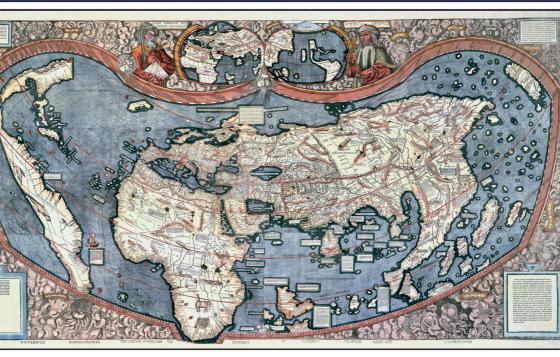
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Strengthening Ties at its Southern Flank: Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia and Philippines from the «Takeshita doctrine» to the Hashimoto Government, 1987-1998

di Raimondo Neironi

Abstract – Japan has been regarded Southeast Asia as a vital region for its diplomatic and economic interests since almost the late 1930s. Although its diplomatic efforts to build – on a new basis – the relationship with Southeast Asia, and particularly with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), dated back to the late 1970s, as of December 1987 Takeshita Noboru's cabinet took great pains to reinforce the economic ties and to initiate political coordination between Japan and the Association. What ensued was an ever-growing form of co-operation affecting diplomacy, culture, trade, and infrastructure projects. The development of Japan-Philippines relations epitomised this new flourishing approach. The bilateral connection with the Philippines as of 1986, until the 1998 at least, demonstrated how much important was for Japan to keep good neighbourhood policy strong at its southern flank. The aim of this paper is twofold: on the one hand, it examines the evolution of Japan-ASEAN/Southeast Asia relations within the space of almost a decade, from the enunciation of the «Takeshita doctrine» to the Hashimoto Ryūtaro's government. On the other, it traces Japan's path towards the enhancement of relationship with the Philippines from the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' regime until the Fidel V. Ramos administration. This paper argues that Tōkyō contributed decisively both to the process of democratisation in the Philippines and to the development of the southern region of Mindanao.

Introduction

Japan has regarded Southeast Asia as a vital region for its diplomatic and economic interests since the late 1930s¹. Directly after the

¹ See for example, G. Huff, World War II and Southeast Asia: Economy and Society under Japanese Occupation, Cambridge, 2020; J.A. Yellen, The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War; Ithaca, London, 2019; T.

ruinous capitulation to the Allied forces in September 1945, the American-led occupation government came to believe that natural resources from this area might revitalise Japan's economy and resume the bilateral trade system between East and Southeast Asia. This assumption dovetailed with the political event occurring at the early October 1949, at a time when Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of a Communist government in China. Since then, John Foster Dulles and the US Department of State affirmed Japan's attempt to increase trade with Southeast Asia «might, to some extent, offset the loss of [its] traditional trading area in China and Manchuria». Moreover, they cannot ignore the possibility that Southeast Asia might also be fallen to Communist threat «with consequent grave effect on Japan's economic position². Hence, the fundamental lesson United States (US) was meant to have learned from the post-WWII period was that just a stable and peaceful co-operation with the region would make Japan a complete success as a democratic and capitalist stronghold in Asia.

The most important Southeast Asian countries that entwined its destiny with Japan was undoubtedly the Philippines. Tōkyō and Manila have taken part of the «hub-and-spokes system» since the 1950s: this exclusive³ security architecture consisted of a string of defence pacts that Washington signed with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines bilaterally, and a trilateral security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand. Despite the repeated attempts of the US to formalise a «Pacific Ocean Pact»⁴

Miyagi, Japan's Quest for Stability in Southeast Asia: Navigating the Turning Points in Postwar Asia, Abingdon – New York, 2018; N. Satoshi, Japan's Colonial Moment in Southeast Asia, 1942-1945: The Occupiers Experience, Abingdon - New York, 2012; S. Hajime, "Southeast Asia as a Regional Concept in Modern Japan", in H.G.C. Schulte Nordholt - R. Raben, Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space, Leiden, 2005, pp. 82-112; N. Tarling, A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, 1941-1945, Honolulu, 2001.

² Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Memorandum of Conversation by the Special Assistant to the Consultant, Allison, 12.1.1951, Asia and the Pacific, 1951, vol. VI, part 1, document 472.

³ M. Dian - H. Meijer, *Networking Hegemony: Alliance Dynamics in East Asia*, "International Politics", vol. 57 (2020), pp. 131-49; V.D. Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*, Princeton, 2016.

⁴ See FRUS, Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the Consultant Allison to the Ambassador at Large Jessup, 4.1.1951, Asia and the Pacific, 1951, vol. VI, part 1, document 32.

failed in 1951, this US-led network of security assistance could succeed in securing Japan and the rest of Pacific Island nations – Australia, New Zealand, The Philippines, and initially Indonesia – to the Communist menace. Furthermore, it should allow the US to create its hegemony along the island chain ranging from the Aleutians to the South Pacific Ocean. Japan and the Philippines constitute both the backbone of this imagined crescent of security.

As time progressed, the special attention that Japan showed towards Southeast Asia thrived and carried on almost until the late 1980s, when the crisis of bipolar system broke out. In particular, Japanese effort to play a leading role in the region in a context of broader change revolved around notably on the Philippines. In order to grasp the importance of Southeast Asia and the Philippines for Japan's diplomacy at the eve of the end of the Cold War onwards, this paper proceeds as follows. First, it traces the relationship which Japan bolstered with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) within the space of more than a decade, from Takeshita Noboru's cabinet (1987) to the last year of Hashimoto Ryūtaro's government (1998). Second, it examines Japan's contribution to the democratic process after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' regime in 1986 and the economic recovery of the Philippines following the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis: in both occasions, it was dramatically viewed as a problematic partner in Southeast Asia's arc of containment, as well as the «sick man» of Asia. This article argues that Japan effectively carved a special place in the development of ASEAN and Southeast Asian states by ensuring a commitment by presence in wide-range fields of co-operation. Moreover, any recovery in the Philippines could not occur without recourse to funds, economic programmes and financial projects approved by Japan's government as of the late 1980s.

