

# PERCEPTIONS

## JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Mechanism of the Islamic State  
Yutaka TAKAOKA

Turkey's Struggle Against the Foreign Terrorist  
Fighters of DAESH  
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# Turkey-Japan: Dialogue on Global Affairs

Bahadır PEHLİVANTÜRK\*

A persistent concern that has gripped analysts of the post-Cold War era is that the dangerous but orderly state of world affairs that followed World War II, thanks to the hierarchical hegemonic character of the world system, would collapse and lead to a new era of uncertainty and increased conflict. It is highly debatable whether the Cold War era was orderly, as one can immediately point to the limited but costly proxy conflicts in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and a stream of wars in the Middle East. Yet, in some circles, there was a nostalgia that the Cold War system provided a certain level of stability, and that uncertainty loomed ahead.<sup>1</sup> While the tragedy of a great power confrontation seems to have been avoided so far, apprehension about uncertainty and low-level conflicts with new asymmetrical non-traditional security threats acquiring a global character seem to have been realized.

These problems are accompanied by traditional nation-state conflicts as seen between Ukraine and Russia, and proxy conflicts over Syria, Iraq, and Yemen between Saudi Arabia and Iran among others. Yet the most prominent security challenges the world has had to confront in the mid-2010s has turned out to be terrorism and uncontrolled migration. The conflict that wrecked Syria also created ISIS terror and led to the world witnessing terror attacks on civilians in disparate parts of the globe. It is no longer just residents of conflict zones that are in danger. Residents in locations such as France, Belgium, Turkey, and Bangladesh have become targets, as well as people in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. The conflicts in the Middle East have also created a migration problem of biblical proportions, such that Europe has not witnessed since World War II. Arguably these issues will not only have social and economic as well as humanitarian repercussions for the EU, but will influence the domestic politics of European countries as well. The role that massive migration played in the Brexit referendum, in

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which the Leave campaign won with a four percent margin, is hard to deny.

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**The security environment in East Asia, in the traditional nation-state based understanding, is also showing symptoms of deterioration.**

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Turkey is one of the countries directly influenced by the new atmosphere of uncertainty and a deteriorating security environment. The conflict zones of the mid-2010s, Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, are all in Turkey's neighbourhood, and Turkey is on the transit route of both innocent migrants and the foreign terrorist fighters of ISIS. These realities have created serious financial and security challenges for the country. Although at the other end of the Eurasian landmass, Japan is also not immune from contemporary post-Cold War challenges. Seven Japanese citizens were killed in a 2016 ISIS attack in Dacca. Furthermore, the security environment in East Asia, in the traditional nation-state based understanding, is also showing symptoms of deterioration. An increasingly assertive China is posing maritime challenges not only for Japan but for various ASEAN countries, and it is far from assured that violent

Cold War conflicts will not revisit this region. Taiwan remains as one of the potential conflict zones, and most important, now a nuclear North Korea continues its provocative policies with renewed missile and nuclear tests. A peaceful solution scenario for the division of the Korean peninsula is still hard to conceive. To this list one can also add the financial crisis of the late 2000s that engulfed the USA and the EU and coincided with an era of relative strengthening of emerging market economies, which has led to the questioning of the West's leadership ability. By the 2010s the recovery still seems to be slow and fragile, and this has been coupled with a worrying slowdown in the Chinese economy. If a new economic crisis emerges, the concern is that this time it might also engulf East Asian economies, including Japan, which were spared from the last economic collapse. Thus, even being far from the Middle East does not assure a secure and stable future. All of this is happening at a time when the continuity of the US's commitment to the East Asia region is being questioned, as the US seems to be preoccupied with problems in other world regions as well as with internal social and political problems.

It could be argued that the most defining feature of the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century international

order is transformation and flux. This era coincides with (or from a neoliberal standpoint is a result of) the weakening of US leadership in the world. The US and Western dominated liberal international order is increasingly coming to be questioned, prompting calls to put more effort into finding different ways to inquire into international relations.<sup>2</sup> The gradual shift in global order has been progressing for decades. Whether one is a US “declinist” (a position that seems to gain popularity once every decade or so) or not, most seem to agree that the landscape of international politics is in a gradual change, and there is a search for a new order in which countries that occupy the second tier of world politics feel the need to be more active and outspoken in world affairs. This is manifested by many new groupings of countries emerging in the past decade, such as BRICS. But such groupings are not the only ones. A new trend which has escaped the attention of analysts to a large extent is the increasing frequency and the scope of *bilateral* ties by countries that have been more passive in the past, such as Turkey and Japan. These countries are deepening their relations through more frequent visits and meetings conducted at various levels for the purpose of not only improving direct bilateral relations, but also to deepen their understanding of

each other and exchange ideas to find avenues for cooperation on seemingly indirectly related world problems.<sup>3</sup> Simple reliance on US leadership and searching for solutions to world problems through large multilateral frameworks are no more deemed sufficient. The slow and inefficient reaction to the world problems manifest a lack of concord, attributed mainly to the weakening of the hegemonic system in the world.<sup>4</sup> Thus, gradually, many countries that were previously on the back stage of the world scene feel the need to come forward and strengthen their direct bilateral relations. In this way they deepen their insights on world problems by mutual knowledge sharing. They also pursue solutions to these problems outside of the traditional hegemonic framework, as the world is now deemed too complex to be left to the good offices of traditional hegemonic powers.

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A new trend which has escaped the attention of analysts to a large extent is the increasing frequency and the scope of bilateral ties by countries that have been more passive in the past, such as Turkey and Japan.

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This special issue is a result of such an effort. The subjects of the articles

in this special issue are diverse. They range from peacekeeping to bilateral economic relations, and from analyses of foreign terrorist fighters to an analysis of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a regional platform. This might be one of the most eclectic special issues by *Perceptions* and at a first glance a common theme binding these disparate studies might elude the eye. Yet there is a tacit connection in these studies. The articles submitted to this special issue are a result of a symposium organized by the Japanese and Turkish governments and private think-tanks in Ankara on 1 March 2016. The motivation of this symposium was the same as what is explained above; to increase understanding between Turkey and Japan, exchange expertise on various world issues in order to deepen mutual understandings about world affairs, and to lay the groundwork for cooperation concerning world problems.

The symposium was organized by the Ankara based think-tank ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies) with the support of the External Relations Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the Center for Strategic Research (SAM) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Japanese Embassy in Ankara, and was entitled “Turkey-Japan Dialogue

on Global Affairs.”<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the symposium was to shed light on Japanese and Turkish perspectives on different regions and world issues, and to create an opportunity for analysts from both countries to come together. The symposium was followed by a workshop, which various experts from the Turkish government, academia, and policy circles attended together with symposium participants. This was the second such symposium organized, with the first one taking place in Ankara in November 2014.<sup>6</sup> While the first symposium focused mainly on Turkish and Japanese bilateral relations, the second one had a global scope and focused on many different world issues, not necessarily involving Turkey or Japan directly. This shows that Turkey and Japan, two countries that remained firmly in the US-dominated Western block during the Cold War but nevertheless not having felt the necessity to strengthen direct relations, have decided to change their attitude and deepen their cooperation concerning global problems. The papers submitted to this special issue are either enlarged and modified versions of studies presented during the symposium, or are results of interactions that took place between Japanese and Turkish researchers during the event.

The papers submitted touch on new issues and report on original research.



The first two articles look at the problem of foreign terrorist fighters of ISIS. This is a topic on which there is very little global expertise. The first article, by Yutaka Takakoka, is on the recruitment methods of ISIS. Dr. Takaoka is a senior research fellow at the Middle East Research Institute of Japan, and during the years 2000-2003 he worked as a political attaché at the Embassy of Japan in Syria. He has been researching contemporary Syrian politics and society for a long while and is the author of a book in Japanese on the political and social role of tribes in contemporary Syria.<sup>7</sup> His article lays down a highly sophisticated analysis of ISIS's resource mobilization mechanism and is especially useful as it provides important insights that can facilitate the formation of counter measures against ISIS recruitment of young people from Europe, the Middle East, or the whole world for that matter.

In his study he argues that the traditional model explaining ISIS's recruitment mechanism relying on personal relationships was valid in the early days when it did not have a highly organized character. After the group's expansion and with heavy exploitation of impersonal social networks (SNS), the recruitment mechanism has changed and ISIS now strives to avoid penetration by spies from hostile entities and unskilled infiltrators

emanating from irregular infiltration. In line with these developments, Takaoka offers a modified and more sophisticated model of the group's recruitment mechanism. He explains the recruitment mechanism through an ontological analysis of various functionaries within ISIS and how they act within the system. In his study, he proposes three types of countries that are involved in recruitment as supply side, transit route, and demand side countries, and he also highlights critical points within the system towards which certain policies can be developed so as to obstruct the effectiveness of the recruitment mechanism.

The other study in this issue that deals with the problem of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) is by Haldun Yaçınkaya, who worked at the Turkish Military Academy in the past and, during his military service, in 2005 served in Afghanistan. He has published two books in Turkish on war issues.<sup>8</sup> Recently, Dr. Yaçınkaya has been conducting research on FTFs, and in his contribution to this special issue he argues that foreign terrorist fighters are not only a threat against the countries in which they are active, but are a growing threat against their states of origin, as well as the states they transit. Turkey falls under all these categories. He argues that foreign terrorist fighter returnees present another threat not

only in terms of potential renewed terrorist attacks but as a source of metastasis that can expand terrorism to the rest of the world.

After explaining the emergence of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and how this concept has developed in legal and academic terms, Dr. Yalçınkaya goes on to explain international efforts to deal with the threat they pose. He then specifically focuses on challenges against Turkey and the role of FTFs in terror attacks within the country, analyzing the attacks through methodological categorization. Turkey's case presents many interesting insights about the danger presented by FTFs. After analyzing Turkey's strategy against them, he concludes that the foreign terrorist fighters create another threat to the civilized world, like a contagious agent of a cancer cell to the rest of the body. He argues that Turkey experienced the initial wave of terrorist attacks by returnees, and the Turkish case study shows that foreign terrorist fighters' contagious effect must be examined for other terrorist organizations as well.

The works on ISIS and foreign terrorist fighters are followed by a different but even less studied topic; Turkey-Japan economic relations. While there were some reports published by various government agencies and some patchy

internet data on the issue previously, K. Ali Akkemik's contribution to this issue is probably the only in-depth and extensive analysis of Turkey-Japan bilateral economic relations ever published. It not only details Turkey's relations with Japan, but by making comparisons it also gives a sketch of Turkey's economic relations with East Asia in general.

