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**Challenges for Qatar and Japan to  
Build Multilayered Relations**  
Satoru Nakamura

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to reveal and to conceptualize the relations between the Arabian Gulf countries and Japan. Qatar-Japan relation is taken as a case study. Their relations comprise the three dimensions of royal, governmental, and citizen diplomacy and have been developed through the three evolutionary processes of pioneering, stable growth, and multilayered.

The relations between the Gulf countries and Japan have been harmonious and based on mutual respect. The Japanese engagement with the Gulf countries has been only constructive. The roles taken by Japan for the creation of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) export industry in Qatar were indispensable for its development. Their relations have been friendly and interdependent since the Gulf countries gained their independence, and their relations have undergone a multilayered expansion in society, education, and academia in recent years.

**About the author: Satoru Nakamura**

Satoru Nakamura was visiting researcher at QU GSC during the Fall semester 2014. Dr. Satoru Nakamura's research agenda includes building a new research framework to comprehend political phenomena in the Gulf region. His publications covered political history of state and nation building in Saudi Arabia as well as role of Islam as value for counterterrorism. Dr. Nakamura has been working as an advocate of preventive diplomacy in the Middle East region.

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*Satoru Nakamura*

*To operate this steel mill [of Qatar Steel Co. Ltd.], one should not impose the installation of the operating system being used for latest Japanese steel mills without tailoring modifications. Rather, it is necessary to take sufficient time to develop an operating system adequate for the Arab customs through acquisition of their appreciation for it and to transfer it.*

*Engineers at Kobe steel mill in the 1980s<sup>1</sup>*

**Introduction**

This paper aims to examine the relations between the Arabian Gulf countries and Japan. The Qatar-Japan relationship is used as a case study. The relationship between the two countries exists on three dimensions: royal, governmental, and citizen diplomacy, and has developed through the three evolutionary stages. For the sake of this paper these stages have been labeled the periods of pioneering, stable growth, and multilayered relationship.

The relationship between the Gulf countries and Japan has been harmonious and based on mutual respect. This friendly and interdependent relationship has existed since the Gulf countries gained their independence, and has evolved over time in a way that their society, education, and academia have influenced each other. An example of this close relationship was the role taken by Japan in the creation of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export industry in Qatar, indispensable for its development. The Japanese engagement in the Gulf has been supported by the Arabs, international organizations, and Western countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Katsumi Ueyama and Osamu Miki, "Chukinto ni Okeru Seitetsu Puranto Kensetsu-Kataaru Seitetsujo no Kensetsu to Manejimento," *Nihon Kikai Gakkai* 86 (770) (1983), 73.

### **I. Research Question and Goal of this Paper**

In recent years, studies on the Middle East-Asian relations,<sup>2</sup> and research on the relations between the Arabian Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates [UAE], hereafter, Gulf countries or Gulf states) and Asia are emerging.<sup>3</sup> There is a dearth of research on the Gulf-Japan relationship, and therefore this paper aims assess the Qatar–Japan relationship and to conceptualize significant characteristics.

A previous study described the Saudi Arabia–Japan relationship as an “exchange of petroleum and technology” as an alternative to the “exchange of petroleum and security” which characterizes Saudi Arabia–US relationship.<sup>4</sup> However, this paper identifies that even the relationship between “the crude oil exporter” and the “oil consumer with advanced technology” has had multilayered dimensions beyond the mere trade of crude oil and machines.

The true significance of Qatar-Japan relationship can be illustrated by focusing on the LNG industry in Qatar; how it was established, how its first international export was enabled, as well as its impact. It is well known that Japan played an indispensable role in establishing the LNG industry in Qatar. Natural gas is known as “clean” energy, and Qatari’s proven gas reserves-to-production ratio is estimated to last 160 years.<sup>5</sup>

Japan has also contributed to the security and stability in the Gulf region through its position of no use of force to solve international conflicts. Japan has also had impact in terms of the technology transfer to support the international export of Qatari culture. A multilayered relationship exists between Qatar and Japan in human development, cultural and religious understandings, as well as political and security dialogues. In this regard, this paper defines a “multilayered relationship” as beyond the trade of energy resources. This includes industrialization, investment, technology transfer, human development in the field of economics, along with politics, security, culture, research, education, medical activities, and sports.

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2 Center for Asian Studies, Cairo University has published academic journal “al-‘Alāqāt al-‘Arabiya al-‘Āsiyūwīya” and accumulated a large number of articles on the Arab Asian relations.

3 Tim Niblock and Monica Malik ed., *Asia-Gulf Economic Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the Local to Global Transformation*, Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2013; Tim Niblock and Yang Guang ed., *Security Dynamics of East Asia in the Gulf Region*, Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2014; Ranjit Gupta, Abubaker Bagader, Talmiz Ahmad and N. Janardhan eds. *A New Gulf Security Architecture: Prospects and Challenges for an Asian Role*, Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2014.

4 Bukhary Essam, “Saudi Arabia to Nihon no Gijutsu Kyouryoku: Senryakuteki Vision,” *Nihon Chuutou Gakkai Nenpou*, 23-1 (2007), 39-84.

5 “Qatar,” US Energy Information Administration, January 30, 2014, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=qa>. Hereafter all websites cited in this paper were accessed in February 2015.

Their strong ties in economics and energy can be highlighted through financial statistics and reports (Table 1). The Gulf countries have traditionally been major import partners of Japan. However, after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, when nuclear power plants ceased operations in Japan, demand for fossil resources spiked, thereby increasing import payments to the Gulf countries. Thus, in 2013, at peak of crude oil price, Saudi Arabia was the 4th largest import partner of Japan, the UAE 5th, Qatar 6th, Kuwait 15th, and Oman 28th.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the sum of exports, the UAE was the 21st trade partner of Japan, Saudi Arabia ranked 22nd, Oman 29th, and Qatar 41st in 2013.<sup>7</sup> Based on the sum of payments, Japan's main export to the Gulf countries is technology, and its main import is energy. In terms of the trade volume between Qatar and Japan and its impact, according to Qatar Information Exchange, Japan was Qatar's 3rd largest import partner, with a 7.5% share of imports, and its largest export partner in 2010. Essentially, Japan has been Qatar's top trade partner.

While, Japan has previously ranked as a major trade partner of the Gulf countries, its importance has decreased over the past decade.<sup>8</sup> China and some European states have increased their trade with the Gulf countries and thus have improved their ranks in trade relations. The main cause of Japan's decrease in trading activity with the Gulf states in recent years is an important research theme. A Japanese ambassador in Qatar stated that Japanese enterprises have been involved in reconstructing the region after the Great East Japan Earthquake.<sup>9</sup> Some Japanese perceive that the generation shift in Qatar might have influenced their loss of interest in purchasing Japanese products.<sup>10</sup>

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6 Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), "Arabu Shuchoukokurenpu (UAE)," <https://www.jetro.go.jp/world/gtir/2014/pdf/2014-ae.pdf>; "Kataarugaikyou," [http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle\\_east/overview/qatar\\_20140812.pdf](http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle_east/overview/qatar_20140812.pdf); "Kuweeto Gaikyou," [http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle\\_east/overview/kuwait\\_20140901.pdf](http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle_east/overview/kuwait_20140901.pdf); "Omaan Gaikyou," [http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle\\_east/overview/oman\\_20140919.pdf](http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle_east/overview/oman_20140919.pdf); "Sauji Arabia Kihonjohou," [http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle\\_east/sa/#basic](http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle_east/sa/#basic); Zai Baareen Nihonkoku Taishikan, "Nihon . Baareen Kankei," <http://www.bh.emb-japan.go.jp/japan/relationship.htm>.

7 "2013 Nen Nihon no Boueki Aitekoku Top 50," JETRO, <https://www.jetro.go.jp/world/japan/stats/trade/>.

8 After 2009, Japan has constantly ranked as Saudi Arabia's third export destination (after China and the US) and its fourth import partner (after the US, China, and Germany). JETRO, "Sauji Arabia," version 2008, version 2009, version 2010, version 2011, version 2012, version 2013, version 2014, [http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle\\_east/sa/#top](http://www.jetro.go.jp/world/middle_east/sa/#top); Japan ranked first in Qatar for both import and export in 2007.

9 Kenjiro Monji, "Nobizakari no Kuni Kataaru to Nihon 2. Nichi Kataaru Kankei," Kasumigasekiai, *Taishi no Mado Kara*, dated April 16, 2012, <http://www.kasumigasekikai.or.jp/embacqatar2.html#page>.

10 Monji, *Ibid*.

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Table 1. Economic Interdependence between the Gulf States and Japan (2013)

2013	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
Import from Japan (US\$ million)	764	1,878	3,123	1,314	6,850	8,549
Export to Japan (US\$ million)	396	13,444	5,635	37,007	49,888	42,852

Source: Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)<sup>11</sup>

Despite the strong and solid economic interdependence between the Gulf countries and Japan, the role that the Japanese has played in the Gulf region's development and stability is rarely mentioned in literature about Qatari history and economic development. A survey on Japan's role in the creation of Qatar LNG by Kohei Hashimoto is the most extensive study on the Qatar–Japan relationship.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is appropriate to set this paper's research goal as a comprehensive analysis of the Qatar–Japan relationship. This paper examines the political, economic, security, and cultural aspects of the relationship between Qatar and Japan, and concludes by conceptualizing this comprehensive relationship. This will serve to highlight the Japanese role in the Gulf region's industrialization and stability.