Japan's renewed initiatives for Southeast Asia

ASEAN-Japan relations can be understood as a mutual relationship that has developed in a bid to resolve security and stability issues as well as to foster economic, diplomatic, and cultural co-operation within Asia. Since the end of the US occupation of Japan in the early 1950s, the main objective has been to overturn the negative image of Japan in the region by expanding the co-operation

with Southeast Asian countries. While it is a known fact that ASEAN-Japan relations were traditionally grounded in the field of economics, however the political dimension has increasingly augmented from the inception of the "Fukuda doctrine" in 1977. Prime minister Fukuda Takeo (1976-1978) pledged that Japan would never come back a military power, conversely it would build close relations with ASEAN countries on equal basis. Since then, the five ASEAN country members gradually accepted Japan's widening political involvement in response to Japan's efforts to enhance its political credibility⁵. As Radha Sinha argues, Japan's relationship with Southeast Asian countries, and especially with ASEAN countries, was "basically colonial", in both political and economic terms: while Japan has successfully taken back control of regional market since the 1960s, it provided no equal access to Southeast Asian products in its own market.

The appreciation of the yen in the aftermath of the signature of the Plaza Accord in 1985 convinced many Japanese firms that Southeast Asia could represent the best platform to establish lower cost production by exploiting the labour-cost advantage. The appreciation facilitated overseas investment by Japanese firms as it lowered the value of foreign assets in terms of the yen. As a result, Japanese *keiretsu* extended their influence in the region than in the Asian newly industrialised economies (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore), thus contributing indirectly to the development of specific sectors, mostly the automotive and electronics industries. Japan was forced by the US and Western Europe to implement an action plan to enhance market access by making easier imports from abroad, including ASEAN countries⁷. Accordingly, despite protests showing a single-minded group of Japanese politicians disapproved of this decision, the Japanese government introduced tariff cuts on a series of goods of significant relevance for

⁵ B. Singh, ASEAN's Perceptions of Japan: Change and Continuity, "Asian Survey", vol. 42 (2002), no. 2, pp. 276-296 (278).

⁶ R. Sinha, *Japan and ASEAN: A Special Relationship?*, "The World Today", vol. 38 (1982), no. 12, pp. 483-492 (483).

⁷ M.C. Suarez, *Takeshita Unveils Aid Package for Southeast Asia*, "The Associated Press", 15.12.1987.

ASEAN, such as commodities, as a new rapprochement towards one of its main trade partners in Asia⁸.

Japan's special relationship with ASEAN was not conceived to establish an economic bloc, but to build a close political coordination. Prime minister Takeshita Noboru (1987-1989) claimed the primary responsibility of the nations of the area was to reduce the potential for conflict in Southeast Asia and blunt the effects of existing quarrels by further strengthening national and regional resilience through closer political, economic, social and cultural co-operation Takeshita reaffirmed their commitment to the realisation of Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality by establishing a Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone. As for economic issues, Takeshita put free and open trade, as well as economic growth, at the centre of Japanese foreign policy. ASEAN expressed concern over the effects of the appreciation of the yen and stressed the need for full implementation of a joint development fund in order that it could come fully into effect in Southeast Asia. At the third ASEAN Summit in Manila in December 1987, Takeshita made a speech entitled «Japan and ASEAN: A New Partnership towards Peace and Prosperity» in which he enumerated three basic policies towards ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries: strengthening the economic resilience; promoting political coordination; promoting cultural exchanges. The high point of Takeshita's visit was the formalisation of the ASEAN-Japan Development Fund of more than US\$2 billion as the first phase of bilateral co-operation which it would stimulate, with two different categories of loans, the private sector in the ASEAN economies. Such a decision stemmed from the Japan's need for expanding its internal demand and opened its market. The disbursement passed through the financial institutions of member countries, and not include the bilateral ties between Japan and each of the ASEAN countries. Takeshita, before resigning because of a gift scandal that has tainted his government, visited Thailand and the rest of ASEAN members in April 1989 to «maintain continuity» in Japan's foreign policy. The government responded to

⁸ S. Sudo, From Fukuda to Takeshita: A Decade of Japan-ASEAN Relations, "Contemporary Southeast Asia", vol. 10 (1988), no. 2, pp. 119-143 (131).

⁹ L.P. Ping, ASEAN and the Japanese Role in Southeast Asia, in A. Broinowski (ed.), ASEAN into the 1990s, London, 1990, pp. 162-183 (171).

mounting calls for economic assistance from developing countries in the region.

The end of the Cold War opened a window of opportunities and forced Japan to redefine its role in a renewed international environment. Increasing cross-border exchanges would weaken the ideological antagonism which had characterised much of the twentieth century¹⁰. ASEAN was concerned about the possibility of Japan becoming too absorbed in the changes that were occurring in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, and may neglect the Southeast Asia region. This apprehension has been voiced by Lee Kuan Yew¹¹, the politically longtime Prime minister of Singapore. In response, Japan, in its efforts to appease such anxiety, made it known at various opportunities. In 1990 Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō visited Thailand and Malaysia in January, while Prime minister Kaifu Toshiki (1989-1991) undertook a trip to Indonesia in May 1990. On this occasion, Japan's aid to Central and Eastern European countries would in no way affect its support to the ASEAN, especially to the three main recipients of Japanese investment in Southeast Asia. On the 1990 Diplomatic Bluebook, Japan stressed the main purpose was to advance world peace and stability by promoting the «International Co-operation Initiative» grounded on the three pillars¹². First, enhancing official development assistance (ODA) which Japan considered as the primary tool guiding the government's aid policy in the region. Second, co-operating for creating a sphere of peace and stability in the region. Third, favouring international cultural exchanges would contribute to the establishment of peace and stability by heightening mutual understanding among nations and creating a richer cultural climate. At that time, the Japan Foundation, a government institution to foster friendship, trust, and mutual understanding all over the world, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation promoted bilateral exchanges with the ASEAN Cultural Centre in January

¹⁰ B. Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine: From Yoshida to Miyazawa*, Basingstoke and New York, p. 142.