Dr. Akkemik points out that despite very warm diplomatic relations as of the mid-2010s, Turkey-Japan economic relations are in decline. This is a reflection of the changing landscape in the East Asia economy, where China and Korea are in a persistent trend to catch up with Japan and are becoming more and more competitive. As Japan is moving away from manufacturing and is being replaced by China and Korea, the Turkish economy is becoming more dependent on industrial inputs from Korea and China at the expense of the declining importance of Japan. However, parallel to Japan-EU free trade negotiations, Turkey is also in negotiations with Japan. Akkemik's heavy data laden empirical work is one of the first studies analysing Turkey-Japan trade relations. In his study, Akkemik also gives insights on Turkey's trade policy and the importance of international trade in the Turkish economy. At the end of his study Akkemik also investigates Turkey-

Japan foreign direct investment (FDI) relations, analyses Japan's New Growth Strategy, which relies on investing overseas as a policy priority as stated by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), and offers Turkey as an opportunity for the Japanese government to realize its expectations.

The next contribution to the issue is also on Japan. Japanese foreign policy has been experiencing a serious transformation over the last few years and researchers have only begun to scratch the surface in understanding the extent and direction of this transformation. Japan, due to its constitution and especially because of Article 9, which limits the activities of its armed forces, is dubbed a Peace State. Article 9 of the constitution prohibits the use of force or threat of using force as a foreign policy tool for the Japanese state. As a result, throughout the Cold War Japan relied on Official Development Assistance (ODA) as its major foreign policy tool, to the extent that in his seminal study, J. K. Holsti defines Japan's major national role conception as one of Developer.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, in the last few decades Japan has contributed to international peacekeeping activities with an increasing level of participation. For this purpose it has also developed the legal groundwork for reinterpreting the

Article 9 of its constitution, effectively reducing limitations on its armed forces. In this study, Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, after analysing the normative foundations of Japanese foreign policy, the development of Japan's contribution to peacekeeping and the accompanying legal modifications, investigates various factors that motivated this change, analysing major aims of Japanese foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study also analyses the Japanese approach to security through the concepts of Comprehensive Security and Human Security that have been embraced by Japanese decision makers. In the conclusion, this study argues that Japan is nearing its long search for a new role in international affairs, moving towards a redefinition of its national role conception as a Peacekeeping State, which points a willingness to take responsibility in the solution of world problems to the extent of using its Self Defence Forces (SDF). Dr. Pehlivan Türk offers the additional ontological category of "peacekeeping state" to Holsti's taxonomy of national role conceptions that can best define Japan, and, provided that the concept of peacekeeping regimes expand in the future, to some other states in the international system as well.

The last contribution in this special issue is from outside of the symposium event mentioned above. However it

is not very different from the main theme of horizontal cooperation among powers in the world as it is on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its regional partners, and enhances this special issue's multi-perspective approach to regional and international affairs. In their study, Syed Farooq Hasnat and Zamurrad Awan from Forman Christian College University in Lahore make an analysis of SCO's potential in resolving the regional threats in Central Asia and its vicinity. In order to examine this concept, the authors analyse the evolution and development of the SCO as an effective political and economic alliance since 2001. They also not only aim to assess the effectiveness of the SCO as a provider regional security for its member states but also study the challenges hampering the effectiveness of the SCO, from national, regional and global perspectives.

In the final analysis Dr. Hasnat and Dr. Awnat argue that SCO has a considerable potential to serve the wider interests of its member states and the SCO can be graded as a security alliance instead of military alliance. They also present some suggestions that could make the SCO a more effective regional forum. These are the need to design comprehensive laws and

policies to more effectively administer the regional affairs, the need to devise a strategy to resolve traditional and non-traditional threats to the region, the need to give serious attention to issues of contention between the member states SCO, and the need to realize the economic integration and cross-cultural linkages of this region.

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**The current hegemonic order is insufficient for a resolving of world problems, and more horizontal cooperation is needed by powers such as Japan and Turkey.**

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As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, this special issue might look eclectic in terms of the theme of the studies included. However, all these valuable contributions are tacitly bound to each other by an underlying concern that the current hegemonic order is insufficient for a resolving of world problems, and more horizontal cooperation is needed by powers such as Japan and Turkey. These worries led to the realization of the symposium; "Turkey Japan Dialogue on Global Affairs", that made this special issue possible.

## Endnotes

- 1 John J. Mearsheimer, “Why we will soon miss the Cold War”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 2 (1990), pp. 35-50.
- 2 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (eds.), *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*, London & New York, Routledge, 2009.
- 3 For an analysis of deepening Turkey-Japan bilateral political relations see, Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, “Turkish-Japanese Relations: Turning Romanticism into Rationality”, *International Journal*, Vol. 67, No.1 (2011), pp.101-117.
- 4 An interesting approach is that of Amitav Acharya, who claims that even though the US is not itself declining, the US-based “American world order” is weakening. Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order*, Cambridge, Polity, 2014.
- 5 The symposium website can be accessed at <http://www.turkeyjapan.org/> (last visited 17 September 2016).
- 6 Bahadır Pehlivan Türk, *Japan and Turkey in the International Community: Cooperation and Potential*, Ankara, ORSAM Report No: 193, at <http://www.orsam.org.tr/files/Raporlar/rapor193/193eng.pdf> (last visited 8 October 2016).
- 7 Yutaka Takaoka, *The Roles of Tribes in Contemporary Syrian Politics and Society: An Analysis of the Tribes in the Euphrates River Region and al-Jazeera Region*, Tokyo, Sangen-sha, 2012 (in Japanese).
- 8 Haldun Yalçınkaya. *Savaş: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Kullanımı*, Ankara, İmge, 2008; Haldun Yalçınkaya (ed.), *Savaş: Farklı Disiplinlerde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Ankara, Siyasal Yayınevi, 2010.
- 9 Kalevi J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1970), p. 266.



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# Analysis of the Resource Mobilization Mechanism of the Islamic State

Yutaka TAKAOKA\*

## Abstract

*This article examines the structure of resource mobilization for the Islamic State by focusing on its recruitment mechanism. This mechanism consists of several actors, and their relationships and interactions are quite important for successful recruitment. Since Islamic extremist organizations need to avoid unreliable members, their resource mobilization in general and recruitment in particular have to be conducted through personal networks, such as kinship networks of each activist. Following the Islamic extremists' success in agitations and propaganda done in cyber space, changes have appeared in the recruitment mechanism as well. Thus, nowadays, the mechanism is formed by "Muhajirun", "recruiters", "coordinators", "temporary and real accepters", and "disseminators". Detailed observations of each actor and their nature, function, and even location reveal several important findings. Furthermore, these findings provide valuable insights about the threat potential of the Islamic State, and of providing counter measures against it. As a consequence, it is possible to say that an effective obstruction of the Islamic State's resource mobilization is as important as direct military actions or police measures against it.*

## Key Words

Islamic Extremism, The Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh), Resource Mobilization, Mujahidun, Muhajirun, Cross Border Migration, Terrorism.

## Introduction

This study aims to explore the mechanism of resource mobilization of the Islamic State, and provide some insights to facilitate formulation of counter measures against this mobilization. To achieve this purpose, it focuses on the group's recruitment methods. Nowadays, expansion of the Islamic State's influence and their possible terrorist attacks around the world have become a central concern for international security. Particularly after attacks in Paris (January and November 2015), Jakarta (January 2016), and Brussels (March 2016), concern has increased worldwide. Meanwhile, what kind of counter measures are to be taken remains unclear. The questions of what kind of policies should be employed to curb the Islamic State's resource mobilization ability, or how to conduct new operations around the world, have also not been answered sufficiently. As a result of the absence of concrete policies

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on this issue, the estimated number of foreigners who joined the Islamic State or other extremist organizations in Iraq or Syria increased from 12,000 to 31,000 between 2014 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of managing such policies stems from the complex activities and the organizational structure of the Islamic State. Therefore, revealing their resource mobilization mechanism and analyzing various actors taking part in the process will contribute to our knowledge of this complex structure.

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There are already numerous research studies and publications about resource mobilization by the Islamic State, such as its fundraising, logistics or armament, and recruitment.<sup>2</sup> Taking this literature into consideration, this article will look mainly at the recruitment process and migration of foreigners into the Islamic State. Since this study focuses on the mechanism of resource mobilization of the Islamic State, it will not provide details on the motivations or social statuses of various actors taking part in the mechanism. These are so diverse that portraying a general image of the people involved is quite difficult.<sup>3</sup>

This article first examines the traditional model of recruitment by Islamic extremists.<sup>4</sup> However, under the present circumstances, this model needs to be modified because of the existence and importance of the Muhajirun (migrants for Jihad), who are inspired by the internet, especially by SNS (Social Networking Services such as twitter, etc.). Hence after giving consideration to the role of SNS by Islamic extremists, this study provides a modified model of recruitment. As a result of examinations of the mechanism of recruitment, it also points out some findings and implications for deterrence of the Islamic State.

## The Traditional Model of Recruitment

When Islamic extremists began to mobilize resources for their activities in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the process of recruitment mainly relied on social relationships, such as the extended family of each activist. This tendency seemed to be a result of the relative primitiveness of the Islamic extremists' recruitment techniques. As leaders like Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989, a major leader of the Arab fighters against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan) or Usama bin Ladin (1957-2011) made journeys around the world to mobilize resources, Islamic extremists of those days ran resource mobilization based on direct personal relationships, and did not have a highly organized character. The nature of their activities probably determined



the way of recruitment. The activities of Islamic extremists were sometimes illegal or criminal and thus they needed trustworthy persons for recruitment. It was natural therefore, for them to seek trustworthy individuals among their relatives. In other words, face-to-face communication between recruiters and recruited was essential.<sup>5</sup> Even after Islamic extremists began to use the internet for their agitations at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, communications via internet were believed to be monitored by state security apparatuses, and therefore they preferred to avoid online resource mobilization. This tendency has continued from the end of the Jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan to the present. However, there was a minor change in the expanded base, as they added their colleagues in Afghanistan as a source of recruitment as well. Islamic extremists' recruitment further developed through the experiences of al-Qaida and the infiltration of foreign fighters (Mujahidun) into Iraq.

Many research studies done by academics and state apparatuses have analyzed this issue, and have revealed important points about the mechanism of recruitment or cross-border migration of Mujahidun.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these studies, some supporters of Islamic extremists themselves provided useful information on the internet to potential recruits about how to enter into Iraq via Syria.<sup>7</sup> They eagerly recommended to those who wanted to

go Iraq to fight, that they find credible guides before their departure. They also provided technical and logistic advice for their journey. According to previous research and such sources of information given above, it is possible to classify four actors participating in the mechanism of recruitment and infiltration:

1. The Infiltrators: Individuals who actually try to take part in Islamic extremist organizations;
2. The Recruiters: Actors who recruit and select the 'infiltrators', and train them ideologically;
3. The Coordinators: Actors who assist 'infiltrators' in cross border migration;
4. The Accepters: Actors who absorb 'infiltrators' into Islamic extremist organizations.

