

Japan and the Middle East: 50 Years after the Oil Shock

外交関係 ハビーブ・ハサン・アル=バダウィー様（レバノン大学教授、レバノン）

JIME-IEEJ and Waseda University Joint International Symposium on

“50 years after the oil crisis: building a new Japan-Middle East relationship” (Ver. 1.9)

How to cite: Badawi, H. (2023). “Japan-Middle East Relationship beyond the Oil Crisis.” In JIME-IEEJ and Waseda University Joint International Symposium on “50 years after the oil crisis: building a new Japan-Middle East relationship” (Ver. 1.9) Proceedings, 30th October 2023, Keidanren-Kaikan, Otemachi, Tokyo.

石油危機から50年
ー日本と中東の新たな関係構築ー

経団連会館2階経団連ホール北
2023年10月30日10:00-12:30

参加申込みフォーム

Program

09:30-10:00 受付

10:00-10:05 開会の辞：辻清人（日本国外務副大臣）

10:05-10:15 基調講演：ムハンマド・ビン・サーレフ・アル=サーダ（元カタル国エネルギー産業大臣）

10:15-11:10 セッション1：対談：石油危機から50年を語る

小島啓一（元通商産業省事務次官）
保坂修司（中東研究センター長）

11:10-11:20 休憩

11:20-12:05 セッション2：石油危機後の日本・中東関係

外交関係：ハビーブ・ハサン・アル=バダウィー（レバノン大学教授、レバノン）
1973年以降の日本・中東ビジネス関係の変化：酒井啓子（千葉大学教授）
文化とソフトパワー：イサーム・ブハーリー（マンガプロダクションCEO、サウジアラビア）

12:05-12:25 セッション3：将来の友好・協力関係に向けた議論と提言

アブドゥッラー・バーブード（早稲田大学カタールチェア教授）
近藤重人（中東研究センター主任研究員）

12:25-12:30 閉会の辞：桜井啓子（早稲田大学国際教養学部教授）

JIME-IEEJ
JAPAN



早稲田大学
WASEDA University

後援：外務省

入場料無料

Executive Summary

This executive summary encapsulates the intricate and dynamic relationship between Japan and the Middle East, particularly emphasizing Japan's strategic foresight and unwavering commitment to regional stability and energy security. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, this milestone serves as a testament to the enduring significance of Japan's Middle Eastern partnerships.

The 1973 oil crisis emerged as a pivotal moment, revealing the intricacies of global interdependence, and highlighting the criticality of energy security. Japan, heavily reliant on Middle Eastern oil, navigated this geopolitical whirlwind, emerging not only with strategic insights but also with a profound understanding of the nuanced realities shaping the Middle East.

Japan's unique position in the region requires a delicate diplomatic balance, adeptly managing relations with both the Gulf states and Iran. This nuanced approach not only safeguards Japan's energy interests but also elevates the nation as a crucial mediator in regional affairs.

As the global energy landscape undergoes transformative shifts, Japan commits to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, necessitating a recalibration of its energy policies. This transformation, pivotal for Japan, must be undertaken judiciously to preserve the delicate equilibrium in its Middle Eastern partnerships.

Proactive strategies are imperative in the face of formidable challenges. Japan's deepening political engagement, multifaceted multilateral cooperation endeavors, and strategic investments in alternative energy sources stand as beacons of its forward-looking approach. These strategies aim not only to fortify Japan's energy security but also to contribute tangibly to the broader stability and prosperity of the Middle East.

Looking ahead, a vista of collaborative potential unfolds. Infrastructure projects, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives promise to strengthen the bonds between Japan and the Middle East. Japan, harnessing its expertise and resources, is poised to make meaningful contributions to the region's development while fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

In conclusion, Japan's engagement with the Middle East stands as a shining testament to the nation's diplomatic sagacity and steadfast dedication to global stability. As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, we anticipate a future where strategic cooperation and mutual respect continue to guide Japan and the Middle East toward shared prosperity, enduring peace, and a more interconnected world.