¹¹ See K.Y. Lee, From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965-2000, New York, 2000.

¹² Diplomatic Bluebook 1990, Japan's Diplomatic Activities. https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1990/1990-contents.htm#CONTENTS (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

1990. ASEAN was concerned that any region-wide multilateral security arrangement might weaken its legitimacy and overshadow it. Japan, on the contrary, feared that any multilateral arrangement might undermine the bilateral security frameworks in the region which had seemingly been so successful in ensuring stability in the past. Thus, in July 1990 Kaifu stated that it was too early to support any type of multilateral security arrangement in the region¹³.

The ASEAN-Japan Forum held in Tōkyō in September 1990 focussed on trade, economic, and financial issues. The meeting demonstrated how mature the relationship between ASEAN and its dialogue partners had become until then. He also stressed that through their development in the last two decades, ASEAN countries had lured world attention as the most dynamic group of nations in the Asia-Pacific region; furthermore, it had been highly respected for their great contribution to the peace and stability of Asia as well as of the world¹⁴. ASEAN proposed to Japan specific projects which would further promote technology transfer from Japan to ASEAN and direct investment in the ASEAN region.

Kaifu backed Takeshita's idea that Japan's foreign policy was a pursuit in which its people had to «toil in their sweat»; Japan could no longer expect to reap the benefits of the existing order without making a contribution¹⁵. Japan attempted to play a role of a honest broker in solving political stalemate in Southeast Asia, as much it made between Indonesia and Malaysia in Borneo against the backdrop of the *Konfrontasi* issue¹⁶. Japan's diplomacy seized on the Cambodian crisis as a testing ground for proactive and independent course of action¹⁷. During the delicate negotiations in the Indochina peace process, in which the removal of all the obstacles to the realisation of coexistence and integration in Southeast Asia were the ultimate goals, Japan was resolved to contribute to the

¹³ G.D. Hock et al., Japan's International Relations. Politics, Economics and Security, Abingdon - New York, 2005 (second edition), p. 232.

¹⁴ Joint Press Statement of the Twelfth ASEAN-Japan Forum Tōkyō, 19-20.9.1990, https://asean.org/joint-press-statement-the-twelfth-asean-japan-forum-tokyo-19-20-september-1990/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

¹⁵ Edström, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹⁶ See O. Frattolillo, *Reassessing Japan's Cold War: Ikeda Hayato's Foreign Politics and Proactivism during the 1960s*, Abingdon, 2019, pp. 74-114.

¹⁷ M.J. Green, Japan's Reluctant Realism. Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power, New York, 2001, p. 178.

peace and prosperity of the sub-region. Japan hosted a meeting in Tōkyō between Prince Sihanouk, leader of the anti-Vietnamese resistance, and the Vietnamese-backed Premier Hun Sen in early June 1990. The outcome of the meeting could not be considered a success, since the Khmer Rouge, the strongest of the tripartite coalition resistance, rejected the Tokyo accord signed between the two leaders. Furthermore, Japan provided support for Indochinese and other refugees everywhere - the boat people. By the end of June 1990, Japan accepted over six thousand Indochinese refugees for resettlement, more than one thousand which has promised at the June 1989 International Conference on Indochinese Refugees. At the same time, Japan is working actively through the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees to alleviate the burden on Hong Kong and the ASEAN countries struggling with large influxes of boat people from Vietnam. The Kaifu government began dispatching a strings of screening missions to refugee camps in Southeast Asia which would permit eligible refugees for resettlement to reside in Japan. It allowed refugees already residing in Japan to legally invite their family members from their countries of origin. Ultimately, it extended support for Japanese language education, social adaptation training, employment seeking and other activities in order to promote the integration of refugees into the country¹⁸. The contribution to the Indochina peace process showed that Kaifu's government not only was able to enhance its political stature in the region 18, but it also tried to align decision-making and policy with the core idea of the «Fukuda doctrine»¹⁹.

The year 1991 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of Japan's «Southern military expedition» (*Nanshin-ron*) against the backdrop of the «Greater East Asian War» (*Dai Tōa Sensō*) and Kaifu planed a visit in some ASEAN member states. This was the attempt to overcome widespread feelings of vexation stemming from the crippling event which marked the Southeast Asian history. In May, in Singapore, then Premier formally apologised for Japan's war crimes against people of the area and expressed his «strong feeling of remorse» (*kibishiku hansei*) for a flurry of acts

¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Refugees, Acceptance of Refugees by Japan, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/refugee/japan.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

¹⁹ A. Pressello, Japan and the Shaping of Post-Vietnam War Southeast Asia: Japanese Diplomacy and the Cambodian Conflict, 1978-93, Abingdon, 2018, p. 218.

that caused «unbearable suffering and grief». Kaifu also made a circumlocutory promise to change Japanese textbooks to reflect more accurately aggression and brutality committed by the Japanese military²⁰.

Under the Miyazawa Kiichi government (1991-1993), in July 1991 Foreign Minister Nakayama launched a proposal for promoting a region-wide forum for multilateral political dialogue at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Kuala Lumpur. This meeting should become «a forum for political dialogue» designed to improve the sense of mutual security amongst East Asian states in the long-run. Many Japanese diplomats, such as Sato Yukio, were involved in the Nakayama proposal and went through the process of conceptualising their own perspective of a new regional and economic order in the Asia-Pacific. Mounting serious debate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), their officials discovered the idea to set up a region-wide «multilateral framework»²¹ for security dialogue as a new foreign policy option. One of the main reasons for their cool response was the lack of prior consultation between MOFA and its counterparts in ASEAN and the USA before the Nakayama proposal²².