It is important that the key factor in successful infiltration is not the ability of the infiltrators but the establishment of good relations and cooperation among the "recruiters", the "coordinators" and the "acceptors". Several case studies have shown that prior to the departure of the "infiltrators", "recruiters" select and indoctrinate them. "Coordinators" then determine their route and/or accommodations, and their access to the "acceptors", who will be the ones to decide to take in the "infiltrators". Guide-book like information for the "infiltrators" warns them to find trustworthy coordinators in advance to begin the journey. Interestingly,

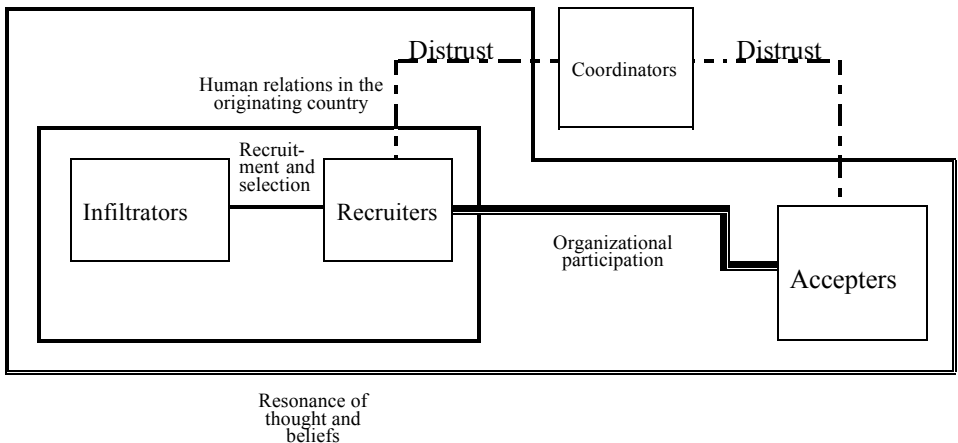
studies have shown that there is little ideological sympathy between the “coordinators” and other actors. For instance, Felter and Fishman stressed a deep distrust on the part of the organization [i.e. “acceptors”] towards the “coordinators”.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is assumed that “infiltrators”, “recruiters”, and “acceptors” share a radical religious ideology, in contrast to the “coordinators”, who do not always share such an outlook. Consequently, previous research has pointed to local tribal people or smugglers playing the role of the “coordinators” for economic incentives. The relationship between actors, the recruitment mechanism, and the cross border migration of Mujahidun, is summarized in Figure 1.

When considering the correlation between the solicitation by Islamic extremists and the actors involved in the cross border migration of

Mujahidun, the “infiltrators” and “recruiters” are located in the originating country of the “infiltrators”, and the “acceptors” exist in the conflict regions. Meanwhile, “coordinators” are believed to be local dwellers of transit countries (tribal people and local smugglers for instance). “Infiltrators” are recruited and selected in their origin country by the “recruiters”, who also give ideological training to the “infiltrators”. The “recruiters” generally seem to be affiliated with certain Islamic extremist organizations (i.e. the “acceptors”), or at least, they have personal ties with some members of the “acceptors”. Overall, successful infiltration depends on cooperation between “recruiters”, “coordinators”, and “acceptors”.

The “infiltrators”, “recruiters” and “acceptors” share religious and ideological thoughts and beliefs. “Coordinators” on the other hand,

**Figure 1: Conventional Model of Recruitment by Islamic Extremists**



although they assist “infiltrators” to join “accepters”, do not necessarily have an ideological sympathy with the other actors in the mechanism, and seek rather to maximize their own economic benefits. Therefore, there seems to be a deep distrust between the “coordinators” and other actors.<sup>9</sup>

## Modified Model of Recruitment

Since 2011, with expansion of the Islamic State on the ground and their heavy exploitation of SNS, they managed to attract more than 30,000 people from around 100 countries. Based on this phenomenon, two derivations can be made. The first concerns the case of those “infiltrators” who did not experience face-to-face communications with the “recruiters” and “coordinators”. It is considered that these infiltrators have radicalized themselves based on agitations or propaganda distributed via SNS, and made the journey to the areas occupied by the Islamic State depending on the guidance they found through SNS. The second concerns non-combatant infiltrators, such as the families of Mujahidun or female infiltrators who aim to provide sexual services for Mujahidun under the excuse of “Jihad al-Nikah” (Jihad for marriage). To comprehend these new kinds of infiltrators into the mechanism of recruitment, this article calls all infiltrators as Muhajirun,<sup>10</sup> and argues

that the above mentioned model should be modified.

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**It is important that the key factor in successful infiltration is not the ability of the infiltrators but the establishment of good relations and cooperation among the “recruiters”, the “coordinators” and the “accepters”.**

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With regard to the first group, even though the Islamic State makes its agitations and propaganda mainly in Arabic, it is believed that some of these infiltrators cannot read, write or speak Arabic. Thus, the question is; how did they get the necessary information, or how did they become familiar with the ideology of Islamic extremism? Normally these are serious obstacles, but the fact that such infiltrators still exist means that there are important individuals who gather articles and movies on Jihad, and then summarize and translate them into different languages on SNS. The literature on this issue points out that these people’s accounts on social media are more popular than the official accounts of Islamic extremist organizations<sup>11</sup>. And it is also noteworthy that these persons have knowledge about Arabic language and religious literature, but are not necessarily affiliated with any particular Islamic extremist organization. Furthermore, they do not seem to have organizational or

personal ties with Islamic extremists. Therefore, it is necessary to add these persons into the model of recruitment as new actors. This article will call them the “disseminators”, providing information and inspiration to candidate “infiltrators”. Several religious intellectuals or activists have been known as fitting in to the category of “disseminators”.<sup>12</sup>

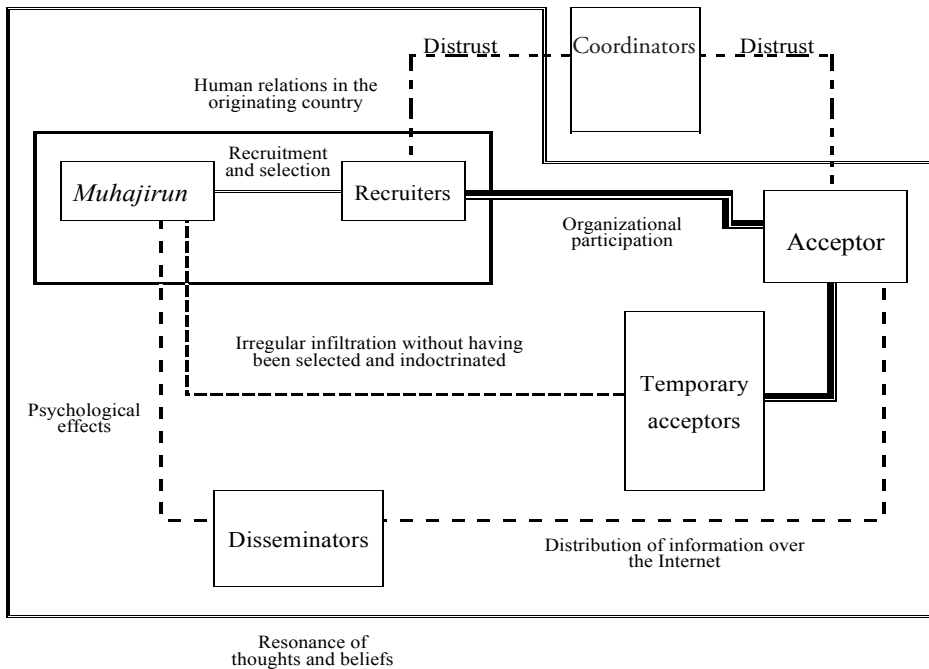
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**These Muhajirun can join the formal organization of the Islamic State only after confirmation of their credibility and skill by several other members.**

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However, the journey of infiltration and the process of joining the Islamic State cannot be easy, and the numbers of fighters who join via recruitment that is inspired solely by such “disseminators” is not likely to be a majority among members of the Islamic State. Indeed, this sort of recruitment may be considered as an irregular one. Certainly, on SNS, there are many narratives of Muhajirun who joined the Islamic State without organized recruitment.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, because these narratives (particularly stories on motivation, journey, the “coordinators”, “an ideal life” in the Islamic State... etc.) may be a part of the Islamic State’s propaganda, analysts should not depend on them completely as their source for research. As Neumann

revealed in his study on the narratives of defectors from the Islamic State, that ideal life is not always secured under the Islamic State. The defectors witnessed injustice, corruption, and poor quality of life in the “Caliphate”.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Islamic State has its own circumstances. For instance, it needs some specific skills to run its organization and activities (bureaucrats, IT engineers, doctors or medical workers, engineers for oil or gas fields, and experienced fighters and specialists for explosives in particular). In addition to these, the Islamic State is seriously required to screen out spies among its members. To secure the credibility of Muhajirun or to train them adequately, the Islamic State attaches them to training facilities or the lowest combat units.<sup>15</sup> These Muhajirun can join the formal organization of the Islamic State only after confirmation of their credibility and skill by several other members. Leaked personal data of numerous fighters of the Islamic State has revealed that the Islamic State actually requires the declaration of candidates’ recommenders to the organization for accountability.<sup>16</sup> Thus, this process has to be taken into consideration when dealing with the mechanism of recruitment. In other words, the Islamic state has introduced what could be called ‘temporary acceptors’, as a tool to avoid penetration by unreliable or unskilled individuals into the organization. Taking the above mentioned changes into consideration, the model of recruitment can be modified as below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Modified Model of Recruitment by Islamic Extremists**

In this revised model, all infiltrators are referred to as *Muhajirun*, since among those who want to join the Islamic State, there are a considerable number of non-combatants or females, children and elders. The model also takes into consideration the fact that, although face-to-face communications remains a core factor for recruitment, a number of irregular infiltrations cannot be ignored. To avoid penetration by spies from hostile entities and unskilled infiltrators emanating from irregular infiltration, the model also adds to the category of “acceptors” a new actor, the “temporary acceptors”. Those *Muhajirun* who infiltrate through irregular means became official members of the “acceptors”

only after screening and training under “temporary acceptors”. The “temporary acceptors” seem to be loosely organized under the “acceptors” within the conflict region. Another new actor, the “disseminators,” also is shown in this revised model as it plays important role to prompt irregular infiltration by distributing information over the internet about the Islamic State or the journey to join it. While the “disseminators” share thoughts and beliefs with the “infiltrators”, “recruiters”, and “acceptors”, they do not have direct organizational or personal connections to any of the “acceptors”. Finally, the “disseminators” do not need to conduct illegal or criminal acts at their locations.<sup>17</sup>

## Findings

This examination on the mechanism of recruitment revealed various important points and led to the above revised model. This model may be applicable not only to Mujahidun and other human resources mobilization, but also to the mobilization of other resources such as money and weapons. Therefore, this part of the study will discuss the characteristics of resources mobilization for Islamic extremists in general, and the Islamic State in particular.

