that since the so-called Nixon shocks in 1971, Japan's foreign policy has taken on a more independent elements than ever before (Kuroda, 1972).

As Michael Yoshitsu (1984, p.1) and others cor-
rectly point out. Japan did not equate its need for Middle East oil with the Arab-Israeli conflict, since Japan imported practically all of its oil through the Majors and not directly from the oil-producing countries as such. Of course, this was beginning to change in the early 1970's and by 1974, oil-producing countries were to complete their takeover of their natural resources from the Majors. The Majors controlled not only the distribution, but the production of oil also ever since the discovery of oil in the Middle East. As will be discussed, OPEC made an historic decision on October 16, 1973 to set its own oil price. The October War of 1973 had taught Japan a lesson that politics and economics cannot be separated, no matter what Japan says.

It may be useful here at this point to review how this historic decision came about within the context of a long struggle of resource-rich countries for political independence. Juan Pablo Perez Alfonzo probably should be credited with his successful negotiation to obtain a 50-50 split in profit accrued from the production of oil in Venezuela in 1945. He was then its oil minister who was to become the
founding father of OPEC in 1960 (Congressional Quarterly, 1981, p. 85). Subsequently, oil-producing countries in the Middle East were able to raise their share of royalties from 12.5 percent in the 1940's to 50 percent level by the early 1950's. Then came Prime Minister Mossadegh's futile efforts to nationalize oil industry in Iran in 1951. The international oil industry in cooperation with the CIA and probably the British were able to oust Dr. Mossadegh and install the Shah as the ruler of Iran again. The Iranian experiment failed largely because of the strength of the Majors and the willingness of the American and the British authorities to assist the oil industry.

OPEC was established in the aftermath of a second price reduction in 1960 led by Exxon. Iraq called for a meeting of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and Venezuela a month after the price cut. At the outset, these five nations were simply interested in bringing the price back up to the level where it was and in the right to be consulted in the determination of oil pricing. Their efforts were successful. In 1966, the United Nations passed a resolution on the perma-
nent right of natural resources guaranteeing the right of resource-rich nations to share their profit fairly with companies extracting their resources. The vote was 99 in favor and none against with eight nations (U.S., England, Belgium, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Malta, and Argentine) abstaining. In 1970, another resolution was passed by the General Assembly to include natural resources found in territorial waters as well. This time six countries including Japan and the United States voted against the resolution which was favored by 100 nations in the world. Other nations voted against were Canada, England, Australia, and South Africa.

Efforts to either nationalize or buy out oil companies started in 1970 with Libya leading the oil-producing countries followed by Iraq in 1972. By the mid-1970's all oil producing countries became their own master in determining the pricing of oil. The process was essentially a consequence of struggles by oil-producing countries to claim their right to dispense their natural resources in the manner they wanted by getting rid of the influence of the Majors and imperialism from outside. As the records indi-
cate, Japan along with the United States cannot possibly be thought of as a friend of oil-producing countries.

Having placed Japan within the historical context of its relations with the oil-producing countries, we are now ready to focus on the question of what took place in Japan in the fall of 1973.

From what I can infer through newspaper accounts, articles, and commentaries describing the energy crisis, there were those who urged Japan to take a pro-Arab stand and those who felt Japan-U.S. bilateral relations were more important, and so therefore Japan should adhere to the U.S. position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, maintaining an anti-Arab position. Those who advocated a change in the policy consisted of:

The Government: Arabists within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as Ambassador Hideji Tamura, who was sent to Saudi Arabia during the crisis as a secret envoy to find out what the inner circle of Saudi Arabia wanted out of Japan, and
others. Yasuhiro Nakasone who was then the Minister of MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry), Kakuei Tanaka who was the Prime Minister, and Vice Prime Minister Takeo Miki.

Business: Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organizations) President Kogoro Uemura, Vice President Toshio Dokow, Soichi Matsune, Hiroki Imasato et al. Arabian Oil Co. President Sohei Mizuno.