Japan's contribution to Southeast Asian regional challenges in the post-Cold War scenario

The most critical challenge Japan was facing then was the creation of a regional security and economic multilateralism in the post-Cold War era. Japan encouraged the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) in the mid-1988 and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with a solid co-operation with, respectively, Australia and Singapore. This initially meant that Japan was poised to move away from usual practice of offering

²⁰ See L.P. Er, *Japan's Postwar Reconciliation with Southeast Asia*, "Asian Journal of Peacebuilding", vol. 3 (2015), no. 1, pp. 43-63; G. Shin - D.C. Sneider, *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories*, Abingdon - New York, 2011.

²¹ K. Ashizawa, *Japan, the US, and Regional Institution-Building in the New Asia. When Identity Matters*, New York, 2013, pp. 135-138.

²² T. Yuzawa, Japan's Security Policy and the ASEAN Regional Forum: The Search for Multilateral Security in the Asia Pacific, PhD dissertation, University of London, 2005, pp. 45-48.

foreign economic assistance to Asian, and especially, Southeast Asian countries, to provide an effective concept of security to reduce any risk of military and economic confrontation. Despite recognising the existence of lingering doubts regionally about the effectiveness of multilateral regional arrangements that would involve external powers, Japan aimed at creating a political hierarchy in Asia allowing to give an alternative to the security treaty with the US – in a bid to be more independent than in the past²³. With its deliberative and informal nature, APEC offered the opportunity to Japan to serve as a bridge between Asia and the West²⁴. By the same token, in July 1993, at the annual meeting of its foreign ministers held in Singapore, ASEAN convened a wider regional forum in a bid to cope with the post-Cold War regional pattern of power. ASEAN's initiative, which was encouraged by Japan and the US, constituted an attempt to subsume East and Southeast Asia within the same structure of regional confidence-building²⁵. The formation of the ARF was perceived by Japan as a supplement and not a substitute to the US-Japan alliance that remains the cornerstone of its post-Cold War foreign policy. Besides enhancing regional security through dialogue and confidence-building measures, the ARF provides Japan with a useful avenue to discuss and influence regional political and strategic issues²⁶.

In the 1990s, the end of bipolarism and the advancement of globalisation brought to light new issues facing Japan, and various questions were raised with the existing model of development assistance. Japan realised it needed to spend the ODAs more strategically, taking national interests into account and in the respect

²³ D. Arase, *Japan's Evolving Security Policy after the Cold War*, "Journal of East Asian Affairs", vol. 8 (1994), no. 2, pp. 396-419 (409).

²⁴ R.J. Ellings - S.W. Simon (eds), Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium, Armonk; NY - London, 1996, pp. 145-146.

²⁵ M. Leifer, *Expanding Horizons in Southeast Asia*, "Southeast Asian Affairs", 1994, pp. 3-21 (4); Address by Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi at the National Press Club, Washington DC, 2.7.1992, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1992/1992-appendix-2.htm (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

²⁶ L.P. Er, *Japan's Search for a Political Role in Southeast Asia*, "Southeast Asian Affairs", (1996), pp. 40-55 (45).

of human rights and not for military use by recipients²⁷. Japan has given priority to ODA assistance in strengthening of the economic structure for sustainable growth and the removal of impediments to such growth; poverty alleviation and mitigation of regional disparities; environmental conservation and disaster management; democratisation and institution building. In 1992, Japan formulated the «ODA Charter», a comprehensive document on Japan's mid-to long-term assistance policy which contained humanitarian considerations as a basic philosophy; recognition of interdependence among nations; environmental conservation; and support for the self-help efforts of developing countries towards economic take-off²⁸.

Reiterating the effot put forward by his predecessors, Miyazawa planned to stabilise the region by launching a series of independent diplomatic initiative29. In January 1993 during his tour of the ASEAN nations, he proposed the forum for the «Comprehensive Development of Indochina» as a venue for a debate and exchange of views on the political future of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The ministerial meeting was held in Tōkyō in February 1995, chaired by Japan, and gathered 25 nations, including the six ASEAN member countries, and eight international organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank. The objectives consisted of the development of the whole of Indochina from a regional perspective; international co-operation through voluntary coordination of assistance; and promotion of market economies in the three countries of the Indochinese sub-region³⁰. Japan has long extended financial support for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the first occasion on which the UN has taken over the administration of an independent member state. From September 1992 to September 1993, Japan dispatched personnel of the Self-Defence Forces to support the operation, civil-

²⁷ S.W. Hook - G. Zhang, *Japan's Aid Policy since the Cold War: Rhetoric and Reality*, "Asian Survey", vol. 38 (1998), no. 11, pp. 1051-1066 (1066).

²⁸ Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2014, p. 4, https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000119315.pdf (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

²⁹ Edström, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

³⁰ M. Ishida, GMS Economic Co-operation and Its Impact on CLMV Development, in C. Sotharith (ed.), Development Strategy for CLMV in the Age of Economic Integration, ERIA Research Project Report 2007-4, Chiba, IDE-JETRO, 2008, pp. 213-214.

ian police officers to assist in training the Cambodian police force. and national and local officers, as well as individuals from private sector to support National Assembly elections required to enact the Cambodian constitution³¹.

However, in the wake of the creation of a fruitful approach with the neighbourood, the new centre-left government began to undertake unprecedent actions in regard to the touchy issue of the "comfort women". In July 1995, Prime minister Murayama Tomiichi (1994-1996) launched the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) in the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Greater East Asian War. After addressing Japan's moral responsibility toward a large number of women involved in sexual exploitation system between the 1930s and the end of the World War II, Murayama proposed a mechanism set up by the Japanese government but managed by volunteers participating in as private citizens. That solution attracted strong criticism by those who insisted on state compensation as the only acceptable resolution to the comfort women issue as a war crime. By the end of 2002, the Fund had concluded its atonement projects, except in the case of Indonesia³².