Qatar maintains a strong identity as part of the Arab and Islamic world and is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Qatar's rise as a rapidly growing economy has been achieved through its strategic access to the global LNG market, including those emerging in Asia such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and China. Thus, this paper discusses whether a regional paradigm for the Gulf states and Asia has been established by examining Wider Asia and Indo-Pacific.

Previous research on the Gulf's policy toward Asia is scarce, and studies on the Japanese policy toward the Gulf are also very limited. A reason for this dearth in academic interest can be attributed to the fairly recent history of the two nations' mutual understanding of their values, customs, institutions, and history, which began only after the Fourth Middle East War<sup>13</sup> in 1973. Another reason is perhaps Japan's stance as a “quiet country” or “quiet power.” A criticism can be made about the Japanese deficiency in public diplomacy to address its policies and strategies. A reason for this is the language barrier. Yet if Japan aims to be an active global power, it should clearly convey its messages and policy goals to citizens and intellectuals in the Gulf countries.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to quotation 8.

<sup>12</sup> Hashimoto Kohei, Jareer Ellass and Stacy Eller, “Liquid Natural Gas from Qatar: The Qatargas Project,” Program on Energy and Sustainable Development at the Center for Environmental Science and Policy, Stanford Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, Stanford. December 2014.

<sup>13</sup> It is also known as October War, Yom-Kippur War, or 1973 Arab-Israeli War, but Japanese prefers this name probably it connotes neutrality of Japan not taking any sides of the war.



## **II. Sources for this Paper and Methodology of Middle East Studies in Japan**

The main resources for this research were publications and web pages in Japanese. Some interviews with officials and businesspeople were also conducted, who consented under the condition of anonymity.

This paper mainly used two academic search engines. One is the Bibliographical Database of all the Middle East Studies (BDMEJ) published in Japan from 1989 to 2013, and updated yearly.<sup>14</sup> This search engine generates a list from the accumulation of bibliographical works by the Japan Association for Middle East Studies (JAMES). The other database is Cinii, the Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator, which is the most frequently used in Japan.<sup>15</sup> This search engine yields a list of articles from all magazines and journals in Japan, based on keywords entered by users.

Japan's researchers on the Middle East have adopted criticism about Orientalism as their main theory for examination of the region. Two stages can be identified in this academic context. First, Islam was studied during the imperial period before the end of the Fifteen Year War<sup>16</sup> in Japan as part of its colonial policy to occupy Asian states. After the end of the Fifteen Year War, research on area studies in the Middle East and the Muslim world was restored as studies in language, literature, religion and history. This marked the progress of Japanese researchers not to repeat a historical trend where human and social sciences were used as a tool of war and colonialism. They strictly separated themselves from colonialism and post-colonialism, and studies on international relations in the Middle East were regarded as taboo. The second stage took place after the 1980s. After the Fourth Middle East War and subsequent oil crisis in 1973, the importance of studies on the Middle East and the Islamic world was recognized in Japan, and the efforts of concerned circles lead to the establishment of JAMES in 1985. Orientalism and *Covering Islam*, by Edward W. Said, were translated into Japanese and published in Japan in 1986,<sup>17</sup> and critics of utilizing human and social sciences as a political tool subsequently acquired a more convenient source and strengthened their position among wider academic circles.

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14 Bibliographical Database of Middle East Studies in Japan (BDMEJ) 1989-2013, [http://search.tbias.jp/document\\_research.cgi](http://search.tbias.jp/document_research.cgi).

15 Cinii (Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator, <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/>).

16 Pacific War is the name for the battles in the Pacific front that began in 1941 and ended in 1945. Japan began its war in 1931 in Manchuria, expanded the front to China's mainland, and ended all battles in 1945. Thus, Fifteen Years' War represents comprehensive fronts, including the Chinese front.

17 Edowaad . W . Saiid, *Orientalizumu*, translated by Noriko Imazawa, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986); Edowaad . W . Saiido, *Isuramu Houdou*, translated by Nobuo Asao, Narihumi Sato, (Tokyo: Misuzushobou, 1986).

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Thus, Middle East studies in Japan have promoted skills in Middle Eastern languages among researchers, collection of primary and local sources, and emphasized the academic process of fact-finding for a more thorough analysis of the region. These research methods have aimed at comprehending local and regional concepts and cognitive frameworks. They have tended to avoid policy, international relations, and security studies since these are research fields where the critics of Orientalism are rare and unconcerned. They have been afraid of the risks that human and social sciences may pose for ongoing wars, occupation and post-colonialism in the Middle East. These constituted the past academic context and the reason why there has been little interest in the Middle East policy of Japan as a research theme until recently. One of the earliest studies was carried out in 1991 by Japanese diplomat Mr. Kunio Katakura and his anthropologist wife, Dr. Motoko Katakura.<sup>18</sup>

Much research went unpublished due concerns that this might influence the life and social structure of the research subject. For example, one researcher obtained a historical source of a certain genealogy document that mentioned ownership of a well in a particular village. This was not published since the outcome could influence the social and economic life in the area, and might cause disputes about local property. Political studies were regarded as the most risky research area, with the exception of the Israel–Palestine conflict.<sup>19</sup>

In recent years, these concerns have weakened, and more political studies have been published in Japan by researchers on the Middle East. A combination of the traditional method of area studies and discipline is the current focus of researchers whose identity is still associated with area studies. A team, led by this author, runs a research project on security in the Middle East. This project maintains that academic research with policy implication for preventive diplomacy in the Middle East can address critics of Orientalism and present policy implications for preventing armed conflicts in the region.<sup>20</sup>

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18 Kunio Katakura and Motoko Katakura, *Japan and the Middle East*. Tokyo: The Middle East Institute of Japan, 1991; A study on the Gulf-Japan relations prior to the discovery of oil resources is authored. Shuji Hosaka, "Japan and the Gulf: Historical Perspective of Pre-Pol Relations," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, 4-1&2 (March 2011), 3-24.

19 Naoki Maruyama, Shuzo Kimura, Ryoji Tateyama, Akihumi Ikeda were among pioneers and all of them specialized on Israel-Palestinian conflict since the end of 1980's. In abroad, the research below dealt with the Middle East Policy of Japan, but its Gulf policy was only mentioned partly. Yumiko Miyagi. *Japan's Middle East Security Policy*. (London: Routledge, 2008).

20 Satoru Nakamura, "Joshou," in Gen Kikkawa and Satoru Nakamura ed. *Chuto no Yobougaiou*. (Tokyo: Shinzansha, 2012).

Japan has no historical experience in taking sides in serious conflicts in the Middle East and the Islamic world. However, the political situation and wars in the Middle East have affected Japan's policy in the region. The Japanese government shifted its course from "inactive neutralism" to "active neutralism" after the Arab states announced that Japan would be judged on whether it was pro-Arab or pro-Israel in 1973. While Japan has never participated in Middle East wars, the region's Japanese residents and their families had confronted danger during the Iran-Iraq war,<sup>21</sup> Iraq's invasion of Kuwait,<sup>22</sup> "the Arab Spring,"<sup>23</sup> terrorism incidents,<sup>24</sup> civil wars in Iraq, and the Dā'ish occupation of Syria.<sup>25</sup> After the September 11 attacks, Japan's MSDF was dispatched to the Indian Ocean to participate in marine operations against terrorism at sea. Japan's Ground SDF (hereafter GSDF) was stationed in southern Iraq for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction from January 2004 to July 2006. The Japanese government has been compelled to explain all new policies and their outcomes.<sup>26</sup> Researchers have also recognized the significant implications of examining these political phenomena and published for intellectuals in the international academic arena.

This paper suggests a perspective based on the Japanese academic tradition of Middle East studies and its new trend to examine if Japan's Middle East policy serves the Middle East's endogenous regional and local development. Appropriate and practical research questions for the study of the relationship between Japan and the Middle East will include whether Japan's Middle East policy contributes to social and economic development, maintenance of stability, and harmony between tradition and modernity in the region. Research questions related to a broader regional and global framework will also be posited, such as whether the policies of the Middle Eastern states serve the cross-regional prosperity and stability in "Broader Asia" and in global society, through their deepening relations with Asian countries.

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21 "Iran-Iraku Sensou-Kiseki no Kyuushutu Geki—Nihon Toruko Yuujou Monogatari-Numata Junnichi San Hen-," *Jumperial Shop*, dated from July 26 to January 26, 2014, <http://jumperial-shop.jp/?mode=f3>.

22 Kunio Katakura, *Hitojichi to Tomoni Ikite: Iraku Taishi no Wangan Kiki Taikenki*, (Tokyo: Mainichishinbunsha, 1994).

23 "Libiya kara no Dasshutsu (Part 2: Kaisha ni yoru Kyushutsu)," *Afurika no Nyuusu to Kaisetsu*, dated April 11, 2011, <http://let-us-know-africa.blogspot.com/2011/04/part-2.html/>/"Shichinin no Houjin Naze Seihu ha Sukuena Tobenai Jieitai Gaikoku Izon no Kyuushutu," *Wedge*, dated February 25, 2011, <http://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/1252>.

24 "Alugeria ni okeru Houjin ni taisuru Tero Jiken," *Gaimushou*, dated February 2013, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/algeria/hostage2013/>.