Introduction:

- **A Brief Overview of the Lecture**
- **Importance of the 50th Anniversary**
- **Relevance of the 1973 Oil Crisis**

A Brief Overview of the Lecture:

In this lecture, we will discuss Japan's diplomatic engagement with the Middle East, focusing on its approach to energy security and its efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. We will examine the challenges that Japan faces in balancing its relationships with Gulf states and Iran, diversifying its energy sources, and ensuring long-term stability. We will also explore the need for proactive strategies, such as greater political involvement, multilateral cooperation, and investment in alternative energy sources. Finally, we will deliberate opportunities for future collaboration, including infrastructure projects, cultural and educational exchanges, and renewable energy and technology.

Importance of the 50th Anniversary:

The 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD is significant for Japan's foreign policy towards the Middle East. It provides an opportunity for Japan to reflect on its diplomatic engagement with the region and to strengthen its partnerships with Middle Eastern countries. As Japan aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, it needs to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil and gas, which makes it crucial for Japan to diversify its energy sources and invest in alternative energy.

Relevance of the 1973 Oil Crisis:

The 1973 oil crisis is relevant to Japan's foreign policy towards the Middle East as it highlighted the importance of energy security and the need for a balanced approach to relationships with the Gulf States and Iran. Japan's heavy dependence on Middle Eastern oil has made it difficult for the country to diversify its oil imports. However, Japan has been promoting diversification and deepening relationships with the Gulf beyond the one-dimensional trade relationship, where it is focusing on policy consultation over issues of common concern, promotion of other forms of economic relations such as investment and tourism, and intensifying exchanges at various levels.

1. The 1973 Oil Crisis:

- **Key Events and Causes**
- **Impacts on Japan's Economy**
- **Significance for Japan's Diplomacy**

Key Events and Causes

Japan has emerged as a proactive and influential diplomatic force, not only within the Middle East but on the global stage. The bold decision by King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz to impose the “Arab oil embargo” during the 1973 war remains a significant and enduring moment in the minds of Japanese and international policymakers. This embargo was a calculated move by Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), designed to penalize the United States for its decision to provide military aid to Israel and to strengthen its position in post-war negotiations. In 1973, during the Arab-Israeli War, Japan, along with Portugal and South Africa, found themselves added to the list of embargoed nations by Arab OPEC members due to their support for Israel. This embargo not only curtailed oil production but also prohibited the export of petroleum to these sanctioned countries. It must be mentioned that in 1972, King Faisal sent a clear message to Japan, underscoring the severe consequences that aligning with U.S. policy in the Middle East would entail. For Japanese policymakers, the 1973 oil crisis unfolded as a complete and surprise.

Certain factors contributed to the 1973 oil crisis. The primary cause for this embargo was the unequivocal financial and military support the United States offered to Israel (Investopedia.). This position culminated in an Arab retaliation through decreasing oil production. Also, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) demanded that foreign oil corporations increase prices and cede greater shares of revenue to their local subsidiaries. This offensive was countered by the Nixon administration which announced a new energy strategy to boost domestic production, reduce U.S. vulnerability to oil imports, and ease the strain of nationwide fuel shortages. However, the embargo, or “shock,” contributed to countless short-term and long-term economic and political results.

Impacts on Japan's Economy

Japan had stockpiled oil supplies, which secured a short-term cushion, but the long-term possibility of high oil prices and recession precipitated a rift within the Atlantic Alliance (U.S. Foreign Relations Office). The oil crisis of 1973 and the accompanying inflation were the result of many factors culminating in a perfect economic storm (U.S Federal Reserve). In December 1973, with panic gripping the world oil market, OPEC sharply raised the price of a barrel to 1165\$, increasing by five times its original amount in 1970, which was 180\$. (Yergin, 2023)

The Japanese diplomatic approach regarding the intensified situation was quite significant. The prohibition of petrol placed Japan and European nations in an uncomfortable position of needing U.S. assistance to secure energy sources, even as they sought to disassociate themselves from U.S. – Middle East policy. This shock was quite beneficial for the West and Japan for it changed the nature of their policy orientation towards increased exploration, alternative energy research, and energy conservation. Furthermore, these countries followed a more restrictive monetary policy approach to better adjust and combat inflation.