MOFA officials focussed on how to use ASEAN as a «balancer» in the increasingly complex US-Japan-China triangle³³. Prime minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998) sought to build a more explicit strategic relationship with ASEAN. In January 1997 he travelled to the region to propose a broader relationship based on closer, regular consultation at the cabinet level with ASEAN; expanded cultural exchange; and co-operation on transnational and environmental security issues. During his speech in Singapore, Hashimoto affirmed the importance of stability and development in Asia as prerequisites for Japan's domestic and external security: it was then self-evident that the two elements were «inseparable». Moreover, Hashimoto stressed the importance of Japan and ASEAN to find a reasonable and cooperative dialogue at the

³¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping Operations, Japanese Participation in UN Peacekeeping Cambodia, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph96/02_2.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

³² S.C. Soh, Japan's National/Asian Women's Fund for "Comfort Women", "Pacific Affairs", vol. 76 (2003), no. 2, pp. 209-233 (210).

³³ Green, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

World Trade Organisation for a free and open world economy to maintain and strengthen a multilateral free trade system. The then leader of Liberal-Democratic Party welcomed the fact that APEC particularly has gained increasing importance, as a framework for pursuing economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, under the ideal of regional co-operation open to the world. Before achieving the necessary prosperity for the area, Hashimoto did not cease to stress the need for Japan and each of the ASEAN countries to take bold steps in domestic reforms, to make both socio-economic systems «more compatible with market mechanisms». Unlike his predecessors, Hashimoto tried to garner more support from the ASEAN countries to play global roles by doing joint initiatives to tackle terrorism, the environment, health and welfare, food and energy shortages³⁴.

When the financial crisis in 1997-1998 disrupted bilateral trade and investment and halted the economic growth, Japan hastened to assure a critical assistance to Southeast Asian countries hit by an unbridled wave of speculative pressures over their currencies. According to US President Bill Clinton, one way forward to recover Asian economies form this financial shock was «a strong Japanese economy» and feared that if Japan had not led the initiative, «Asia [would have gone] down and US-Japan relations [would have returned] to the days of the 1980s and 1990s»35. At the beginning of the crisis, the Japanese government announced assistance measures for East and Southeast Asia totalling approximately US\$44 billion up to the end of November 1998. The measures include bilateral co-operation in the context of the assistance package implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), assistance for private investment activities, facilitation of trade financing, assistance to the socially vulnerable, assistance for economic structural reforms, and assistance for human resources development. In late September 1997, Japan launched a plan for

³⁴ Policy Speech by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō, "Reforms for the New Era of Japan and ASEAN for a Broader and Deeper Partnership", Singapore, 14.1.1997, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9701/policy.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

³⁵ William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Memorandum of Conversation, "Meeting with Prime minister Ryūtarō Hashimoto of Japan", Vancouver, 24.11.1997, pp. 2-3 [www.clintonlibrary.gov].

the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in the annual World Bank-IMF meeting held in Hong Kong. The Hashimoto cabinet intended to pursue an Asian version of the IMF to develop its own regional model of financial cooperation. It proposed the establishment of a fund of US\$ 100 billion that would be financed by Asian countries to help the governments cope with currency crisis. Half of its reserves coming from Japan and the remaining US\$50 billion from Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and China. Nevertheless, this proposal met the strong opposition from China, which was afraid of Japanese regional ambitions³⁶, and the Western countries because it would jeopardise the adequacy of the IMF³⁷, an important pillar of the «Washington consensus», and impede the liberalisation of trade and finance. In November, the Clinton administration said it would support only the «Manila framework group», centred on the IMF, to address financial crisis, a fine-tuning of surveillance practices to analyse capital flows and to prevent ASEAN's financial and banking systems from collapsing because of a cyclical turmoil³⁸. A widespread accusation levelled at Japan is that it was subjugated to the financial rescue programme under the IMF to comply with the US³⁹.

In overcoming their economic difficulties and to contribute to the stability of international financial markets, Japan launched the «New Miyazawa Initiative» in October 1998 which provided a package of support measures amount US\$30 billion, of which US\$15 billion were made available for the medium- to long-term financial needs for economic recovery in Asian countries, and another US\$15 billion were set aside for their possible short-term capital needs during the process of implementing economic

³⁶ S. Narine, *The Idea of an "Asian Monetary Fund": The Problems of Financial Institutionalism in the Asia-Pacific*, "Asian Perspective", vol. 27 (2003), no. 2, pp. 65-103 (69).

³⁷ See P.Y. Lipscy, *Japan's Asian Monetary Fund Proposal*, "Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs", vol. 3 (2003), no. 1, pp. 93-104; S.N. Katada, *Banking on Stability: Japan and the Cross-Pacific Dynamics of International Financial Crisis Management*, Ann Arbor, 2001, pp. 172-207.

³⁸ M. Wesley, *The Asian Crisis and the Adequacy of Regional Institutions*, "Contemporary Southeast Asia", vol. 21 (1999), no. 1, pp. 54-73 (58-59).

³⁹ C.W. Hughes, *Japanese Policy and the East Asian Currency Crisis: Abject Defeat or Quiet Victory?*, "Review of International Political Economy", vol. 7 (2000), no. 2, pp. 219-253 (220).

reform. The Japan Export-Import Bank was the main instrument to support the process. AT the same time, Japan established a Special Yen Loans Facility (SYLF) at ASEAN Leaders' Summit in December 1998, which aimed at increasing productivity and at bringing about economic structural reform by creating an economic environment conducive to private investment.

