

**RESOURCE DIPLOMACY IN
JEOPARDY: JAPAN'S CHANGING
ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

by

James Krick

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MA International Studies

Leiden University

2015

Word Count: 10,703

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis Abstract	3
Introduction.....	4
Chapter I: Literature Review.....	6
Chapter II: Methodology	13
Chapter III: Resource diplomacy: a historical context	17
Chapter IV: Case Studies.....	22
Chapter V: Conclusion	31
Bibliography	33

Thesis abstract

On the 31st of January 2015, a video was released which showed the brutal murder of the Japanese journalist Gotō Kenji at the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The killing sent shockwaves throughout the world yet nowhere more so than in Gotō's homeland. Japan has long maintained a policy of resource diplomacy with key trading partners in the Middle East who have supplied the Japanese economy with the oil that the country has required in order to maintain its regional and global position. However, with the death of Gotō along with his associate Yukawa Haruna, the first Japanese citizens to be executed as a result of the Japanese government's policy in the Middle East since the end of Japanese involvement in Iraq in 2005, there is a rekindled debate amongst Japan's leaders that the country must develop its hard power ability in order to be able to assert itself and protect its interests abroad. This thesis investigation will examine Japan's foreign policy in the Middle East using the case studies of the murders of Gotō Kenji and Kōda Shosei and the backdrop of resource diplomacy. The investigation will be using a constructivist approach in order to provide a theoretical framework that will speculate that the Japanese government is, rather than responding to threats against it, attempting to create a an identity for itself in the region.. The conclusion will then ascertain whether the changing situation in the Middle East will force Japan to re-evaluate its interests in the region or whether the instability in the region has, rather than putting Japan's energy lifeline in jeopardy, been used by its leadership to re-ignite the debate about its need to adopt a more assertive security stance on the global stage and whether Japan, far from being attached to US foreign policy, has in fact been pursuing an entirely separate Middle Eastern policy of its own.

Introduction

On the 31st of January 2015, the extremist group known as the Islamic state (IS) announced that it had executed a Japanese journalist by the name of Gotō Kenji. This was the second Japanese hostage that IS had executed in the space of a month. The motive behind the killings of these Japanese citizens was a pledge made by the Japanese Prime Minister, Abe Shinzō, who had promised 2.5 billion dollars in non-military aid to countries in the region that were combatting ISIS. Abe remarked on the importance of the fight against IS, "It goes without saying that the stability of the Middle East is the foundation for peace and prosperity for the world, and of course for Japan. Should we leave terrorism or weapons of mass destruction to spread in this region, the loss imparted upon the international community would be immeasurable."¹

This action brought the Japanese government into direct confrontation with the extremist group for the first time and led to the execution of the two hostages. However, Abe's tough stance on the Islamic State lies, not solely in his desire to combat terrorism and to join with the international community's policy of humanitarian aid and military assistance to those actively involved in fighting against the Islamic State's expansion, but in his desire to ensure that Japan's crucial energy link to the Middle East remains stable.

Japan as a huge economic power has an insatiable thirst for crude oil with which it is able to power its economic might. As such, it has long pursued a policy of resource diplomacy with several of the oil rich nations of the Middle East. As Andrew Scott Cooper observes, Middle Eastern oil is quite literally vital to the Japanese state. "A staggering 90 percent of Japan's petroleum supplies came from the Persian Gulf. If

¹ Simon Tindsall, 'ISIS threat to hostages exposes risk in Abe's counter-terror strategy' published in *The Guardian* 20/01/2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/20/japanese-hostages-threatened-by-isis-risk-abe-counter-terror> retrieved 25/05/2015

the Gulf was blockaded the lights would go out from Tokyo to Rome.”² Given this, the expansion of IS across large swathes of Syria and Iraq, even threatening the key Iraqi oilfields of Baiji has spread a sense of alarm across the industrialized nations of the world. As journalist Andrew Critchlow remarks, “Should Isil capture a major oil field in Iraq, or overwhelming the government, the consequences for energy markets and the financial system would be potentially catastrophic.”³

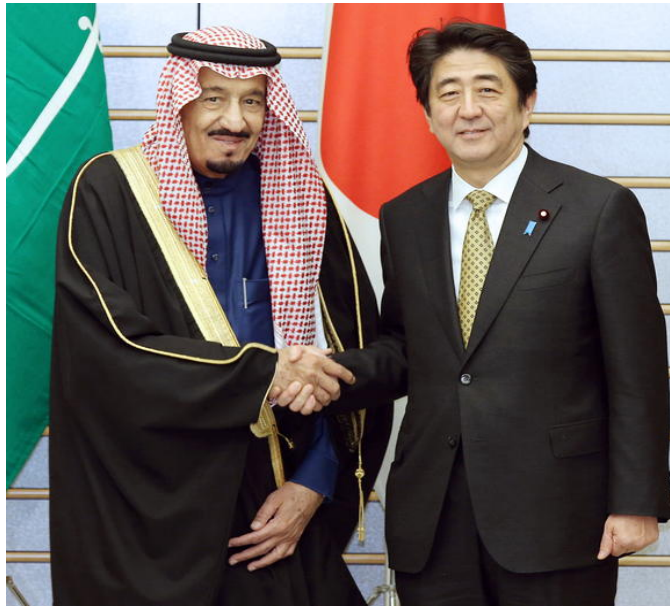
This thesis investigation will, using a case study of two different yet remarkably similar attacks, examine how the Japanese government has reacted to the death of its citizens at the hands of Islamic extremists, how this is an indicator of the government’s desire to protect its resource diplomacy policy at all costs and how these elements may signal a significant push by both Koizumi and Abe to develop Japan’s hard power ability.

Crucially, by also assessing the credibility of the threat posed by the on-going turmoil in the Middle East to Japan’s interests and identify, using the case study as a prime example of threat perception, the investigation will determine whether the reaction of the Japanese leadership is no more than a response to a perceived threat or whether it is in fact an attempt to enhance Japan’s global position and fuel the on-going debate about its ability to assert itself.

² Andrew Scott Cooper, *The Oil Kings: How the US, Iran and Saudi Arabia changed the balance of power in the Middle East.* 2011 p 52

³ Andrew Critchlow, *ISIS is making the biggest threat to oil prices even worse* published in *Business Insider* 30/05/2015

<http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-is-making-the-biggest-threat-to-oil-prices-even-worse-2015-5?IR=T> retrieved 03/06/2015



4

Abe Shinzō meets Saudi King Salman

Literature review

This study will now proceed with a detailed overview of the nuances of Japan's policy of resource diplomacy in the Middle East, the Japanese responses to 'external' terrorism since the establishment of Japanese/Arab relations in 1909 until present day. It is important to note that, whilst Japan has had a fairly active history of domestic terrorist groups such as the JRA, its exposure and reactions to international terrorism are not as entrenched as many other developed nations. Since the attacks of 9/11 however, Japan's external security policy is beginning to change. Peter J Katzenstein makes this point, "In the post-9/11 world, Japan's external security policies—purportedly the sacrosanct hallmark of post-war Japanese pacifism—appear to have changed more than its internal policies."⁵

By using various academic sources as an indicator of how the current Japanese government under Abe Shinzō and also under the former government of Koizumi

⁴ Ken Moriyasu, 'Saudi's succession battle adds to Mideast turmoil.' Published in 'Nikkei Asian review' 16/04/2014

⁵ Peter J Katzenstein, 'Rethinking Japanese security: Internal and external dimensions' 2008 p 133

Junichiro have reacted to the challenges and threats that have emerged for Japan in the region, it will be possible to chart the responses and potential policy shifts that have resulted. The threat posed by IS and Al Qaeda has just begun but Japan has faced terrorist threats in the past, both internally and externally. Whilst the governments of Abe and Koizumi do have some differences and Japanese foreign policy cannot be viewed as single, unitary actor, there are however some major similarities when it comes to the policies used by both Prime Ministers in the Middle East region. Katzenstein notes on the subject of terrorist threats to the Japanese state, the mechanisms that have been built to deal with these threats are still in their infancy. “ Because terrorism is a direct threat to the state, it has been a subject of high-level political meetings of heads of state. In this area, as in the area of multi- lateral security, Japan has actively sought to create regional institutions. But this is a recent and tentative move.”⁶ Yet, despite this, terrorist attacks that have been perpetrated by foreign nationals targeting Japanese citizens have, in the past, been a rarity. Because of the attacks by firstly AQI and then IS directly targeting Japanese citizens as a consequence of the government’s policies in the region, Japan has been forced into a new era where it must juggle the twin concerns of becoming embroiled in a direct conflict with a terrorist group and maintaining its alliances with key partners. The Japanese relationship with the Middle East is at the core of this investigation and is a significant reason behind the Japanese state’s current confrontation with IS.