2. Lessons from History

- **Learnings from the 1973 Oil Crisis**
- **The importance of accurate information**
- **Adapting to Middle Eastern Realities**

Lessons from the 1973 Oil Crisis

The 1973 oil crisis was a complex event, with multiple factors contributing to its occurrence. Understanding the causes and effects of the crisis requires accurate and up-to-date information. For example, during the Six-Day War in 1967, Arab oil exporters attempted to mobilize the “oil weapon,” but the oil market was in surplus and the United States had spare capacity to counter the embargo. Having accurate information about the state of the oil market and production capacity was crucial in assessing the impact of the crisis. Another main lesson is the ability to adapt to Middle East realities. The 1973 oil crisis highlighted the geopolitical significance of the Middle East and the need to adapt to the region's realities. The crisis was triggered by the Yom Kippur surprise attack on Israel by Syria and Egypt, supported by other Arab nations. (Levins, 2023)

The resulting oil embargo and skyrocketing prices had severe consequences for the global economy. Understanding the dynamics of the Middle East and its impact on the energy market is essential for long-term energy security and stability. The 1973 oil ban demonstrated the power of free markets in driving growth and the importance of a thriving energy market at home. The high oil prices caused a severe economic collapse in the West, marking the end of the global period of high growth and ushering in an era of stagflation. The crisis also exposed the fallacy of efforts to cap energy demand and control prices rather than expand supply (Glock, 2023). The resilience of the energy market and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances are crucial lessons from the 1973 oil crisis.

The Importance of Accurate Information:

The 1973 oil crisis underscored the critical role of accurate and up-to-date information in understanding and navigating complex geopolitical events. In the context of historical attempts by

Arab oil exporters to wield the “oil weapon” during the Six-Day War in 1967, having precise information about the state of the oil market and production capacity was paramount. Accurate information enables policymakers to assess the potential impact of such attempts and develop informed responses. This lesson resonates beyond the crisis, emphasizing the ongoing need for reliable data to shape effective energy and foreign policies.

Adapting to Middle Eastern Realities:

The 1973 oil crisis brought to light the geopolitical significance of the Middle East, emphasizing the imperative of adapting to the region's unique realities. Triggered by the Yom Kippur surprise attack on Israel, the crisis revealed the interconnectedness of Middle Eastern events with global energy dynamics. Adapting to Middle Eastern realities involves recognizing the geopolitical complexities, cultural nuances, and regional dynamics that influence energy markets. This lesson remains relevant, urging nations to tailor their strategies to the ever-evolving landscape of the Middle East for long-term energy security and stability.

3. Japan's Diplomatic Balancing Act

- **Approach to Mediating Conflicts**
- **Balancing Arab, American, and Iranian Relations**
- **Impact on Japan's Foreign Policy Style**

Approach to Mediating Conflicts

Japan's consistent policy towards the Middle East has been non-commitment. Japan has not taken a direct role in mediating conflicts in the region but rather has pursued a policy of helping create a climate conducive to peace and preventing the escalation of the conflict. A clear example of its non-direct role was during the Iran-Iraq war where it took a balanced approach to both Iran and Iraq with the greatest possible care (Shaoul, 2005). Japan's policy always has been to maintain good relations with all parties involved in a conflict rather than taking sides.

Balancing Arab, American, and Iranian relations

Japan has been balancing its national interests to conform to the changing dynamics of the Middle East (Sage Publications). For instance, Japan presently maintains strong economic and diplomatic links with Iran in contrast to its Western allies (Oxford Press, 2012). Japan's long-term oil dependence has made it difficult for the country to take sides in conflicts in the region where it has been sustaining good relations with both the Arab world and Israel. This neutral position is to satisfy its most important policy priority, which is to ensure a stable supply of oil.

Impact on Japan's Foreign Policy Style

Japan's policy in the Middle East has moved from vague support of peace and concern about specific economic interests to a greater focus on long-term stability. It has recognized that economic issues cannot be dealt with from an isolationist perspective and that reliance on market forces alone is not a viable strategy. Its foreign policy style has been characterized by a balancing act between its national interests and its relationships with other countries.

