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Based on thorough research of multinational archival sources, Andrea Pressello's article provides a comprehensive account of Japan's engagement in the 1970 Jakarta Conference on the Cambodian conflict. By focusing on Tokyo's role in the Conference, the paper identifies the content and limitations of Japan's peace diplomacy, the international perceptions of that diplomacy, and its effect on regional cooperation in Southeast Asia during the Cold War.

Pressello uses a historical research method to reconstruct Japan's vigorous diplomacy at the Jakarta Conference and analyzes the abundant diplomatic records of Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Cambodia in March 1970, the Sato administration began to consider how to address the situation, resulting its proposal of issuing a multilateral joint appeal aimed at raising international awareness of the situation in Cambodia and Indochina in general (282). Later, Tokyo decided to set aside its initial plans for smaller five-country appeal and focused on backing an Indonesian proposal of holding a conference of Asian countries. Eventually, on 16 and 17 May 1970 minister-level representatives of eleven countries in Asia convened in Jakarta to discuss means to restore peace in Cambodia. At the conference, Japan's Foreign Minister Aichi Kiichi called for immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces; for the convening of an international conference to address the whole Indochinese problem; and for the reactivation of the International Control Commission. The Japanese draft of the Conference communique became the basis for negotiations amongst delegates and several points proposed by Japan were included in the final document (288). After the Conference, the Indonesian, Japanese, and Malaysian special envoy missions were conducted as a follow-up measure, visiting New York, Moscow, India, London and several other cities to meet with the world leaders. They completed their mission in July 1970 without achieving their main objectives.

Pressello concludes that through the Jakarta Conference, Japan gained experience in a new area of its diplomacy, expanded its regional role from purely economic to include political and security affairs, and made a step forward in trust building with Southeast Asian nations (297).

This article significantly contributes to the historiography of Japan's diplomacy towards Southeast Asia in the 1970s. With the exception of a few works, including Amiko Nobori's "Japan's Southeast Asian Policy in the

Post-Vietnam War: The Jakarta Conference, Economic Aid to Indochina Countries, and Diplomatic Normalization with North Vietnam” and Ang Cheng Guan’s “The Jakarta conference on Cambodia, 1970,” the Jakarta Conference has not been closely examined by the diplomatic historians.¹ Even the Japanese career diplomat Kono Masaharu, who greatly contributed to the Cambodian peace process, emphasized in his memoir that the 1989 Paris international conference on the Cambodian conflict was the first time in the post-World War II era that Japan attended any international conference with peace in its name, and did not mention the Jakarta Conference in which Japan played an important role nineteen years before the meeting in Paris.²

With the wealth of primary sources, Pressello successfully persuades the readers that Japan’s peacemaker role with regards to Cambodia and to the stability in Southeast Asia already existed in early 1970s, in contrast to the current argument that Japan only became involved in settling the Cambodian conflict when the peace process began during the late 1980s.³ Pressello demonstrates that Japan’s engagement in the Jakarta Conference was actually an early example of Tokyo’s diplomatic efforts reflecting Japanese aspirations to contribute to regional co-operation, which would eventually culminate with the so-called “Fukuda Doctrine” in 1977.⁴

This article also gives readers a fresh perspective on the international history of the Cold War in Southeast Asia by focusing on the Japan’s role as a peacemaker. Especially in the literature of the Vietnam War, apart from a notable study by Thomas R. H. Havens, *Fire across the Sea*, the Japanese angle of the conflict has not been fully taken.⁵ Japanese perspective and roles cannot be ignored if we hope to achieve a fuller understanding of the international history of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. For example, one of the few important existing works on the Jakarta Conference by Ang Cheng Guan provides a fascinating analysis on the subject from Southeast Asian perspective, but mentions Tokyo’s role only slightly.⁶

Furthermore, Pressello’s work greatly helps readers understand the basic nature of Japan’s diplomatic policy during the Cold War. By closely examining the process of Japan’s preparation for the conference, its draft joint communiqué, and its negotiations with other countries, it clearly illustrates Japanese diplomatic style

¹ Amiko Nobori, “Japan’s Southeast Asian Policy in the Post-Vietnam War: The Jakarta Conference, Economic Aid to Indochina Countries, and Diplomatic Normalization with North Vietnam,” *Keio University G-SEC Working Paper*, 21 (2007):1-17; Ang Cheng Guan “The Jakarta conference on Cambodia, 1970,” in Albert Lau, ed., *Southeast Asia and the Cold War* (London, New York: Routledge, 2012): 241-66.