However, given the relatively small threat that is posed to Japanese nationals abroad and the miniscule threat posed to the Japanese mainland itself, there is evidence that suggests the Japanese government has used the attacks by extremist groups to advance its own agenda on the world stage. Despite its recent independent actions, the debate as to whether the government of Japan is attempting to enhance its identity on its own or whether it is acting out of pressure to follow the US is an on-going question. Calder characterizes the Japanese state as ‘reactive’. He notes, “Embedded stakes in the U.S.-Japan relationship are so strong as to make the hurdle toward proactive policymaking almost impossible to surmount in the absence of broad domestic unity, centralized decision- making, or a major crisis in which U.S. support is not forthcoming.”⁷ However, Thomas Berger characterizes Japan as an ‘adaptive’

⁶ Peter J Katzenstein, *Rethinking Japanese security: Internal and external dimensions* 2008 p118

⁷ Kent E Calder, *Japan as a post-reactive state* 2003 p615 retrieved 28/06/2015

state that is in the process of becoming a fully-fledged member of the international community.⁸ This has been particularly true under the recent leadership of Abe.

The relationship with the Middle East is one of the more complex relationships that form Japan's foreign policy and has shown Japan to be both 'adaptive' and 'reactive' on different occasions. This has led to significant conflicts of interest. Hook highlights the ability of Japan to adopt adaptive policies in the region whilst also observing the underlying complexities of the relationship, "Following the first 'oil shock' in October 1973, Japan's dependence on oil imports from the Middle East meant that it refused to toe the US's policy line of attempting to organize a consumers' cartel to counteract the increased bargaining power of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Instead, Japan launched an independent and vigorous campaign of resource diplomacy (*shigen gaikō*) as a way to re-establish its access to these vital energy supplies."⁹ It is also arguable that although Koizumi's decision to stand shoulder to shoulder with the US after 9/11 seemed a 'reactive' policy, it was in fact an attempt to re-legitimize the presence of Japanese forces abroad. Hook notes on this factor, "Although these were largely symbolic moves, they mattered politically. Koizumi wanted to pre-empt the criticism that had met Japan's tepid response after the Persian Gulf War a decade earlier. His stance assured the United States that the upgrading of U.S.–Japan security policies since the mid-1990s was honoured in times of crisis."¹⁰

The links and diplomatic relations that have been established since the burgeoning Japanese industrial sector's thirst for and dependence on oil began in the 1950s have endured the greatest difficulties and issues as a consequence of Japan's economic, military and cultural ties to the US which has been aggressively pursuing its own foreign policy aims in the region. Many in Japan still view the US as the key to a successful Japanese foreign policy. Samuels notes "Japan's neoconservatives and realists hold a common view of the importance of the US alliance. In his first policy speech after becoming Foreign Minister, Aso declared that the United States should

⁸ Thomas U Berger, 'Conclusions: The liberalism of an adaptive state' published in 'Japan in international politics: Beyond the reactive state.' 2007

⁹ Glenn D Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, 'Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition' 2005 p 29

¹⁰ Glenn D Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, 'Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition' 2005 p 236

come first and Asia second.”¹¹

Katzenstein argues, Japan has to balance its policy in the Middle East with its other equally crucial partnership. “Political unrest in the Middle East, the end of the Cold War in Europe, as well as many political issues in Japanese domestic politics are interpreted not so much on their merits as on their likely effects on Japan’s relations with the United States”¹² Far from being a harmonious relationship, the Japanese government’s links with the White House has on occasion directly dictated its policy in the Middle East. It is directly as a consequence of this relationship, that Japan’s defence policy has moved the furthest away from the aims of its ‘pacifist constitution’ of 1947. At the behest of the Bush administration, Japanese forces were sent to Iraq to aid the on-going US mission (albeit in a non-combat role). “The Iraq war of 2003 marks the most extreme case of Japan’s tilt toward the US in the Middle East. Japan immediately announced its clear support for US military action in the Iraq crisis at a time when most other states were critical of a rush to war.”¹³ Yukiko Miyagi is, however, also keen to emphasize the fact that Japan’s policy in the Middle East has led it to become a bridge between Arab and US positions. The Japanese government’s interests in both the partnerships with Arab nations and its alliance with the US has meant that it plays a very delicate balancing act between the two sides. “Japanese diplomacy has been conducted in a particular style and by particular methods largely shaped by Japan’s desire to avoid conflict or being openly forced into choices that antagonize one side or the other on contentious Middle East issues. Thus, it has tried to bridge the gap between US and Arab positions.”¹⁴ The balancing act of its foreign policy adds further support to Berger’s argument that Japan has become an ‘adaptive’ state in the post-9/11 world.

The increasingly pressing question is whether Japan’s growing military activity abroad truly spells a shift of dynamics for Japan as a state. Katzenstein notes that in the wake of the attack on the Japanese embassy in Lima in 1999, the government responded by creating a force that has been specifically designed to deal with future

¹¹ Richard J Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo’s grand strategy and the future of East Asia* 2007 p145

¹² Peter J Katzenstein, *Rethinking Japanese security: Internal and external dimensions* 2008 p68

¹³ Yukiko Miyagi, *Japan’s Middle East security policy; rethinking rules and norms* July 2011 p23

¹⁴ Yukiko Miyagi, *Japan’s Middle East security policy: Theory and cases* 2008 p39

threats abroad. “In response to the takeover of the Japanese embassy in Lima, Peru, a terror response team (TRT) was set up in the spring of 1998. It will be dispatched in future crises when Japanese nationals are threatened by international terrorism. The unit trains abroad, and it exchanges information with corresponding units in other countries.”¹⁵ However, the lack of Japanese connections to the extremist groups in the Middle East meant that in the cases of Gotō and Kōda, the TRT were ineffectual.

There has been extended debate in Japan that by committing itself to the ‘war against terrorism’ in the Middle East it is not only becoming more of a target for terrorist organisations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, but, perhaps more importantly in the eyes of the public, it is changing to becoming a ‘normal state’ as opposed to the state whose actions were dictated by the ‘toothless pacifism’¹⁶ of the past. Hatakeyama notes on the changing status of Japanese defence policy, “Given Japan’s new proactive moves in the security field, the question remains whether this new policy direction was instigated by a change in the international system or by a shift in the anti-militarist domestic norm. Rationalists argue that Japan has become a ‘normal state’, one that hoped to maximize its national interest by playing a role in the security arena.”¹⁷ With China’s recent emergence as a world power and the US’s decline in influence, there is significant belief to suggest that Abe’s Japan is looking to play a more active role in the war against terrorism as a pivot by which it may become a ‘normal’ country again with a military force that is able to proactively defend Japanese interests both at home and abroad. The problematic nature of this argument stems from the fact that this may lead to a further downturn in Sino-Japanese relations and increased tension in the Asia-Pacific region.