4. Economic Dependency and Diversification

- **Japan's oil imports from the Middle East**
- **Strategies for Diversification**
- **Strategic Partnerships and Agreements**

Japan's Oil imports from the Middle East

Japan is highly dependent on fossil fuels and, in turn, highly dependent on the Middle East for its energy needs, importing close to 90% of its crude oil from the region. Japan's oil import strategy has traditionally been focused on the Middle East and has been heavily constrained by prohibitive costs (Vivoda & Manicom, 2011). Its oil consumption contributed to maintaining a diplomatic approach in the region by constructing strong ties with both the Arab world and Israel.

Strategies for Diversification

Japan has been trying to satisfy its most important policy priority, which is to ensure a stable supply of oil. Through promoting diversification and deepening of relationships with the Gulf beyond the one-dimensional trade relation, Japan is focusing on policy consultation over issues of common concern, promotion of other forms of economic relations such as investment and tourism, and intensifying exchanges at various levels ranging from high-ranking officials to business representatives to the youth of both countries. Strategies for diversification could involve seeking to foster horizontal and vertical diversification, diversifying manufacturing away from oil production, further integrating into the global value chain, and attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) into the non-oil sector (IMF, 2016).

Strategic partnerships and agreements:

Japan's strategic partnerships and agreements in the region are primarily with the Gulf States. The Japanese government and businesses are reassessing the Gulf States as economic partners (Oxford Analytica, 2023). For instance, cooperation on UAE-produced clean energy serves Japan's interest in diversifying its renewable energy mix while also boosting the UAE's global energy

leadership (Alexander & Bou Serhal, 2023). Also, increasing investments in tourism and other economic sectors is a main goal of the new Japanese vision of economic relations with the Gulf.

5. Japan's Military Presence

- **Somali Piracy and its Impact**
- **The 2019 Tanker Incident**
- **Deployment of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force**

Japan's military presence in the Middle East has been primarily focused on ensuring the security of its oil imports and protecting its national interests. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) has played a significant role in this regard, particularly in addressing issues such as Somali piracy and the 2019 tanker incident.

Somali Piracy and its Impact:

The JMSDF deployed a force off the coast of Somalia to protect Japanese ships from Somali pirates. The force consisted of two destroyers, patrol helicopters, speedboats, eight officers of the Japan Coast Guard, a force of commandos from the elite Special Boarding Unit, and a P-3 Orion patrol aircraft in the Gulf of Aden. This deployment was aimed at ensuring the safe passage of Japanese vessels through the region, which was a vital target for Japan's energy security.

The 2019 Tanker Incident:

In June 2019, two tankers, one of which was operated by a Japanese company, were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. The JMSDF, along with the United States and other international partners, played a role in ensuring the safety of navigation in the region and investigating the incident (Morimoto, 2023).

Deployment of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force:

The JMSDF has been actively participating in joint exercises and deployments in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Middle East, to enhance its tactical capabilities and strengthen cooperation with partner navies (Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2023). These deployments are part of Japan's efforts to maintain a presence in the region and protect its national interests, particularly in the context of its energy security (Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2023).

Japan's military presence in the Middle East, particularly through the JMSDF, has been crucial in ensuring the security of its oil imports and protecting its national interests. The JMSDF's participation in joint exercises and deployments in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Middle East, has helped enhance its tactical capabilities and strengthen cooperation with partner navies

6. Diplomacy towards the Gulf States and Iran

- **Prioritizing Relations with Arab States and Iran**
- **Challenges in Balancing Ties**

Japan's unique position in the Middle East has led to a diplomatic balancing act, particularly in its relations with Gulf states and Iran. Japan has traditionally prioritized its relations with Arab states and Iran, which has presented challenges in balancing ties between these countries. Its oil security policy has historically focused on two major countries in the Persian Gulf region: Iran and Saudi Arabia. Japan has preserved a good relationship with Iran, even after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, due to its lack of a negative colonial legacy in the country and its record of resisting US pressure to cut economic ties. Japan has also developed strong economic and diplomatic ties with Arab states in the Gulf, such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. (The Japan Times , 2023)

Japan's prioritization of relations with both Arab states and Iran has presented challenges in balancing its ties between these countries. Japan's self-interest in ensuring energy security and its historically amicable diplomatic relations with both the GCC states and Iran have given it an advantageous diplomatic position in assuming the mediator role. For example, during the escalation of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran in 2019, there was criticism in Tokyo that Japan should have mediated between the two countries instead of China (Saito, 2023).