Those who desired to maintain anti-Arab policy or did not wish to change its existing policy included:

The Government: Most of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs members including Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira, Administrative Vice Minister Shinsaku Hogen [3].

With the exception of Arabists within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and possibly Vice Prime Minister Takeo Miki who was selected to be sent to the Middle East in December of 1973 as Japan's
special envoy of good will, those who spoke for a new policy toward the Middle East consisted of those political and economic leaders who seemed to have felt Japan's national interest would be best served by taking a more friendly position toward the Arab Middle East, while those who felt that there is no reason to change Japan's policy did so not because they are Zionist or Zionist sympathizers as such one would expect to find in the United States, but rather they felt Japan-U.S. bilateral relationship was of such importance that Japan would be better off by adhering closely to the U.S. policy. Let us see how these forces interacted to produce the new policy Japan formally announced on November 22, 1973 [4].

Prior to the energy crisis of 1973-4, the Middle East was not salient in the minds of people of Japan. Government representatives likewise took it for granted that inexpensive oil has been and will always be available for years to come. With the exception of those who had been involved in either diplomatic work or business in the Middle East, people were simply indifferent toward the Middle East [5]. Japan-U.S. bilateral relations have played such
an important role that Japan did not really give much thought to developing its own policy toward the Middle East. This has all changed since the fall of 1973, as we all know, although again as the oil glut situation continues to prevail there has been less interest shown in the region.

How did the oil shortage come about in 1973? How did it affect Japan? What was involved in developing a new Japanese Middle East policy?

Unaware of what was to happen in October, MITI created a new Agency of National Resources and Energy in July of that year. On October 7, International Resources Section Chief of the Agency Keiya Toyonaga left Tokyo for an OECD meeting in Paris—a day after the October War started in 1973. The OECD's meeting was designed to prepare itself for an oil crisis in the event of emergency. Japan was asked to take part in working out plans to cooperate among oil-consuming nations. Europeans have been much more sensitive to the possibility of an oil crisis than have the Japanese. In fact, having attended a preliminary meeting in July, Toyonaga inserted a passage in his report to the effect that an oil crisis could take
place as early as the coming winter. This was the rationale for urging MITI to take an active part in the OECD conference. In other words, although practically no one anticipated the advent of an oil crisis, there were a few who were concerned with the possibility for some time. However, like everything else, having it on paper is different from having something actually happen and lining up to buy gas at a service station.

Having failed in the 1967 attempt to use oil as a weapon against the West at the urging of Nasser, King Faysal made several announcements before the 1973 war to the effect that he would use oil as a political weapon unless anti-Palestinian nations of the West modify their policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. He had warned the Japanese as well. His pleas were left unheeded till the October war broke out.

OPEC met on September 15 and 16, during which time the oil-producing countries decided to ask for an oil-price increase. The next meeting was set for October 8, 1973 in Vienna. Delegates to the meeting learned of the outbreak of a new war on their way to
the Vienna conference. The oil-producing countries, led by Sheykh Yamani of Saudi Arabia, demanded $6.00 a barrel, or double the price of oil, to which oil companies reacted negatively. They gave a counter offer of $3.50 per barrel. OPEC insisted on $5.12 as the rock-bottom price. Both parties agreed to meet on October 16 in Kuwait. The OAPEC nations decided to meet on the following day to retaliate against countries supporting Israel directly or indirectly by using oil as a political weapon. By 1973 many nations depended so heavily on the Middle East that they would be deeply hurt in the event of oil embargo. This was particularly true in the case of Japan, which depended on the region for about 80 percent of its oil.

