
Turkey-Japan: Dialogue on Global Affairs

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A persistent concern that has gripped analysts of the post-Cold War era is that the dangerous but orderly state of world affairs that followed World War II, thanks to the hierarchical hegemonic character of the world system, would collapse and lead to a new era of uncertainty and increased conflict. It is highly debatable whether the Cold War era was orderly, as one can immediately point to the limited but costly proxy conflicts in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and a stream of wars in the Middle East. Yet, in some circles, there was a nostalgia that the Cold War system provided a certain level of stability, and that uncertainty loomed ahead.¹ While the tragedy of a great power confrontation seems to have been avoided so far, apprehension about uncertainty and low-level conflicts with new asymmetrical non-traditional security threats acquiring a global character seem to have been realized.

These problems are accompanied by traditional nation-state conflicts as seen between Ukraine and Russia, and proxy conflicts over Syria, Iraq, and Yemen between Saudi Arabia and Iran among others. Yet the most prominent security challenges the world has had to confront in the mid-2010s has turned out to be terrorism and uncontrolled migration. The conflict that wrecked Syria also created ISIS terror and led to the world witnessing terror attacks on civilians in disparate parts of the globe. It is no longer just residents of conflict zones that are in danger. Residents in locations such as France, Belgium, Turkey, and Bangladesh have become targets, as well as people in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. The conflicts in the Middle East have also created a migration problem of biblical proportions, such that Europe has not witnessed since World War II. Arguably these issues will not only have social and economic as well as humanitarian repercussions for the EU, but will influence the domestic politics of European countries as well. The role that massive migration played in the Brexit referendum, in

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which the Leave campaign won with a four percent margin, is hard to deny.

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Turkey is one of the countries directly influenced by the new atmosphere of uncertainty and a deteriorating security environment. The conflict zones of the mid-2010s, Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, are all in Turkey's neighbourhood, and Turkey is on the transit route of both innocent migrants and the foreign terrorist fighters of ISIS. These realities have created serious financial and security challenges for the country. Although at the other end of the Eurasian landmass, Japan is also not immune from contemporary post-Cold War challenges. Seven Japanese citizens were killed in a 2016 ISIS attack in Dacca. Furthermore, the security environment in East Asia, in the traditional nation-state based understanding, is also showing symptoms of deterioration. An increasingly assertive China is posing maritime challenges not only for Japan but for various ASEAN countries, and it is far from assured that violent

Cold War conflicts will not revisit this region. Taiwan remains as one of the potential conflict zones, and most important, now a nuclear North Korea continues its provocative policies with renewed missile and nuclear tests. A peaceful solution scenario for the division of the Korean peninsula is still hard to conceive. To this list one can also add the financial crisis of the late 2000s that engulfed the USA and the EU and coincided with an era of relative strengthening of emerging market economies, which has led to the questioning of the West's leadership ability. By the 2010s the recovery still seems to be slow and fragile, and this has been coupled with a worrying slowdown in the Chinese economy. If a new economic crisis emerges, the concern is that this time it might also engulf East Asian economies, including Japan, which were spared from the last economic collapse. Thus, even being far from the Middle East does not assure a secure and stable future. All of this is happening at a time when the continuity of the US's commitment to the East Asia region is being questioned, as the US seems to be preoccupied with problems in other world regions as well as with internal social and political problems.

It could be argued that the most defining feature of the early decades of the 21st century international

order is transformation and flux. This era coincides with (or from a neoliberal standpoint is a result of) the weakening of US leadership in the world. The US and Western dominated liberal international order is increasingly coming to be questioned, prompting calls to put more effort into finding different ways to inquire into international relations.² The gradual shift in global order has been progressing for decades. Whether one is a US “declinist” (a position that seems to gain popularity once every decade or so) or not, most seem to agree that the landscape of international politics is in a gradual change, and there is a search for a new order in which countries that occupy the second tier of world politics feel the need to be more active and outspoken in world affairs. This is manifested by many new groupings of countries emerging in the past decade, such as BRICS. But such groupings are not the only ones. A new trend which has escaped the attention of analysts to a large extent is the increasing frequency and the scope of *bilateral* ties by countries that have been more passive in the past, such as Turkey and Japan. These countries are deepening their relations through more frequent visits and meetings conducted at various levels for the purpose of not only improving direct bilateral relations, but also to deepen their understanding of