As Japan looks for a different way to defend itself it is becoming equally aware of the fact that there may come a time when the US can no longer be relied upon to protect its interests. “U.S.–Japan security relations, in their broadest sense, are thus beginning to confront a broadening set of major challenges. At the same time, their capacity to deal with these threats, many of them quite subtle, is steadily declining.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Peter J Katzenstein, *Rethinking Japanese security: Internal and external dimensions*’ 2008 p113

¹⁶ Kenneth B Pyle and Michael H Armacoast, *Japan and the engagement of China: challenges for US policy coordination*’ December 2001

¹⁷ Kyoko Hatakeyama, *Japan’s peacekeeping policy: Strategic calculation or internalization of an international norm?*’ 22/08/2014 p4

¹⁸ Kent E Calder: *Pacific Alliance: Reviving US-Japan relations*’ p22

Given the security threats to Japan that it is facing abroad, the Japanese military will play a more prominent role in anti-terror operations of the future and the aim of current anti-terrorist rhetoric could be a smokescreen behind which Abe intends to reassert Japanese hard power capabilities. The evidence would seem to suggest that the US would be very much in favour of Japanese assistance, having welcomed the Koizumi government's military assistance during the invasion of Iraq. Miyagi notes, "The most significant change in Japan's orientation in the period following the Gulf War was the emergence of an increasingly pro-US policy in the region. The Gulf War was also a turning point in that Japan began gradually to start, in its aftermath, a restrained use of military means in its security strategy."¹⁹ It must be noted that Iraq, however, was not considered an anti-terrorist operation but a 'regime change' mission.

The securing of Japanese oil imports is of the utmost importance to the Japanese government. This was also a significant deciding factor in Koizumi's decision to assist the coalition in Iraq and secure the Gulf oil supply. Interestingly, Koizumi, who was a staunch ally of President Bush, faced perhaps his most challenging issue in the Middle East as a result of Bush's 'axis of evil speech'. He decided to go against the US rhetoric and continue trading with Iran for oil despite the country's presence on Bush's 'axis'. "In the case of the other point of the 'axis of evil', Iran, the Koizumi government has been prepared to risk US displeasure by negotiating with Tehran to gain access to the exploitation of Iranian oil reserves."²⁰ This again reflects the Koizumi government's desire to use the Middle East as an arena for testing its increasingly 'adaptive' foreign policy.

Japan has consistently supplied sizeable aid packages to Middle Eastern nations. Whilst this aid has in the past been focused on peaceful reconstruction, Prime Minister Abe's declaration that Japan's 200 million dollar aid package to the region would be targeted specifically for those countries fighting ISIS has set a new precedent as Abe has for the first time in Japanese-Arab relations supplied financial aid to combat terrorist groups directly. This is, in many ways, an echo of Koizumi's

¹⁹ Yukiko Miyagi, *Japan's Middle East security policy; rethinking rules and norms* July 2011 p20

²⁰ Glenn D Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, *Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition* 2005 p 100

‘adaptive’ policy in the Middle East although Abe has been less willing to follow the US directly. The aid package he pledged is for solely humanitarian purposes but the fact that it is specifically meant for those countries and groups that are combatting IS has reaffirmed Japan’s commitment to the stability of the region.

The recent murder of the Japanese hostages has also ignited a sense of anger amongst even the more pacifist elements of Japanese society. “This is the first time that Japan, wrapped in the cocoon of its pacifist constitution and resting comfortably under the U.S. security umbrella, has reacted with such a spirit of vengeance.”²¹ Japan’s leader has also spoken of his decision to aid the nations of the region against IS remarking, “Should we leave terrorism or weapons of mass destruction to spread in this region, the loss imparted upon the international community would be immeasurable,”²² As a result of this, Abe much like Koizumi before him has used events to manipulate the debate on Japanese rearmament and to expand the Japanese SDF mission internationally. Miyagi observes, “Abe has used the hostage incident to geographically expand the self-defence mission of the SDF into the Middle East and therefore advance his larger agenda of acquiring legislative and constitutional sanction for SDF military activity abroad.”²³

The ‘gap’ in the literature that this investigation will be centred on is whether the confrontations with IS and AQI truly pose a threat to Japan’s policy of resource diplomacy in the Middle East, or whether both the Abe and Koizumi governments have manipulated these events in order to exaggerate the perceived threat and influence the on-going debate about Japan’s assertiveness on the international stage. An examination of whether Japan will continue to maintain its aggressive stance towards the perceived threat to its resource diplomacy whilst simultaneously seeking

²¹ Mina Pollmann, ‘Post-hostage crisis, what is Japan’s role in the Middle East’ published in ‘*The Diplomat*’ 02/92/2015
<http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/post-hostage-crisis-what-is-japans-role-in-the-middle-east/>
retrieved 11/05/2015

²² Simon Tindsall, ‘ISIS threat to hostages exposes risk in Abe’s counter-terror strategy’ published in ‘*The Guardian*’ 20/01/2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/20/japanese-hostages-threatened-by-isis-risk-abe-counter-terror> retrieved 25/05/2015

²³ Yukiko Miyagi, ‘How Abe used the IS hostage crisis to push security reform’ published in ‘*East Asia Forum*’ 07/04/2015
<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/04/07/how-abe-used-the-is-hostage-crisis-to-push-security-reform>
retrieved 04/07/2015

to create a more proactive and ‘adaptive’ security role for itself in the future is a subject that is on-going and, given that the events that brought Japan into confrontation with IS occurred so recently, the outcome and nature of this project will be unique.

Methodology

The methodological structure of this investigation will centre on two key focal points in order to provide a well-rounded but also unique view of the Japanese leadership’s changing foreign policy in the Middle East. The first of these focal points will be the application of constructivism to resource diplomacy in the Middle East. The second focal point will be the examination of two case studies regarding to the killings of Gotō Kenji and Kōda Shosei. The case studies will be vital to the overall investigation as these two incidents represent the two occasions where Islamic terrorist groups have most directly challenged Japanese policy in the Middle East and therefore will provide clear evidence of both the similarities between the policy of the Koizumi and Abe governments and will also highlight any shift towards a more proactive role for Japan in the region.

The case study aspect of the investigation will provide perhaps the most important insight and because of this the selection of two similar cases, perpetrated by two similar extremist actors will act as an accurate barometer of the Japanese government’s changing policy over a period of 11 years. Klotz identifies that a single case study that consists of multiple events (in this case the murders of Kōda and Gotō) can provide insights into a shift in dynamics. “Often single case studies emerge out of

an empirical puzzle. We see some- thing that does not fit our expectations based on prevailing theories or conventional wisdom. A researcher, already knowledgeable about a part of the world or particular issue, may have some hunches about what is happening and perhaps some critiques of dominant frameworks.”²⁴

The case study will examine the murders of Kōda Shosei in 2004 during the height of Japan’s involvement in the Iraq war, and the murder of Gotō Kenji in 2015 at the hands of IS. The mapping of subsequent reactions in both cases will take into account not only the reactions in Japan to the murders, but will also take into account the reactions in the Middle East itself. This will include the use of various Arabic language sources and will take into consideration the opinion of both Arab and Iranian stances. The similarities and differences between the two murders will be very important for the outcome of this investigation as they will highlight whether Japan is beginning to take a harder line towards foreign terrorist groups than it has done in the past. It will also ascertain whether Japan’s position in the Middle East is changing in the eyes of its Arab and Iranian trading partners.

As mentioned, the case study method that will be used will include multiple events. Robert Yin identifies the strengths of using this method in certain cases when he notes, “The rationale for multiple-case designs derives directly from your understanding of literal and theoretical replications. The simplest multiple-case design would be the selection of two or more cases that are believed to be literal replications, such as a set of cases with exemplary outcomes in relation to some evaluation questions”²⁵ Given this, the selection of this method derives from the fact that there is an important comparison to be made in contrasting the two attacks that have directly targeted Japanese citizens. The motivation behind the attacks and the subsequent government reaction must all be framed against the backdrop of Japan’s policy in the region so as to ascertain whether Japan is truly becoming more ‘adaptive’ or whether it remains committed to its pacifist stance despite the supposed threats it faces.