On October 16, OPEC decided on its own side for the first time to raise the price of oil by 70 percent, from $3.01.1 to $5.11.9. The oil companies were simply informed of its decision. This day marked a historic change in the beginning of a new economic era for the world. The OAPEC nations, meeting on the following day, declared their united position on the use of oil as a weapon against anti-
Arab nations. The agreement called for the reduction in oil production of 5 percent a month until Israel withdrew its forces from the territories occupied since the 1967 war and oil-consuming nations agreed to respect the Palestinians' rights to self-determination. Saudi Arabia even went further to declare the next day that it would cut oil shipments to the United States by 10 percent if the United States continued to aid Israel in its war efforts against Arabs.

All these events took place while the then Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira were away from Japan visiting Europe and the Soviet Union. In fact, the war started while they were in the Soviet Union. The head of the newly-created Agency of National Resources and Energy in MITI, Eiji Yamagata, was taken by total surprise. Although a few days after the October war broke out, on the 6th, there were some discussions in MITI regarding the possible use of oil as political weapon, but there were no meetings called to discuss any counter measures as such.

It was not until October 17th that bureaucrats
began to take action. First, MITI Vice Minister Hideaki Yamashita called for a study session. High-ranking members of the study group had to call on oil experts to inform them of the meaning of the official price of oil and how crude oil comes to Japan, etc., from the very beginning. What is of significance was that neither the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor MITI was aware of the fact that Japan was considered by the Arabs to be a non-friendly country. OAPEC did not clearly define what it meant by the friendly nations who would continued to be supplied with needed oil. Everyone knew that the United States and Holland were considered enemies by the Arabs since they were singled out in the OAPEC declaration.

Japan was buying most of its oil from the Majors then. They started to inform Japan that they will have to cut the shipment of oil and they would also have to raise the price of oil. Some Japanese naively assumed that the Majors were able to continue their oil supply by obtaining more oil from non-Arab sources. Saudi Arabia announced on October 20 its decision to totally embargo the shipment of oil to the United States and reduce oil production by 25
percent. Other Arab nations followed Saudi's suit. On November 4, OAPEC decided to reduce production by 25 percent for the month of November in relation to its production rate of September. Then, afterward it would continue to reduce the rate by 5 percent every month starting in December. By this time, the official price of oil set by OPEC was considered low. In the open market, premium oil was sold for as high as $20 per barrel. MITI officials were completely shaken by the news of a 25 percent reduction. A temporary shortage of toilet tissue caused a panic in Japan in late October, but it really does not carry direct relevance to Japan/Middle East relations. What could have been a disaster which never surfaced during the crisis period was the possible shortage of imported agricultural products, including feed grains, etc., due to the shortage of banker oil, without which ships could not operate. There was a shortage of banker oil (ASAHI SHIMBUN, November 21, 1973, p.3). Keiya Toyonaga, Section Chief on International Resources, was sent on a secret mission to the United States in the early part of December to ask the Majors to provide enough banker oil to
Japanese cargo ships carrying foodstuff. His mission was successful, thanks to his personal contacts with the Major officials. One must keep in mind that Japan does not only depend on foreign countries for its needed mineral resources and raw materials, but it needs food also. About half of the food eaten in Japan is imported, if one includes feed grains. Oil stockpiling alone may not be sufficient to prevent panics and confusion if there is any prolonged oil crisis. Without banker oil, food cannot find its way to Japan.

As the crude oil supply decreased, the shortage of its products, such as heavy oil and gasoline started to show up. Those who suffered the most in Japan were government agencies who used to purchase all of their petroleum needs through bidding, while restaurants and other private consumers bought from oil companies. Consequently, the government felt the pinch before anyone else. What used to be a buyer's market made a complete turn. Large consumers of oil were treated better by oil companies. Still government agencies -- hospitals, police, bureaucrats, the Self-defense Force and other government-run places,
faced serious problems.

