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Review

Junichirō Shiratori, *'Keizai Taikoku' Nihon no Gaikō: Enerugī Shigen Gaikō no Keisei, 1967–1974 nen* [The Energy Resource Diplomacy of a Rising Japan, 1967–1974], Chikura Shobō, 2015, 410 pp.
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Since the time of World War II until the present day, energy vulnerability has been the Achilles' heel in the national security of Japan, a country which relies on imports for almost all of the oil consumed domestically. The vast majority of its oil imports come from the Middle East region, which the US, Japan's chief ally, has long been politically involved in. Thus, when Japanese scholars discuss the country's 'energy security' (*enerugī anzen-hoshō*) and 'resource diplomacy' (*shigen gaikō*), how Japan maintains and develops its relations with Middle Eastern states and how those relations are balanced with Japanese–American relations are central to the discussion. After the end of World War II, the country's energy vulnerability was most noticeably felt in 1973 when oil-exporting Arab states targeted Japan for their strategic oil embargo in relation to the Arab–Israeli war (the October War). It has been conventional wisdom in the study of Japan's diplomacy that the event led Japan to practice a more clearly articulated pro-Arab Middle East policy, and, in doing so, Tokyo acted in a manner more autonomous from Washington than previously, given that the US was dissatisfied with Japan's announcement of the pro-Arab statement in relation to the war. Such conventional wisdom has also provided an image of heedless Japanese decision-makers who, facing such an out-of-the-blue situation, myopically prioritized access to *abura* (oil) of *arabu* (the Arabs) over the country's long-term strategic relationship with the US.

Shiratori's book *'Keizai Taikoku' Nihon no Gaikō* challenges this conventional wisdom by closely examining Japanese decision-makers' reactions to the seismic changes in the global oil industry that took place in the period between the 1967 Arab–Israeli war (the Six-Day War) and the creation of the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 1974. The book effectively demystifies the Japanese–American discord surrounding the 1973 Oil Crisis and revises the axiom of Japan's practice of 'autonomous diplomacy' (*jishu gaikō*), by illuminating Japan's close collaboration with the US and other major Western powers in creating a collective body – the IEA – that ensures cooperation among major oil-importing states and establishes a united front *vis-à-vis* the one formed by the oil-exporting Arab states, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, (OAPEC). The incorporation of such an "international" perspective within the analysis is new and innovative, and meaningfully broadens the horizon of the analysis of

Japan's energy security/resource diplomacy beyond the traditional scope of the two sets of bilateral relationships (Japanese–Arab and Japanese–American).

What underpins this unconventional and eye-opening analysis is the author's nuanced knowledge about the dynamics of the global oil industry. While energy security and resource diplomacy are often used to represent the zero-sum nature of international politics, the game can, in fact, be positive-sum. In particular, effective cooperation among major oil-importing states in a time of supply crunches minimizes the shock: even if some states are targeted by oil-exporting states for their embargo, they are still able to secure oil imports by buying oil on the international market as long as the volume of total global exports exceeds that of total global imports and no major oil-importing states resort to hoarding of the imported oil. This means that the best solution to an oil crisis that oil-importing states can employ is not to strengthen their bilateral relationships with oil-exporting states but rather to participate in the collective action with other oil-importing states to safeguard the flow of oil on the international market.

Nevertheless, this truth about the global oil industry may be counter-intuitive to many. In fact, as the author mentions, the Japanese public, with a great degree of anxiety about their life and economy, supported Tokyo's pro-Arab Middle East diplomacy during the time of the crisis (p. 370–1). Due to the high degree of knowledge asymmetry between themselves and the public, which they deemed as an insurmountable obstacle in the short time they had, Japanese policymakers decided to detach the international negotiations for the creation of the IEA from the discussion at the Diet, even at the risk of compromising the principle of 'democratic diplomacy' (*minshu-teki gaikō*) in doing so (p. 372). Tokyo thus walked a tightrope, balancing its responses to the Arab states, the Western powers, and the domestic public. Omni-balancing also took place within the Japanese government in the form of inter-ministerial debate, with Yasuhiro Nakasone, an international trade and industry minister, advocating autonomous diplomacy and Masayoshi Ohira, a foreign minister, supporting cooperation among oil-importing states (p. 370).

The book also captures Western perspectives on Japan's participation in the IEA, the body that would have been ineffective without the involvement of the East Asian state with the world's second largest economy that was also the world's largest importer of oil at that time. Ensuring Japan's participation was an impending task for the US and other major oil-importing states, which were deeply concerned about Japan possibly becoming a maverick power (p. 5). The author regards positively Japan's decision to join the body and play the role of a responsible stakeholder in the international community (or *kokusai keizai chitsujo no kyōdō kanri-sha*, 'co-administrator of the international economic order', in the words of the author), responding to such concern. At the same time, Japan also succeeded in influencing the discourse of the new body in favor of its own national interest by making the body less confrontational towards OAPEC, using its status of the world's largest oil importer as a bargaining chip (p. 368).

While the central theme of the book is the formation of Japan's resource diplomacy, the author also attempts to identify Japan's participation in the IEA as a watershed in the history of Japan's diplomacy. The author argues that, after 1972 (the year in which the reversion of Okinawa and diplomatic normalization with China took place), the main objective of Japan's diplomacy shifted from the settlement of World War II-related affairs (*sengo shori*) to responding to the demand made by the US and other major Western powers that Japan behave as a responsible stakeholder within the international community (p. 1). The 1973 Oil Crisis was the first litmus test for Japan in this respect (p. 373). The author underscores that the event preceded the G6

Summit occurring for the first time in 1975, which is generally remembered as the beginning of Japan's full-fledged international cooperation with major Western powers (p. 371).

If there is anything to quibble about in regard to this book, it is that the author does not fully address why Japan was more successful in playing the responsible stakeholder role in 1973 than in the events that took place in later years. The conditions under which Japan could/could not play such a role remain undiscussed. Nevertheless, this obviously requires a close investigation of other cases and comparisons that are simply beyond the scope of the book. The virtue of the book lies in its marvelously putting together painstakingly collected archival materials that enable the author to provide detailed and precise narratives that support his arguments. In addition, the book fuels, rather than depletes, the discussion, and that only testifies to its excellence.

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