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It is evident that Islamic extremists (the Islamic State in particular) inevitably mobilize resources from outside of the conflict region. According to their view, the conflict in Syria and Iraq is not a problem for these two states, but a problem for the Islamic Community (Umma) as a whole.

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It is evident that Islamic extremists (the Islamic State in particular) inevitably mobilize resources from outside of the conflict region. According to their view, the conflict in Syria and Iraq is not a problem for these two states, but a problem for the Islamic Community (Umma) as a whole. Thus

all Muslims should contribute to win the strife in accordance with each individual's capacity in various fields (i.e. not only on the battleground, but also, for example, in fundraising or propaganda spreading). This approach towards world jihad is assumed to prompt irregular infiltration and to mobilize the efforts of "disseminators", who contribute to the Islamic State outside of its organizational frameworks and personal relationships.

To secure trustworthy supporters, the Islamic extremists prefer to mobilize resources through their personal networks such as kinship networks or territorial connections. Consequently, face-to-face communication between the recruiter and the recruited plays an essential role in resource mobilization. This tendency did not change in principal even after recruitment via SNS became conspicuous. Thus leading class or skilled Muhajirun are supposed to be recruited through face-to-face recruitment.

From the view-point of each actor's location, it is natural to believe in the existence of a well-organized network within the originating countries of the Muhajirun and other resources to a certain extent. Therefore, such attacks as those in Paris (November 2015), Jakarta (January 2016), or Brussels (March 2016), for which the Islamic State claimed responsibility, do not reveal so much a problem about its expansion or "globalization", but show

how the Islamic State uses its capacity and resources in these arenas. In these countries there are already organized networks to mobilize resources for the Islamic State, and the attacks show that it has capability to conduct attacks at any location into which its network extends. From this point of view, there is a high probability of further attacks by the Islamic State in the countries where it has already developed its capacity to mobilize resources.

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Concerning the “coordinators”, these actors can be located around the routes between the origin countries of the Muhajirun and the conflict zone. In this case, Turkey can be considered as a main route for the cross border migration of Muhajirun. As stressed above, although the “coordinators” play a crucial role for successful infiltration, the “coordinators” do not have to share religious ideology or political aims of other actors in the mechanism of resource mobilizations. Therefore, the relationship between the “coordinators” and other actors seems to be tense and vulnerable. Nevertheless, since the

infiltration of Islamic extremists into Iraq or Syria has been continuing for at least five years, the “accepters” have had enough time to establish and develop their own activities to provide assistance for the Muhajirun.

Meanwhile, although the effects of the “disseminators” are not necessary to be limited within a specific geographic area, their location seems to be quite important. Certainly the “disseminators” are active in cyber space and they may therefore be free from some real world restrictions, however, when a person wants to act as a “disseminator”, it is still more convenient for him to be in a country or society with a culture of tolerance, freedom of expression and religious freedoms. If the “disseminator” is located in an oppressive regime or one with poor internet infrastructure, it becomes virtually impossible to act effectively.

Ultimately, only the “accepters” actually exist in the conflict zone. They seem to be quite skeptical toward Muhajirun who reach Syria or Iraq by irregular means. Therefore the layer of “temporary acceptors” has been established as a proxy to impose screening on Muhajirun and to train them. There have been several reports on difficulties experienced by Muhajirun under the “acceptors”.<sup>18</sup>

## Implications and Conclusion

This part discusses implications of the threat from the Islamic State in the

future, and counter measure policies against its activities. The potential threat of the Islamic State against a certain country can be estimated by the actual results of its resource mobilization. Some European and South Asian countries act as resource sources for the Islamic State, and several hundred of the *Muhajirun* have been recruited from these countries. This fact means that there is an organized base of the Islamic State within these countries, and this organized base can easily turn into aggressors against their host countries. Therefore, it is important to see the motive of the Islamic State to change its organized base's activities there from resource mobilization to aggressive operations. As one intelligence agency stated, it is important for the Islamic State to maintain its image as a "strong" group attracting streams of new recruits, thus it needs to continuously achieve brilliant war results.<sup>19</sup> In addition to this motivation, increasing pressure on resource mobilization activities by the Islamic State in resource supplying countries may increase the possibility of attacks within these countries, because it is natural that an increase in state scrutiny against resource mobilization would let "recruiters" consider a counterattack.

As several resolutions by the U.N. Security Council have demonstrated, cutting resource supplies for the Islamic State is considered as a key counter measure against it. Thus

further analysis of the structure of resource mobilization and the model of recruitment, which this research aimed to provide in particular, is useful to deal with the issue. According to this model, countries involved in this issue can be grouped into three categories according to their place in the recruitment mechanism. The first consists of the "supply side," such as European countries, countries of the former Soviet Union, South Asian countries, China, and Arab countries. The *Muhajirun*, the "recruiters", and in many case, the "disseminators" are active there. The Islamic State (the "acceptors") exploits these countries for resource mobilization. As the "acceptors" rely for an essential part of their recruitment on face-to-face communications, it is highly probable that the "recruiters" are coordinating closely with the "acceptors". Furthermore, the "recruiters" may be organized under the direction of the "acceptors" to a certain extent. Although these "supply side" countries should concentrate their efforts to prevent "recruiters" from carrying out their activities, this effort may increase the possibility of attacks in these countries, at least in the short term. Attacks in Paris and Brussels may be considered as a result of this. In accordance with this point of view, the possibility of a large scale attack by the Islamic State in, for example, Japan, is not high. Even though there was a case of a Japanese infiltrator detained in Turkey in the



end of March 2016, this seems to be an exception and there are only minor resource mobilization activities for the Islamic State in Japan.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, in addition to keeping guard on the ground, checking for the possible activities or the presence of “recruiters” is important for countries like Japan to avoid such an attack.

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The second group of countries is the “transit route” countries, such as Turkey. The “coordinators” here are assumed to use smuggling routes or pasture fields to assist the journeys of the “infiltrators,” in exchange for economic incentives. In addition to the activities of the “coordinators”, “accepters” may develop their organizational base in this category of countries. Countries in this category are assumed to have difficulties in controlling their border areas, or seem to have specific circumstances including social, economic, political, or tribal divisions. At least some of latest attacks in Turkey reflect its nature as a “transit route” used by thousands of Muhajirun going to the Islamic State.

The third group consists of the “demand side” countries, such as Iraq, Syria, and possibly Libya, where the “accepters” and “temporary accepters” are active. In these countries, there are power vacuums, which allow the “accepters” or the “temporary accepters” to act freely to a certain extent. Since the “accepters” have their own circumstances, they prefer to absorb trustworthy, trained, skilled fighters or professionals and even their wives. Moreover, the “accepters” are in need of various economic and military resources, and these actors are necessary to develop infrastructure to train or screen Muhajirun. Furthermore, these countries will possibly export trained and experienced fighters abroad as returnees in the future.

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**Thus further analysis of the structure of resource mobilization and the model of recruitment, which this research aimed to provide in particular, is useful to deal with the issue. According to this model, countries involved in this issue can be grouped into three categories according to their place in the recruitment mechanism.**

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By looking at this picture one can conclude that counter measures should

differ in accordance to these categories. In “supply side” countries, it is necessary to check “recruiters” and their network as the top priority, because this network may turn into a base from which major attacks can be launched. EU countries have already expressed their concern about possible threats that emanate from returnees of Islamic extremist organizations. Nevertheless, these countries should remember that when there are returnees, they can be a source of recruitment themselves. In this context, it is worth emphasizing that the conventional tendency is to recruit fighters through kinship, local community ties or by relationship to Jihadi colleagues. When these Islamic extremists form an organization they tend to include several members from same family. The militant composition in the latest attacks in Paris and Brussels support this argument. This experience must to be a lesson for “supply side” countries.

For “transit route” countries, taking measures against the “coordinators” is the most important step. In addition to border control and police measures, a kind of political, economic, and social conciliation for tribes or rural dwellers might be required as well. Although imposing visa restrictions is considered as the most effective measure for a country to avoid being a “transit route” for *Muhajirun*, this measure may sometimes contradict with goals of economic development, as it might

discourage foreign investors or tourists. Therefore, conciliation seems to be the most preferable measure against would be “coordinators”. Moreover, conciliation with the “coordinators” may also prompt disputes between them and other actors taking part in the resource mobilization mechanism. “Coordinators” who do not always share similar religious ideologies with other actors is an important vulnerability for resource mobilization of the Islamic State.

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As for the “demand side” countries, enacting countermeasure policies against facilities and infrastructures used to receive *Muhajirun* is necessary. Within these measures, the option of utilizing various military means should be open as well. In addition to policies aiming to dissolve functions and facilities of the “acceptors”, determined efforts to find rational and

sustainable solutions for the conflicts in Iraq and Syria should be pursued. It is the incessant political disputes that have justified the existence of Islamic extremists in the first place. In addition, harmful discourse and analysis have provided convenient excuses for the Islamic extremists, especially the Islamic State, to mobilize resources around the world. Hence a combination of military measures to destroy the infrastructures of the “acceptors” on the one hand, and the introducing of political initiatives to deprive justifications for Islamic extremists on the other, should be considered as a single integrated measure in “demand side” countries.

Finally, obstructing the effectiveness of the “disseminators” is a very important challenge for all countries in their countering efforts against the Islamic State. Although the “disseminators” do not necessarily have personal or organizational ties with other actors in the resource mobilization mechanism, they significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the propaganda and messages of the Islamic State on SNS. Regarding this characteristic of the “disseminators”, they thus prefer to locate in those places that guarantee freedom of speech as well as full access to the internet. In other words, some Western countries have become a hot bed for the “disseminators”. Consequently, close monitoring and elaborate counter measures against

the “disseminators” in industrialized countries and their allies is seriously required. However, keeping the balance between the need to restrain the “disseminators” and defending civil rights and freedom is a very complicated issue. As the restriction of civil rights is closely related to the rise of terrorism or extremism, over-restrictions of these rights and freedoms harbors the danger of facilitating the further growth of Islamic extremism.

While, the Islamic State ostensibly denies all un-Islamic value systems in the world, it does not hesitate to mobilize essential resources for its activities from these infidel systems. At the same time it also exploits perceived “un-Islamic” civil rights and freedom in Western societies. The key point of carrying out counter measures against the Islamic State may be hidden in this contradiction. Therefore, understanding its mechanism of resource mobilization in general and recruitment in particular is necessary for developing an effective fusion of military and civil counter measures against the Islamic State’s activities.

Finally, it should be emphasized that revealing the complex structures of Islamic extremist organizations is essential to take any countermeasure, and observations on the mechanism for resource mobilization are an important step in that direction.