MITI focused on how to secure sufficient oil to avert a crisis. Prime Minister Tanaka's initial recommendation was to place the distribution of oil, under government control by issuing coupons through post offices. This was rejected outright by MITI, which did not have anywhere near the sufficient number of personnel to carry out such a plan. Tanaka moved quickly to develop an alternative to his government control plan by asking his secretary to write out his ideas of establishing a set price for oil and other related products. Those who sell oil at a higher price will be fined. He urged that new law should be acted upon immediately along this line of thinking. This memo was written before he met with Dr. Henry Kissinger (Yanagida, 1983, pp. 446-447). Tanaka's memo deviated from the MITI plan to control the price of oil and its products in that Tanaka wanted to control the price of everything that might rise as a result of the increased price of crude oil. This idea called for stabilizing the price of all major items in order not to disrupt the lives of ordinary people. This plan certainly cuts
across many ministries and agencies in order to be effective. The idea went beyond the realm of MITI's jurisdiction. Tanaka's comprehensive plan obviously was superior to MITI's notion of simply controlling the price of oil and its products, for oil plays such an important far-reaching role in the everyday life of the people in Japan.

In order to make the plan more comprehensive, the "Gotoda Machine."[7] which worked on a similar plan a year ago, was remobilized to draft a bill on November 15, 1973. Under the leadership of Masaharu Gotoda, Deputy General Secretary of the Cabinet, high officials of Economic Planning Agency, the MITI and Ministry of Finance, such as Shigeya Yoshise, Hidetoshi Kojima, Minoru Masuda, Hachiro Moriguchi, Keijiro Nakahashi and Akira Watari worked fervently under time pressure as its members. One of its members recalled the days when he and other members worked every evening and day on the plan. The meeting was held ten times. Then, various revisions were made within just one week. The bill was introduced to the House of Representatives on December 7, 1973 and passed the House on December 18. The House
of Councillors approved the bill on December 21. Kojima, Pricing Bureau Director of Economic Planning Agency, remarked: "We deliberated on an original plan developed by the Economic Planning Agency in the Cabinet Secretariat's office by taking into account the views of various ministries. After the draft was revised, it was passed on to the Cabinet for its deliberation. The draft was built on two pillars. The first has a plan to create a price control system through the development of a sort of cartel -- the ceiling price to be determined by the oil industry. The second pillar was to impose penalties on those companies that raised the price in order to make excessive profits.

However, the first pillar to limit the ceiling price through the development of the cartel would constitute a clear violation of the anti-trust law. "So we scaled down our efforts to set up a standard fixed price" [6]. Irrespective of whatever else Tanaka did, he certainly acted wisely with speed within the existing structural constraints to avert any major crisis. The passage of a law would have been impossible unless it is done within the frame-
work of crisis mood which existed then.

Domestically, the first shortage of oil products to surface was kerosene. The price of kerosene was going up earlier in the year, but especially in July and August. Consequently, the government froze the price of kerosene on October 1 before the energy crisis. This was done in cooperation with 12 whole-sale oil companies which deal in kerosene. The reason for this limited action was that it was impossible to enforce the price freeze at the retail level (Yanagida. 1983, p. 438). There are 130,000 retail shops that sell kerosene and MITI had only 40 bureaucrats in MITI's oil section.

Zenji Kumagai, head of Petroleum Department, Agency of National Resources and Energy, is reported to have told Yanagida that it became impossible to maintain the rising price of kerosene at the retail level by November (Yanagida. 1983, p. 438). MITI was forced, thus, to freeze the retail price at 380 yen per can containing 18 liters (ASAHI SHIMBUN. December 18, 1973, p. 2) starting on November 28 [8]. Because of the Oil Section's inability to enforce the price freeze, MITI solicited assistance from prefectural
governments for cooperation and asked MITI offices through the country to hear any complaint of retail shops selling over the frozen price. They heard many consumer complaints.

Other products that reported acute shortages was heavy oil and LPG for taxis. LPG prices were also frozen by the government at 1,300 yen for 10 kilos (ASAHI SHIMBUN, December 18, 1973, p. 2).