each other and exchange ideas to find avenues for cooperation on seemingly indirectly related world problems.³ Simple reliance on US leadership and searching for solutions to world problems through large multilateral frameworks are no more deemed sufficient. The slow and inefficient reaction to the world problems manifest a lack of concord, attributed mainly to the weakening of the hegemonic system in the world.⁴ Thus, gradually, many countries that were previously on the back stage of the world scene feel the need to come forward and strengthen their direct bilateral relations. In this way they deepen their insights on world problems by mutual knowledge sharing. They also pursue solutions to these problems outside of the traditional hegemonic framework, as the world is now deemed too complex to be left to the good offices of traditional hegemonic powers.

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This special issue is a result of such an effort. The subjects of the articles

in this special issue are diverse. They range from peacekeeping to bilateral economic relations, and from analyses of foreign terrorist fighters to an analysis of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a regional platform. This might be one of the most eclectic special issues by *Perceptions* and at a first glance a common theme binding these disparate studies might elude the eye. Yet there is a tacit connection in these studies. The articles submitted to this special issue are a result of a symposium organized by the Japanese and Turkish governments and private think-tanks in Ankara on 1 March 2016. The motivation of this symposium was the same as what is explained above; to increase understanding between Turkey and Japan, exchange expertise on various world issues in order to deepen mutual understandings about world affairs, and to lay the groundwork for cooperation concerning world problems.

The symposium was organized by the Ankara based think-tank ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies) with the support of the External Relations Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the Center for Strategic Research (SAM) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Japanese Embassy in Ankara, and was entitled “Turkey-Japan Dialogue

on Global Affairs.”⁵ The purpose of the symposium was to shed light on Japanese and Turkish perspectives on different regions and world issues, and to create an opportunity for analysts from both countries to come together. The symposium was followed by a workshop, which various experts from the Turkish government, academia, and policy circles attended together with symposium participants. This was the second such symposium organized, with the first one taking place in Ankara in November 2014.⁶ While the first symposium focused mainly on Turkish and Japanese bilateral relations, the second one had a global scope and focused on many different world issues, not necessarily involving Turkey or Japan directly. This shows that Turkey and Japan, two countries that remained firmly in the US-dominated Western block during the Cold War but nevertheless not having felt the necessity to strengthen direct relations, have decided to change their attitude and deepen their cooperation concerning global problems. The papers submitted to this special issue are either enlarged and modified versions of studies presented during the symposium, or are results of interactions that took place between Japanese and Turkish researchers during the event.

The papers submitted touch on new issues and report on original research.

The first two articles look at the problem of foreign terrorist fighters of ISIS. This is a topic on which there is very little global expertise. The first article, by Yutaka Takakoka, is on the recruitment methods of ISIS. Dr. Takaoka is a senior research fellow at the Middle East Research Institute of Japan, and during the years 2000-2003 he worked as a political attaché at the Embassy of Japan in Syria. He has been researching contemporary Syrian politics and society for a long while and is the author of a book in Japanese on the political and social role of tribes in contemporary Syria.⁷ His article lays down a highly sophisticated analysis of ISIS's resource mobilization mechanism and is especially useful as it provides important insights that can facilitate the formation of counter measures against ISIS recruitment of young people from Europe, the Middle East, or the whole world for that matter.

In his study he argues that the traditional model explaining ISIS's recruitment mechanism relying on personal relationships was valid in the early days when it did not have a highly organized character. After the group's expansion and with heavy exploitation of impersonal social networks (SNS), the recruitment mechanism has changed and ISIS now strives to avoid penetration by spies from hostile entities and unskilled infiltrators

emanating from irregular infiltration. In line with these developments, Takaoka offers a modified and more sophisticated model of the group's recruitment mechanism. He explains the recruitment mechanism through an ontological analysis of various functionaries within ISIS and how they act within the system. In his study, he proposes three types of countries that are involved in recruitment as supply side, transit route, and demand side countries, and he also highlights critical points within the system towards which certain policies can be developed so as to obstruct the effectiveness of the recruitment mechanism.