² Masaharu Kono, *Wahei kōsaku: tai Kanbojia gaikō no shōgen* [Building peace: Testimony of diplomatic policy towards Cambodia] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1999): 28.

³ See, for example, Hidekazu Wakatsuki, “*Zenbōi Gaikō*” no jidai: reisen henyōki no Nihon to Ajia 1971–80nen [The Era of “Omnidirectional Diplomacy”: Japan and Asia in the Period of Transition in the Cold War 1971-80] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2006); Yoshihide Soeya, “Vietnam in Japan’s Regional Policy,” in James W. Morley and Masashi Nishihara eds., *Vietnam Joins the World*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); and Sueo Sudō, “From Fukuda to Takeshita. A decade of Japan–ASEAN relations,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 10:2 (1988):119-143.

⁴ In his book, Pressello closely analyzes Japan’s peacemaker role for Cambodia and for stability in all of Southeast Asia after the end of the 1970s, but did not discuss Japan’s role in the Jakarta Conference in detail. Andrea Pressello, *Japan and the Post-Vietnam Southeast Asia: Japanese Diplomacy and the Cambodian Conflict, 1978–1993* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁵ Thomas R. H. Havens, *Fire across the Sea: The Vietnam War and Japan, 1965-1975* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987),

⁶ Ang Cheng Guan “The Jakarta Conference on Cambodia, 1970,” in Albert Lau, ed., *Southeast Asia and the Cold War* (London, New York: Routledge, 2012):249.

and approach, which can be characterized as non-confrontational, inclusive, pragmatic, and omnidirectional. Pressello rightly points out that Japan carved out a role for itself as a moderate, co-operative, and proactive broker that through the use of “quiet diplomacy” worked to bridge differences amongst concerned parties (297). This demonstrates Japan’s effort to portray its role as neutral honest broker between the Communist and the capitalist bloc.

It can be argued that the intensification of the conflict between the Asian countries and Japan’s ally, the United States, highlights a basic structural twist embedded in Japan’s postwar foreign policy course based on the peace constitution and the US-Japan alliance.⁷ On the one hand, the US urged Japan to publicly express an unequivocal support for American operations in Indochina and to contribute to the economic development of free Asian nations. On the other hand, the domestic antiwar sentiment in Japan had been growing and put pressure on the Sato administration not to cooperate with US war efforts. Since these military conflict/security tensions were impediments to Japan’s policies, Tokyo naturally attempted to achieve peace by building bridges among the conflicting parties.

Tokyo made similar efforts in the case of Japan’s earlier engagement in the multilateral meetings among Asian countries, such as the Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia (SEAMCED) and the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC). In convening the first SEAMCED meeting in 1966, Tokyo made efforts to bring ‘neutral’ states such as Cambodia, Indonesia, and Burma so that they could soften the image of the anti-Communist gatherings. Similarly, the Japanese policymakers attempted to moderate the impression that they were forming an anti-Communist alliance when they decided to attend the first meeting of ASPAC in 1966. In drafting the joint statement following this meeting, while South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, and other countries emphasized clear expressions such as “threat of communism” and “support for South Vietnam,” Japan took the position that criticism of specific countries should be avoided as much as possible.⁸

ASEAN and Japan’s cooperative partnership began in 1973 with the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan forum on synthetic rubber. The analysis of Tokyo’s active role in the Jakarta Conference shows how the Japanese policymakers recognized the emergence of regional initiatives for cooperation in Southeast Asia prior to the inception of this forum. In terms of the Jakarta Conference, Ambassador Ushiroku Torao, a prominent Japanese diplomat who had served as a Director-General of the Asian Affairs Bureau, observed that “as seen in ASEAN, ASPAC, SEAMEC (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council), and SEAMCED, the concept of Southeast Asian region or (Southeast) Asia-Pacific region is steadily being nurtured and established as a sub-region that transcends each member’s domestic system, political ideology, etc., although there are some differences in views of regional scope.”⁹ He argued that given this regional trend, Japan should naturally participate in the proposed conference by the Indonesian government. Pressello’s article could have paid further attention to Japan’s interest in the emergence of regionalism in Southeast Asia.