While these events were taking place domestically within Japan to adjust itself to a newly emerging situation in the world, Japan also was forced to adjust diplomatically to the new world order. How did this take place is discussed next.

It was reported on October 27 in the ASAHI SHIMBUN (P. 2) that Kuwait and other Arab governments informally made a request to Japan and Western Europe to place pressure on the United States to refrain from any further military and other assistance to Israel. Arab governments felt that Japan and Western Europe will face more serious problems than the United States if OAPEC's reduced oil production continues on. Apparently, the government of Japan gave no definite answers. The Arabs responded by
repeating the same request through formal channels of communication, albeit informally.

Meanwhile, ten Arab ambassadors to Japan led by Saudi Ambassador, Auni Dejani, paid a visit to Foreign Minister Ohira on October 19. They asked Japan's support for the Arab cause and expressed a hope that they will not have to in any serious way disrupt the oil flow to Japan which Japan needs very badly, and for which depends heavily on OAPEC (ASAHI SHIMBUN, October 19, 1973, evening edition, p. 1). Yoshitsu reports that prior to Ohira's meeting with Dejani et al., Ohira conferred with Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Shinsaku Hogen and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumihiko Togo, and agreed not to change Japan's position with respect to the Arab--Israeli conflict (Yoshitsu 1984, p. 3). Hogen told Yoshitsu that the three felt that Tokyo's commitment to Israel should stay intact (Yoshitsu 1984, p. 3). Perhaps for this reason, Ohira responded to Dejani's request by pointing out Japan's support for UN Resolution 242 on October 19 (ASAHI SHIMBUN, October 19, 1973 evening edition, p. 1).

On October 26 at 11:30 AM, Vice Foreign Minister
Hogen invited Ambassador Dejani to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and handed over a statement, asking him to convey the same message to the rest of the nine Arab representatives in Tokyo (ASAHI SHIMBUN, October 27, 1973, p. 2). The ASAHI reports that the statement contained the inadmissability of territorial acquisition by force and Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in accordance with UN Resolution 242, which Japan wholeheartedly supports. To Hogen's document, Dejani said that he highly valued Japan's position and will convey the message to the other Arab Ambassadors (ASAHI SHIMBUN, October 27, 1973, p. 2). I am puzzled at the ASAHI's reporting of Ambassador Dejani's reaction to Hogen's document. Why should Dejani be highly satisfied with the statement, which says nothing more than what was already known to Dejani? Yoshitsu provides some answer to this question by citing what Hogen told Yoshitsu during his interview with Hogen. Yoshitsu reports that the document contained the following three points (Yoshitsu, 1984, p. 4):

1) "Israeli forces must withdraw from all areas occupied after the October [sic] 1967 war,"
2) "any settlement of the conflict must respect the legitimate right of Palestinian self-determination," and

3) "the Japanese would reexamine [their] policy toward Israel should that country ignore the three principles."

Hogen told Yoshitsu that "nothing had really changed ..." Yoshitsu concurs with his statement. I found the document as revealed by Hogen to be wanting in several respects.

First, the first principle clearly departs from UN Resolution 242 in that it contains the adjective "all," purposely excluded in UN Resolution 242. This is an extremely sensitive and important point in discussing the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States probably would not have supported the resolution had it contained the adjective "all," since it would then include Jerusalem.

Second, the resolution called for a "just settlement of the refugee problem" and did not contain any specific reference to "Palestinians" whatsoever, not to even mention the "legitimate right of Palestinian self-determination." The resolution does speak of...
Israel as a nation and speaks of "territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area." It was a very one-sided resolution in that it calls for the recognition of every State in the area while it completely ignores the Palestinians' right to self-determination. It does not even recognize the existence of Palestinians. They are simply referred to as "refugees." This related by Hogen definitely goes beyond what the resolution stipulates.

