

## EVOLUTION AND PROSPECTS OF JAPAN'S ASIAN POLICY

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### Abstract

Cooperation in the fields of trade, finance and security in the Asian region was carried out mainly on the basis of bilateral agreements during the post-war period. Since 2010, significant progress has been made through multilateral cooperation. As a result of the effective operation of a number of regional organizations, multilateral functions have been significantly improved. This article examines Japan's pursuit of multilateralism in its foreign policy toward Asia as a strategy to realize the country's interests and highlights the need for Japan to intensify its coalition-building efforts as part of its Asian policy.

**Keywords:** Asian policy, bilateral relations, multilateralism, security, regional integration.

### Introduction

Consistency and flexibility are important in foreign policy. If the consistency in the country's foreign policy is reasonable, it will gain the trust of the other party and the entire international community. However, consistency should not mean inflexibility and it should provide flexibility that allows the country to respond effectively as different situations arise. After 1945, Japan's economic restructuring policies had a significant impact on political, diplomatic, and security processes. This began to affect Japan's foreign policy. Since its inception, the Yoshida Doctrine has served as a key determinant of Japan's economic performance.

**Methodology.** When studying the geography of the vast region as East Asia on a conceptual basis, it can be divided into two sub-regions: Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. The first includes the Russian Far East and maritime provinces, Korea, the Yangtze River from northeastern China, Japan and Taiwan. The second region includes Southeast China, Hong Kong, six members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), three Indo-Chinese states, and Myanmar. Many studies of contemporary Japanese foreign policy focus on economic criteria and therefore include the Pacific as part of their regional analysis. Furthermore, if we focus on East Asia and its two sub-regions as defined above, we must recognize that they cannot be thought of in isolation. It follows that the geographical context changes depending on the issues of Japan's foreign relations. If we focus primarily on Japan's economic interests, we must also consider emerging economic zones in the East Asian region. If the main issue is related to Japan's political and economic security, then the focus will be on

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Japan's neighbors. It also examines Japan's political influence and its place in the balance of power in the North Pacific, focusing primarily on its interactions with three major powers: the United States, Russia and China.

Results and discussion. Japan's basic policy towards Asia has been consistent, as it has been made clear on many occasions. At Japan's historical turning point in Asia, one can determine how to act based on this established policy.

The first point of Japan's Asia policy is "Japan's contribution as a country committed to peace". This is Japan's basic, consistent policy, and the determination of the Japanese people to follow the lessons of history and never become a military power. Therefore, Japan will continue to deny itself a military role in Asia. One of the main ways in which Japan can contribute to peace and prosperity in Asia is by steadfastly maintaining its commitment to peace and using its capabilities exclusively for non-military purposes. This means that Japan is not content with pursuing peace for its own sake, but actively contributes to the efforts of ASEAN and other peace-loving countries to resolve conflicts peacefully, ease tensions, and promote dialogue.

Japan will continue to strongly support the efforts undertaken by ASEAN countries to resolve the issue peacefully. It will also continue to actively contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to peace by promoting dialogue with interested countries, including Vietnam.

The second aspect of Japan's Asia policy is to "promote mutual understanding through continuous dialogue and dialogue to build mutual trust".

For this purpose, there is a great need to deepen mutual understanding between Japan and Asian countries, including ASEAN countries. Japan has been making efforts to mutually strengthen opportunities for language education, expand exchange programs for our youth who will be the next generation of leaders, develop regional studies, and better appreciate the mutual culture of both sides. Japan's shift to Asian multilateralism in its regional diplomacy, in this sense, can be seen as a response to this structural change in the region. There are two main characteristics of multilateralism. First, small and medium-sized countries can reflect their own interests in the cooperation as even a hegemon finds it necessary to take a coalition building approach, instrumental, thus distributing benefits to these states in multilateral fora. Second, the third greatest power could have the casting vote in the equilibrium of the two great powers<sup>1</sup>.

Faced with today's unprecedented and difficult challenges, Japan and ASEAN countries should better understand each other's problems and views, become close friends, and positively continue wide-ranging dialogue and exchange.

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<sup>1</sup> Terada, T. (2014). Japan's Asian Policy Strategy: Evolution of and Prospects for Multilateralism in Security, Trade and Financial Cooperation. *Public Policy Review*, 10(1), 228-229.

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The third characteristics of Japan's Asia policy is to "establish cooperative relations between Japan and ASEAN that can effectively respond to the changing environment".

Some Asian countries, including ASEAN countries, are facing serious economic difficulties due to the sluggishness of exports and the lack of funds for economic development, especially due to the slowdown in the growth of the economies of developed countries and the decline in economic development.