⁷ For the question of a structural twist embedded in Japan’s postwar foreign policy course, see, Yoshihide Soeya, *Anzenhoshō o toinaosu: “9 jō-anpotaiei o koete* [Reexamination of Security: Beyond Article 9 and the U.S.-Japan Security System](Tokyo: NHK Books, 2016).

⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 16, 1966.

⁹ Ushiroku taishi hatsu gaimu daijin ate koden, “Indoshina mondai” May 13, 1970[Telegram from Ambassador Ushiroku to Foreign Minister, Subject: Indochinese problems, Telegram from Embassy in Thailand to Foreign Ministry, No. 784], Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

Another interesting aspect that this paper suggests is the division between countries with an explicit and confrontational anti-Communist stance and those with a more moderate position even among the non-Communist regional countries. This is a vivid illustration of the many different views of the Indochina conflict and Cold War in Asia expressed by the non-Communist nations. At the Jakarta Conference, South Vietnam as well as the countries which were involved in the Vietnam War, including South Korea, Thailand, and Australia maintained a confrontational posture towards the Communist camp and explicit support for the Lon Nol government. For example, Australia's draft communiqué called for the conference organizers to despatch observers to Cambodia, reconvene the conference in the future, and adopt "reasonable and practicable steps" (287). Tokyo made a consistent effort to moderate Canberra's hard-line stance.

One of the article's greatest contributions is that it sheds light on this diplomatic effort which actually turned out to be a failure, and clearly identifies the factors which diminished the efficacy of Japanese diplomacy. This helps readers to understand the constraints which Japanese diplomacy was and still is facing.

Pressello's analysis could have gone further to analyze the reasons why Tokyo actively engaged in this multilateral effort for peace in Cambodia. For example, Ambassador Ushiroku sent an interesting cable to Foreign Minister Aichi which stated that "Japan's participation in this conference at the top level will establish a bridgehead for securing Japan's voice in the Indochina problem in the future."¹⁰ Presumably, Ushiroku had in mind Japan's active role in the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation process in Indochina. As for the factors other than Japan's aspiration for more active regional role in the political field, Pressello's article, entitled "Japanese Peace Diplomacy on Cambodia and the Okinawa Reversion Issue, 1970" reveals that Japan was pressing for peace in Cambodia in order to ensure the smooth realization of two priority agendas of the Sato administration: the Okinawa reversion and the automatic extension of the Japan-US security treaty.¹¹ It is strongly recommended that the readers consult this article.

Andrea Pressello's "Japan's Debut in Multilateral Peace Diplomacy" is clearly written, thoroughly researched, well-documented, and a valuable contribution to our understanding of post-war Japan's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia. It is also an important work within the growing body of scholarship on the international history of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. The article is strongly recommended for those who seek to understand postwar Japanese diplomatic history, and will also be of interest to those studying the Cold War in Asia.

Amiko Nobori is currently teaching international relations and Japan's diplomacy as an adjunct lecturer at Keio University, Seikei University and Nishogakusha University in Tokyo. She earned M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from the Graduate School of Law at Keio University. Her recent publications include: "Posuto betonamu ki no tōnan Ajia chitsujo to nihon gaikō 1969-1980[A Regional Order in the post-Vietnam War Era in Southeast Asia and Japan's Foreign Policy: 1969-1980]," in Yoshihide Soeya ed., *Chitsujo hendō to Nihon gaikō:kakudai to shūshuku no 70 nen* [The Changing Order and Japanese Diplomacy:

¹⁰ Ushiroku taishi hatsu gaimu daijin ate koden, "Indoshina mondai ni kansuru Ajia shokoku kaigi" April 21, 1970[Telegram from Ambassador Ushiroku to Foreign Minister, Subject: Asian nations' conference on Indochinese problem, Telegram from Embassy in Thailand to Foreign Ministry, No. 702], Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

¹¹ Andrea Pressello, "Japanese Peace Diplomacy on Cambodia and the Okinawa Reversion Issue, 1970," *Japan Forum* (2021):1-24; doi: 10.1080/09555803.2020.1863446.

70 Years of Expansion and Contraction] (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2016) and “Sengo nikkann kankei ni okeru ‘taisei masatsu’ to nihon gaikō: 1961-1987 [Postwar Japanese-South Korean Relations and the Issue of Regime Type in Japanese Foreign Policy Making: 1961-1987],” *Hōgaku Kenkyū* [Journal of Law, Politics and Sociology] 94:2 (2021): 73-101. She is currently working on an oral history project on retired Japanese diplomats.