Third, the government of Japan never made the "threat" that it would re-examine its policy towards Israel if Israel ignores the two principles, assuming that he meant two instead of three, as reported by Yoshitsu. This too represents a departure from the traditional posture Japan took in reference to its policy towards the Middle East. Japan never made any public statement threatening to change its policy towards Israel.

Fourth, it is true that these points are found in the Nikaido announcement of November 22, 1973. If what Hogen told Yoshitsu is true, then Hogen's position coincides with the final decision which was not
made public till November 22. From what I can infer from newspaper accounts and documents, the decision was not finalized till Prime Minister Tanaka made his decision, probably in the middle of November after receiving reports from his secret envoys to the effect that Saudi Arabia wanted to have the last point included in the announcement, which specifies a possible change in the Japanese government policy towards Israel. What Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries wanted Japan to do was to sever its diplomatic relations with Israel (AKAHATA, November 20, 1973, p. 4 and ASAHI SHIMBUN, November 14, 1973, evening edition, p. 2). What Japan seems to have done is to give into the Arabs' request but not all the way, stopping at warning Israel it may have to reconsider such a move. If Hogen indeed handed over the document as reported by Yoshitsu, how did Hogen know what Saudi Arabia wanted, which even Prime Minister Tanaka did not know?

Yasuhiro Nakasone, who then was the MITI Minister, was arguing for a closer relationship with the Arab Middle East, as reported on November 2 in the ASAHI SHIMBUN (p. 6). He pressed Prime Minister
Tanaka by saying:

"We need to demonstrate our understanding of the Arab demands with respect to their occupied territories. There is a need to take actions to implement UN Resolution 242, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories."

Tanaka responded by saying:

"There is no question about the need for us to develop closer ties with the Arabs. I would like to take positive actions to achieve peace in the region."

Nowhere does Tanaka mention anything about Japan's threat of reexamining its policy toward Israel. Yanagida reports that in early November the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent two secret envoys to Saudi Arabia in order to find out what Saudi Arabia wanted regarding Japan's policy toward the Arabs (Yanagida, 1979, pp. 58-90; 1983, pp. 456-457). One envoy was Hideji Tamura, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and the other envoy was Kei-ichi Morimoto, a former employee of the Foreign Ministry who had worked in Saudi Arabia. They were sent separately.
Both of them reported back to the Ministry that Saudi Arabia wanted Japan to change its policy towards Israel. Ambassador Tamura himself reports that he did meet King Faysal on November 12 to discuss Japan's plight (Tamura, 1976, pp. 49-50). Furthermore, Sohei Mizuno, who was then visiting Saudi Arabia, came back to Japan to visit Tanaka and convey the serious nature of the situation in Japan/Saudi Arabia relations.

Then, upon receiving the report from the two secret envoys that Hogen met with senior members of the Middle East and African Bureau and other relevant bureaus on November 18, somebody drafted an official statement which considered of three principles, including one on the possible reconsideration of Japan's policy towards Israel. Yanagida claims that the last principle incorporated was a product of what the two envoys brought back from Saudi Arabia (p. 457). His claim certainly does not contradict with what Ambassador Tamura's report indicates (pp. 49-50).

Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Yamani stated on November 13 that "If Japan wants to fully restore the
import of oil, then she must totally sever her diplomatic and economic relations with Israel" (ASAHI SHIMBUN, November 14, 1973, evening edition, p. 3). A similar statement was also made by him in Vienna (AKAHATA, November 20, 1973, p. 4). The envoy's report and Yamani's statement coincide. Japan apparently had all this information when Dr. Kissinger stopped in Japan on his way back from China on November 14. Ohira attempted to obtain the State Department's "understanding" of Japan's position with respect to its new policy towards the Middle East by showing the draft plan consisting of the three principles through Japanese Ambassador to the United States Yasukawa. The State Department conceded that, although it could not agree with Japan's new Middle East policy, it "understands" why Japan had to modify its position on the Middle East (Yanagida, 1983, p. 457).