25 "Siria ni okeru Houjin Hitojichi Satsugai Jiken," *Gaimushou*, February 6, 2015, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ca/tp/page24\\_000394.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ca/tp/page24_000394.html).

26 Arab Japan Dialogue Forum was launched by the initiative of Japanese PM Junnichi Koizumi as a second track diplomacy to exchange opinions on the Middle East affairs and mutual cooperation with Arab in 2003. Special attention was paid on Iraq affairs, and annual forum was held to 2007, the next year of withdrawal of Japan's Ground SDF from Iraq, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/middleeast/jaf.html>.

### **III. Relations between the Gulf Region and Japan: Three Dimensions and Three Phases**

This chapter defines key concepts to represent the Qatar–Japan relationship. It analyzes the models that are useful for examining the Japanese contribution to the Qatari strategy for development. The hypothesis about these three dimensions and three evolutionary stages, heading toward a multilayered relationship, is postulated.

#### **(1) Goals of Qatar’s Development Strategy and its Achievement**

Qatar’s national strategy is well stated in “Pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030.” Qatar has selected four major areas for development; economic, social, human, and environmental.<sup>27</sup> Qatar aims to build a sustainable economy and provide a good life for its citizens. Does the Qatar–Japan relationship serve these goals? This paper aims to address this question.

The Qatari government has wisely realized that its oil reserves are limited and will be exhausted in 30 to 40 years, and has endeavored to diversify its economic structure since its independence.<sup>28</sup> The Japanese presence in Qatar has supported the diversification of the Qatari economy. Kobe Steel Co. Ltd., a Japanese company, had built an efficient steel mill for Qatar Steel Co. in accordance with the industry standards of the 1970s. The Japanese private sector also began to participate in Qatar’s new challenge to establish its LNG industry and enter the supply chain network. The Japanese have contributed to realizing Qatar’s export LNG and to the installation of the world’s largest production capacity, producing 7.7 million tons of LNG per year for the first time in 2010. In 2014, Qatari citizens enjoyed the highest income per capita in the world, and Japanese LNG demand contributed to this. Japanese electric power companies preferred to establish long-term contracts for LNG imports from Qatar to secure a stable supply, which allowed Qatar to export LNG at a higher price than market value.<sup>29</sup> The Japanese public and private sectors have contributed to creating a sustainable economy and income for Qatar. Its substantial national revenue is the source of Qatar’s independent diplomacy.

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27 “Pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030,” Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, n.d., [http://www.gsdp.gov.qa/portal/page/portal/gsdp\\_en/qatar\\_national\\_vision](http://www.gsdp.gov.qa/portal/page/portal/gsdp_en/qatar_national_vision).

28 Osamu Uchiyama, “Pulanto Yushutsu no Hinshitsu Kanri-Kataru Seitetsujo ni okeru Jinzai Ikusei,” *Hinshitsu*, 12-3 (1982), 62-67.

29 Yozo Hasegawa, “Tennen Gas LNG Kakaku Meguru Sanshoukoku no Koubou: Juyou Zou Se ni Tsuyoki Kuzusamu Kataaru,” *Economisuto* 90 (45) (2012), 74-75.

Qatar diverted its security strategy between 1990 and 1992. GCC and the League of Arab States could not defend Kuwait nor liberate it from the Iraq, and coalition forces, led by the US, stepped in. This was followed by Saudi Arabia-Qatar border conflict in 1992. As Saudi Arabia could not guarantee the security of the Gulf states from external threat during 1990-91, and posed a direct military threat to Qatar in 1992, Qatar switched its regional strategy to align with Western states. The LNG industry was probably planned as a mechanism for Western states to engage in Qatar. Natural gas production would liberate Qatar from the influence of the giant oil producer, Saudi Arabia.<sup>30</sup> Yet, Qatar's LNG industry did not have prospects of profit at the beginning of 1992. The Japanese private sector had a critical role in reinforcing the true value of Qatar's natural gas and breaking the deadlock.

### ***Japan's Goal and Strategy in the Gulf***

This paper formulates Japan's diplomatic goal to achieve political harmony and economic interdependence with the Gulf countries, as well as maintain security and stability in the region through constructive engagement. The principle of Japanese diplomacy can be formulated as follows; gradual political engagement, military self-restraint, respect for non-intervention, maintenance of friendly relations, sharing prosperity, and achievement of peace and stability without wielding arms to solve international conflict. Japan's diplomacy aims at preventing diplomatic frictions with friendly states by keeping their relations apolitical, and does not exert arms to realize its political goals.

The key feature of Japanese–Middle East diplomacy is constructive engagement. Japanese activities in the Middle East include diplomacy, trade, assistance in human development, construction and cultural exchange. Constructive engagement is also the tool of Japanese security policy in the Middle East.

The Japan SDF, established in 1954, has never deployed arms in international conflicts. Japan began to dispatch the SDF to the Middle East and West Asia for humanitarian assistance, peace-building, marine sweeping, disaster relief, and antiterrorism measures after the end of the Cold War. It has never engaged in conflict in the field during these missions.

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30 Hashimoto, *op.cit.*, 17, 29.

## **(2) Evolutionary Process of Multidimensional Relationship**

The developmental stages of the relationship between the Gulf countries and Japan in politics, economics, and culture are marked by three phases and the time frame can be divided into two: the first for Saudi Arabia and the second for other Gulf countries, due to the difference in their years of independence. Japanese experiences in the Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, may have been a contributing factor that made the Qatar-Japan relationship smoother and accelerated its development. The first phase is the pioneering stage, the second phase constitutes a period of stable growth, and the third phase points toward a more complex relationship. The first phase began immediately after the independence of each Gulf country, when Japan and the Gulf countries sought to establish their diplomatic relations. During this first phase, Japanese missions and businesspeople arrived in the Gulf countries and began citizen diplomacy. The second phase of stable growth is marked by the establishment of the mechanism in the Gulf countries to export energy to Japan on a constant and stable basis. In Saudi Arabia's case, the second phase began when Arabian Oil Co. Ltd., based in al-Khafjī, exported petroleum to Japan in 1961. In Qatar's case, the second phase began in 1996 when the first LNG tanker was shipped to Japan. During the second phase, interdependence took root, and relations were stabilized. During the third phase of higher multilayered relations, the governments of the Gulf states and Japan declared a strategic and comprehensive partnership. Moreover, the relationship between the private sectors of both sides diversified from the trade of energy and technology to other economic activities, and new cultural activities were also initiated.

### ***Multilayered Relationship between Qatar and Japan***

It can be confirmed that both the Qatari and Japanese governments share the common goal of building a highly multilayered relationship, declared in a joint statement. On August 28, 2013, the Japanese premier Shinzo Abe visited Qatar and spoke with HH Amīr Tamīm bin Ḥamad Āl Thānī. They then issued the "Joint Statement on the Strengthening of the Comprehensive Partnership towards Stability and Prosperity between Japan and the State of Qatar" (hereafter cited as the "2013 Joint Statement"). This statement included proposals to strengthen relations in the three fields of culture, education, and society. It can be interpreted as the diversification of their relationship beyond the trade of energy for technology.

### ***Multidimensional Diplomacy***

A highly complex relationship can be built through the strengthening of multidimensional relations; royal, intergovernmental (diplomatic), and public sector. The relationship with the Imperial family is not “diplomacy” in the ordinary sense, but it has an impact on overall relations. The private sector’s fostering of cordial relations can be labeled “citizen diplomacy.”

### ***Royal “Diplomacy”***

The Imperial family of Japan declared itself the country’s ruler in the sixth century. They officially lost all political power after the enforcement of the current constitution, and the status of the Japanese Emperor is now ascribed as a symbol of the state of Japan. On the other hand, the Royal families in the Gulf countries hold authority and power in politics, economics, diplomacy, and security. According to the Imperial Household Agency, the official website of the Imperial “diplomacy” of Japan Agency, that lists official visits including Royal families from abroad to Japan and the visits of the Japanese Imperial family abroad. The Qatari Royal family’s visits to Japan are numerous. HH Minister of Finance and Petroleum ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Khalīfa Āl Thānī (May 1976); HH Amīr Khalīfa bin Ḥamad Āl Thānī, HE Minister of Finance and Petroleum ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, HH Minister of Foreign Affairs Aḥmad bin Sayf Āl Thānī, HE Deputy Commander of National Force ‘Abdullāh (April 1984); Minister of Foreign Affairs HH Mr. Aḥmad bin Sayf Āl Thānī (February 1989); HH Prince Muḥammad bin Ḥamad Āl Thānī (October 1990); HH Amīr Ḥamad bin Khalīfa Āl Thānī (April 1999); HH Princess Mūzā bint Nāṣir al-Misnad (October 2001); HH Amīr Ḥamad and HH Princess Mūzā (June 2005); HH Amīr Tamīm bin Ḥamad Āl Thānī (May 2009); HH Princess Mūzā (April 2014); and HH Amīr Tamīm (February 2015).<sup>31</sup>

Of note was HH Amīr Ḥamad and HH Princess Mūzā meeting with the Emperor and Empress on June 9, 2005. HH Princess Al-Mayāsa, daughter of Amīr Ḥamad, also attended the meetings of Amīr Ḥamad with the Japanese premier and the crown prince. During their stay in Japan, Amīr Ḥamad and Princess Mūzā visited the venue of the “2005 World Exposition” in Nagoya, Japan, where Qatar opened its booth for international exposition for the first time; it turned out to be very popular. Mr. Nikai, the director of general affairs of the Liberal Democratic Party and the secretary general of Komeito (Clean Government Party), attended the official banquet, wearing a thawb (Arabian garment for males).<sup>32</sup>

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31 Refer to this website for the imperial meetings with foreign guests: “Kousai Shinzen,” Kunaichou, <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/about/gokomu/shinzen/shinzen.html>; “Kouryu no Hajimari to Gaikoukankei no Juritsu,” Chunchi Sauji Arabia Taishikan, (2005), <http://www.saudiembassy.or.jp/50years/3.htm>.