## Endnotes

- 1 Richard Barrett, *Foreign Fighters in Syria*, New York, The Soufan Group, 2014, p.33; The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, New York, The Soufan Group, 2015, p. 25.
- 2 On the fundraising, Janine Di Giovannni, and Leah Mcgrath Goodman and Damien Sharikov, “How does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror?”, *Newsweek*, 6 November 2014; Elizabeth Dickinson, *Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria’s Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home*, Washington, The SABAN Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, 2013; The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), *Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Paris*, The Financial Action Task Force, 2015; Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, and Aaron Y. Zalin, “Uncharitable Organizations”, *Foreign Policy*, 26 February 2013; Erika Solomon, Guy Chazan and Sam Joe, “ISIS Inc: How Oil Fuels the Jihadi Terrorists”, *Financial Times*, 14 October 2015; David Andrew Weinberg, *Qatar and Terror Finance Part I: Negligence*, Washington, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2014; Analyze sources of revenue for the Islamic State such as oil, smuggling and donations from Gulf States and even “taxation”. On the aspect of armament, see, Conflict Armament Research, *Islamic State Ammunition in Iraq and Syria*, London, Conflict Armament Research, 2014; conducted field research and provided very important analysis.
- 3 Major literatures which shed light on the motivation and social statuses of recruited members are Barrett, 2014; Joseph A. Carter, Shiraz Maher and Peter R. Neumann, *Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Network*, London, The International Centre for The Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2014; Briggs Rachel Obe and Tanya Silverman, *Western Foreign Fighters Innovations in Responding to the Threat*, London, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015; Neumann summarized members’ diverse motivations into three: the Syrian conflict; faith and ideology; and personal and material needs. Nevertheless, he also pointed out that narratives of recruitment by the Islamic State are complex and multifaceted; Peter R Neumann, *Victims, Perpetrators, Assets: The Narratives of Islamic State Defectors*, London, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2015, p. 9; Dodwell provides important considerations on social statuses (education levels, job history, experiences of Jihad... etc.) of foreign fighters in the Islamic State, examining leaked personal files of foreign fighters, and pointing out this diversity, see, Brian Dodwell and Daniel Milton and Don Rasseler, *The Caliphate’s Global Workforce: An Inside Look at the Islamic State’s Foreign Fighter Paper Trail*, New York, Combating Terrorism Center, 2016.
- 4 There is no clear definition of the sorts of individuals and groups that the term ‘Islamic extremists’ refers to, and there are cases where different names, such as ‘Islamic radicals’,

are used to describe the same phenomenon. In this paper, the discussion is advanced by provisionally defining the following individuals and groups as Islamic extremists: (i) those who, in addition to analyzing the current situation and considering problem-solving based upon Islamic logic and its logical claims, justify their own actions by their own version of Islam; (ii) those who have a negative attitude toward existing states, country borders, and political systems (such as monarchies and republics); and (iii) those who have adopted terrorism as a political style of action and try to achieve their objectives through activities that are illegal within the framework of existing nations and institutions.

- 5 Thomas Hegghammer, "The Recruiter's Dilemma: Signaling and Rebel Recruitment Tactics", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2013), pp. 3-16.
- 6 Nawaf Obaid and Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Militants in Iraq: Assessment and Kingdom's Response*, Washington DC, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2005; Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records*, New York, Combating Terrorism Centre, US Military Academy, 2007.
- 7 Although credibility is not confirmed, the articles below are examples of such information: *Hādhihi Hiyā al-Iarīq ilā al-Irāq* ("This is the way to Iraq"), at <http://www.hkmah.net/showthread.php?t=8953> (last visited: 4 June, 2005); *Iarīq ilā Bilād al-Rāfidayn al-Jadīd* ("New way to land of two rivers"), at <http://alfirdaws.org/forums/showthread.php?t=2821> (last visited 11 September 2005).
- 8 In this case the "acceptors" - the Islamic State in Iraq or al-Qaida in the land of Two Rivers-asked the "infiltrators" to declare the amount of money paid for the "coordinators", and filed it as an organized document. The document suggested that there were no fixed or regular fees for coordination, and suggested the existence of a dispute about the amount of fee the "coordinators" should get (Felter and Fishman, p.23-27).
- 9 Yutaka Takaoka and Masaki Mizobuchi, "How does Muhajiroun Get to Go to Jihad? Foreign Fighters and the Geopolitics of the Conflict in Syria", in Raymond Hinnebusch and Omar Imady (eds.), *The Syrian Uprising: roots and trajectories*, London, Routledge, 2016 (forthcoming).
- 10 UNSC defined *Muhajirun* as follows: "Nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training." UNSC: United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 19 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2015/358, 15 May 2015, p 5-6.

- 11 Carter, Maher and Neumann, *Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Network*, pp.15-18.
- 12 Ibid, pp.18-28.
- 13 Supporters of the Islamic state have compiled several narratives of *Muhajirun* as e-Books, for example, *Hijrah (migration) to the Islamic State 2015*, at <https://thejihadproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/hijrah-to-the-islamic-state.pdf#search=%27Hijrah+to+the+Islamic+State%27> (last visited 11 October 2016); Although the narratives in this e-book stress the “grace of Allah” or “the will of Allah” for successful journeys, it provides few details of infiltration processes.
- 14 Neumann, *Victims, Perpetrators, Assets*, pp.10-11.
- 15 An article in the Arabic newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awasat* on 6 November 2014, “Kaifa Yanndamm al-Shābb fi Misr ilā ‘Dā’ish?’ (‘How do Egyptian youth join into Da’ish?’) reported some examples of this reality.
- 16 Personal data of 122 ISIS suicide bombers, *Zaman Al Wasl*, at <https://en.zamanalwsl.net/news/14563.html> (last visited 15 October 2016), showed leaked forms with the personal data of fighters. In addition to name, date of birth and citizenship, etc. the form contains fields of ‘recommendation and recommender’.
- 17 Takaoka, and Mizobuchi, “How does Muhajiroun Get to Go to Jihad? Foreign Fighters and the Geopolitics of the Conflict in Syria” (forthcoming).
- 18 General Intelligence and Security Service Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, *Life with ISIS: the Myth Unravalled*, at <https://english.aivd.nl/binaries/aivd-en/documents/publications/2016/01/15/publication-life-with-isis-the-myth-unravalled/life-with-isis.pdf>, pp. 5-13 (last visited 12 October 2016).
- 19 Ibid, p.14.
- 20 The Soufan Group estimated that there were only nine Japanese infiltrators into the Islamic State between 2011 and 2015. This fact strongly indicates that there are weak recruitment activities, thus there is only a minor organizational base of the Islamic State in Japan, see, The Soufan Group, p.8.

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# Turkey's Struggle Against the Foreign Terrorist Fighters of DAESH\*

Haldun YALÇINKAYA\*\*

## Abstract

*DAESH is a terrorist organisation with a Salafist jihadist ideology that threatens the civilized world. Moreover, like a contagious agent of a cancer cell to the rest of the body, the foreign terrorist fighters of DAESH are a growing threat against their states of origin, the states they transit, and the states where they are active, as well as their neighbouring zones. Turkey falls under all these categories. Between 2014 and 2016, 159 individuals in Turkey lost their lives because of terror attacks executed by the foreign terrorist fighters. Data from these attacks are analysed in the article. While increased international cooperation on the use of no-entry lists, has produced some positive improvements in the efforts against foreign terrorist fighters, such collaboration should extend to other measures as well. In conclusion, the article argues that while Turkey experienced the initial wave of terrorist attacks by returnees, foreign terrorist fighters might cause a metastasis to the rest of the world. Moreover, the contagious effect of foreign fighters for violence is not limited to DAESH and needs to be examined within other terrorist organizations.*

## Key Words

DAESH, foreign terrorist fighters, Syria, Turkey, terrorism.

## Introduction

Terrorist groups, especially those with Salafist jihadist motivations, have expanded their presence and influence in Syria and Iraq in recent years, due to the on-going civil war in Syria since 2011, and the developments in Iraq since 2003. The threat posed by these groups, particularly the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/DAESH) and the al-Nusra Front (ANF), has become a concern for the security and stability of not only the countries of the region but also different parts of the world where the violence spread by these groups has triggered radicalization and violent extremism.

Turkey, as a neighbour to the conflict zone, has been facing an increased risk and threat to its security at many levels. The reason for the risk is essentially caused not only by the geographical proximity to the conflict zone but also

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by its border neighbours, which include such non-state actors as DAESH, the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), and various opponents to the Syrian regime, as well as the Assad regime itself. Although there are many other concerns for Turkey caused by DAESH, the article focuses only on the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) of DAESH and their effects against Turkey. It also needs to be highlighted that there are other non-state actors whose foreign terrorist fighters create security problems for Turkey, but they are not the focus of this article.

Foreign Terrorist Fighters, in general, were described as illegal by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178, on 24 September 2014. Prior to this, foreign fighters were not assumed to pose a threat to civilization, rather they were seen simply as volunteers who were ready to sacrifice their lives. However, the foreign fighters wave in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the emergence of al-Qaida raised concerns about such individuals. Subsequently, as DAESH has seen, the UN Security Council duly responded to their actions with Resolution 2178, describing them as illegal. The main problem concerning foreign terrorist fighters is their role in spreading violence outside of conflict zones, all around the world.

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In this perspective, this study initially explains the evolution of foreign fighters, especially the most recent generation associated with DAESH. This will lead to the articulation of theoretical explanations of foreign terrorist fighters, established with the al-Qaeda experience of the last decade. Later, the article argues for international efforts to tackle with the phenomenon in general. Within this framework, the theoretical approach will be applied to Turkey to describe the threat potential against the country specifically. Subsequently, a data set encompassing the DAESH terror attacks against Turkey between March 2014 and March 2016 will be used to analyse the effects of foreign terrorist fighters on Turkey. Consequently, Turkey's strategy against foreign terrorist fighters will be discussed. In the conclusion, the article argues that foreign terrorist fighters have a



contagious effect for violence spreading to the rest of the world and the case in Turkey is an indicator.

## Emergence of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon with DAESH

Foreign fighters have been seen on battlefields since the emergence of nation states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, history witnessed devoted foreign fighters on battlefields such as in Greece, the United States, Spain, Palestine, Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia, and Somalia. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, al-Qaeda began recruiting foreign fighters for terrorism, thus leading to these foreign fighters being seen as terrorists instead of volunteers ready to sacrifice their lives to save what they saw as the weak side in a war. This was the start of a second generation in the evolution of foreign fighters. At this point the international community still did not establish a judicial regulation against them due to the fact that their number was relatively low. With the emergence of DAESH in Syria and Iraq however, the United Nations added the title “terrorists” and declared them illegals. This allows us to now talk about the third-generation of foreign fighters.