If Japanese policy toward the Middle East had remained the same, then there would have been no need to obtain the United States' "understanding." Similarly, it was reported that efforts would be made to explain Japan's stand to Dr. Kissinger when he

Although Japan did support UN Resolution 242, she remained mute as to its interpretation. It is a vaguely worded resolution to which the United States, the most faithful ally of Israel, gave its support. What Japan needed to do was to make its position more explicit in one way or another (Tamura, 1976, p. 49). Japan's new position as revealed by Nikaido certainly goes beyond UN Resolution in making it explicit that Japan wants Israeli forces to withdraw from "all" the territories occupied in the 1967 war. This was obviously Japan's response to make its interpretation of its support of 242 more explicit.

Another departure from the previous policy of the government of Japan was its plan to step up aid to the Arab Middle East. On December 10, 1973, Vice Prime Minister Takeo Miki was sent as a special envoy to visit Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait and eight other Arab countries and promised them increased Japanese cooperation with Arab efforts to develop their economies.

In fact, the Asahi reports that the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs claimed that its new policy was demonstrated in the addition of the word "all" in urging Israeli forces to withdraw from its occupied territories (ASAHI SHIMBUN, November 21, 1973, p. 1). Hence, I find the claim made by Hogen and Yoshitsu in contradiction with what was then taking place in Japan and the Arab Middle East in 1973.

Thus, finally, a new stand was announced by the Cabinet Chief Secretary Susumu Nikaido on November 22, 1973. This was done in order to meet the deadline set by the Arabs, whose foreign ministers were expected to meet on November 24 in Algeria. Foreign Minister Ohira met with ten Arab representatives in Tokyo, while Vice Foreign Minister Hogen was asked to meet with the Israeli Ambassador to explain Japan's position and convey Japan's desire for peace in the region. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo was informed of Japan's new policy on the morning of November 22.

It was not until December 25, 1973, however, that Japan was informed of OAPEC's decision to recognize Japan as a "friendly" nation. The decision was made not on November 24 in Algeria, but had to wait until another meeting in Kuwait on December 22. The formal
announcement was made on Christmas day in 1973.

Meanwhile Japan had to prepare itself for an oil cutoff. New laws passed the Diet hurriedly in order to avert serious crises as the supply of oil started to dwindle.

A threat made by Dr. Kissinger in his discussion with Prime Minister Tanaka on November 15 had its base, as reported in the JERUSALEM POST. It reported that if Japan severs its ties with Israel, Jewish financial leaders in the United States will retaliate by boycotting Japanese goods (ASAHI SHIMBUN, November 21, 1973, p. 1). Also, some Jews in fact did react negatively even to the new Japanese Middle East policy, which certainly was far from what the Arabs demanded. by staging demonstrations in front of the Japanese Camera Show in a New York Hotel on November 30, 1973 (ASAHI SHIMBUN, December 1, 1973, evening edition, p. 1). About 30 members of the American Jewish Congress took part in this demonstration. Tokyo's Israeli Embassy issued a statement severely criticizing Japan's new Middle East policy on November 26. The Embassy statement clearly said that Japan's new policy represents a departure from the
neutral position Japan maintained in the past and an abandonment of friendship with Israel. Japan should reconsider its new policy and look for genuine peace in the Middle East (AKAHATA, November 27, 1973, p. 2). Notwithstanding Hogen's claim that Japan did not change its position on the Middle East, Arabs as well as Israel publicly acknowledged Nikaido's announcement as being a new Middle East policy.

Nikaido's announcement and subsequent actions taken by Vice Prime Minister Miki and others certainly suggest Japan's new Middle East policy. The decision seems to have been made rather quickly in relation to what it normally takes for Japan to make decisions proving that the Japanese decision-making apparatus (Rangi-sei) can operate in a crisis with the speed and decisiveness required for a good decision.