Japan's unique position in the Middle East, its prioritization of relations with Arab states and Iran, and the challenges in balancing ties between these countries have shaped its foreign policy approach in the region. As Japan continues to navigate its diplomatic balancing act, maintaining strong relations with both Arab states and Iran will remain crucial for its energy security and overall regional stability.

7. Beyond Energy: Multi-Faceted Engagement

- **Areas of Collaboration Beyond Energy**
- **Japan's Role in Regional Dialogues**
- **Aid and Assistance for Infrastructure Projects**

Japan's engagement with the Middle East extends beyond energy, with a focus on collaboration in various sectors. Some areas of collaboration beyond energy include technology, defense, and infrastructure partnerships. In regard to technology and renewable energy, Prime Minister Kishida's visit to the Middle East in 2023 highlights these sectors where agreements were signed (Mann & Afterman, 2023). A clear example was the cooperation project with the UAE to strengthen decarbonization and clean as well as develop innovative technologies (Pollmann, 2023). The goal is to turn the Middle East into a “hub” for exporting decarbonized energy.

On the level of defense, Japan's military presence in the Middle East has been focused on ensuring the security of its oil imports, but it has also played a role in addressing issues such as Somali piracy and the 2019 tanker incident. The Japanese government has been participating in joint exercises and deployments in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Middle East, to enhance its tactical capabilities and strengthen cooperation with partner navies.

On the level of infrastructure, Japan has been involved in infrastructure development in the Middle East, particularly in the areas of automobiles and machinery exports. Japanese companies have also worked on enhancing human resources and technical cooperation in various fields through government support. The Pacific country played a role in regional dialogues, particularly in its efforts to mediate conflicts and promote peace and stability in the region. Japan's approach to energy security and strengthening relations with the Middle East has been characterized by a diplomatic balancing act, given its prioritization of relations with both Arab states and Iran (Yoshioka, 2018).

Japan's active political and economic engagement with the Middle East, at both the government and private levels, aims to achieve peace and stability in these countries.

8. Challenges and Future Outlook

- **Identified Challenges in Japan's Approach**
- **The need for proactive strategies**
- **Opportunities for Future Collaboration**

Identified Challenges in Japan's Approach

Japan's approach to the Middle East faces several challenges. A severe challenge that Japan's faces is balancing its diplomatic ties with previously clashing countries in the region. These Middle East countries, Iran, and the Gulf States, have political and religious differences. Japan has traditionally prioritized relations with Arab states due to its dependence on Middle East oil. However, it also maintains diplomatic and economic ties with Iran, which has strained its relationship with the United States and other Western countries (Mieczysław P. Boduszynski, 2019).

Another main problem facing Japan is its large dependence on Middle East oil. As Japan aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, it needs to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil and gas. This shift may impact its relations with major Middle Eastern countries, requiring Japan to invest in alternative energy sources and maintain a delicate balance in its partnerships (Mitsuka, 2021).

A final issue Japan that might hinder Japan's Middle East policy is the lack of stability in the region. Japan recognizes the importance of long-term stability in the Middle East for its own security and economic interests. Conversely, the region's complex geopolitical landscape, ongoing conflicts, and potential for political and social unrest pose challenges to Japan's engagement. Arab nations in the Middle East face various pressing challenges, such as rising food prices and energy security. Japan needs to understand and address these concerns to foster stronger relationships and collaboration in the region.

The Need for Proactive Strategies

To overcome these challenges, Japan should consider adopting proactive strategies. A main proactive strategy is greater political involvement in the conflicts that surround the region. Japan's policy in the Middle East has evolved from vague support of peace and concern about specific economic interests to a greater focus on long-term stability (Dowty, 2000). It should continue to actively engage in regional dialogues and contribute to conflict resolution efforts.