²⁴ Audie Klotz, ‘Case selection’ published in ‘*Qualitative methods in International Relations*’ 2008 p51

²⁵ Robert K Yin, ‘*Case Study Research: Design and methods*’ 2002 p 262

Theoretical framework

The application of the constructivist theory to Japan's policy in the Middle East will provide a unique viewpoint. This theory will reinforce the hypothesis that the Japanese government is not actually responding to a menace that truly threatens either the Japanese mainland or the energy supply in the Middle East, but that it is in fact seeking to use the threat as a means by which it is able to develop its identity. This notion is echoed by Phillips's observation, "Constructivists are defined by their emphasis on the socially constructed character of actors' interests and identities, and by their concomitant faith in the susceptibility to change of even the most seemingly immutable practices and institutions in world politics."²⁶

Japan's current use of soft power has meant that the balancing act it performs in the region remains vital in order to preserve its resource supplies from all nations in the region. It has to gamble in certain situations when its position becomes untenable and these gambles have, on occasion, failed. Miyagi observes, "Policy makers do not

²⁶ Andrew Bradley Phillips, 'Constructivism' published in *International Relations for the Twenty-First century* 2007 p60

always correctly perceive their environment; as has been seen, after previously underestimating US determination to get its way in episodes regarding Iran, they overestimated US power in the Iraq war when bandwagoning did not seem to pay off as expected.”²⁷

However, simply by the sheer virtue of the fact that the Japanese government has put itself in a position where it has gambled, it is by default not a ‘reactive’ nation that is solely focused with towing the US line. The Japanese policy in the Middle East is, perhaps given the fluid nature of current events in the region, one of the most changeable areas of its foreign policy. Given this, constructivism once again provides perhaps one of the most suitable methods for taking into account the potential for change. Andrew Heywood remarks, “Constructivism stands, in a sense, between ‘inside-out’ and ‘outside-in’ approaches, in that it holds that interactions between agents and structures are always *mediated* by ‘ideational factors’”²⁸

Constructivism’s answer that Japan is seeking to assert itself more on the global stage and is using the Middle East as a testing ground for its more ‘adaptive’ policies can also explain its on-going relationship with the countries of the Middle East. Whilst the on-going turmoil has seen significant difficulties arise between the US and the Arab states and the US and Iran, Japan has sought to detach itself from following US policies too closely. Even with its involvement in the occupation of Iraq and perhaps its greatest case of ‘bandwagoning’ it still sought to maintain economic and diplomatic ties with an increasingly isolated Iran.

²⁷ Yukiko Miyagi, *Japan’s Middle East security policy: Theory and cases* 2008 p179

²⁸ Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics* 2011 p72

Resource Diplomacy: a historical context

The murder of Gotō Kenji and Yukawa Haruna has not only tested Japan's ability to assert itself abroad but also highlighted its crucial interest in the Middle East. This lies in Japan's desire for the resource wealth that is abundant in the region. In a similar fashion to the great economies of Europe, Japan owes much of its economic growth since the end of the Second World War in 1945 to its incredibly shrewd diplomatic policy of exchanging trade links, financial and humanitarian aid along with Japanese manufactured goods and skills for Middle Eastern crude oil.

This policy has been essential for Japan's phoenix-like rise from the ashes of destruction to one of the world's greatest economic powers. Japan is a nation that is famously resource-poor and has therefore relied upon its imports of crude oil and coal to keep its economy afloat. In 2012 Japan was second only to China in global imports of crude oil.²⁹ In 2013, 44% of Japan's energy consumption was petroleum with an

²⁹ *'Japan is the second largest net importer of fossil fuels in the world.'* Published in *'Energy today'* 07/11/2013
<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=13711> retrieved 12/05/2015

estimated 90% of Japan's electricity coming from fossil fuels³⁰ in the wake of the tsunami and subsequent nuclear disaster of 2011. As of 2014, Japan imports a staggering 81% of its crude oil from the Middle East (including Iran).

Japan's dependency on the Middle East has been severely increased by the disastrous earthquake and tsunami that hit the country's northeastern coast in March of 2011. The tsunami was responsible for the on-going nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and this has subsequently led to the Japanese government deciding to take all of its nuclear reactors offline as a precaution. As journalist Justin McCurry observes "The last of Japan's 48 functioning nuclear reactors went offline in September 2013 in response to the March 2011 Fukushima disaster, the world's worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986."³¹ Plans to restart the reactors earlier in 2015 have run into difficulties because of widespread public opposition to the reactors. As a result of this, Japan's main alternative to crude oil from the Middle East has been temporarily halted and therefore the current confrontation between IS and Japan in the Middle East could not have struck at a more critical time.

There has been concern about the threat that IS poses to the Middle East's oilfields. As El-Katiri notes, "The decisions over where and whether to invest by oil market heavyweight Saudi Arabia, and also medium-sized producers such as Kuwait and the UAE, are important drivers of tomorrow's oil prices. These countries are already facing uncertainty from within their own region; after all, we don't yet know how much more oil we can expect to be exported from Libya, Iran or Iraq."³² However, despite the threat posed by IS, Japan's key energy partners in the region remain completely operational.

It is crucial to remember that Japan suffered just as much as the other industrialized

³⁰ 'Japan's fossil-fuel related generation remains high because of continuing nuclear plant outages' Published in 'Energy today' 15/03/2013

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=10391> retrieved 12/05/2015

³¹ Justin McCurry, 'Japan's post-Fukushima restart plans dealt a blow by court ruling' published in 'The Guardian' 14/04/2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/14/japans-post-fukushima-nuclear-restart-plans-dealt-a-blow-by-court-ruling> retrieved 23/04/2015

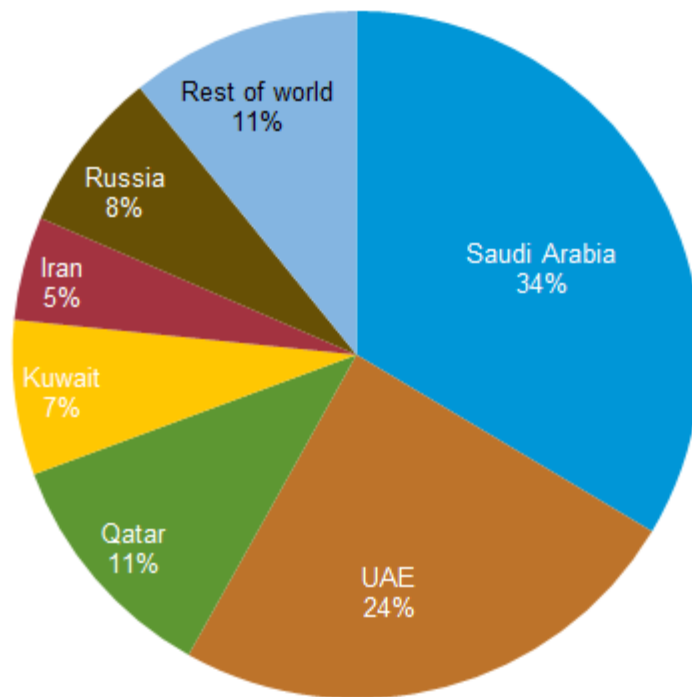
³² Laura El-Katiri, 'Why the Middle East conflict is a bigger threat to UK energy security than Putin' published in 'The Guardian' 05/09/2014

<http://www.theguardian.com/big-energy-debate/2014/sep/05/conflict-middle-east-energy-security-putin> retrieved 27/06/2015

nations during the 1973 oil embargo by Saudi Arabia and this shocked the country into diversifying its oil source. However, as Sugihara notes, the supply is still at risk. “Japan’s oil supply security is still far from Winston Churchill’s oil axiom: ‘on no one country, on no one route and on no one field must we be dependent. Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone’, depending as it does on the Gulf area for more than 70 per cent of its oil imports.”³³

Japan's crude oil imports by source, 2014 (11 months)

34



Sources: Japan's Ministry of Finance, Global Trade Information Services

The policy of resource diplomacy is a prime example of the constructivist idea of identity-development as it is centred on the ‘adaptive’ balancing act that has Japan balancing its interests between the Gulf Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and the