32 Masahiko Horie, “Kataru Hamado Shucyou no Hounichi,” *Chutokenkyu*, (2005/2006, IV), 3-7.

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Currently, the Japanese Emperor's reception of foreign guests is never a direct occasion to discuss diplomatic matters, but provides opportunities to convey Japan's symbolic message of extending cordial relations with the countries represented by the foreign dignitaries. Since the Imperial relationship is not directly affected by national interests, the relationship between the Japanese Imperial family and the Royal families of the Gulf countries can be considered a special feature and may function as a stabilizer in the future. This feature can be found at all three phases of the evolution of bilateral relations. The presence of the Japanese Emperor provided the incentive for Qatari leaders to visit Japan, and during their stay, cultural exchanges were promoted, as in the case of Amīr Ḥamad and Princess Mūzā's visit in 2005. The Imperial–Royal relationship can contribute to deepening the multilayered relationship between the Gulf countries and Japan.

### ***Citizen Diplomacy***

People who are not official diplomats but comprise of businesspeople, journalists, tourists, academics, students, and in fact all citizens, can serve to bridge different cultures. Economic activities, cultural exchange, education, and research can have an impact in the form of citizen diplomacy. At a glance, the above definition may give the impression of an overstretched concept of diplomacy. However, citizens can have a significant influence on shaping the impressions of other nations and the type of diplomatic or overall relations that exist. This mechanism seems true in the case of the relations between the Gulf states and Japan.

Citizen diplomacy is key to building multilayered relations between two countries since citizens, who have various interests, are expected to participate in bilateral relations. The concept of citizen diplomacy can be widely used, as diplomats and foreign affairs ministers understand that stronger international relations among citizens are important for developing stable bilateral relations, and thus actually support citizen diplomacy. While the term citizen diplomacy is a widely accepted concept to describe international activities conducted by non-diplomats and non-politicians, such as cultural figures, intellectuals, businessmen and tourists, its definition is varied. US Department of State defines it the concept that an individual has the right to help shape foreign relations. Citizen diplomats can be students, teachers, athletes, artists, business people, humanitarians, adventurers or tourists, who are motivated by a desire to engage with the world in a meaningful, mutually beneficial dialogue.<sup>33</sup> In Japan, groups proclaiming themselves as entities for citizen diplomacy can be classified into two groups; the first aims at international advocacy on issues that the government lacks policy emphasis, such as the rights of the indigenous peo-

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<sup>33</sup> Department of State, US, "You are a citizen diplomat," <http://diplomacy.state.gov/discoverdiplomacy/references/169794.htm>.



ple called Aynu.<sup>34</sup> The second group sets their goals as promotion of international economic prosperity, cultural exchanges, and support for governmental relations. One such group is the International Friendship Exchange (FEC).<sup>35</sup> The Qatar-Japan relationship encompasses the second type of cultural diplomacy, and emphasizes that business activities can open opportunities for cultural and national interaction.

Citizen diplomacy does not involve activities that are officially recorded, unless they are officially sanctioned. In the case of Qatar and Japan, much of the official diplomatic relations is not yet described in official documents. Thus, this paper accesses industrial records written by Japanese technicians and businesspeople stationed in Qatar, which can highlight the dimension of citizen diplomacy.

Since the 1970s, Japan's export industry has been significantly impacted by human resource development in Qatar. Japanese multinational companies in the Gulf region, such as the Arabian Oil Co. in al-Khafjī on the border of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and Japanese construction companies in the Middle East, have restrained their profitability and contributed to the strengthening of the governmental finances of the Gulf countries.<sup>36</sup> The Japanese private sector has also supported research and development, technology transfer, and the promotion of mutual understanding of religion and customs. Through such activities of citizen diplomacy, human networks have been created between the Gulf countries and Japan. In recent years, embassies of the Gulf countries and Japan were in charge of initiatives to celebrate anniversaries of their relations, opening new opportunities for cultural exchange.

### ***Necessity of Interregional Framework***

The Gulf countries and Asia, including Japan, require a new framework to unite them. If one observes the geopolitical landscape, the Gulf states and Japan are now part of "Broader Asia" or a new interregional model called "Indo-Pacific." The Gulf region and Japan can be framed as part of the globalized world, but a more specific framing is lacking. Broader Asia, encompassing East and West Asia, or Indo-Pacific, which combines the region surrounding the Indian Ocean and the Pacific region, is perhaps a more appropriate description, at least at present. The Gulf region and Japan were both part of the Silk Road in ancient times, connected by sea routes. Now these countries can be framed within a wider modern regional concept as they play leading roles in Broader Asia or the Indo-Pacific region in trade and regional, political and security issues.

34 "Youkoso Shimingaikou sentaa no Peji he," <http://www005.upp.so-net.ne.jp/peacetax/>.

35 "FFC Minkangaikou Suishin Kyoukai," <http://www.fec-ais.com/>.

36 Kunihiro Nanbu, "Hakuri ha Kibo no Ookisa de Kabaa Suru," *Nikkei Architecture*, July 23, 2007; It is well known that the Arabian Oil Co. was distributed only 45% share of the profit, dividing the rest for its each counterpart (Kuwait or Saudi Arabia).

#### **IV. History of Qatar–Japan Relations**

This chapter highlights historical findings about the Qatar–Japan relationship. It will discuss Japanese engagement in the Gulf region’s politics and security, and highlight the history of the relationship, including the roles of the private sector in the form of citizen diplomacy, and activities leading to higher multilayered relations after 2011. Japan’s Gulf policy has evolved, based on political gradualism and military self-restriction, seen as appropriate for the region.

##### **(1) Japan’s Expanding Engagement in the Gulf**

Previous studies have demonstrated that Japan’s Middle East policy shifted from “inactive neutralism” to “active neutralism” during the Fourth Middle East War and the First Oil crisis. Junnichihiro Shiratori conceptualized the shift as Japan’s clarification of its Middle East policy.<sup>37</sup>

The oil crisis was Japan’s first experience in becoming involved in Middle East regional affairs. Japan then shifted its Middle East policy gradually in the context of its experiences during the Arab–Israel conflict and Iran–Iraq war. The first significant shock was the Fourth Middle East conflict. It is appropriate to consider that Japanese policy as shifting from its position of inactive neutralism to “neutrality addressing the pro-Arab cause”. Japan learned that its policy of giving respect to the Arab governments by silence on contentious issues would not promote friendly relations or mutual understanding. It then attempted to have more opportunities to exchange political views and secure communication channels with all Arab countries and with Israel.

Thus, Japan’s Gulf policy gradually shifted. Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe took the initiative to visit Iran and Iraq on August 7–9, 1983 in a serious effort to prevent the escalation of the Iraq–Iran war and create a political environment to facilitate a peaceful solution. A departure from Japan’s inconspicuous performance in the Middle East, the initiative was named “creative diplomacy” in Japan.<sup>38</sup> Japan provided “Hyper Fix,” a navigation guidance system of high-precision, to Arab countries at its own expense (US\$ 10 million). It also dispatched two representatives to the UN Iran–Iraq Military Observation Group in August 1988.<sup>39</sup> Before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Japan endeavored to contribute to the solution of regional armed conflicts through mediation and dialogue. Japan’s political shift was gradual; it thus

<sup>37</sup> Junnichihiro Shiratori, “Rethinking Japan’s Foreign Policy during the First Oil Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of the Participation in Cooperation among Consumer Countries and the ‘Clarification’ of Japanese Middle East Policy (in Japanese),” *Hougakuseijigakuronkyuu*, 89 (2011): 59-93.

<sup>38</sup> Katakura and Katakura, *op.cit.*, 98.

<sup>39</sup> Katakura and Katakura, *op.cit.*, 99.

maintained friendly relations with all Middle East countries.

The direct defense cooperation between the Qatar and Japan is confined to confidence building through exchange of views and intelligence. Qatar does not require Japanese presence for its defense. However, the two countries share regional concerns. Qatar took part in the coalition force in the Gulf War in 1991 and provided an air base for the US led coalition against Iraq in 2003. Qatar is a stake-holder in the security in Iraq, the freedom of navigation in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

Political and security cooperation between Qatar and Japan can be highlighted by several exchanges. In 2009, Japan's Ministry of Defense commenced an interchange with Qatar. The Staff Office of the Ministry of Defense and headquarters of the Qatar National Force agreed on regular consultations about defense policy and international activities. The first meeting was held in June 2009. The Japanese presented their perspective of maintaining friendly relations with the Arab states, as well as SDF activities in the Middle East including the Gulf of Aden and Iraq. The Japanese defense attaché confirmed that both states share a common regional policy to maintain diplomatic channels with Iran and Israel aiming at comprehensive peace and security in the Middle East. The second highest-ranking officer in the Qatari Army stated that the international contribution made by the Japanese government had been widely recognized among the Middle East states, and humanitarian assistance conducted by Japan's SDF in Iraq was a model for Arab armies since it respected the local culture and customs.<sup>40</sup> The Japanese MOFA also agreed with Qatar in the "2013 Joint Statement" to hold regular political and security dialogues.