Multilateral cooperation is another practical method for Japan's operation in the region. Japan can leverage its positive reputation in the Middle East to open multilateral strategic dialogues with the region, focusing on critical issues such as digital transformation, technological competition, and security. This approach can help build a better Middle East and foster stronger relationships with regional actors. Finally, investment in alternative energy sources, such as hydrogen and ammonia, in collaboration with Middle Eastern countries is a vital strategy of cooperation in the Middle East. This can help maintain a mutually beneficial relationship while supporting the region's transition to a low-carbon economy.

Opportunities for Future Collaboration

Despite the challenges, there are opportunities for future collaboration between Japan and the Middle East, including infrastructure and cultural and exchange programs. In regard to infrastructure programs, Japan can provide aid and assistance for infrastructure projects in the region, leveraging its expertise in areas such as transportation, urban planning, and disaster management (Sollman, 2021). This can contribute to the region's development and enhance bilateral relations. Additionally, regarding cultural and educational exchanges, Japan can strengthen people-to-people ties through cultural and educational exchanges, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation (Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). This can help build a solid foundation for long-term partnerships between Japan and Middle Eastern countries.

Concluding Remarks

In tracing Japan's dynamic and nuanced engagement with the Middle East, one cannot help but be struck by the strategic foresight and unwavering commitment to regional stability and energy security that have defined this enduring relationship. Against the backdrop of the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, this milestone serves as a poignant testament to the abiding significance of Japan's Middle Eastern partnerships.

The 1973 oil crisis, an epoch-defining moment, laid bare the intricacies of global interdependence and underscored the criticality of energy security. Japan, heavily reliant on Middle Eastern oil, found itself thrust into a geopolitical whirlwind. Emerging from this crucible, Japan not only gleaned strategic lessons but also attained a profound comprehension of the intricate realities that define the Middle East.

Japan's distinctive position in the region necessitates a delicate diplomatic ballet. Balancing relations with both the Gulf states and Iran, twin linchpins of the Middle East, has proven to be a challenging yet indispensable endeavor. This nuanced approach has not only shielded Japan's energy interests but also elevated them to the role of a crucial mediator in regional affairs.

Yet, as the global energy landscape undergoes seismic shifts, the imperative to diversify energy sources looms ever larger. Japan's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 entails a fundamental recalibration of its energy policies. This transformation, while pivotal, must be undertaken judiciously to preserve the delicate equilibrium in its Middle Eastern partnerships.

Considering these formidable challenges, proactive strategies are not only prudent but imperative. Japan's deepening political engagement, multifaceted multilateral cooperation endeavors, and judicious investments in alternative energy sources stand as beacons of its forward-looking approach. These strategies are poised to fortify not only Japan's own energy security but also to make tangible contributions to the broader stability and prosperity of the Middle East.

Peering into the horizon, a vista of collaborative potential unfolds. Infrastructure projects, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives beckon, promising to fortify the bonds between Japan and the Middle East. By harnessing its expertise and resources, Japan stands poised to make meaningful contributions to the region's development, all while nurturing an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

In illuminating Japan's intricate and dynamic engagement with the Middle East, one is immediately struck by the strategic foresight and unwavering commitment that have consistently defined this enduring relationship. As we approach the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, this milestone not only serves as a chronological marker but stands as a poignant testament to the abiding significance of Japan's partnerships in the Middle East.

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As the global energy landscape undergoes seismic shifts, the imperative to diversify energy sources looms larger than ever. Japan's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 necessitates a fundamental recalibration of its energy policies. This transformation, while pivotal, must be undertaken judiciously to preserve the delicate equilibrium in its Middle Eastern partnerships.

Amidst these formidable challenges, proactive strategies emerge as not merely prudent but imperative. Japan's deepening political engagement, multifaceted multilateral cooperation endeavors, and judicious investments in alternative energy sources stand as beacons of its forward-looking approach. These strategies are poised not only to fortify Japan's own energy security but to make tangible contributions to the broader stability and prosperity of the Middle East.