³³ J A Allan and Kaoru Sugihara, *Japan in the contemporary Middle East* 1993 p74

³⁴ *Country overview: Japan* published by ‘US Energy Information Administration’ 30/01/2015 <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=JPN> retrieved 12/05/2015

UAE, Iran and the US. As Yukiko Miyagi identifies, “ Japanese policy has been pulled by two oft-conflicting needs; to develop good relations with the Arab states (and Iran), both oil producers and those in conflict with Israel, and at the same time to maintain Japan’s close alliance with the US. Hence, the widely accepted notion that Japan is caught and must balance its dual dependencies on the two sides.”³⁵

Perhaps the most important partner for Japan during the course of its policy of resource diplomacy has been Saudi Arabia. Since the official establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1955, the Saudis have become the key member of Japan’s resource diplomacy and have grown into one of Japan’s most vital trading partners, perhaps only second to the US in importance. In 2015 Japan and Saudi Arabia celebrated the 60-year anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. The Saudi embassy in Tokyo announced, “2015 celebrates the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia since 1955. During these periods, the two countries have deepened cordial relationship in the field of politics, economy and culture.”³⁶ The burgeoning relationship between the two nations has not, however, always been so smooth. Japan was seriously affected by the 1973 Saudi led oil-embargo, a victim of its proximity to and support of the US during the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. Nester argues that Japan was at fault and was on this occasion defeated by its own policy as it had failed to pick up on the signals sent by the Saudis of growing disquiet regarding Japan’s support of the US. “Although King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had clearly warned Japan during a 1972 visit that continued adherence to US policies in the Middle East would have serious consequences, the 1973 oil shock came as a complete surprise to Tokyo policy-makers.”³⁷

Since the oil embargo however, Japan-Saudi relations have remained stable and even cordial. Dr. Ismail bin Muhammad Mufaraj, A Saudi journalist and expert on the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Japan, writes that it is important to remember that the relationship between the two nations is very much a two-way relationship and

³⁵ Yukiko Miyagi, *Japan’s Middle East security policy: Theory and cases*’ 2008 p36

³⁶ ‘60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia’ published by ‘Embassy of Japan in Saudi Arabia’ 02/2014
<http://www.ksa.emb-japan.go.jp/60years.htm> retrieved 28/05/2015

³⁷ William Raymond Nester, *Japan’s oil diplomacy: Tatemaie and Honne*’ published in *Third World Quarterly: Vol.11*’ 01/1989 p77

that the import of Japanese goods and skilled technicians has left a huge footprint on the Saudi economy. He also notes that the economic relationship between the two is in a state of constant growth.³⁸ This highlights the fact that Japan, despite its close proximity to the US, is viewed very differently and separately by the nations of the Arabian Peninsula.

Iran has also played an important role in the resource diplomacy policy. Whilst it plays a markedly smaller role in the current Japanese import of crude oil, the importance of Iran's relationship with Japan, given that it was maintained throughout the country's Islamic revolution and has been through subsequent hard-line anti-US Iranian governments means that it should not be overlooked. The Iranian case with regards to Japanese resource diplomacy is perhaps the most interesting case as this is perhaps the most blatant example of the Japanese 'balancing act' in action. As Miyagi identifies when discussing the case of Iran's on-going nuclear program, "The case of the Iranian nuclear crisis showed Japan's classic balancing behaviour between its oil interests and the US alliance"³⁹ The fact that, until the recent thaw in relations under the Rouhani regime, the US has considered Iran a pariah state demonstrates Tokyo's ability to circumnavigate the diplomatic complications in pursuit of its own interests. In many ways, Japan has acted as a bridge between Iran and the US. The Iranian news corporation Al Alam affirmed that Japan has been one of the country's closest trading partners. It remarked on the visit of the Deputy Foreign Minister visit to Iran in June 2014 that the Japanese had stressed during the talks that they were keen to develop and enhance trade links with Iran and praised the Iranian President's efforts to engage with the international community. Iran has equally stressed that; in return, it was seeking Japanese recognition for its legal nuclear programme.⁴⁰

Japan's policy of resource diplomacy has remained stable since the oil crisis of 1973 and its relationships with its Arab and Iranian suppliers have remained stable despite its involvement in the occupation of Iraq. This is perhaps one of the greatest indicators of the Japanese government's desire to forge an identity in the region that is

³⁸ Ismail bin Muhammed Mufaraj, 'التقوية من طور من اليا ابانية السعودية العلقاققت', published in 'صحيفة' 01/05/2013

<http://www.noworld.net/articles.php?action=show&id=253> retrieved 30/04/2015

³⁹ Yukiko Miyagi, 'Japan's Middle East security policy: Theory and cases' 2008 p148

⁴⁰ 'اليا ابان مع العلقاقات مستوع رفع عمل استعداد على ايران: نظريه' published in 'Al Alam' 11/06/2014 <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1601927> retrieved 30/04/2015

completely apart from the US. The recent killings have sparked anger in Japan against IS but the mood of the Japanese public has proved of use to Abe as he has been able to advance the debate on Japanese hard power whilst simultaneously standing with Japan's Middle Eastern allies in solidarity.

The murders of Gotō Kenji and Kōda Shosei: a case study

The examination of the following two case studies is an important indicator of how the Japanese state has reacted when Islamic extremist terrorist groups have directly targeted its citizens. It is important to note that the backdrop to the two cases studies is different. This certainly has bearing to some degree on the subsequent reactions of the Japanese government and, also, in the Middle East. The nature of the hostage's occupations and how they came to find themselves in the region is an equally important variable to consider. The reason for the case studies importance lies in the fact that by incorporating various different sources and opinions, including Arabic language sources from Middle Eastern analysts, the case study comparisons will provide an illuminating insight into whether the Japanese responses to terrorism and to the potential threat in the region has shifted.

Gotō Kenji



Gotō Kenji pictured in 2014

On the 30th of January 2015 Gotō Kenji, a Japanese journalist who had been working extensively in the Middle East was murdered by IS near their capital city of Raqqa.⁴² He was executed after a ransom demand of \$200 million and lengthy negotiations over a potential hostage exchange with a convicted Iraqi suicide bomber being held in Jordan fell through. His killer, Kuwaiti-born British jihadi, Mohammed Emwazi claimed that the killing of Gotō was in response to Abe Shinzō's pledge of \$2.5 billion in aid to those countries that were engaged in fighting IS. In a prepared speech before executing the Japanese journalist, Emwazi accused Japan of being a member of the 'satanic coalition' and, addressing Abe directly, claims that because of his decision to 'take part in an unwinnable war' that IS were about to 'let the nightmare for Japan begin',⁴³

⁴¹ 'Profile: Japanese journalist Kenji Goto' published in 'BBC News' 31/01/2015
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-30978302> retrieved 29/03/2015

⁴² 'Japan outraged at IS beheading of hostage Kenji Goto' published in 'BBC News' 01/02/2015
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31075769> retrieved 29/03/2015

⁴³ 'ISIS claims to have beheaded second Japanese hostage' published in 'France 24' 01/02/2015
<http://www.france24.com/en/20150131-claims-have-beheaded-japanese-hostage-goto> retrieved 03/06/2015

Gotō was imprisoned by IS alongside his friend and associate, Haruna Yukawa. It later emerged that Gotō had in fact gone to Raqqa in the hope of securing the release of his fellow countryman who had been captured by IS earlier in 2014. Yukawa's presence as a Japanese IS hostage was also significant for the Japanese government, however his reasons for travelling to Syria had come as a result of a breakdown in Japan⁴⁴ and so he decided to reinvent himself as military contractor despite having no military training of any kind.⁴⁵

The Free Syrian Army in Aleppo had captured Yukawa on a previous occasion. Gotō, having established connections within the group, was instrumental in securing his release. When interviewed by the *Asahi Shinbum*, Gotō's translator had confirmed that before his journey into IS held territory, the journalist had been planning to do the same again. "According to Zaeem, Gotō was determined to report on the lives of citizens in areas under the rule of the Islamic State. He also said he wanted to rescue Yukawa, 42, who was believed to have been taken hostage by the Islamic State in August 2014."⁴⁶