The Middle East, having experienced hundreds of armed conflicts, is sensitive to foreign intervention, and does not seek excess of additional actors stationed in the Gulf region. Japan, with no political ambition in the Middle East, will continue to promote a gradual approach and militaristic self-restriction so as not to disturb the region's stability. The SDF will continue to employ some of the highest military capability in the Gulf region at times of crisis, and will not use it for offensive missions.

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40Takuya Shimodaira, "Taiwa no Tsumikasane koso ga, Shinrai Kankei wo Tsukuru - - Chutou Kataaru tonou Bouei Kouryuu," *Gaikou Fooramu*, 22-9 (254) (2009): 76-77.

## **(2) Private sector's role in Qatar in 1970's; Engagement of Kobe Steel for QASCO**

The role of the Japanese private sector in Qatar has been enhanced by the cooperation between the public and private sectors of Qatar and Japan. In 2013, 47 Japanese enterprises had branches and 1,045 Japanese resided in Qatar.<sup>41</sup> While, these figures may look small in comparison to those of other nations in Qatar, their activities are critical to the development of the relationship between the two states. Japanese enterprises have contributed to industrialization and human resource development in Qatar, made possible by utilizing “clean” energy from natural gas. They sought to harmonize internationalism and the preference for employing Arab nationals. The business cases of the operation of Qatar Steel Co. (QASCO) and the first export by Qatar's LNG industry are also disclosed below.

The following discussion is based on industrial records by the staff of Kobe Steel Co. Ltd. (hereafter, “Kobe Steel”). The QASCO was a joint venture established in al-Mesayīd in July 1974, with ownership comprising, Qatar government 70%, Kobe Steel 20%, and Tokyo Trade Co., Ltd. 10%. The construction cost totaled ¥ 70 billion, with ¥14 billion financed from capital funds ¥ 21 billion from a Japan Export and Import Bank (JXIM) loan, and ¥40 billion from a foreign syndicate loan backed by the finance and guarantee of the Qatar government. It was thought that Kobe Steel was granted the contract due to the Qatar government's intention to maintain its distance from the British after independence.<sup>42</sup>

After Kobe Steel secured the contract for the construction of QASCO, it assessed that the method of “direct reduction” would be adopted for the first time by a Japanese steel company. This was because “direct reduction” was suitable for the Middle East and al-Mesayīd, as the cost of the natural resource was cheap, and the market demand low. It was noted that Kobe Steel adopted this method for the first time in Qatar. The industrial records of Kobe Steel explained processes of electric furnaces, successive casting, rolling, and so on, while this paper focuses on the Japanese activities related to the human and cultural exchange with Qatar.

Kobe Steel concluded four contracts with QASCO, consisting of construction, management service, marketing, and industrial agreements. Kobe Steel also understood its obligation to engage in operations and technology transfer, which a long term

41 JETRO, “Kataaru Gaikyo.”

42 Shigeru Nagai, “Asada Koukichi, Chuukintou Kataaru de Tetsu wo Tsukuru,” *Kinzoku*, 45-1, 86-87.

process taking several years. In the beginning, the employees totaled 1,129 from 14 nations; 120 were Japanese and 280 were trainees.<sup>43</sup>

Construction work proceeded “smoothly” after overcoming initial difficulties; operations began in February 1978, then commercial operations in April 1978, and full operations in 1979. The management, composed mainly of Japanese employees, initiated planning and designing upon the approval of the board of directors, and the management team enforced operations. The disparity in skills and management experience was apparent between the Qataris and the Japanese, yet organization of decision-making was deliberately designed to create a balance between them. The board members comprised seven from the Qatar government, one from Kobe Steel, and one from Tokyo Trade. The Japanese staff tried to avoid collusion, and for this reason, Egyptian engineers were appointed to the management team.<sup>44</sup>

The QASCO confronted numerous obstacles. Almost all the industrial records repeatedly noted the heat (sometimes reaching 50 to 60 °C), humidity close to 100%, fine-grained sand getting into the machinery and eyes, and scarce rain proved to be initial challenges. Since skilled labor was lacking, they devised automatic operations. When the loading capacity of Al-Dūḥa port reached full operations, they responded with early planning. As often as possible, devices were assembled in Japan and sent to Qatar. As spare parts were not available in Qatar, they built storehouses and managed them. Despite all these difficulties, construction was completed on schedule.<sup>45</sup> They then realized that there was no distribution system for their products to buyers.

The QASCO had a policy of prioritizing the employment of Qataris and Arabs. Yet, the operation of the steel mill required human resources management based on a merit system, excluding racism and discrimination. Employees were affiliated to three religions, and none received special treatment. However, work time was modified only during Ramadan to early morning and late at night.

Out of the initial 1,129, employees, Qataris comprised 2.9% share, Indians 51.9%, Bangladeshis 23.6%, and others comprised the rest. Since skilled staff was not available locally, the majority of them were hired from South Asia.<sup>46</sup> The Qataris’ income per capita was the second highest in the world at the time, and it was difficult to find Qatari workers. Thus, all Qatari employees were hired as trainees. The QASCO designed a long-term plan for job training and dispatched 78 employees to Kobe. Of them, 20 Qataris were trained for 18

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43 Shota Kawauchi, “Kataaru Seitetsujo no Kensetsu: Sono 1 Juchuu kara Sougyoumade,” *Koubeseikouhou*, 28-3 (July 1978), 4-17.

44 Shouzou Mitsushima, “Kataaru Seitetsujo no Kensetsu 2,” *Koubeseikou Gihou*, 29-2 (1979), 1,4.

45 Ueyama and Miki, *op.cit.*, 68-73.

46 Mitsushima, *op.cit.*, 2-9.

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months, eight of whom were promoted to section chiefs after the training course. This effort was evaluated as a successful transfer of management know-how.<sup>47</sup> From the first operation until 1982, the total number of Qatari employees increased from 21 to 77. All started as trainees, with occupation categories varying to cover the various management roles. Some moved their residence from Al-Dūḥa to closer to the steel mill as a result of their consciousness. The trainers of Kobe Steel visited the trainees' dormitory and often stayed up all night, discussing various topics. They rationalized this as the impossibility of teaching lessons to trainees sitting at desks in class.<sup>48</sup> The Japanese trainers' tenacious attitude toward teaching might have had impact on the Qatari trainees. Kobe Steel also began to receive trainees from Hadeed Steel Co. of Saudi Arabia.<sup>49</sup>

The earliest Japanese who arrived there in the 1970s and built Qatar Steel in al-Mesay'īd had trouble comprehending the basic tenets of Islam. Information on Islam was scarce in Japan at that time. Fortunately, they were allowed to visit Kobe Mosque (Figure 4)<sup>50</sup> and study the tenets and practices of Islam with imams until they could understand the pillars of Islam. It is worth mentioning that they concluded that there was compatibility between Islam and science.<sup>51</sup> These corporate activities did not seek profit only but promoted friendship, trust, and mutual understanding of cultures. This can be framed as citizen diplomacy.

Figure 4. Kobe Mosque since 1935



47 Uchiyama, *op.cit.*, 62-67.

48 Kennichi Shiraiwa, "Chuukinto Kataaru kara Haken Sareta Kunrensei no Toreeningu Kiroku," *Sekai no Roudou*, 27-4 (July 1977), 11.

49 Uchiyama, *op.cit.*, 67.

50 Kobe Mosque is the oldest mosque existing in Japan now. It was built in 1935 by Tataris, and Indians. *Yoshiaki Hukuda*, "Kobe Mosoku Kensetsu—Showa Senzen Ki no Zaishin Musurimu ni yoru Nihon Hatsu no Mosoku Kensetsu Jigyō," *Ajia Bunka Kenkyūjo Nenpō*, 45 (2011), 32-51.

51 Shiraiwa, *op.cit.*, 15-19.

### **(3) Participation of Japan in LNG Development in Qatar**

Qatar produces numerous products from natural gas such as methane, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), GTL (Gas-to-Liquid) and LNG, but this paper limits its scope to industrialization of LNG since this was the breakthrough for the Qatari industrialization process.

The world's largest gas field, known as Northfield, was discovered in Qatar in 1971, but LNG exports started only after 1996. Why did the development of the gas industry take a quarter of a century? What were the obstacles and how were they overcome? The LNG production requires more complicated facilities than crude oil production. Physically, it requires sophisticated plants for gas liquefaction, international transportation for export, and gasification facilities for liquefied gas in countries with LNG demand. Qatar addressed these problems by organizing a new consortium to coordinate its fund raising drive, exploration of markets, and construction of a plant and other facilities with adequate technology thereby constructing the world's largest, LNG export facility.

