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*Background Documents Distributed
to the members of the Joint
Palestinian-Japanese Working Group
in preparation for the January 26
Online Workshop*

The Future of the Middle East Peace Process

Policy Recommendations
produced by the Middle East
Study Group
March 2020

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Headed by **Dr. Ryoji Tateyama**,
Professor Emeritus, National Defense Academy
of Japan
Organized by **The Japanese Institute of
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PCPSR's Publications of the Joint Working Group on Palestinian-Japanese Working Group

Background Reports prepared for the first workshop

Mohammad Daraghmeh, **Japan As Seen by the Palestinian Media: How the Palestinian Press and Social Media View Japanese Culture, Literature, Technology, Economy, and Palestinian-Japanese Relations**

Dr. Abdel Nasser Makky, **Strengthening Japan's "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" Initiative: Japan and the Jordan Valley**

PCPSR, **Japan in the Middle East, 2017-2021: The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Palestinian-Japanese Relations (excerpts from Japan's MOFA Bluebook)**

PCPSR, **Official PA-PLO Positions on Japanese-Palestinian Relations: recent statements on the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Palestinian-Japanese Relations**

Omar Sha'ban, **Japan's Developmental Role in the Gaza Strip: The Constraints of the "Split" and the Promising Potential in Partnering with Civil Society and the Productive Sector**

Khalil Shikaki, **Palestinian Public Perception of Japan: Report on Results of a Public Opinion Poll among Palestinians, December 2021**

Background Report prepared for the Second workshop

Khalil Shikaki, **Japan and Palestine: Timeline of Main Developments and Turning Points in the last 50 years**

Reports on workshop's proceedings

PCPSR, **Report on the Presentations and discussion of the First Workshop of the Joint Palestinian-Japanese Working Group, January 2022**

PCPSR, **Report on the Presentations and discussion of the Second Workshop of the Joint Palestinian-Japanese Working Group, March 2022**

Other Publications

The Future of the Middle East Peace Process: Policy Recommendations produced by the Middle East Study Group, Headed by Dr. Ryoji Tateyama, Professor Emeritus, National Defense Academy of Japan, Organized by The Japanese Institute of International Affairs

Government of Japan, **Japan's assistance to the Palestinians**

Government of Japan, **JAIP: Jericho Agro-Industrial Park**

The Future of the Middle East Peace Process

Policy Recommendations produced by the Middle East Study Group

The following is an unofficial English translation from the original Japanese, not for quotation or citation
Link to the original report and the names of the JIIA's Middle East Study Group:

https://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/research/R01_Global_Risk/

3. Future of the Middle East Peace Process[※]

(1) Whereas the international community's interest in the Palestinian issue declines, Japan should continue to support Palestine.

Japan has been actively supporting the Palestinians since 1993, when the Oslo Accords were signed. Japan has consistently supported a "two-state solution" whereby Israel and an independent Palestinian state coexist and prosper together as Japan's basic policy. To achieve this goal, Japan has pursued three pillars of its contribution to peace in the Middle East: (1) political approach to the two sides; (2) assistance to the Palestinians' efforts for state building and human resource development; and (3) confidence building measures between the two sides. Japan has also worked for promoting trust between Israel and its neighbors by promoting regional cooperation through development projects and technical cooperation. Based on these principles, Japan has set the promotion of economic and social independence of the Palestinians as its basic policy of Official Development Assistance (ODA), and has focused on the following priority areas: (1) stability and betterment of people's livelihoods based on human security; (2) reinforcement of governmental financial base and administrative capacity; and (3) support for economic independence.

One initiative that represents Japan's support for Palestine is the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity". This initiative is Japan's medium- to long-term effort aimed at promoting socioeconomic development in the Jordan Valley through regional cooperation among Japan, Palestine, Israel, and Jordan, and at promoting Palestinian economic independence.

[※] This is a tentative translation of Section 3 in the Policy Recommendation in *Rethinking Anti-Globalism: Study on Critical Factors Shattering International Orders –Global Risk Study*, The Middle East Study Group, The Japan Institute of International Affairs, March 2020.

However, the situation surrounding the Palestinian problem has changed significantly in the 27 years since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords; the foundation for achieving a two-state solution has been acceleratingly undermined. This is especially true since the advent of the Trump administration, and Israel has openly advocated a policy of annexing all or part of the West Bank. Furthermore, the peace plan proposed by President Trump at the end of January 2020 not only places top priority on ensuring Israel's security, but also accepts Israel's annexation of approximately 30% of the West Bank, making it far from a two-state solution acceptable to the Palestinians.