On 24 September 2014, the United Nations Security Council adopted

Resolution 21781 and defined foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) as:

“... individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict...”

With Resolution 2178, the UN Security Council urges the member states to take necessary measures to prevent the actions of such FTFs. The reason for defining any individual as an FTF because of their travels to conflict zones or because they are found to have intentions of terrorism, is a result and reflection of the level of security threat being faced. Admittedly, that approach encompasses a high potential to raise discussions among judicial scholars; however, this issue is not within the scope of this study. Because of the difficulties involved in any de-radicalization process for such fighters, and their contagious effect in spreading violence throughout the world, third-generation FTFs have started to be taken as a serious threat to the civilised world and thus received a reaction at the utmost capacity, resulting in being defined as illegal.

Since the FTF phenomenon is still being conceptualized, there are

different attempts to create models for understanding the FTFs' pathways. In this context, a model developed by the International Centre for Counter Terrorism in The Hague provides a useful framework to understand this phenomenon. According to this model,<sup>2</sup> an FTF will eventually be; either, first, killed in conflict zone, or, second, stay in the conflict zone permanently, or, third, leave the conflict zone. The potential threat of FTFs to the rest of the world begins, ironically, if they want to leave the conflict zone. Essentially, they might either return to their home or travel to a third country. In the first option, they can be either integrated into the society peacefully, or may decide to join other conflicts. Or else, in a very detrimental scenario to the world, these returnee FTFs might engage in terrorist activity in their home country. The last option for the returnee FTFs tops the threat list for the rest of the world.

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The potential threat of FTFs to the rest of the world begins, ironically, if they want to leave the conflict zone. Essentially, they might either return to their home or travel to a third country.

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As stated, before UN Security Council Resolution 2178, scholars preferred the term “foreign fighters” instead of “foreign terrorist fighters.” There are a number of studies on al-Qaeda’ foreign fighters covering the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century within this perspective.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the motivation of al-Qaeda, namely a Salafist jihadist interpretation of Islam, these studies established the theoretical approach for foreign fighters. Regarding the continuation of the Salafist jihadist movement from al-Qaeda to DAESH, or alternatively from foreign fighters to foreign terrorist fighters, the theory has the capacity to explain the current wave. Having stated that, the main concern for foreign fighters is the “blowback effect.” The blowback effect states that foreign fighters have the potential to spread the violence to different geographies.<sup>4</sup> In essence, the blowback effect portrays the threat capacity of foreign fighters when they return from conflict zones. The theoretical approach also shows us that one out of nine foreign fighters will engage in further terrorist activity after they return.<sup>5</sup> As for DAESH’s foreign terrorist fighters, I argue that the proportion is jeopardized because of their evolution. This proportion also fails to show the level for their contagious capacity for violence to the rest of the world. At this stage, the theoretical approach follows previous studies which have found out that

the battlefield experience of returnees makes their lethal capacity twice as much as before they went to the conflict zone.<sup>6</sup>

## International Efforts to Deal with the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon

Essentially, there are three institutional fora for international efforts against foreign terrorist fighters and, by implication, against DAESH: the Anti-ISIL Coalition, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), and the United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee (UN CTC). The Anti-ISIL Coalition takes hard power measures against DAESH; the GCTF creates a platform to decide on principles against the threat, as well as paving the way for international cooperation; and the UN CTC aims to establish internationally harmonized national regulations. It needs to be noted that the conceptualization process of the FTF phenomenon is an on-going process, and the international community has been seeking to understand the phenomenon in order to tackle with it. Therefore, the efforts of the GCTF and the UN CTC encompass some theoretical attempts, such as defining and regulating international travel standards, etc.

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Admittedly, DAESH has the initiative and it can easily abuse the liberal international system, especially travel regulations. In other words, the international efforts are only responsive to the actions of terrorist organisations, and these organisations have the upper hand in setting the terms of the debate. The effectiveness of the international efforts is another question, and so far they have not proven capable of controlling this challenge.

Currently, we have some reports published by the United Nations,<sup>7</sup> in addition to some academic assessments of the subject. As well, real time media releases including social media sources give us some hints at how to conceptualize this phenomenon. As mentioned above, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2178, which defined foreign fighters, under specific circumstances, as terrorists, and provided a road map

for its members to deal with the phenomenon. Essentially, UN Security Council Resolution 2178 is the cornerstone to deal with the problem, and has created a capacity for leading the international cooperation to become more effective. Before the Resolution, neither international cooperation nor national mechanisms had a reference point for dealing with the problem. Resolution 2178 has since then paved the way for the global response to the FTF challenge. Previously, even the lack of a definition for FTFs was itself an obstacle for efforts to address this problem. We now have tangible criteria and a roadmap at the national and international levels for tackling FTFs, which used to be a huge gap for international coordination, cooperation, or even collaboration.

On 14 May 2015, the UN Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate released a report entitled “Implementation of Security Council 2178 (2014) by States affected by foreign terrorist fighters”.<sup>8</sup> The report underlines that foreign terrorist fighters are a growing threat against (i) their states of origin; (ii) the states they transit; (iii) the states where

they are active; and (iv) those states’ neighbouring zones. In particular, in the long-term, FTFs pose a risk for their home countries or third countries where they decide to reside as they become returnees, named as “alumni” in the report. The UN CTC identifies 67 most affected member states and mentions the presence of up to 30,000 FTFs in the region.<sup>9</sup> Previously there

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were reports that relied on limited sources, such as interviews, social network analyses, estimations or gatherings through media. This UN report is the first report that relies on extensive data based

on the accumulation of member states’ official approvals. At this point, it needs to be noted that previous analyses and the UN CTC report are in accordance with each other and the direction of the international community is on the right path to conceptualize this phenomenon. Essentially, the UN CTC report identifies five urgent measures that need to be taken by member states: (i) Preventing inter-state travel of FTFs; (ii) law enforcement; (iii) countering incitement to terrorism, including through the Internet; (iv) criminalization; and (v) financing of foreign terrorist fighters. These

five points pass on “what needs to be done” instructions to the international community to prevent FTFs and their travels.

In a nutshell, the UN CTC states that the world has been caught unprepared to prevent FTF travels. Although there have been some improvements, there is still a need for an effective international cooperation to overcome this problem. Essentially, globalization has been encouraging individuals to travel around the world. The global system, which reflects this understanding, lacks effective instruments to prevent mobility of individuals. Hence, the principle of freedom for travelling allows the FTFs to benefit from considerable mobility around the world. As for the other above-mentioned measures, namely law enforcement, countering incitement to terrorism including through the Internet, criminalization, and financing of the FTFs, there are only clues for improvement because of the fact that there have not yet been significant official public statements on them. According to the clues; law enforcement is still ineffective although most countries have criminalized FTFs' activities. The countering measures on the Internet and financing of terrorism are two popular subjects that are being discussed in public. In 2016, the main perception is that the flow of FTFs has decreased to some extent.<sup>10</sup>

## Turkey's Challenges with Foreign Terrorist Fighters

As for the application of the abovementioned model to Turkey, the threats have been tripled compared with those of the rest of the world. Turkey, theoretically, perceives exactly the same threat as do her Western allies, in the sense that a Turkish FTF who decides to come back to her/his home might, like any other FTF returnee, engage in a terrorist activity within the country. In addition to that, Turkey's threat perception encompasses two additional dimensions. Turkey's concerns begin when any foreign terrorist fighter decides to leave the conflict zone, as he/she will likely use Turkey on the way back to her/his home, thus creating the first threat to Turkey. For instance, in March 2014, three Turkish citizens, including one police officer and one military personnel, were killed during the return of some foreign terrorist fighters.<sup>11</sup> As this event underscores, even the transiting FTF can create an additional threat for Turkey. As for the third dimension, a foreign terrorist fighter who decides to leave the conflict zone might prefer to reside in Turkey as a third country due to the fact that Turkey is a Muslim-majority country where she/he can blend relatively easily into local society, as well as among Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, the numbers of which reach

millions. Alternatively, returnees might be stuck in Turkey due to policies aimed at revoking their passports or cancelling their citizenships by their home countries. This particular model shows us therefore that threats against Turkey have two additional dimensions compared to those of its western allies.

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Turkey is a Western state, which is located at the very edge of the current conflict in the Middle East. Undoubtedly, this reality creates not only threats against Turkey in itself, but also raises its vulnerability as a transit country for FTF mobility. In fact, FTF travel through Turkey to Syria has been triggered by Turkey's liberal visa regime and the porous Turkish land border with Syria. Turkey receives more than 35 million tourists annually from all around the world through its land borders, ports and especially airport gates. Its attempts to have a more liberal visa regime are not only aimed at supporting its tourism industry but

also to facilitate its economic and trade interests, which are very legitimate necessities in a globalized economy. In the meantime, Turkey's long—more than 900 kms—border with Syria has been historically a problematic issue for Turkey. The border, crossing from rural and urban areas, dividing towns, families, and tribes, has long been a matter of concern in terms of terrorist infiltrations from Syria, particularly by the PKK terrorist group. Furthermore, the border area has been known to be an arena of smuggling networks that are connected on both sides of the border. Last but not least, as it is a well-established fact, securing borders requires constant sustained struggle and can never be guaranteed.

Turkey is an active member of the international coalition against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Institutionally, both at the national and international levels, Turkey has been fulfilling its responsibilities to fight against violent extremism and terrorism. Turkey's experience in fighting against PKK terrorist organisation for more than 30 years makes it an active contributor to the efforts against terrorism around the world, as shown by Turkey's role in Afghanistan soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In fact, one can argue that Turkish citizens' participation in the militant Salafi movements, especially al-Qaida, has been very limited,<sup>12</sup> considering that 98 % of Turkish society is comprised

of Muslims. Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) has been an important mechanism in preventing extremism in the country. Nevertheless, as stated in the Soufan Group report with reference to Turkish authorities, 2,100 FTFs have joined terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq, counting those who are alive, dead or returnees.<sup>13</sup> This number represents an enormous increase of Turkish FTFs compared with those to former violent extremist movements motivated by religious reasons. In other words, the current foreign terrorist fighter wave has changed the tendency in Turkey, thus creating a high-risk threat to the country. The atrocities in Syria have reflections in Turkey and the hostilities between groups in Syria feed terrorist activities in Turkey in the shape of a two-flank terrorism. It could be argued that the two terrorist fronts in Turkey, namely the PKK and DAESH, have reflections from the conflict between the PYD and DAESH in Syria. Thus, one could argue that the Salafist jihadist recruitment in Turkey has increased due to the atrocities against the PKK in Turkey.