The other study in this issue that deals with the problem of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) is by Haldun Yaçınkaya, who worked at the Turkish Military Academy in the past and, during his military service, in 2005 served in Afghanistan. He has published two books in Turkish on war issues.⁸ Recently, Dr. Yaçınkaya has been conducting research on FTFs, and in his contribution to this special issue he argues that foreign terrorist fighters are not only a threat against the countries in which they are active, but are a growing threat against their states of origin, as well as the states they transit. Turkey falls under all these categories. He argues that foreign terrorist fighter returnees present another threat not

only in terms of potential renewed terrorist attacks but as a source of metastasis that can expand terrorism to the rest of the world.

After explaining the emergence of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and how this concept has developed in legal and academic terms, Dr. Yalçınkaya goes on to explain international efforts to deal with the threat they pose. He then specifically focuses on challenges against Turkey and the role of FTFs in terror attacks within the country, analyzing the attacks through methodological categorization. Turkey's case presents many interesting insights about the danger presented by FTFs. After analyzing Turkey's strategy against them, he concludes that the foreign terrorist fighters create another threat to the civilized world, like a contagious agent of a cancer cell to the rest of the body. He argues that Turkey experienced the initial wave of terrorist attacks by returnees, and the Turkish case study shows that foreign terrorist fighters' contagious effect must be examined for other terrorist organizations as well.

The works on ISIS and foreign terrorist fighters are followed by a different but even less studied topic; Turkey-Japan economic relations. While there were some reports published by various government agencies and some patchy

internet data on the issue previously, K. Ali Akkemik's contribution to this issue is probably the only in-depth and extensive analysis of Turkey-Japan bilateral economic relations ever published. It not only details Turkey's relations with Japan, but by making comparisons it also gives a sketch of Turkey's economic relations with East Asia in general.

Dr. Akkemik points out that despite very warm diplomatic relations as of the mid-2010s, Turkey-Japan economic relations are in decline. This is a reflection of the changing landscape in the East Asia economy, where China and Korea are in a persistent trend to catch up with Japan and are becoming more and more competitive. As Japan is moving away from manufacturing and is being replaced by China and Korea, the Turkish economy is becoming more dependent on industrial inputs from Korea and China at the expense of the declining importance of Japan. However, parallel to Japan-EU free trade negotiations, Turkey is also in negotiations with Japan. Akkemik's heavy data laden empirical work is one of the first studies analysing Turkey-Japan trade relations. In his study, Akkemik also gives insights on Turkey's trade policy and the importance of international trade in the Turkish economy. At the end of his study Akkemik also investigates Turkey-

Japan foreign direct investment (FDI) relations, analyses Japan's New Growth Strategy, which relies on investing overseas as a policy priority as stated by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), and offers Turkey as an opportunity for the Japanese government to realize its expectations.

The next contribution to the issue is also on Japan. Japanese foreign policy has been experiencing a serious transformation over the last few years and researchers have only begun to scratch the surface in understanding the extent and direction of this transformation. Japan, due to its constitution and especially because of Article 9, which limits the activities of its armed forces, is dubbed a Peace State. Article 9 of the constitution prohibits the use of force or threat of using force as a foreign policy tool for the Japanese state. As a result, throughout the Cold War Japan relied on Official Development Assistance (ODA) as its major foreign policy tool, to the extent that in his seminal study, J. K. Holsti defines Japan's major national role conception as one of Developer.⁹

Yet, in the last few decades Japan has contributed to international peacekeeping activities with an increasing level of participation. For this purpose it has also developed the legal groundwork for reinterpreting the