This situation is a big problem for developing countries and it is the most important problem that needs to be solved immediately.

How ASEAN countries deal with this challenge may affect their long-term development strategies for the future and, to some extent, their strength as states.

Therefore, as a partner in Asia, Japan wants to actively cooperate with ASEAN countries to support their efforts to overcome these challenges. To ensure that Japan can expand sincere and truly fruitful cooperation, ASEAN countries will take the initiative in formulating a development program adapted to the changing environment. With the third medium-term goal of expanding Official Development Assistance since the 1990s, Japan will continue to see ASEAN countries as its most important partners and continue to cooperate with them. Naoko Munakata said that the main thrust of Japan's Asia policy in the 1990s was in support of integration within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>2</sup>.

In order to elaborate on the economic cooperation with the ASEAN countries, it is necessary to dwell on several specific points.

The first point is the question of financing local expenses. To review Japan's ODA loans to finance domestic expenditure, taking into account the situation of each ASEAN country that requires such financing, and in accordance with the basic principle of contributing to the self-help efforts of recipient countries ready

Second, although the main focus is on project assistance, Japan also considers diversifying forms of economic cooperation to support specific policy goals or comprehensive development programs in developing countries.

The third concerns technical cooperation and its diversification. Taking into account the current needs of ASEAN countries, Japan has as a task to give additional attention to technical cooperation programs in areas such as comprehensive support for export promotion by improving product quality and testing capabilities, coordinated with financial support when necessary, and investment promotion. defines. It also fosters what might be called a soft-focus approach by helping to create an environment that facilitates technical transfer by the Japanese private sector, which has valuable know-how.

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<sup>2</sup> Munakata, N. (2001). *Evolution of Japan's policy toward economic integration*. Tokyo: Brookings Institution Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies.

Trade is another important area of Japan-ASEAN economic cooperation. Export promotion will continue to be very important for the economic development of ASEAN countries.

Both Japan and ASEAN have an interest in ending protectionist pressure and maintaining and strengthening the free trade system. Therefore, Japan wants to join forces with ASEAN countries to promote a new round of GATT.

In order to increase its exports, ASEAN needs to reorient its traditional export structure dependent on primary commodities by diversifying the product mix of exports. Hoping that the efforts of the ASEAN countries in this field will achieve fruitful results, Japan is ready to give them full support in their efforts. In addition, ASEAN's exports of manufactured goods to Japan should be promoted on a broader and historical basis. This should be done against the background of changing economic structures of both Japan and ASEAN and global economic structural adjustment.

Japan's shift to Asian multilateralism in its regional diplomacy, in this sense, can be seen as a response to this structural change in the region. There are two main characteristics of multilateralism. First, small and medium-sized countries can reflect their own interests in the cooperation as even a hegemon finds it necessary to take a coalition building approach, instrumental, thus distributing benefits to these states in multilateral fora. Second, the third greatest power could have the casting vote in the equilibrium of the two great powers<sup>3</sup>.

Investments and technology transfers from Japan will play an increasingly important role in bringing about such structural changes and raising the ASEAN economy to a higher level. Again, Japan has decided to strengthen cooperation to achieve an environment that facilitates the transfer of Japanese investment and technology to ASEAN countries, and expects efforts on their part for the same.

**Conclusion.** Although the discussion focuses on the diplomatic and security elements of Japanese politics, the influence of the economic factor cannot be ignored. This factor was the main driving force behind Japan's involvement in Asia in the post-war period. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, faced with the need to adapt to a changing environment, Japan began to accept its autonomy with a serious political and security focus. This should be considered to the extent that it may affect the nature of Japan's relations with its Asian neighbors. Economic and domestic factors have been the subject of many serious studies, and this article also relied on this analysis. Although the main focus of the article is on Japan's Asian policy, an attempt was made to place it in the wider context of international politics and to reveal the connections and conflicts between regionalism and globalism in Japan's foreign policy. Japan aims to actively develop economic integration in Asia. If so, it should solve its «historical problems» with

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<sup>3</sup> Terada, T. (2014). Japan's Asian Policy Strategy: Evolution of and Prospects for Multilateralism in Security, Trade and Financial Cooperation. *Public Policy Review*, 10(1), 229.

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neighboring countries. Energy and environmental issues will be the main areas of regional cooperation. Most Asian countries face similar challenges of resource constraints and environmental protection, and economic aid should be more integrated with these regional efforts. These goals can be achieved through closer ties with economies within and outside the region in various ways.

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