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Turkey's other dilemma started after the DAESH threat to the Syrian and Iraqi people became more visible. Becoming involved in a military operation, in other words opening a ground front against DAESH, was out of question because of the difficulty of performing military and humanitarian operations simultaneously. Almost three million refugees within Turkey increased the country's vulnerabilities for several reasons, not only because of the potential infiltration of terrorist organisations. According to official statements, Turkey has spent over US\$ 10 billion for the refugee operations.<sup>14</sup> In every sense, the scale of the relief operation for refugees is no less than a military one. In essence, with its humanitarian operation, Turkey focused on saving three million people fleeing from the Assad regime, DAESH, and other non-state actors. The alternative would have been fighting against the Assad regime and DAESH. However this option was out of the question when public opinion in Turkey is taken into account, in particular, Turkish society's sensitivity toward military casualties. The loss of almost 30,000 people over 30 years due to PKK terrorism still shapes public perceptions. It is safe to assume that the public would not tolerate more deaths caused by terrorism, including by DAESH terrorism. Additionally, the Turkish public would not support

ground operations against DAESH considering the on-going PKK terrorist attacks within the country. In contrast, the Turkish public, interestingly, has not reacted openly against the USD 10 billion bill spent for Syrian refugees, or in other words, on the humanitarian operation.

## DAESH Terror Attacks against Turkey and the Role of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

So far, the conceptual framework and the status of Turkey against the FTFs have been explained. Now it is also necessary to analyze the terrorist attacks executed in Turkey that are connected to DAESH. These terrorist attacks, conducted between March 2014 and March 2016, killed a total of 163 and left more than 766 people wounded in Turkey. Just looking at these terrorist attacks and casualties would be insufficient, however, to assess the true DAESH threat against Turkey. To get a complete picture, it is necessary to analyze the wave of attacks in order to understand DAESH's stance in general, and the effects of the FTFs specifically toward Turkey. During the above-mentioned period, one of the attacks was an armed clash at a road checkpoint, five were cross-border assaults, and six were suicide bombings.

In this regard, one can observe four different categories for DAESH attacks against Turkey. First is the threat caused by the FTFs passing through Turkey as transit terrorist fighters. Second are the suicide bombings against selected targets in Turkish territory. Third are the rocket attacks on Turkish soil as a response to Turkey's artillery fire conducted as part of the anti-ISIS coalition attacks against DAESH in Syria. The fourth category involves the attacks against the Bashiqa Camp, where the Turkish military trains local forces against DAESH in Iraq. Undoubtedly, Turkey's relocation of the Suleiman Shah Tomb to an area nearer to the border has prevented a similar confrontation in Syrian territory. The last two categories, the attacks along the border, which were mainly against the border town of Kilis, and those in Iraq, which have been immediately responded to by the Turkish side, are outside the scope of this analysis.

A closer look at the attacks in the first and second categories suggests that the suicide bombings, which killed 156 people and injured 755, are the bloodiest of the various attack types. FTFs were the perpetrators of suicide bombings and the transit passing attacks. The threat posed by FTFs particularly stand out in DAESH's terrorist attacks against Turkey. According to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178, everyone



recruited by terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq is considered as an FTF. In other words, all individuals recruited either from Turkey or from third countries are similarly considered as FTFs. The definition matters because of the combat experience of the FTFs and the level of threat they pose, which gets amplified upon their return as compared to the level they posed when they first departed from their home countries. In sum, DAESH terrorist fighters, whether from Turkey or not, pose a serious threat against Turkey when they return.

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**A close assessment of the attacks and their timing show that DAESH has a high capacity to select its targets in Turkey in accordance with the agenda of the time period.**

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Three of the DAESH FTFs' suicide bombings took place in Sultanahmet and Taksim, while the other three attacks were carried out in Diyarbakır, Suruç and Ankara. A close assessment of the attacks and their timing show that DAESH has a high capacity to select its targets in Turkey in accordance with the agenda of the time period. Undoubtedly, Turkey's high proportion of Muslim population is definitely a factor. DAESH has not

yet executed indiscriminate attacks in Turkey because it has not yet been able to recruit as many people from Turkey as it desires.

DAESH leader, el Bağdadi, through his spokesperson Abu Muhammed el Adnani, invited the group's sympathizers to travel, in Islamic glossary "Hijrah," to the so-called Islamic State.<sup>15</sup> He added that, alternatively, sympathizers can fight for DAESH in their home countries if they do not have any access to travel. Following his words, some DAESH sympathizers have been executing terror attacks in the West.<sup>16</sup> Meantime, in Turkey, DAESH's returnee FTFs have been executing terror attacks as well. Since Turkey is geographically next to the conflict zones and, thereby, Syria is relatively accessible for them, instead of DAESH sympathizers, it is the returnee FTFs with battlefield experience that have been executing more lethal terror attacks in the country.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in accordance with the theoretical approach, in reality, the FTFs are creating a high threat to Turkey.

In addition, as the media reports indicate, the suicide attackers responsible for the bombings in Turkey had participated in DAESH activities in Iraq and Syria as well. In other words, it is the returnees who have carried out the attacks, and their high battlefield experience has increased their

capability to execute more fatal terrorist activities. DAESH suicide bombings in Turkey have caused a terrifying average number of 31 deaths and nearly 151 wounded individuals per attack. This proportion clearly demonstrates the lethal impact of the experienced FTFs. It should be emphasized that Turkey is facing terrorist attacks because it shares borders with conflict zones and these attacks have a high potential to spread to the rest of the civilized world. In other words, the attacks between March 2014 and March 2016 against Turkey would be an initial indicator for the spread of the violence caused by DAESH terrorism to the rest of the world through FTFs.

## Turkey's Strategy against Foreign Terrorist Fighters

In order to grasp Turkey's strategy to counter DAESH, a significant point must be taken into consideration. With the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Turkey started sharing borders with non-state actors. As of 2016, Turkey faces the PYD, DAESH and the Syrian opposition groups. Sharing a border with non-state actors, which are also fighting each other, further triggers Turkey's security concerns. In addition, the situation becomes further complicated as Turkey is also neighboring the Assad regime, against which Turkey repeatedly uttered its

rejection in diplomatic platforms. It needs to be noted that most of the Syrian refugees in Turkey fled from the Assad regime.

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Turkey's position against DAESH can be elaborated at two levels: international and domestic. At the international level, the anti-ISIL coalition, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the UN Counter Terrorism Committee (UN CTC) are the main pillars of the international efforts against DAESH, as well as against FTFs. Turkey is a member of the anti-ISIL coalition and was the co-chair of the GCTF. Turkey has also opened its air bases to the anti-ISIL coalition since 2015 and has begun taking hard power measures against DAESH, in addition to the on-going humanitarian operation of sheltering almost three million refugees in the country. This greater involvement raises Turkey's vulnerabilities, raising the possibility of terrorist engagement risk to the top level, compared to that of any other member of the coalition.

Turkey's activities in the GCTF, as co-chair, were remarkable and led to the establishment of some tangible mechanisms relying on international cooperation, such as the no-entry list or programs for countering radicalism. At the same time, as a member of the United Nations, Turkey is making contributions to the UN CTC at both the state and society level. The UN CTC report released in May 2015 defined Turkey as one of the most-affected countries worldwide.<sup>18</sup>

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*As of 2016, Turkey faces the PYD, DAESH and the Syrian opposition groups. Sharing a border with non-state actors, which are also fighting each other, further triggers Turkey's security concerns.*

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At the domestic level, Turkey's strategy against DAESH involves four different phases. First, Turkey opted for preventing the travels of the FTFs at the beginning of 2014. The main instrument for Turkey to prevent their passage through Turkey is a no-entry list of potential FTFs established through international cooperation. Essentially, the UNSCR 2178 has paved the way to accelerate work toward improving the no-entry list. The second instrument, the Risk

Analysis Groups, have been established by Turkish security units to identify potential foreign terrorist fighters at borders, ports, and airports.<sup>19</sup> Any individual who fits the profile might be prevented from travelling through the country and swiftly deported back to her/his country. According to the information that was made public; the number of people on the no-entry list reached 38,624 persons from 128 different countries as of March 2016.<sup>20</sup> This number was around 5,000 during the summer 2014, around 7,000 by fall 2014, 9,915 in January 2015, and around 19,000 persons in March 2015.<sup>21</sup> The rapid acceleration of international cooperation is welcome, but also shows the failures of the past, which had put the total estimated amount as up to 30,000. It needs to be stated at this point that every case of FTF travel to Turkey, in addition to other neighbouring countries, is a failure of international cooperation regarding information sharing. In addition to that, thanks to the no-entry list, in the course of four years, 3,335 individuals from 95 different countries were deported from Turkey as suspected foreign terrorist fighters.<sup>22</sup>

As for the Risk Analysis Units, as of February 2016 they had interviewed 5,734 individuals and described 1,748 of them as inadmissible.<sup>23</sup> This shows that the Risk Analysis Groups is functioning to some extent as an

innovative tool to address possible shortfalls of the no-entry list.

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DAESH is a terrorist organisation with a Salafist jihadist ideology that threatens the world. However, the foreign terrorist fighters of DAESH create yet another threat to the civilized world, just like a contagious agent of a cancer cell to the rest of the body.

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In the second phase, Turkey has started from summer 2015 onwards to reinforce its Syrian border controls in order to prevent the border-crossings and has started to get positive results. As a first priority, Turkey has erected a wall and fortified its border against DAESH. As has been reported through the media releases by the Turkish military,<sup>24</sup> the border fortification made it almost impossible for foreign terrorist fighters to cross from the end of 2015 onwards. It was necessary to analyse Turkey's efforts to improve security on its borders with Syria and Iraq due to the fact that the border was porous. Historically, the Syrian border of Turkey was subject to illegal crossings and smuggling. Moreover, the superficial demarcation of the border had split tribes and towns during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when

the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Hence, the divided families and tribes traditionally have been crossing the border, which made it hard to prevent and control passes because of its humanitarian nature.<sup>25</sup>

The measures for the third and fourth phases are yet to be developed. The third phase is about preventing attacks by FTFs returning to and travelling through Turkey. It will definitely be a very difficult and arduous task. However, it will not be enough and the fourth phase has to involve a de-radicalization of these people.

## Conclusion

DAESH is a terrorist organisation with a Salafist jihadist ideology that threatens the world. However, the foreign terrorist fighters of DAESH create yet another threat to the civilized world, just like a contagious agent of a cancer cell to the rest of the body. Even if the world could overcome DAESH itself as a threat, the FTFs can still spread the violence out of the conflict zone. In fact, they have already begun spreading the violence, and the case of Turkey is an indicator of their potential.

The FTFs are a growing threat against their states of origin, the states they transit, and the states they are active in, as well as their neighbouring zones. Turkey falls under all these categories. While 159 individuals lost their lives

in Turkey between March 2014 and March 2016 because of terror attacks executed mostly by returnee FTFs, the DAESH terror attacks in Europe and, in one case, the USA, were mostly executed by sympathizers in Europe and in the USA. This has meant that Turkey has been facing more fatal terror attacks compared to the West. I would argue it was because of Turkey's proximity to the conflict zone and one might expect the wave would spread to other regions.