Article 9 of its constitution, effectively reducing limitations on its armed forces. In this study, Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, after analysing the normative foundations of Japanese foreign policy, the development of Japan's contribution to peacekeeping and the accompanying legal modifications, investigates various factors that motivated this change, analysing major aims of Japanese foreign policy in the 21st century. This study also analyses the Japanese approach to security through the concepts of Comprehensive Security and Human Security that have been embraced by Japanese decision makers. In the conclusion, this study argues that Japan is nearing its long search for a new role in international affairs, moving towards a redefinition of its national role conception as a Peacekeeping State, which points a willingness to take responsibility in the solution of world problems to the extent of using its Self Defence Forces (SDF). Dr. Pehlivan Türk offers the additional ontological category of "peacekeeping state" to Holsti's taxonomy of national role conceptions that can best define Japan, and, provided that the concept of peacekeeping regimes expand in the future, to some other states in the international system as well.

The last contribution in this special issue is from outside of the symposium event mentioned above. However it

is not very different from the main theme of horizontal cooperation among powers in the world as it is on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its regional partners, and enhances this special issue's multi-perspective approach to regional and international affairs. In their study, Syed Farooq Hasnat and Zamurrad Awan from Forman Christian College University in Lahore make an analysis of SCO's potential in resolving the regional threats in Central Asia and its vicinity. In order to examine this concept, the authors analyse the evolution and development of the SCO as an effective political and economic alliance since 2001. They also not only aim to assess the effectiveness of the SCO as a provider regional security for its member states but also study the challenges hampering the effectiveness of the SCO, from national, regional and global perspectives.

In the final analysis Dr. Hasnat and Dr. Awnat argue that SCO has a considerable potential to serve the wider interests of its member states and the SCO can be graded as a security alliance instead of military alliance. They also present some suggestions that could make the SCO a more effective regional forum. These are the need to design comprehensive laws and

policies to more effectively administer the regional affairs, the need to devise a strategy to resolve traditional and non-traditional threats to the region, the need to give serious attention to issues of contention between the member states SCO, and the need to realize the economic integration and cross-cultural linkages of this region.

The current hegemonic order is insufficient for a resolving of world problems, and more horizontal cooperation is needed by powers such as Japan and Turkey.

As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, this special issue might look eclectic in terms of the theme of the studies included. However, all these valuable contributions are tacitly bound to each other by an underlying concern that the current hegemonic order is insufficient for a resolving of world problems, and more horizontal cooperation is needed by powers such as Japan and Turkey. These worries led to the realization of the symposium; "Turkey Japan Dialogue on Global Affairs", that made this special issue possible.

Endnotes

- 1 John J. Mearsheimer, “Why we will soon miss the Cold War”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 2 (1990), pp. 35-50.
- 2 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (eds.), *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*, London & New York, Routledge, 2009.
- 3 For an analysis of deepening Turkey-Japan bilateral political relations see, Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, “Turkish-Japanese Relations: Turning Romanticism into Rationality”, *International Journal*, Vol. 67, No.1 (2011), pp.101-117.
- 4 An interesting approach is that of Amitav Acharya, who claims that even though the US is not itself declining, the US-based “American world order” is weakening. Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order*, Cambridge, Polity, 2014.
- 5 The symposium website can be accessed at <http://www.turkeyjapan.org/> (last visited 17 September 2016).
- 6 Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, *Japan and Turkey in the International Community: Cooperation and Potential*, Ankara, ORSAM Report No: 193, at <http://www.orsam.org.tr/files/Raporlar/rapor193/193eng.pdf> (last visited 8 October 2016).
- 7 Yutaka Takaoka, *The Roles of Tribes in Contemporary Syrian Politics and Society: An Analysis of the Tribes in the Euphrates River Region and al-Jazeera Region*, Tokyo, Sangen-sha, 2012 (in Japanese).
- 8 Haldun Yalçınkaya. *Savaş: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Kullanımı*, Ankara, İmge, 2008; Haldun Yalçınkaya (ed.), *Savaş: Farklı Disiplinlerde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Ankara, Siyasal Yayınevi, 2010.
- 9 Kalevi J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1970), p. 266.