As we peer into the horizon, a vista of collaborative potential unfolds. Infrastructure projects, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives beckon, promising to fortify the bonds between Japan and the Middle East. By harnessing its expertise and resources, Japan stands poised to make meaningful contributions to the region's development while nurturing an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

In summation, Japan's engagement with the Middle East stands as a shining testament to the nation's diplomatic sagacity and steadfast dedication to global stability. As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, we gaze forward with sanguine optimism, secure in the knowledge that through strategic cooperation and mutual respect, Japan and the Middle East will continue to chart a course toward shared prosperity, enduring peace, and a more interconnected world.

This retrospective journey through history portrays Japan not as a passive actor in the Middle East but as a dynamic force, adept at adapting to challenges, mediating conflicts, and contributing to the region's stability. As we reflect on the past, let it serve as a compass guiding us toward a future where collaboration and understanding between Japan and the Middle East deepen,

transcending the complexities of geopolitics and fostering a world where nations work together for the greater good.

Finally, Japan's engagement with the Middle East stands as a shining testament to the nation's diplomatic sagacity and steadfast dedication to global stability. As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, we gaze forward with sanguine optimism, secure in the knowledge that through strategic cooperation and mutual respect, Japan and the Middle East will continue to chart a course toward shared prosperity, enduring peace, and a more interconnected world.

Appendix

Interview at Waseda University

The JIME-IEEJ and Waseda University Joint International Symposium commemorating the 50th anniversary of the oil crisis has now concluded, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing dialogue between Japan and the Middle East. This event provided a crucial platform for insightful discussions where diverse perspectives were shared, and collaborations were forged. Reflecting on the symposium, it is evident that emphasizing Arab representation played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the Japan-Middle East relationship.

The Imperative of Inclusion:

The symposium underscored the profound influence of the Arab world in shaping Japan-Middle East relations. The contributions of Arab nations were recognized as instrumental, particularly in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis. Their historical role was acknowledged and appreciated, providing valuable context for the discussions.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Arab representation allowed for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the region's complexities. Each nation in the Middle East possesses its own distinct socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics. These diverse perspectives enriched the discourse, offering fresh insights and fostering a greater appreciation for the intricacies of the region.

Bilateral Cooperation and Economic Partnerships:

The symposium delved into the potential for economic partnerships between Japan and the Middle East, and it was evident that the opportunities extended far beyond energy cooperation. Sectors such as technology, infrastructure, healthcare, and more emerged as promising areas for

collaboration. Arab representatives played a crucial role in articulating the diverse economic landscape of the region, providing valuable insights for future collaborations.

Understanding Cultural Nuances:

A key takeaway from the symposium was the importance of understanding cultural nuances and soft power strategies in the Middle East. Arab perspectives on cultural exchange, language, and artistic expression were invaluable in shaping discussions on building enduring relationships. This nuanced understanding formed the foundation for stronger cultural ties between Japan and the Middle East.

Empowering Future Leaders and Policy Formulation:

The inclusion of Arab scholars and researchers enriched the academic discourse, contributing a wealth of knowledge and expertise in fields such as political science, international relations, economics, and energy studies. Their insights were instrumental in charting the future course of Japan-Middle East relations. Additionally, the symposium generated policy recommendations grounded in rigorous research and reflective of the real-world experiences and aspirations of Arab nations, ensuring that policies are not only practical but also impactful.

Promoting Global Understanding and Peace:

The symposium fostered a spirit of mutual respect and empathy, foundational elements for building bridges between nations and fostering enduring peace and stability in the region. Providing a platform for Arab voices challenged prevailing stereotypes and biases, contributing to a more balanced and accurate perception of the Middle East. This inclusive approach paved the way for a more harmonious and cooperative global community.

Finally, the symposium on Japan-Middle East Relations, with its emphasis on Arab representation, proved to be a pivotal event in fostering a comprehensive, inclusive, and fruitful dialogue. The diverse perspectives shared during the symposium propelled us into a new era of collaboration and understanding between Japan and the Middle East, benefiting both regions and the global community at large. This inclusive approach was not only respectful but also enriching for all involved, and it lays the foundation for continued cooperation in the years to come.

From Tokyo, Prof. [Habib Al Badawi](#)

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