Qatar has been the world leader in LNG export since 2006, but the risks to LNG production was estimated as high in the 1980s and 1990 due to a large gas production accident in 1977 in al-Mesay'ud. A fire broke out at the LNG plant designed and managed by Shell International, destroying the entire tank yard and facilities, killing six and injuring thirteen.<sup>52</sup>

Initially the Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) established a joint venture for an LNG project with Shell, BP (British Petroleum), and CFP (Compagnie française des pétroles: succeeded to Total) in 1982, but subsequently Shell exited the agreement. The Qatar LNG Gas Company (hereafter QG) was established in November 1984,<sup>53</sup> with Japanese participation having a significant impact on the course of its development. The main driver of QG's LNG project was Japanese participation after 1985. However, previous studies, Qatar's historical books, and the websites of Qatar Gas and Ras Gas all neglected to mention the indispensable role played by the Japanese private sector in Qatar's LNG development. One exception stated, "Japan is Qatar Gas' foundation customer, and Qatar's LNG exports

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52 Nobukazu Ogura, "Kataaru Koku ni okeru LNG Tanku no Hakai Jiko," *Anzenkougaku*, 26-6(1987), 399-402.

53 Hashimoto, *op.cit.*, 11.

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began with the first delivery to Chubu Electric from Qatar Gas in early 1997.”<sup>54</sup>

The Arabic and English sources only mention that “LNG export started in 1996.”<sup>55</sup> The first gas tanker was shipped from Ras Raffin in the end of 1996, and arrived in Kawagoe, Japan in January 1997. Exxon Mobil played a leading role in driving the QG projects,<sup>56</sup> but it is worth emphasizing that Japanese companies provided the world’s largest gas market for QG, contractors with top technology and quality for LNG plants, investment and finance, all of which were factors leading to Exxon Mobil’s participation.

QG was established in November 1984, with stock-holders comprising QGPC (Qatar General Petroleum Corporation, now QP), BP, and CFP. In September 1985, Marubeni was issued an equity participation of 7.5%. Marubeni had signed a contract with QG to support marketing in May 1985.<sup>57</sup> Marubeni was also assigned to develop the LNG market in Japan for Qatar since Japanese consumption of natural gas was then 70% of the world’s total. Japan was severely impacted by the oil crisis in 1973 and as a result aimed to geographically diversify of its energy sources away from the Middle East for its energy security.

Although the Qatar government initially requested a production capacity of 6 million tons, since the LNG project was being developed during a period of low oil and gas prices, 4 million tons was estimated as sufficient for commercial success.<sup>58</sup> However, the withdrawal of BP due to profitability concerns in January 1992<sup>59</sup> impacted the project. Considering that BP was (and still is) a major player with 40 years business experience in Qatar and various gas projects around the world, its withdrawal posed a serious threat to the project’s feasibility. Japanese analyst Yoshiaki Takasugi repeatedly suggested that it would be impossible for Qatar to succeed in the raising of US\$ 35 billion for all its ongoing projects during 1992 and 1993, which included the LNG project, industrialization, and construction of urban infrastructure, and the Qatar government would need to set priorities among

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54 “Energy Minister Delivers Speech at Annual Qatar Gas Reception in Japan,” *LNG World News*, October 18, 2012, <http://www.lngworldnews.com/energy-minister-delivers-speech-at-annual-qatargas-reception-in-japan/>.

55 For example, “Qatar Economic Insight 2013,” QNB, August 25, 2013, <http://www.qnb.com/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1355496376563&ssbinary=true>; Robin Mills, “Qatar Impresses in Energy but Cannot Rest on Its Laurels,” *National*, July 1, 2013.

56 Mills, *Ibid*. In all the LNG project completed its construction by 2010, Exxon Mobil participated in 6.2 million ton per year production capacity out of 7.7 million ton in total.

57 Ichiro Yagi, “Kataaru LNG Projekuto,” *Douryoku*, 39 (192) (1989), 32-35.

58 Yagi, *op.cit.*, 33.

59 Yoshiaki Takasugi, “Kataru . Purojekuto no Doukou to Hyouka,” *Chuto Keizai*, 1992-4, 24; Mills, *Ibid*.



those projects.<sup>60</sup> He was justified in suggesting that a harsh financial environment for the QG LNG project existed and might be detrimental to the project, as a minor construction project for a methanol MTBE (methyl tert-butyl ether) plant delayed its completion by almost a year. With oil prices was low, Qatar's current account balance had been in the red until 1998.<sup>61</sup>

However, the Japanese participation remained, and the Qatari government worked hard to overcome the crisis. In May 1992, Chubu Electric Power Co. made a decision to purchase 4 million tons of LNG annually starting in 1997,<sup>62</sup> a major breakthrough for the entire QG LNG project as it was its first major sales contract. The Chubu Electric made a decision to risk a prospected return of stable and long-term gas supply. This decision was paid off when after 19 years there was an energy crisis caused by the East Japan Great Earthquake in March 2011. In April 2011, one month after the disaster, at a time when the energy supply and demand projection was forecasted as dangerously close, the CEO of the QG, Khālid bin Khalīfa Āl Thānī, visited Japan and secured an increase the LNG supply to Japan.<sup>63</sup>

The impact of contract by the Chubu Electric in 1992 can be assessed by successive contracts. In June 1992, Italy signed up to start the second QG LNG project, which projected production in the range of 6.1 to 10 million tons for export to Italy, scheduled to start in 1997. In the following month, Sumitomo and French ELF announced the development of the third QG LNG project, of 4 million tons. Sumitomo signed a contract for a commercialization study, which aimed at a breakthrough of the ELF gas project signed the previous year, as ELF had not yet found a sales market.

Exxon Mobil and Mitsui & Co., Ltd. agreed to a stock participation at 10% and 7.5%, respectively, in the QG's first project in December 1992, filling the gap left by BP. Mitsui had experience in LNG projects in Australia and Abu Dhabi. Toshimi Tsuchiya of Chubu Electric Co., suggested that it exerted its influence on Mobil to join the project<sup>64</sup>. Exxon Mobil took a leading role in the first QG LNG project as an investor, designer, and stabilizer, announcing the fourth QG LNG project of 10

60 Takasugi, *op.cit.*, 23-33; Yoshiaki Takasugi, "Ookiku Ugoki Dashita Kataru no LNG purojekuto," *Chuto Keizai*, 1992-10, 33; Yoshiaki Takazugi, "Shikin Choutatsu wo Kadai to Shitsutsu Shinten suru Kataru Kaihatsu Projekuto," 1993-4, 17,29-30.

61 Makoto Ookubo, "Kataaru ni okeru Nihon Bijinesu no Genjou to Kongo no Tenbou," *Boueki Hoken*, March 2005, 13-19.

62 "Kataaru kara no LNG no 'Hatsushukka'-Chouki Antei Purojekuto ga Shidou," Chubu Denryoku, 123-125.

63 Yasushi Yoshikai, "Bussann. Marubeni Nidai Shousha ga Tsunaida Kataaru to Nihon no Kyoukono Kankei," *Enerugi Forum* 60 (711), (2014), 89; Harumichi Tanabe, "Nihon Kigyuu Hatsu, Kataaru LNG Jigyuu he Sankaku," *Enerugi Forum* 60(711), (2014), 91.

64 "Interview: Chubudenryoku kara Hajimatta Kataaru Choutatsu no Rekishi," *Enerugi Forum* 60 (711), (2014), 86.

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million tons. J.P. Morgan joined the project to develop a master plan to increase project funds in December 1992.<sup>65</sup> The construction of the first QG LNG project finally started in 1993. The largest portions of the contracts were awarded to Chiyoda Corporation.

Another risk for the LNG project involved security issues. Saudi and Kuwaiti tankers were sunk in 1984 during the Iran–Iraq War.<sup>66</sup> On September 30, 1992, Saudi Arabia and Qatar clashed on their borders and the following day, the Qatari cabinet announced the suspension of the Qatar–Saudi border agreement signed in 1965. Iran and the UAE have had border disputes over the Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tomb Islands since 1971. Mitsui and the Iranian National Petroleum Company established a joint venture named Iran–Japan Petrochemical Co. Ltd. (IJPC) in 1971 and started construction in 1976, but they suspended the project before its completion, because of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The facility that remained was damaged by Iraqi attacks in 1980 during the Iran–Iraq War. Eventually, in October 1989, Mitsui agreed with Iran to abandon its investment of 75 billion yen and loan of 125 billion yen and paid 130 billion yen as a settlement. Mitsui finished its payment in 1991.<sup>67</sup> In 1995, a coup took place in al-Dūḥa, and the new Amīr Ḥamad replaced the former one. At that time a rumor had spread that Saudi Arabia and the UAE were sheltering Qatari rebels who were siding with the former Amīr. These incidents heightened security concerns in Qatar. The good news that emerged was the end of the Iran–Iraq War in 1989, and Iraq’s capacity to attack the northern Persian Gulf was totally destroyed in 1991, and the Middle East Peace Process was in progress after 1991. It should be noted that in 2006, Iranian President Ahmadinejad hinted at counterattacking Qatar if the US attacked Iran.<sup>68</sup>

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65 Takasugi, *op.cit.*, 18.