Moreover, the international community's interest in the Middle East peace process has begun to wane. The international community has actively supported the post-Oslo Peace Process as a model case for conflict resolution. However, in addition to the continuing decline in the likelihood of achieving a peace based on a two-state solution, the international community has had to devote resources to dealing with a series of other problems that continue to erupt. In the Middle East, the current regional order has been shaken and the balance of power has changed significantly in recent years. This has also contributed to the decline in the international community's interest in the Middle East peace process.

(2) A set of two aid philosophies: realizing a two-state solution and strengthening resilience of the Palestinian society.

Against this backdrop, how should Japan engage in the Middle East peace process? There can be two ways of thinking. The first is that the Government of Japan will maintain its support for a two-state solution and continue its conventional assistance measures, namely to assist strengthening governance, particularly for the Palestinian Authority, in order to support future independence of the Palestinians. Given the difficulty in establishing an independent Palestinian state in the foreseeable future and the possibility of further continuation of the conflict, the second way of thinking is to focus on bottom-up assistance measures to strengthen resilience of the Palestinian society.

It should be noted that the two options are not necessarily mutually exclusive; on the contrary, both ways of thinking are required to be the aid philosophy. Major actors in the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, have stressed the importance of achieving peace based on a two-state solution even after the Trump peace plan was announced. As a member of the international community, Japan should maintain this stance and continue to advocate the realization of a two-state solution as its aid philosophy. This will require to continue its conventional assistance measures, such as supporting capacity building of the Palestinian Authority.

At the same time, if we turn our eyes to reality, it is clear that the "realization of a two-state solution" alone is not convincing as an aid philosophy. Furthermore, the Palestinian community is expected to face more and more crises under the Israeli control. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue assistance measures based on the reality and further challenges. In other words, it has become increasingly important to expand assistance for strengthening resilience of the

Palestinian society in order to prevent people from falling into despair, communities from becoming impoverished, and young people from becoming radicalized.

To this end, through assisting organizations that consolidate the foundations of communities, it is an urgent need to promote participatory activities not to exclude the socially vulnerable, such as women and the disabled, to assist establishing such systems, and to support new and emerging young leaders. Moreover, taken into account the spread of corruption and political distrust due to the concentration of a large amount of aid in the Palestinian Authority, it is desirable to provide direct assistance to civil society for purposes such as improving administrative capacity, promoting people-participation, developing industries, supporting education, and empowering women.

With the goal of realizing a two-state solution, the international community, including Japan, should support resilience of the Palestinian community as a second aid philosophy and provide bottom-up assistance from a long-term perspective, in addition to continuation of assistance based on the conventional aid philosophy on a certain scale.

(3) Need To Further Activate JICA's Initiatives

Based on the above, it can be pointed out that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) could provide the following assistance as a specific example.

First, looking at the Palestinian private sector, many companies are actively engaging in business relations with Israel, particularly with Arabs who have Israeli nationality, as an approach to the foreign market. In addition, there are diaspora Palestinian communities scattered around the world. Many of them have a Palestinian identity and invest in Palestine by taking advantage of their current nationality.

Second, bottom-up support for residents requires to devise ways to build trust in governance. In situations where a central government does not have sufficient capacity and legitimacy, community-level assistance which is closest to residents can be a breakthrough for winning the trust of people through the implementation of community-based projects.

JICA's support for the Palestinians, particularly in the area of industrial development, is not limited to regional development at the community level. JICA's efforts to expand business opportunities in partnership with private enterprises are effective in strengthening resilience. At the same time, JICA has taken more initiatives to support the socially vulnerable in refugee camps, such as women and the disabled, and to enhance the sharing of universal values through improving the quality of government administrative services and legal development. These assistance projects are also essential to strengthen resilience of the Palestinian society.

The **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research** explored Palestinian-Japanese relations by establishing a joint Palestinian-Japanese working group made up of experts and academics to engage in a dialogue on the various facets of the relationship with the aim of proposing a joint vision on how to strengthen and advance that relationship in a manner that helps it meet the challenges of the future. This initiative sought to examine *Japan's role in the Middle the Middle East by focusing on Japanese-Palestinian Relation through a Joint Japanese-Palestinian second track policy workshops and consultation.*

The dialogue took place in two online workshops to discuss the current relationship and explore ideas and policies for the future. In addition, the effort included the preparation and publication of various background reports and working papers addressing some aspects of the current relationship. PCPSR also issued two reports summarizing the presentations and discussion of the two workshops as well as the recommendations of the second workshop.

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