Japan used to separate politics from economics (seikei bunri), in a bid to prevent from worsening relations with the Communist countries or authoritarian regimes in Asia, while keeping a low profile with them in political and diplomatic affairs. Myanmar can be considered as an example of this approach during the late 1980s. As Tōkyō suspended its ODA to Yangon after its leaders suppressed the «888 Uprising» in August 1988, business interests were behind a petition presented to the Japanese government in January 1989 by the Japan-Burma Association, a group gathering mainly members from Japanese top industrial conglomerates, to advocate economic ties despite the military coup. Hideo Watanabe, former Deputy chief cabinet secretary in Nakasone Yasuhiro's government (1982-1987), took the lead to pursuing this stance since he was used to have more access to Burmese senior officials than all but a few foreigners⁴⁰. Through the method of "quiet dialogue" (shizuka na taiwa), the Japanese diplomacy sought to persuade Myanmar's military government by ensuring ODAs to soften their approach to political opposition, especially towards Aung San Suu Kyi who was very popular in Japan⁴¹. In March 1995, Japan partially lifted its ODA curbs and extended humanitarian aid to Myanmar. Three years on, in a move that both Aung San Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy and the Clinton administration severely lambasted⁴², the Japanese government announced the release of about US\$20 million in loan funds for renovating Rangoon's Mingaladon International Airport. It has seized every opportunity to encourage the military government

⁴⁰ A. Slodkowski, *Special Report: How Japan Inc Stole a March in Myanmar*, "Reuters", 2.10.2012.

⁴¹ D.M. Seekins, *Japan's Development Ambitions for Myanmar: The Problem of "Economics before Politics*", "Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs", vol. 34 (2015), no. 2, pp. 113-138 (128); L.P. Er, cit., pp. 47-48.

⁴² D.M. Seekins, *Japan's "Burma Lovers" and the Military Regime*, "Asian Perspective", vol. 24 (2000), no. 4, pp. 315-334 (326).

to promote multi-party democratic system and improve human rights through guaranteeing political freedom, ensuring the due process of law, resuming student exchanges in education sector⁴³. What ensued was the emergence of a temporary chasm between Japan and the US which was very akin to what happened in the case of Vietnam in the coming years: as a matter of fact, Tōkyō normalised a full-scale relationship with Vietnam in November 1992 while the US embargo was still into effect, but Tōkyō was cautious not to provoke Washington⁴⁴.

Japan's diplomacy towards Manila after the end of the Marcos rule

The Philippines was widely acknowledged as a significant pawn for Japan's diplomacy because it was in Manila that Prime minister Fukuda proclaimed its doctrine for Southeast Asia in 1977. Both countries embraced the liberal and democratic discourse during the height of the Cold War and joined the US-led asymmetrical system of alliance relationship (dōmei kankei) that was originally directed against the Communist expansion in Asia. Whilst under the Ferdinand Marcos rule the adherence to the San Francisco system favoured Manila to solve certain issues on war reparations and to assess the best way to accrue the Japanese investment in the country, since the late 1990s the two spokes have crossed different paths. On the one hand, US-Japan security relations aimed to maintain a stable regional balance of power and address potential short-term regional conflicts. On the other, the aim of US-Philippines security ties turned into various domestic insurgencies and the Islamic fundamentalism in the Mindanao region⁴⁵. Nevertheless, both are influenced by China's emergence in East Asia. In the face of China's growing economic and political clout in the mid-1990s, mainly in the South China Sea, Tōkyō needed to strengthen its

⁴³ Press Conference by the Press Secretary, 17.7.1998, https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1998/7/717.html#1 (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

⁴⁴ A. Miyashita, *Limits to Power: Asymmetric Dependence and Japanese Foreign Aid Policy*, Lanham; MD, 2003, pp. 97-99.

⁴⁵ R.C. De Castro, Exploring a 21st-Century Japan-Philippine Security Relationship: Linking Two Spokes Together?, "Asian Survey", vol. 49 (2009), no. 4, pp. 691-715 (706).

security alliance with Washington⁴⁶ to avert a potential military conflict Beijing would pose.

The former President Corazon "Cory" Aquino (1986-1992) was convinced that the friendship between Japanese and Filipinos thrived on several levels: geopolitical, socio-economic, and personal. The relationship between two democratic societies worked together to preserve liberal principles in Asia, and the common locations of the two countries made them each other's «defenders, protectors and economic allies»⁴⁷. The diplomatic relation was viewed in terms of «an earnest and nurturing» friendship flourishing between «an elder and developed civilisation and a young and growing country». In some ways, President Aquino recognised Japan was to the Philippines a Sensei – a «teacher and inspiration» to a struggling country in Asia⁴⁸. The Japanese have demonstrated what the Philippines could become «by working hard, taking pride in culture and identity, and believing in the principal of equality of any nation». Finally, Aquino stressed the importance of the «intimate and relaxed»⁴⁹ political relation between her husband, Benigno S. Aguino Sr, and some Japanese personalities at a time when Benigno Aquino joined the Japanese-sponsored puppet state between 1942 and 194550.

At the meeting of the Consultative Group for the Philippines held in Tōkyō in July 1989, Japan expressed its intention to provide the Philippines with ODA totalling about 135 billion for fiscal year 1989 to launch the «Multilateral Aid Initiative», a programme that diplomats and commentators avoided to refer as a «mini-Marshall Plan»⁵¹. In 1990, the Philippines is the top recipient of Japan's ODA

⁴⁶ See I. Makoto - T. Minohara Tosh (eds), *The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present*, Singapore, 2017; S. Ogawa, *Significance of the Post-Cold War: US-Japan Alliance and Prospects for Security Co-operation*, "Korean Journal of Defense Analysis", vol. 6 (1994), no.1, pp. 57-78.

⁴⁷ Speech of President Corazon Aquino on the Philippine-Japan Friendship Society, 16.1.1987, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1987/01/16/speech-of-president-corazon-aquino-on-the-philippine-japan-friendship-society-january-16-1987/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

^{′48} Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ S. Rood, *The "Mini-Marshall Plan" for the Philippines*, in C.Y. Ng - C. Jeshurun (eds), *Southeast Asian Affairs 1990*, Singapore, 1990, pp. 273-291.

after Indonesia and China⁵². The allegations of corruption at the height of the Marcos scandal revealed that from 10 to 15 percent of loans implemented in the early 1970s by the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund – one of the agencies of Japanese foreign aid – was systematically given as kickbacks to President Marcos and his cronies by more than fifty Japanese aid contractors through a system of contract fraud and illegal payments53. That meant that under the Marcos's rule Japan imposed neither political conditionality nor progressive policy reforms. At a time when President Aquino came to power Japan began working more closely with other international donors, that had more experience in providing loans, to enshrine specific policy conditions before authorising its ODAs⁵⁴. Both Takeshita and Kaifu pursued the policy of extending the maximum assistance to the Aquino administration for its nation-building efforts⁵⁵, particularly after the sixth coup attempt that endangered presidency in December 1989.