66 Hashimoto, *op.cit.*, 2.

67 Hitoshi Suzuki, “IJPC Purojekuto wo Saikou Suru,” *Ajiken World Trend*, 211 (2013), 32-33.

68 Horie, *op.cit.*, 3-7.

Japanese companies stayed in Qatar during this unstable time. In 1995, they accepted the request of Energy Minister Dr. ‘Abdullāh al-‘Aṭīya to continue gas projects.<sup>69</sup> They judged that building bidirectional and multidimensional relations with Qatar would pay off. Energy Minister al-‘Aṭīya extended his deep appreciation to Japan repeatedly in his speech at the inauguration ceremony of the first QG project in 1997.<sup>70</sup> There are annual visits from the Energy Minister to Japan to meet the executives of Chubu Electric, who also visit Al-Dūḥa every year. The closeness of the relationship is exemplified by the description by staff of Qatar Gas of Chubu electric as “the first lover<sup>71</sup>”. In 2014, this author had the opportunity to meet with former Energy Minister al-‘Aṭīya. He effusively praised the technology, ethics and morals of Japanese people in good earnest. HH Ḥamad bin Āl Thānī, the former Amīr of Qatar, is venerated by Japanese businesspeople as he extended his deep gratitude to the Japanese private sector at the inauguration ceremony of the QG phase III in 2006.<sup>72</sup>

Bankers hesitated at the enormous investment needed for the first QG LNG project that aimed to produce six million tons, especially after the court coup in 1995. The project, financed by the QG, was in crisis between 1992 and 1993. However, the JXIM took the lead to cover the first LNG project with insurance and took the risk in December 1993, and did not withdraw in 1995.<sup>73</sup> It covered US\$ 24 billion, which prompted commercial banks to cover another half billion US dollars.<sup>74</sup> The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the successor organization of JXIM, signed a loan contract with a total limit of US\$ 4 billion with 21 Japanese commercial banks and the US Export and Import Bank in December 2005.<sup>75</sup>

Constructing the LNG plant that was designed for the first QG LNG project had several technological challenges. Yet Qatar’s strategy was clear; it aimed to achieve its dominant competitiveness in the global LNG industry by reducing production costs through the acquisition of economies of scale, which would be realized through the construction of giant plants and LNG tankers with the latest technology through joint ventures.<sup>76</sup> Chiyoda Corporation and Nikki Co. Ltd. provided leading technologies to build the

69 Kokusaikyouryokuginkou, “Interview ‘Kataaru Gasu 3’ Purojekuto ga Kankou,” January 2011, [https://www.jbic.go.jp/wp-content/uploads/interview\\_ja/2013/09/2993/JBIC\\_interview\\_201101.pdf](https://www.jbic.go.jp/wp-content/uploads/interview_ja/2013/09/2993/JBIC_interview_201101.pdf).

70 Akira Nanbara, “Kataaru de Kangaeta Koto,” *Kaigaitoushi Kenkyujo Hou*, September 1997, 2.

71 “Interview: Chubudenryoku kara Hajimatta Kataaru Choutatsu no Rekishi,” 86.

72 Kokusaikyouryokuginkou, *Ibid.*

73 Hashimoto, *op.cit.*, 27, 29; “Interview: Chubudenryoku kara Hajimatta Kataaru Choutatsu no Rekishi,” 86.

74 Nanbara, *op.cit.*, 2-3.

75 Kokusaikyouryokuginkou, *Ibid.*

76 Tetsuya Mukai, “‘Kaisetsu’ LNG14 ni Sanka Shite, ‘Kataaru no Atsui LNG’,” *Haikangijutsu*, December 2004, 31-34.

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world's largest LNG plant in the desert. Chiyoda was awarded contracts for engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) for the first and second phases of QG in 1993, completed in 1997 (now called QG I). In 1995, it obtained an EPC contract to reinforce the third with French Technip Co., completed in 1998. Chiyoda also secured an EPC contract for Ras Gas's third and fourth phase in 1999 with the Italian Snamprogetti Co., and which were completed in 2002 (QG I & II). It obtained another EPC contract for the fifth phase for Ras Gas with Snamprogetti in 2004. The challenge to the large-scale construction began with the front-end engineering design (FEED) for the fourth and fifth phase of QG, which requested a LNG production capacity of 7.8 million tons per year for one phase (QG phase II). This scale was 1.6 times larger than the largest LNG facility in the world. Chiyoda received its EPC contract with French Technip in 2004. Then Chiyoda received contracts for QG's sixth and seventh phases (QG phases III & IV) and the sixth and seventh for Ras Gas, each with a production capacity of 7.8 million tons per year.<sup>77</sup>

This large-scale construction required various new technological devices and solutions. Chiyoda disclosed that it adopted the "air pipe cleaning method" to prevent cracks in the huge foundation. Simultaneous construction of six huge phases caused an unexpected rush, but Chiyoda managed to maintain construction materials and skilled engineers. At its peak, more than 60,000 staff members from over 60 countries engaged in overall construction, though Chiyoda had experience in managing only 3,000 to 4,000 workers at a time in the past.<sup>78</sup> It completed the entire construction earlier than the scheduled date and achieved it with the fastest construction rate record for the last phase.<sup>79</sup> The QG achieved a no-accident record for successive 2.15 million working hours.<sup>80</sup>

As Qatar was regarded as a country with security risks, the LNG projects were estimated not yet profitable for some enterprises in the 1990s, but Japanese enterprises maintained its value. It is safe to state that Japan was among the oldest partners in the attempt to establish Qatar's sustainable growth system of gas production, together with Qatar. Japan took the risk and played the roles of off-taker, investor, financier, and contractor to launch ambitious, Qatari LNG projects.

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77 Ookubo, *op.cit.*, 13-19; Shizuka Komabashi, "Enjinia Shijou Saidai no Kyodai na Puranto Gun: 2008 Nen no Kansei Mezashi Chiyoda Kakou ga Tegakeru Kataaru LNG," *Enerugii*, 40-11 (2007), 150-153.

78 Komabashi, *op.cit.*, 152.

79 Abdul Redha Abdel Nasser Hamad al-Thani, Masayuki Ishikura, Yoshitsuji Kikkawa, "Kyodai Northfield kara Saisho no LNG," *Sangyou Kikai*, 587(1999), 36-40; Komabashi, *op.cit.*, 152.

80 Komabashi, *op.cit.*, 152.

LNG World News published that Minister of Energy and Industry HE Dr. Muḥammad Al-Sāda addressed an annual QG reception held on October 15, 2012 in Tokyo with the following statement:

*“We in Qatar are very proud of the very reliable LNG exports to Japan over the past fifteen years, which has allowed us to effectively participate in the security of energy supply to our valued Japanese customers. The LNG trade remains the backbone of our relations with Japan in the energy sector; not only in terms of value but also in terms of significance since Japan was the founding importer of LNG from Qatar, which is by far the largest exporter of the product in the world today.”<sup>81</sup>*

The private sector’s activities can be defined as citizen diplomacy. Joint ventures for industrialization impart pride on the policymakers and people of Qatar. The trainers of Kobe Steel tried to communicate with trainees beyond their obligations. Japanese enterprises remained engaged in the LNG project through its troubles and endured risks and eventually brought it to completion. Citizen diplomacy contributed to bringing about mutual respect and understanding between the two nations. These Japanese activities were achieved within the international framework under the consortium.

Figure 5. Japan: Among Oldest Partners for Qatar’s Sustainable Growth

<b>Investor:</b> Marubeni and Mitsui among the QG LNG project investors	<b>Financier:</b> JXIM etc. took risk of covering the GS LNG project with insurance
<b>Off-taker:</b> Japan was the world’s largest market for LNG Chobu Electric Power Co., etc.	<b>Contractor:</b> Chiyoda provided leading technologies

81 “Energy Minister Delivers Speech at Annual Qatargas Reception in Japan,” *Qatargas*, October 17, 2012, <http://www.qatargas.com/English/MediaCenter/news/Pages/12OctQGReceptionTokyo.aspx>.

#### **(4) Comprehensive Partnership and Multilayered Relations**

Royal diplomacy and citizen diplomacy have contributed to establishing a multi-layered relationship between Qatar and Japan. The “2013 Joint Statement” declared their comprehensive partnership and aimed to promote the development of highly complex, bilateral relations. However, Japanese diplomats perceived that this complex bilateral relationship began in 2011. This assessment coincides with their evaluation of Qatar’s quick response of humanitarian aid to the area that suffered from the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, phase three of the Qatar–Japan relationship, marked by acceleration toward multilayered relations, can be described as having started in 2011.

#### **“Maskar”: Qatari “Perfect Aid” for the East Japan Great Earthquake (2011)**

The opening of the third phase of Qatar–Japan relationship was triggered by the East Japan Great Earthquake in 2011. As the tsunami flooded all facilities on the coast and destroyed cities and towns, much international aid was sent to Japan from all over the world.<sup>83</sup> Among the humanitarian aid sent, Qatar’s was perhaps the most helpful. The Qatar Friendship Fund (QFF), under the Qatar Foundation, quickly surveyed situation and assessed the need of the people with the assistance of a Japanese consultancy. They then commissioned the construction of a multifunctional, fishery-processing facility, completed in 2012 in the coastal town of Onagawa, in the northeast of Japan. This facility provided effective support for the fishermen of the town. It was considered “perfect aid” for the townspeople since they needed to restart their fishery industry, which was their main source of income.<sup>84</sup> This was possible due to the Qatari experience in providing foreign aid for over 100 countries.<sup>85</sup> The QFF also expanded activities to education and health. The gratitude toward the Qataris for their targeted aid can be exemplified by the documentary titled “Sanma to Kataar (Saury and Qatar)” shot by Japanese film producer, Hiroaki Inui, and released in March 2016.<sup>86</sup> Saury is the main fish caught traditionally in Onagawa.

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82 “40 Years of Friendship,” Qatar Japan 2012, <http://qatarjapan2012.com/online/en/40-years-of-friendship>.