However, Gotō had failed to take heed of repeated warnings about dealing with the extremist group directly. IS are a far more fanatical, hard-line group than the relatively liberal FSA and view the West and its allies (including Japan) as their enemies. The roots of this jihadi organization lie in the fall of Saddam Hussein in neighbouring Iraq and the subsequent sectarian conflict. Their roots and original leaders first sprang from the branch of Al Qaeda in Iraq who were responsible for similar actions and atrocities against different religious sects during the US occupation. This factor accounts for the training and organization that IS uses, which has come as a shock to many foreign observers. Weiss observes on the links between IS and the military of Saddam Hussein, "ISIS is also a spectral holdover of an even

⁴⁴ Justin McCurry, 'Haruna Yukawa: death in the desert marks a violent end to a troubled life' published in 'The Guardian' 25/01/2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/haruna-yukawa-execution-by-isis-confirmed>
retrieved 01/06/2015

⁴⁵ Justin McCurry, 'Haruna Yukawa: death in the desert marks a violent end to a troubled life' published in 'The Guardian' 25/01/2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/haruna-yukawa-execution-by-isis-confirmed>
retrieved 01/06/2015

⁴⁶ Daisuke Kanda, 'Goto went to Islamic State stronghold to rescue Yukawa, interpreter says' published in 'The Asahi Shinbum' 22/01/2015
http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201501220073 retrieved 26/04/2015

earlier foe than al-Qaeda. Most of its top decision-makers served either in Saddam Hussein's military or security services. In a sense, then, "secular" Baathism has returned to Iraq under the guise of Islamic fundamentalism—less a contradiction than it may appear."⁴⁷

Upon confirming the death of Gotō, Shinzō Abe issued a statement condemning the murders and highlighting Japan's commitment to the Middle East region. It is notable that he used his first address since the murders to affirm that Japan remains committed to the Middle East cause. "Japan will never give in to terrorism. We will further expand our humanitarian assistance in the Middle East in areas such as food and medical care. Japan will steadfastly fulfil its responsibility in the international community combatting terrorism."⁴⁸ In keeping with his militarist stance, Abe also used the two killings to highlight the need for Japan to build a military presence that would be capable of defending Japanese interests both at home and abroad.

The Japanese public reaction to the death of Gotō has been one of anger and defiance. However, the killing of Yukawa did not have the same effect on public opinion. Whilst Gotō was viewed as a courageous journalist who had been killed attempting to save his friend, Yukawa's death drew more mixed reactions with many accusing him of being a fantasist who should not have travelled to IS held territory in the first place.⁴⁹ However, despite the obvious anger towards IS, the Japanese public have also been cautious towards the prospect of Japan rebuilding its military as a result. Many Japanese retweeted a post written by Gotō from Syria in 2010 in the direct aftermath of his death. "Hate is not for humans. Judgment lies with God. That's what I learned from my Arabic brothers and sisters."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, 'ISIS: inside the army of terror' February 2015 p101

⁴⁸ 'Statement by Prime Minister regarding the hostage incident of Japanese nationals in Syria' 01/02/2015

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201502/1209726_9914.html retrieved 03/04/2015

⁴⁹ Justin McCurry, 'Haruna Yukawa: death in the desert marks a violent end to a troubled life' published in 'The Guardian' 25/01/2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/haruna-yukawa-execution-by-isis-confirmed> retrieved 01/06/2015

⁵⁰ 'Kenji Goto tweet of tolerance goes viral in poignant memorial to journalist' published in 'The Guardian' 02/02/2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/02/kenji-goto-tweet-goes-viral> retrieved 15/03/2015

The reaction across the Middle East has been similarly unanimous in condemning the senseless murder of the journalist. Many Arabic sources highlighted Gotō's steadfast work in highlighting the Syrian crisis and the atrocities that were being committed to the outside world. Reporter Mohammed Suweidan, of Syrian revolutionary newspaper, 'Al Ghad' penned an article entitled "Our reporter colleague Gotō" where he praised Gotō's efforts in relaying the war in Syria to the outside world. He also claimed that Gotō's death would not deter the media from reporting from all the hostile areas of Syria, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere. He said that the 'Media martyrs' would continue to fall in the name of exposing the truth."⁵¹ Both the Saudi and Iranian governments condemned the actions of IS with the Iranian embassy in Tokyo issuing a particularly pointed statement that referred to the killing of the Japanese hostages as the result of the West's policy in the region. "The formation of these kind of extremists is the outcome of incorrect policies of the West and their regional allies."⁵² 'Al Quds', a Palestinian newspaper based in London, highlighted the fact that before Gotō had travelled to Syria on his rescue attempt he had pleaded that were anything to happen to him that no blame be given to the Syrian people.⁵³ However, the most poignant of responses to Gotō's death came from Jordan, a country that had been instrumental in attempting to secure Gotō's release. Journalist Gadha al Sheikh remarked that there had been a widespread campaign in the country to spread pictures of Gotō reporting and doing his daily duties as oppose to as a hostage of IS. This campaign became very popular and was given the moniker, He's a journalist, he's a human. (إنسان يي ا كان ,ص ح ف ي ا كان)⁵⁴

⁵¹ Mohammed Suweidan, 'غوتو الص ح ف ي ا الزم ي ل' published in 'Al Ghad' 03/02/2015
<http://www.alghad.com/articles/851134-الص ح ف ي ا-الزم ي ل>

retrieved 20/04/2015

⁵² 'Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman condemned the killing of the 2nd Japanese hostage by ISIL' published by 'Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Tokyo' 04/02/2015

<http://en.tokyo.mfa.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=266&pageid=11010&newsview=325995>
retrieved 11/05/2015

⁵³ 'دب ح و ق ب ل "غوتو ل ك ي ب ج ي" و ص ي ة ي ب ش ر و ن س و ر ي و ن ن ا ش ط و ن' published in 'Al Quds Al Arabi' 01/02/2015

<http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=288490> retrieved 11/05/2015

⁵⁴ Gadha al Sheikh, 'إنسان يي ا كان ,ص ح ف ي ا كان "غوتو م ع ف ي س ب و ك ي ت ض ا م ن"' published in 'Al Ghad' 01/02/2015

<http://www.alghad.com/articles/850765-الص ح ف ي ا-كان-غوتو م ع ف ي س ب و ك ي-تض ا م ن>
retrieved 11/05/2015

Kōda Shōsei



Kōda Shōsei pictured during his graduation from high school.

The second event is the execution of Kōda Shōsei, another Japanese citizen, whose execution in 2004 in Iraq bore striking similarities to the case of Gotō nine years later. Kōda arrived in Iraq in October 2004 wishing to travel to the witness the on-going war for himself. As a tourist he had been warned on several occasions about entering Iraq whilst in neighbouring Jordan but had ignored the fears for his safety.⁵⁶ His captors demanded that Japanese forces withdraw from Iraq. When the Koizumi government refused to comply, his decapitated body was found in Baghdad draped in a US flag.

His execution came at the hands of a group known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). This group, still in their infancy in 2004, would become infamous for the beheading of several foreign hostages and for their use of extreme and brutal violence during the sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia groups that soon engulfed the country. Their leader, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, became such a figurehead for extremist Sunni

⁵⁵ 'Japan's backpacker hostage' published by 'BBC News' 31/10/2004
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3958125.stm> retrieved 10/06/2015

⁵⁶ 'Japan's backpacker hostage' published by 'BBC News' 31/10/2004
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3958125.stm> retrieved 10/06/2015

groups operating across the Middle East that the US put a \$25 million bounty on his head until he was killed in a US airstrike in 2006.⁵⁷

It is crucial to note that AQI, although eventually defeated during the Iraq war of 2003-2011, would re-emerge as IS in northern Syria in 2013. As Weiss observes, the seeds of IS were planted by Al Zarqawi. “The next trap being laid for America, as al-Zarqawi originally envisioned it, was in northern Syria.”⁵⁸ The leadership of the group known as IS is largely made up of Al Qaeda veterans. IS has now split from Al Qaeda as Berger observes, “The Islamic State has thrown down the gauntlet to al Qaeda and seeks to supplant its former ally as the symbol and leader of a global movement acting out a twisted definition of jihad.”⁵⁹ However, in both cases, the groups responsible for the attacks on Japanese citizens retain significant links and remain similarly motivated.