Although some claim that the new policy to be pro-Arab, in reality it did not give into Arab demands. It is a more pro-Arab position in relation to that of the United States, or most Western European countries, to be sure. Japan certainly has not given up its attempt to be neutral in all issues.
if it were at all possible. It is not difficult to assume that Israel has been informally assured of Japan's intention not to change its basic policy toward Israel, even though it publicly claims to be reexamining its policy towards the state of Israel.

From the point of view expressed by Egyptian Ambassador to Japan Mohsen Abdel Khalek and Kuwaiti Ambassador in Tokyo Talat Yacoub Goussein, Japan's new policy is not a pro-Arab position. It is a pro-justice position. Ambassador Goussein continued to complain that he has never been asked by any Japanese to explain the Arab position on the Arab-Israeli conflict ever since his arrival in Japan. When he was the Ambassador to the United States, he used to get an invitation to speak on the conflict at least once every three weeks. He concluded that the Japanese have no interest in the Middle East (ASAHI SHIMBUN, December 10, 1973, p. 2).

Japan's Middle East policy has, however, changed in two different perspectives. First, the government of Japan has shown a keen interest in Arab affairs as a result of the energy crisis. All of sudden, the Japanese could not take it for granted that oil was
something one could buy anytime from anywhere.

Second, Japanese government policy towards the Middle East definitely came closer to what the Arabs wanted. But it certainly did not completely satisfy their demands. There is no visible evidence that Japan urged the United States to change its policy towards the Middle East. As can be seen from the exchange of ideas from the Tanaka-Kissinger meeting, it was still the United States which was trying to lean on Japan and not the other way around. Obviously, Japan was in no position to lean on the United States because of its vulnerability. Japan showed its tenacity to cling on to its traditional stand of keeping itself as neutral as it can in order to survive in world politics.

Perhaps a byproduct of the crisis was that the Japanese have been reminded once again that it cannot stay aloof from world politics forever. It also showed how powerful United States influence is on Japanese foreign policy making. Even though it was not able to keep Japan totally on the side of the United States with respect to the Middle East conflict, it did its best to make Japan maintain its
diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

Notes
1. Prime Minister Tanaka's response to Kissinger's request to stay with the United States on the Middle East issue on November 15, 1973 as quoted in Yanagida, 1979, p.80; 1983, p. 456.
2. Itagaki points out that Japan had forgotten its action in the San Remo Conference of 1920 (Itagaki, 1980, p. 60).
3. There are two Vice Ministers under each Minister in Japan, viz., Administrative Vice Minister (Jimu Jikan) and Parliamentary Vice Minister (Seimu Jikan). The former is the highest civil service position while the latter is filled by political appointee. Politically appointed vice ministers are often less knowledgeable of their tasks as expected.
4. For Nikaido's statement of November 22, 1973, see Appendix.
6. For this study, I consulted two major newspapers in Japan, i.e., ASAHI SHIMBUN which is the most respected of three largest newspapers in the nation and AKAHATA (RED FLAG) which is the most popular party paper in Japan published by Japan Communist party.

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Appendix

A Statement by Susumu Nikaido, Chief Cabinet Secretary November 22, 1973

1. The Government of Japan has consistently hoped that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East will be achieved through the prompt and complete implementation of Security Council Resolution 242. To this end, Japan has continued to ask the government officials of all involved countries for advocacy of all U.N. resolutions calling for the Palestinians' right to self-
The Government of Japan is of the view that the following principles should be adhered to in achieving a peace settlement:

(1) The Inadmissibility of Acquisition and occupation of any territories by use of force:

(2) The withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the territories occupied in the 1967 war:

(3) The respect for the integrity and security of the territories of all countries in the area and the need of guarantees to that end: and

(4) The recognition of and respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in bringing about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Government of Japan, deploiring Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories, urges Israel to comply with these principles. The Government of Japan will continue to observe the situation in the Middle East with grave concern and, depending on future development, may find it necessary to reconsider its policy toward Israel.