83 “Sekai Kakkoku . Chiiki Nado karano Kinkyuu Shien,” Gaimushou, February 5, 2015, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/saigai/shien.html>.

84 “Haikai,” Kataaru Furendo Kikin, <http://www.qatarfriendshipfund.org/jp/qff/background>; “Masukaa,” Kataaru Furend Kikin, <http://www.qatarfriendshipfund.org/jp/project-list/maskar>.

85 “Qatar’s Foreign Aid Crosses QR3B,” *Peninsula*, November 11, 2013.

86 “Sanma to Kataar”. <http://onagawamovie.com/>.

Anniversary of 40 Years of Qatar–Japan Relations



Figure 6. Memorial logo for the 40-year anniversary of Qatar-Japan relations

日本 represents Japan in Japanese calligraphy, قطر is Qatar in Arabic calligraphy. They are crossed and incorporated symbolizing the intimacy and bonds between the two.

The 40-year anniversary of the Qatar–Japan relationship was celebrated in 2012 with cultural events in both Al-Dūḥa and Tokyo.<sup>87</sup> There were more than 50 events to celebrate the anniversary.<sup>88</sup> The events can be evaluated as a “technological transfer cooperation related to cultural exchange” with Qatar.

### ***Gaining Momentum for Deeper Multilayered Relations***

The Qatar–Japan relationship could be strengthened by cooperation in education and research. This will also contribute to Qatar’s enduring prosperity and human development.

The Kumonshiki teaching method in mathematics, although not adopted in the Qatari official curriculum, is spreading rapidly as an extracurricular activity in Qatar.<sup>89</sup> Its reputation has grown through word-of-mouth communication. It is popular among Qatari parents because it teaches children not only mathematics, but also proper discipline.

The study of the Japanese language is also quietly booming in Qatar. In the Al-Bayān Girls’ School, Japanese is taught as a foreign language,<sup>90</sup> and other schools are following this trend.

HH Amīr Ḥamad requested the Japanese school in Al-Dūḥa accept Qatari students,<sup>91</sup> and this was agreed by the Japanese PM.<sup>92</sup> It can be assumed, through this request that Qatar evaluates that Japanese-style elementary school education to be a strategic policy option for the human resource development. There are no established

87 “Japan to Mark 40 Years of Qatar Ties,” Qatar Japan 2012, <http://qatarjapan2012.com/online/en/details/114>.

88 Shingo Tsuda, “Juusouteki na Nikokukan Kankei Mezasu Nichi Kataaru,” *Guroobaru Keiei*, December 2004, 5.

89 Masahiko Horie, “Kataaru Dayori ‘Nihon Shiki Kyouiku Netsu ni Kotaete,’” *Gaikou Fooramu*, 229 (2007), 70-73.

90 Horie, “Kataaru Dayori...,” 70-73.

91 Junnichi Aoki, “Dooha Nihonjin Gakkou ni okeru Nihongo Kyousitsu no Jissai—Kataaru Jin, Genchi Jin heno Nihongo Shidou no Jissen—,” *Zaigai Kyouiku Shisetsu ni okeru Shidou Jissen Kiroku*, 24 (2001), 117-121.

92 Horie, “Kataaru Hamado Shuchou...,” 3-7.

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criteria on how Qatari students can assimilate into the Japanese education system and the realization of this request has been a challenge.

Cooperation for joint research has also been encouraged. The “2013 Joint Statement” indicated the following fields for areas of cooperation: medicine, science and technology, education, agriculture, training, human development, art, Islam, tourism, and sports.<sup>93</sup> The Qatari royal initiative has had a significant impact on education. On a five-day tour in Japan in 2014, HH Princess Mūzā visited SONY, Kyoto University, the National Institute of Information, University of Tokyo, Keio University, and biometrical research institutes<sup>94</sup> and also met with PM Abe. Following the visit, HITACHI issued a press release, announcing that HITACHI and Qatar University would commence joint research projects aiming to find solutions in three areas: energy-saving air conditioners, water management and utility of recycled water, and high efficiency of energy management.<sup>95</sup>

New chair positions, financed by Marubeni, for Japan Studies in Qatar University were launched in the fall semester of 2014. Although in its early stages, Japan Studies will have a long-term positive impact.<sup>96</sup> The key to the success of the cooperation in education and research involves activities of specialists in these fields. As both governments, including the Royal leader, have tried to deepen their relations, it is expected that many Japanese citizens will realize the significance of these sectors and engage in institutionalizing these initiatives.

Figure 7. Qatar and Japan, Key Concepts

Citizen diplomacy	Political harmony and mutual respect
Interdependence	Comprehensive partners

93 “Joint Statement on Promoting and Expanding Cooperation under the Comprehensive Partnership between Japan and the State of Qatar,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000068802.pdf>.

94 Victoria Scott, “Sheikha Moza Seeks Scientific Collaboration during Visit to Japan,” *Doha News*, April 24, 2014.

95 “Hitachi to Kataaru Daigaku ga Infura Sisutemu Bunya no Kenkyou. Shou Ene Gijutsu ni Kansuru Houkatsuteki na Sangaku Renkei Kyoutei wo Teiketsu,” Hitachi Press Release, November 16, 2014, <http://www.hitachi.co.jp/New/cnews/month/2014/11/1106a.html>.

96 “New Faculty Members for Japanese Studies Welcomed,” Qatar University, *Newsroom*, November 23, 2014.



## **Conclusion**

Initially, the Qatar–Japan relationship was surrounded by an unstable and insecure regional environment, but evolved through three phases to the current. Many Japanese will also remember that Qatari leaders uttered praises about the services they had provided. The Japanese also believe that the Qataris expressed their sense of moral obligation through their quick support for the disaster in Japan in 2011.

This paper has highlighted three aspects of the Qatar-Japan relationship; royal, intergovernmental and citizen diplomacy. These three interact and maintain momentum to deepen multilayered relations between the two countries. The “2013 Joint Statement” exemplified the direction for the relationship to deepen. It is expected that leaders and citizens from both sides will take initiatives to maintain the relationship. As the role of citizens is changing and becoming more important as a tool for diplomacy, they are critical for the future of bilateral relations.

Interactions between Qatar and Japan signified a gradual policy shift, restricted security engagement, and “business engagement beyond business.” A cultural survey on the behavior of Japanese based on altruism may explain their behavior in certain situations. During the security crisis, the Japanese assessed the political and economic risks in the Gulf region, and decided to remain committed to the large project on which Qatari leaders had bet their future.

Qatar is regarded as an equal and independent partner by the Japanese, who respect it as part of the broader Arab and Islamic culture. The academic orientation among area researchers in Japan, as well as the behavior of the Japanese businesspeople and SDF personnel, was positive toward Arabs and Muslims. They also strive toward more active engagements in the Gulf region.

The Japanese engagement in Qatar has been smooth, and without any conflict. If it is adequate to formulate the goal and strategy of Japan’s Middle East policy as the achievement of political harmony, economic interdependence, and security and stability through constructive engagement, it may be possible to state that the Qatar–Japan relationship is an ideal one. Japan has respected Qatar’s goal and strategy for its development, by supporting the construction of advanced industrial plants. It has also bought collateral products for Japan. Moreover, the closeness of the relationship was demonstrated when Qatar swiftly exported a large amount of LNG to Japan immediately after the Great Japan Earthquake.

## *Challenges for Qatar and Japan to Build Multilayered Relations*

While Japanese people know little about Arab customs and Islamic practice, they do not hold serious biases against it. The Japanese experience in the Middle East is new compared with other Western and regional countries, but the Japanese have sought the maintenance of a balance between the tradition and modernity of the Arab culture. Japanese engagement in Qatar has drastically expanded Qatar financial resources, increasing diplomatic options of Qatar. Furthermore, Japanese enterprises operate in Qatar under the authority of the Qatari government and Japanese multinational enterprises play leading roles in the economy.

It is not safe to assert that the Qatar–Japan relationship will continue without risk. It will require effort from both sides to maintain a productive and constructive relationship. Among the causes of conflict is the generational change in leaders,<sup>97</sup> and competition from Australia and the US for QG’s export industry.<sup>98</sup> The strategic and regional bonds that unite Qatar and Japan have been vague; the interregional concept of Wider Asia or Indo-Pacific is not well defined. The SDF units have been deployed in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean for 14 years, but a grand security strategy for interregional cooperation has not yet been designed. The Japanese government took successive, temporary measures to dispatch the SDF, in alignment with permanent engagement in the region. Bilateral relations between Qatar and Japan have also been in medicine and environment.

It has been challenging to examine the nature of the Qatar–Japan relationship and thus further academic study is urgently needed. The future of the relationship between Qatar and Japan will be influenced by the effort of both nations to promote mutual understanding. Both governments should aim to improve their public diplomacy.

One modest suggestion for the future of Qatar–Japan relations is the potential for Japanese local and rural areas to exchange with Qatar. The Arab experiences in Japan are cited in a few examples. Qatar joined the expo in Nagoya in 2005, and Saudi Arabia held “Saudi Week in Osaka” in 2012. Kobe Steel and Kobe Mosque had historical relations with Qatar in the 1970s.

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97 Monji, *Ibid.*

98 Cameron Mchugh, “Qatar to Relinquish Holds as World Leader in LNG Exports,” *Arab News*, September 2, 2014.