The year 1990 put a strain both on the young Filipino democracy and relationship with Japan. The Philippine economy was littered with the negative conjunction of the reiterated of coup attempts, the earthquake in Luzon, and ineffective or inadequate policies, mainly the agrarian reform, that were far from being approved by the Congress. On the occasion of the ASEAN-Japan Forum in 1990, Philippines' delegation expressed vehemently its concern on continuing imbalances in the bilateral trade and urged Tōkyō to import more manufactured and semi-manufactured products from ASEAN. To top it all off, the Aquino administration was forced to enlist the IMF, on the one hand, to implement a bailout package to reduce government subsidies and raise revenue; on the other, it found ways to generate the foreign exchange needed to continue to make its foreign debt and commodities' payment. This blueprint

⁵² Cited in Hook - Zhang, op. cit., p. 1059.

⁵³ D.D. Trinidad, Japan's ODAs at the Crossroads: Disbursement Patterns of Japan's Development Assistance to Southeast Asia, "Asian Perspective", vol. 31 (2007), no. 2, pp. 95-125 (102).

⁵⁴ M.T. Tana - Y. Takagi, *Japan's Foreign Relations with the Philippines: A Case of Evolving Japan in Asia*, in J.D.J. Brown - J. Kingston (eds), *Japan's Foreign Relations in Asia*, Abingdon - New York, 2018, pp. 312-328 (314).

⁵⁵ Policy Speech by Prime minister Noboru Takeshita to the 114th Session of the National Diet, 10.02.1989, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1989/1989-appendix-1.htm (Accessed on 30.05.2022).

established a new set of economic performance targets. It could initially count on about US\$535 million in Japanese loans, primarily⁵⁶.

Fidel V. Ramos inaugurated, quite implausibly, his administration (1992-1998) claiming two basic concerns about Japan and the US security system in Asia. First, the alliance between Japan and the US had to be preserved; second, is Japan had to project its political standing in the area as much as it was able to fulfil its economic power as of the end of US occupation of the country in 1952. Ramos stressed the US-Japan alliance should not be considered as crumbling in a post-Cold War era, even though he firmly believed the military pact had to be «redefined into something closer to a genuine partnership». However, there was indeed an inherent anomaly – «similar to the original West European effort to keep apart Western and East Germany»: post-Cold War Japan continued to remain «a strategic client of the US». This can lead to «an unhealthy kind of nationalism» in a country acutely aware of both its economic strength and its cultural uniqueness⁵⁷. Manila, as well as other Asian governments, maintained that a rebirth of Japanese militarism continued to be a concrete menace. In February 1993, at the Philippines-Japan Society in Makati City President Ramos said the Philippines would have much to learn from «Japan's ethos of excellence». He spoke not only of the means of progress, but of the attitudes and values that make for those means⁵⁸. It was Japan that José Rizal, the celebrated progenitor of Philippine nationalism, spoke of warmly in 1888 during a sixweek visit there, when he said that he was impressed by the discipline, the honesty and industriousness of the Japanese people. In 1998 Japanese government paid a tribute to Rizal by erecting a bronze bust of the main Filipino poet and novelist along a trail within Hibiya Park, a large public park next to the Imperial Palace.

⁵⁶ D.G. Timberman, *The Philippines in 1990: On Shaky Ground*, "Asian Survey", vol. 31 (1991), no. 2, pp. 153-163 (161).

⁵⁷ Address of President Fidel V. Ramos, East West Center, Honolulu, 16.10.1995, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-1995-11-27/pdf/CREC-1995-11-27-pt1-PgS17518.pdf (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

⁵⁸ Speech of President Fidel V. Ramos, Philippines-Japan Society, Makati City, 25.2.1993, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1993/02/25/speech-of-president-ramos-to-the-philippines-japan-society-february-25-1993/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

In July 1995, three years on a former Filipina comfort women spoke out in public, President Ramos accepted the apologies made by Japan in August 1994, on the occasion of Murayama's Southeast Asia tour. The assistance provided an atonement fund, medical and welfare support programmes, and a letter of apology from Japanese government to each woman. Murayama told Ramos that his new coalition government was «considering seriously [...] how best to express its apology and remorse on the issue of comfort women». Murayama, moreover, added that the government would help establish «women's vocational training centres» within a framework of economic co-operation. And so did the Japanese government almost until the 1990s. After this qualitative change, the Philippines was led to support, within the context of United Nations reforms, Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the Security Council.

In July 1997, Thailand's bath, equity, and property markets weakened further as its difficulties evolved into a twin balance-of-payments and banking crisis. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia also allowed their currencies to weaken substantially in the face of market pressures, with on the eve of the crisis the Philippine financial system looked more solid than did others in Asia. In March 1999, Manila received US\$1.6 billion under the framework of the New Miyazawa Initiative. All financial programmes would be implemented by the Export-Import Bank of Japan, the ADB and the World Bank⁶⁰. Compared to the other ASEAN countries, the Philippines had relatively less exposure to Japanese bank lending⁶¹ for a twofold reason: first, Japan registered low levels of foreign direct investment in the Philippinesregistering low levels of Japanese foreign direct investment in the Philippines. In 1996, Japanese FDI in ASEAN-4 economies (Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia) totalled more than US\$5.1 billion - with Indonesia

⁵⁹ W. Branigin, *Japan Offers Atonement for Sex Slavery*, "The Washington Post", 25.08.1994.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Finance of Japan, *Japanese Financial Support to the Philippines under the Framework of the New Miyazawa Initiative*, 15.01.1999, https://www.mof.go.jp/english/policy/international_policy/financial_cooperation_in_asia/new_miyazawa_initiative/e1e061.htm (Accessed on 30.05.2022).