In the case of Kōda’s death, the public reaction was more mixed than in Gotō’s case. There was a significant degree of hostility towards the presence of Japanese SDF forces in Iraq from the Japanese public in the first place. However, the mixed reactions came as the result of Kōda’s supposed wish to visit the warzone that was Iraq of 2004 as a tourist. “Political commentator Minoru Morita observed that the hostage crisis has split the Japanese people into two camps: people blaming Koizumi’s diplomatic loyalty to the U.S. for the hostage tragedy, and others blaming the hostage himself for recklessly entering the war-torn country, where more than 150 foreigners have been taken by militants this year.”⁶⁰

The seemingly reckless nature of Kōda’s decision to visit Iraq against the advice of various different sources seems to have tempered any sympathy that the Japanese public had for his death. This is in stark contrast to Gotō who was seen as someone

⁵⁷ Lawrence Joffe, ‘Obituary: Abu Musab al Zarqawi’ published in ‘The Guardian’ 09/06/2006 <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/jun/09/guardianobituaries.alqaida> retrieved 12/05/2015

⁵⁸ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, ‘ISIS: inside the army of terror’ February 2015 p101

⁵⁹ J M Berger, *The Islamic State VS Al Qaeda: Who is winning the war to become the jihadi superpower* published in ‘Foreign Policy’ 02/09/2014 <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/02/the-islamic-state-vs-al-qaeda/> retrieved 10/05/2015

⁶⁰ Reiji Yoshida, ‘Japan must now ponder extending SDF mission’ published in ‘The Japan Times’ 01/11/2004 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2004/11/01/national/japan-now-must-ponder-extending-sdf-mission/#.VXrGn-sxFYI> retrieved 23/05/2015

who had dedicated his life to the causes of others and who had died trying to rescue his friend and fellow countryman. In many ways, the view of Kōda's death in the eyes of the Japanese public has far more in common with the reaction to the death of Yukawa Haruna as both were deemed to be in a warzone simply out of curiosity.

What is crucial to note on the case of Kōda is the backdrop to his killing. The presence of Japanese SDF forces inside Iraq acted as a catalyst for such threats against Japanese citizens and even against the Japanese mainland itself in an echo of the threats that would be made by IS a decade later.⁶¹ Yukiko Miyagi identifies the caution with which the Koizumi administration undertook its mission in Iraq. "The government phased the SDF deployment in order to demonstrate its caution to the Japanese public, but it continued despite plots to attack the GDSF and the kidnappings of Japanese civilians by Iraqi resistance groups during 2004"⁶² This once again demonstrates that the cautious approach by the Koizumi and Abe governments comes as the result of careful management of public opinion. On neither occasion has the government stepped away from the threats in the Middle East but the explicit rhetoric against the extremist groups has in both cases adopted a more passive tone so as to avoid stronger reactions from the public.

When both cases are viewed comparatively, the attitude of the Japanese government has been similarly unwavering in the face of threats from both Al Qaeda and from the Islamic State. However, unlike the US position, Japan has adopted a constructivist stance of seeking to be seen firstly as a nation in its own right and secondly as a member of a US coalition. The governments of both Abe and Koizumi have stood firm in the face of the murder of Japanese citizens. This demonstrates that the policy for the threat of terrorism in the Middle East has remained resolute, as, for Japan to show a significant weakness against the terrorist groups that threaten its oil supply would be a potentially catastrophic blow to resource diplomacy. As a result of this, both Koizumi and Abe have sought to ensure that the alliances in the region with both the Gulf Arab state and, paradoxically, Iran remain as strong as they were pre-9/11.

⁶¹ 'Al Qaeda threatens Japan if troops sent to Iraq, AFP reports.' Published in 'Bloomberg News' 17/11/2004

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aa66PdZXmmz8> retrieved 20/05/2015

⁶² Yukiko Miyagi, 'Japan's Middle East security policy: Theory and cases' 2008 p97

It is an interesting parallel to note that Abe's speech about Gotō's death echoed one made a decade earlier. Koizumi, in 2004 issued a very similar statement upon hearing about the death of Kōda Shōsei. He remarked that 'Japan will continue to coordinate with the international community and provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the people of Iraq by the Self-Defence Forces and maintain its unwavering stance in the fight against terrorism.'⁶³ Koizumi was certainly more pro-US whereas Abe is more concerned with the return of a 'strong Japan' yet their 'adaptive' foreign policies in the Middle East and their reactions to the threat posed by extremist terrorist groups display a number of marked similarities. As such, in both the cases of Gotō and Kōda, the anger that has transpired as a result of their deaths and about the threats posed has been manipulated. In the case of Koizumi, the killing of Kōda was used to justify the presence of the SDF in Iraq. In the case of Gotō, Abe has used the killing to once again enforce the 'adaptive' foreign policy in the region. Miyagi identifies this policy as a 'chameleon' policy. "In what could be called a 'chameleon' policy, Japan sought protection by presenting contrary images of its foreign policy to different audiences — as a strong partner to the US and as a peaceful actor to Middle Eastern audiences."⁶⁴

⁶³ 'Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi' published by 'Prime Minister of Japan and his cabinet' 31/10/2004

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/koizumispeech/2004/10/31seimei_e.html retrieved 03/04/2015

⁶⁴ Yukiko Miyagi, 'How Abe used the IS hostage crisis to push security reform' published in 'East Asia Forum' 07/04/2015

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/04/07/how-abe-used-the-is-hostage-crisis-to-push-security-reform> retrieved 04/07/2015

Thesis Conclusion

During the course of this thesis investigation, the governments of both Koizumi and Abe have come under scrutiny as a result of their confrontations with extremist groups in the Middle East. Their steadfast commitment to standing up to terrorism has, in both cases, led to heated debates at home as to whether Japan should look to expand its hard power capabilities. In the case of Koizumi, the killing of Kōda was seen as a strong reason for Japan to withdraw the SDF from the US-led coalition in Iraq. In the case of Abe, the killing of Gotō and Abe's subsequent aggressive rhetoric directed at IS was seen as an unnecessary provocation of the extremist group. However in both cases, the Prime Ministers used the incidents to highlight the dangers posed to Japan whilst simultaneously using the fear that has been created to strengthen the cause for Japan's complete rearmament.

The fact that both IS and AQI pose a negligible threat to Japan and also to the energy flow from the Middle East suggests that both leaders may have in fact had their sights set on strengthening Japan much closer to home. A deterrent to Beijing and Pyongyang would be of much greater use to Japan than a strengthened presence in the Middle East. The Japanese policy of resource diplomacy with its key suppliers in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Iran remains unthreatened despite the turmoil in Iraq and Syria.

The application of the theory of constructivism has, however, highlighted the fact that Japanese policy in the Middle East has become something of a testing-ground for the creation of a new, more assertive Japanese foreign policy identity on the world stage. Koizumi and Abe have both performed ingenious balancing acts where they are able to maintain their commitment to their key ally, the US. Hook observes on this factor, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs works hard to avoid an Arab tilt in foreign policy

that might damage Japan's political relations with the United States.”⁶⁵ However both Prime Ministers have also been able to adopt their own regional policy that, at times, has gone against US wishes.