⁶¹ M. Noland, *The Philippines in the Asian Financial Crisis: How the Sick Man Avoided Pneumonia*, "Asian Survey", vol. 40 (2000), no. 3, pp. 401-412 (410).

and Thailand the largest recipients. Indonesia alone absorbed more than US\$2.5 billion⁶². Second, the Ramos administration makes less dependent financial market to Japanese financial institution encouraging non-Japanese banks to enter the market⁶³.

Japan exhibited its protracted effort toward the economic development of the Philippines in Mindanao, the southern distressed region of the country. Before World War II a huge number of Japanese people migrated to Davao region to engage in the production of abaca. Since then, Davao has been hosting the biggest Japanese community in Southeast Asia. Between 1992 and 1998, at a time when the new President Ramos encouraged other donors except from the US to assist Mindanao after the Moro nationalist insurgency was temporarily halted, Japan outlined its intention to assist significantly new assistance to Mindanao with Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) and Japan International Co-operation Agency (IICA) funding for major infrastructure projects⁶⁴. Japan's assistance to Mindanao started from the construction of a fishing port in Zamboanga way back in 1978. Japan financed Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project in 1990, a grant to build a supply of road construction equipment in western Mindanao (1998) and a loan for improvement in power grid project (1995) and a loan for the construction of the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway rehabilitation project (1997). IICA's assistance to Mindanao in the 1990s was mainly directed toward supporting the development policies of the Philippine government, which gave priority to agricultural infrastructure development during the Aquino administration, and to economic development and the reduction of inequality through regional economic co-operation and the social reform agenda during the Ramos administration65.

⁶² Y. Sazanami et al., Japanese Foreign Direct Investment to East Asia and Exchange Rate Policies – Some Longer-Term Policy Implications After the Crisis, "Keiko Economic Studies", vol. 40 (2003), no. 1, pp. 1-26 (2).

⁶³ Noland, op. cit., p. 410.

⁶⁴ A. Fermin - T. Parks, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance. The Case of Mindanao, Philippines*, "The Asia Foundation", 2013, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Japan International Co-operation Agency, Comprehensive Review of JICA's Assistance in Mindanao, Report, February 2021, pp. 56-57.

Conclusion

Southeast Asia must be considered as the main stage of Japan's diplomacy in the Cold War era, as well as in the post-bipolar world. Although the relationship presented several problems in the past, solved just partly after the enunciation of the «Fukuda doctrine», the Takeshita and Hashimoto initiatives demonstrated that it was possible to successfully establish broader economic co-operation with ASEAN and, at the same time, to build a close political commitment. These initiatives took part of a comprehensive strategy of the MOFA to pursue an independent diplomacy in Asia. Mainly since the Kaifu government, Japan non only succeeded to enhance its political stature in the region, but also it tried to align decision-making and policy with the core idea of Fukuda's strategy. The major success of Japan's diplomacy towards Southeast Asia can be encapsulated into three main lines of intervention.

First, participation in the regional process in Asia constituted the right action to contribute to the success of the region and reap the benefits of co-operation against the backdrop of the new wave of globalisation. Japanese participation in Asian regional co-operation raised its international political profile. Compared to the past, in the 1990s Japan did not plan on creating a new-pan Asian identity, but it rather pledged to become an harmless power in the Asia-Pacific. A narrower involvement of Japan in regional affairs after the end of the Cold War elicited fears among the Asian nations: it, of course, might say this was the price that Tokyo had to pay during the first half of the twentieth century for its militaristic stance. Although the economic factor dominated relations between Japan and Southeast Asia for much of the post-war period, the non-economic aspects have become increasingly significant, and cannot be ignored when Japan emphasised the importance to remove Asian concerns about the future direction of Japan's diplomacy. Japan could not miss this opportunity to increase its commitment in Southeast Asia; still less could ASEAN members failed to gain broader opportunities from a direct co-operation with Japan, especially in the economic field.

Second, Japan has constituted a successful form of economic model since the 1980s. The Philippines often expressed some intention of emulating Japanese economic experience, as well as other Southeast Asian countries found an inspiration to Japanese

industrial model over the past: Singapore launched its «Learn from Japan» campaign in 1978 and Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad did the same putting forward its «Look East» policy in 1982. Japan-Philippine relations continued to be robust after the end of martial law. The US saw this broader co-operation as a good signal, but Japan did not receive foreign pressure from Washington. Japan has been providing economic assistance to the Philippines since the restoration of democracy, and its contribution focussed on Mindanao region. Since the financial meltdown erupted in Southeast Asia in 1997, Japan was committed to halting the magnitude of crisis as any negative consequences from the ASEAN economies would jeopardise financial and political stability in Asia. Nevertheless, its increasing economic presence in international financial institution, Japan found it difficult to realise the AMF because of the opposition of Western countries and China. As a result, Japan failed to impose its political clout and exposed weaknesses of Japan's leadership in Southeast Asia.

Third, most Japan's diplomatic success in sharpening solid relations with ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries hinged upon the positive outcome of ODA strategy. Pan-Asian sentiment resurfaced after the end of the Cold War since Japan showed sympathetic about the Southeast Asian countries' economic and social development on the basis of an even relationship. If it is acceptable the notion according to which the ODA strategy could be explained in terms of «Pan-Asianism» 66 – which does not be confused with the ideology of the «Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere» – it can be similarly claimed that this important foreign policy instrument assured to Japan a primary approach to Southeast Asian countries. The ODAs, on the one hand, served Japan's economy and security because they set in motion export strategy and dynamic competitive advantages in international trade; on the other, they contributed to the alleviation of poverty in low- and middle income countries of the area whose stability has been always considered essential to Japan's diplomacy.

⁶⁶ H. Ryūhei, *Pan-Asianism in International Relations. Prewar, Postwar, and Present*, in S. Saaler - J.V. Koschmann (eds), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism, and Borders*, Abingdon - New York, 2007, pp. 226-245 (230).

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