Calder's observation that Japan is a 'reactive' state and cannot function internationally without US approval has been proved to be somewhat erroneous when viewed in the context of the Middle East. Hook observes that it was in fact the US who instead sought assurance from Japan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. “In the period after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the US is similarly seeking to ensure that Japan remains supportive of US goals and offers assistance as an ally in America's new 'war on terror' and the fight against the 'axis of evil'.”⁶⁶

The observation made by Berger regarding Japan as an adaptive state seeking to build its identity has, however, proved far more accurate when viewed in the context of the Middle East. The murders of Japanese citizens at the hands of the extremist groups in the region has given both leaders a chance to further their 'adaptive' foreign policy. The current threat to resource diplomacy is negligible and Japan continues to maintain close links to its partners in the region (including Iran), whilst simultaneously supporting US-led security initiatives in order to cement its position as one of Washington's closest allies. This has been a largely covert policy and has not often been explicit in its aims. However, the cases of both Gotō and Kōda have highlighted the few occasions when Japan's 'adaptive' policy and new identity creation has been brought to the forefront. Miyagi observes on this factor, “Japan has simultaneously expanded its support for US-led military operations and security agendas in the Middle East while still maintaining that Japan is a non-militarist, politically neutral and peaceful country. The potential contradictions in balancing these two positions was bound to come to a head sooner or later.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Glenn D Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, *Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition* 2005 p 61

⁶⁶ Glenn D Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, *Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition* 2005 p 90

⁶⁷ Yukiko Miyagi, *How Abe used the IS hostage crisis to push security reform* published in *East Asia Forum* 07/04/2015

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/04/07/how-abe-used-the-is-hostage-crisis-to-push-security-reform>
retrieved 04/07/2015

Bibliography

- Allan, J A and Sugihara, Kaoru '*Japan in the contemporary Middle East*' London: Routledge (1993)
- Berger, J M '*The Islamic State VS Al Qaeda: Who is winning the war to become the jihadi superpower*' published in '*Foreign Policy*' (02/09/2014)
- Berger, Thomas U '*Conclusions: The liberalism of an adaptive state*' published in '*Japan in international politics: Beyond the reactive state.*' Washington: Lynne Rienner (2007)
- Calder, Kent E '*Japan as a post-reactive state*' Elsevier limited (2003)
- Calder, Kent E '*Pacific Alliance: Reviving US-Japan relations*' Yale University press (2009)
- Cooper, Andrew Scott '*The Oil Kings: How the US, Iran and Saudi Arabia changed the balance of power in the Middle East.*' New York: Simon and Schuster (2011)
- Critchlow, Andrew '*ISIS is making the biggest threat to oil prices even worse*' published in '*Business Insider*' (30/05/2015)
- El-Katiri, Laura '*Why the Middle East conflict is a bigger threat to UK energy security than Putin*' published in '*The Guardian*' (05/09/2014)
- Hatakeyama, Kyoko '*Japan's peacekeeping policy: Strategic calculation or internalization of an international norm?*' (22/08/2014)
- Heywood, Andrew '*Global Politics*' London: Palgrave Macmillan (2011)
- Hook, Glenn D, Gilson, Julie, Christopher W Hughes and Hugo Dobson, '*Japan's international relations: Politics, economy and security. 2nd edition*' London: Routledge (2005)
- Katzentein, Peter J '*Rethinking Japanese security: Internal and external dimensions*' New York: Routledge (2008)
- Klotz, Audie '*Case selection*' published in '*Qualitative methods in International Relations*' London: Palgrave Macmillan (2008)
- McCurry, Justin '*Japan's post-Fukushima restart plans dealt a blow by court ruling*' published in '*The Guardian*' (14/04/2015)
- Weiss, Michael and Hassan Hassan, '*ISIS: inside the army of terror*' New York: Regan Arts (2015)
- Miyagi, Yukiko '*How Abe used the IS hostage crisis to push security reform*' published in '*East Asia Forum*' (07/04/2015)

- Miyagi, Yukiko 'Japan's Middle East security policy; rethinking rules and norms' (July 2011)
- Miyagi, Yukiko 'Japan's Middle East security policy: Theory and cases' London: Routledge (2008)
- Moriyasu, Ken 'Saudi's succession battle adds to Mideast turmoil.' Published in 'Nikkei Asian review' (16/04/2014)
- Mufaraj, Ismail bin Muhammed 'التقنية من منظور من اليابانية السعودية العلاقات' (The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Japan) published in 'صحيفة' (01/05/2013)
- Nester, William Raymond 'Japan's oil diplomacy: Tatemaie and Honne' published in 'Third World Quarterly: Vol.11' (01/1989)
- Phillips, Andrew Bradley 'Constructivism' published in 'International Relations for the Twenty-First century' (2007)
- Pollmann, Mina 'Post-hostage crisis, what is Japan's role in the Middle East' published in 'The Diplomat' (02/02/2015)
- Pyle, Kenneth B and Armacoast, Michael H 'Japan and the engagement of China: challenges for US policy coordination' (2001)
- Samuels, Richard J, 'Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the future of East Asia.' Cornell University Press (2007)
- Sheikh, Ghadha al 'إنسانيا لكان, صحفيا لكان" غوتو مع فيس بوكي تضا من' published in 'Al Ghad' (01/02/2015)
<http://www.alghad.com/articles/850765-لکان-صحفيا-لکان-غوتو-مع-فيس-بوكي-تضا-من>
<http://www.alghad.com/articles/850765-لکان-صحفيا-لکان-غوتو-مع-فيس-بوكي-تضا-من?s=83e59817139fdb19921c95fa10e00d03> retrieved 11/05/2015
- Tindsall, Simon 'ISIS threat to hostages exposes risk in Abe's counter-terror strategy' published in 'The Guardian' (20/01/2015)
- Yin, Robert K 'Case Study Research: Design and methods' Washington D.C: Sage (2002)
- Yoshida, Reiji, 'Japan must now ponder extending SDF mission' published in 'The Japan Times' (01/11/2004)
- 'Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi' published by 'Prime Minister of Japan and his cabinet' (31/10/2004)
http://japan.kantei.go.jp/koizumispeech/2004/10/31seimei_e.html retrieved 03/04/2015
- 'Al Qaeda threatens Japan if troops sent to Iraq, AFP reports.' Published in 'Bloomberg News' (17/11/2004)
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aa66PdZXmmz8> retrieved 20/05/2015
- 'Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman condemned the killing of the 2nd Japanese hostage by ISIL' published by 'Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Tokyo' (04/02/2015)
<http://en.tokyo.mfa.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=266&pageid=11010&newsview=325995>
retrieved 11/05/2015
- 'Kenji Goto tweet of tolerance goes viral in poignant memorial to journalist' published in 'The Guardian' (02/02/2015)
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/02/kenji-goto-tweet-goes-viral> retrieved 15/03/2015

'Statement by Prime Minister regarding the hostage incident of Japanese nationals in Syria' (01/02/2015)
http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201502/1209726_9914.html retrieved 03/04/2015

ISIS claims to have beheaded second Japanese hostage published in 'France 24' (01/02/2015)
<http://www.france24.com/en/20150131-claims-have-beheaded-japanese-hostage-goto> retrieved 03/06/2015

'Japan outraged at IS beheading of hostage Kenji Goto' published in 'BBC News' (01/02/2015)
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31075769> retrieved 29/03/2015

'Profile: Japanese journalist Kenji Goto' published in 'BBC News' (31/01/2015)
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-30978302> retrieved 29/03/2015

60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia' published by 'Embassy of Japan in Saudi Arabia' (02/2014)
<http://www.ksa.emb-japan.go.jp/60years.htm> retrieved 28/05/2015

Country overview: Japan published by 'US Energy Information Administration' (30/01/2015)
<http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=JPN> retrieved 12/05/2015

'Japan's fossil-fuel related generation remains high because of continuing nuclear plant outages' Published in 'Energy today' (15/03/2013)
<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=10391> retrieved 12/05/2015

'Japan is the second largest net importer of fossil fuels in the world.' Published in 'Energy today' (07/11/2013)
<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=13711> retrieved 12/05/2015

'الايابان مع العلاقات مبنى توقع لرفع استعداد على ايران: ظريف' published in 'Al Alam' (11/06/2014)
<http://www.alalam.ir/news/1601927> retrieved 30/04/2015