As the experience on FTFs' travels has increased, the international community has witnessed some positive improvements, thanks to international collaboration through no-entry lists. This collaboration should extend to other measures. However, national concerns might prevent the development of thinking beyond national borders, whereas this kind of threat does not have any border. In other words, the foreign terrorist fighters of DAESH impose a serious threat to the world, showing that a local violence might harm the international security,

and this necessitates a way of thinking that can move beyond national borders so as to be globally effective.

It is obvious that UNSCR 2178 does not only describe DAESH's foreign terrorist fighters as illegal; it also describes all terrorist organisations' foreign members as illegal. Additionally, the resolution urges all member states to take some specific measures against them.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, there is not any good or bad foreign terrorist fighter dichotomy. The others, such as the foreign terrorist fighters of the PYD also spread their violence to the rest of the world.

In conclusion, this article argues that while Turkey has experienced the brunt of the initial wave of terrorist attacks by returnees, foreign terrorist fighters might cause a metastasis to the rest of the world. Moreover, the contagious effect of foreign fighters creating further violence is not limited to DAESH and it needs to be examined for other terrorist organizations as well.

## Endnotes

- \* This article has extracted and updated from the author's two policy briefs and an analysis report at ORSAM (Center for Middle East Strategic Studies), which were published in 2015 and 2016. "International Cooperation against Foreign Terrorist Fighters: The Experience of Turkey" ORSAM Review of Regional Affairs, No.22, February 2015. "Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Turkey: An Assessment at the First Year of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178" ORSAM Review of Regional Affairs, No.31, October 2015. "Analysing the ISIS Attacks in Turkey and Turkey's Struggle" ORSAM Foreign Policy Analysis, 22 March 2016.
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- 11 Haldun Yalçınkaya, "Analysing the ISIS Attacks in Turkey and Turkey's Struggle", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 22 March 2016, at <http://orsam.org.tr/index.php/Content/Analiz/4577?c=orsam|english> (last visited 4 September 2016).
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# Is Turkey Turning Its Face Away From Japan to China and Korea? Evidence from Trade Relations

K. Ali AKKEMİK\*

## Abstract

*The economic relations between Turkey and Japan have recently been on the decline. This is partly a reflection of the ongoing economic transformation in the East Asian region, where China and Korea have caught up with Japanese industries and technology in most sectors. Korean and Chinese firms have gained competitive power over Japanese firms, which have traditionally been champions of manufacturing. Partly as a consequence of the ailing Japanese economy, Turkish industry has recently turned to Korea and China as sources of industrial supplies. This paper shows the extent to which the Turkish economy has become more dependent on industrial inputs from Korea and China at the expense of the declining importance of Japan. This is discussed in conjunction with the ongoing free trade negotiations between Turkey and Japan.*

## Key Words

Turkey, Japan, Free Trade Agreement, Import Dependence, Foreign Direct Investment.

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## Introduction

The expansion of trade has been a policy priority for successive Turkish governments since the opening up of the economy in 1980. The liberal governments of the 1980s and the 1990s improved trade but not industrialization. The economic transformation of the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also resulted in trade liberalization as well as the liberalization of capital flows. Unlike the successful forerunners in East Asia few decades ago, however, the Turkish government was not selective in its industrial development strategy and failed to enhance the development of an industrial base that would sustain further industrialization. That is to say, Turkish governments were not able to devise appropriate policies to reduce the dependence of domestic industries on imported inputs and intermediate products as well as investment goods. The export-oriented growth strategy of successive Turkish governments resulted in increased dependence of Turkish industries on foreign-produced

inputs. A desirable solution to this case could be attracting foreign firms to invest in manufacturing industries in Turkey; however this opportunity was not materialized. While this is largely attributable to an inferior macroeconomic performance of the Turkish economy, characterized by high inflation rates and high interest rates stemming from a very large public sector borrowing requirement, the governments' lack of an industrial development vision is also responsible. At present, the Turkish economy is able to produce and export intermediate products and finished manufactured items with medium-level technological sophistication but is highly dependent on upper-end, technologically more sophisticated manufacturers. Partially attributable to this structural deficit, Turkey has consistently run trade and current account deficits in its balance of payments.

Turkey has actively sought to increase trade relations with her partners by signing a series of Free Trade Agreements (FTA), the most significant of which is the Customs Union Agreement with the European Union (EU), which became effective in January 1996. Recently, Turkey signed an FTA with South Korea in May 2013.<sup>1</sup> Economists expect FTAs and moves towards free trade to bear important benefits for involved parties such as improved competition,

technology transfer, and improved efficiency for domestic trading firms.<sup>2</sup> While theoretical studies assume that freer trade leads to higher economic efficiency, it is well known that theoretical models with strong assumptions do not necessarily warrant beneficial results for the trading countries.

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Along with Turkey's opening up, Japan has remained an important trading partner of Turkey for the past three decades. Economic relations between the two countries have undergone significant changes over the last decade or so. Trade relations improved remarkably during the 1980s, and by the 1990s Japan had become a major trading partner for Turkey. Japanese firms have also undertaken significant investments in Turkey during the course of improving economic relations between the two countries. However, it is observed that since China joined the World Trade

Organization (WTO) in November 2001, Japan's importance for Turkish trade has deteriorated. To make things worse, trade volume between Japan and Turkey shrank considerably in recent years. On the other hand, the share of China, together with Korea, has increased drastically during the same period. The rise of China in the world economy has also been reflected in China's increasing share in Turkey's trade, with China recently becoming an important supplier of industrial materials and intermediate inputs for Turkish industries. Since 2001, Korea and China have taken over from Japan the role of important Asian economic partners for Turkey.

Turkey and Japan have recently started negotiations to sign an FTA. The most important reason that necessitated an FTA between the two countries is that Japan is preparing for an FTA with the EU. Recent developments in trade and investment relations between Turkey and Japan need to be reviewed critically for the prospective FTA to bear fruitful results for both countries.<sup>3</sup> This paper provides a stocktaking exercise, laying down an empirical inventory of Turkey's economic relations with Japan, displaying recent changes and trends. The existing literature on Turkey's economic relations with East Asian countries places a special emphasis on trade of final products and pays little

attention to trade of inputs. While this has recently captured the attention of researchers, no study has yet assessed the shifts in Turkey's relations with Japan, Korea, and China with regards to both changing trade relations and the trade of intermediate inputs.<sup>4</sup> This study fills an important gap in this regard. Furthermore, it also links these shifts to the industrial policies currently implemented in Japan.

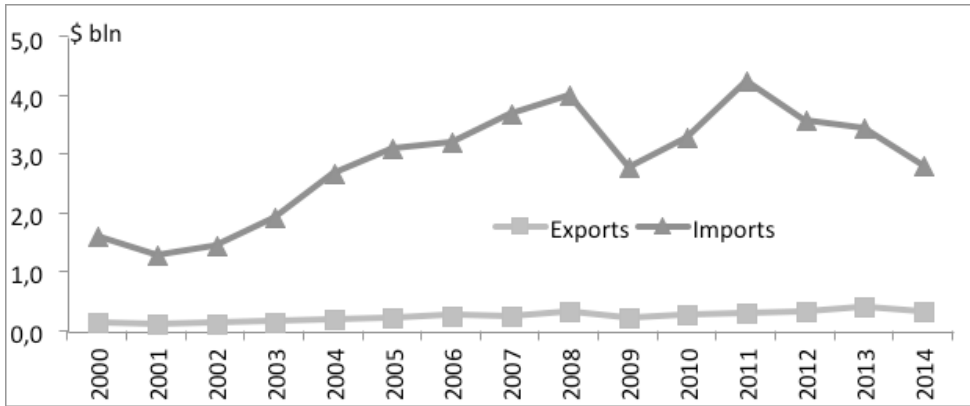
## Economic Relations between Turkey and Japan

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat), Turkey's trade with Japan has been declining since 2011.<sup>5</sup> Figure 1 presents the trends in total Turkish exports to and total imports from Japan during the period 2000-2014. It is evident from the figure that Turkey has steadily run a large trade deficit against Japan. Turkish exports to Japan have never reached even the one billion dollar mark while Japanese exports to Turkey have risen from 1.5 billion dollars in 2000 to US\$ 4 billion in 2008. Following the drop during the global financial crisis, Japanese exports fell to less than US\$ 3 billion in 2009 but recovered back to US\$ 4 billion in 2011. Since 2011, however, Japanese exports have exhibited a steady decline, shrinking to US\$ 2.8 billion in 2014. In other words, Japanese exports to

Turkey have withdrawn to the level recorded during the unfavorable global

trading conditions arising from the global financial crisis in 2009.

**Figure 1: Turkey-Japan Trade Relations (2000-2014)**

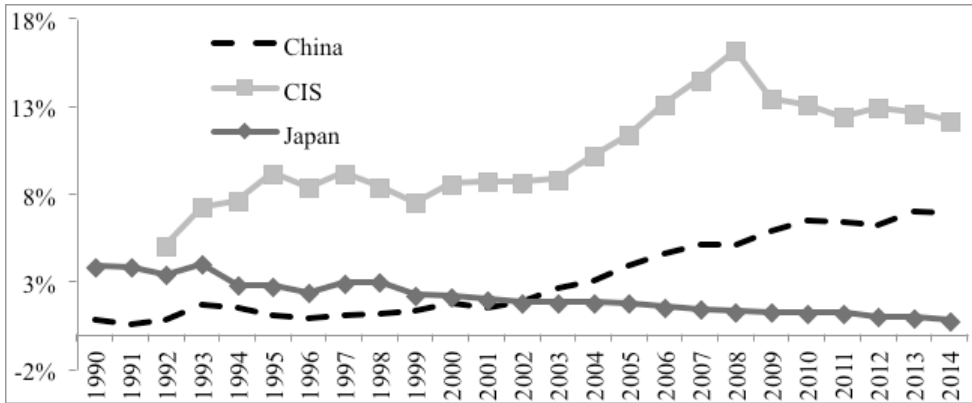


Data source: Turkstat

It is evident that the trade relations between Japan and Turkey have been deteriorating recently. To put it in perspective, Figure 2 presents the shares of various trading partners in Turkey’s total imports over the period 1990-2014. China’s share in Turkey’s total trade has increased from under 1% during the early 1990s to almost 7% in twenty years. Much of this increase took place after China joined the WTO in 2001. Japan’s share in Turkey’s total trade was about 3.4% in 1992, more than four times that of China, but in

2014 its share fell to 0.8%, the value for China in 1992. The reversal in the shares of Japan and China in Turkey’s trade marks a significant compositional change in Turkey’s trade with East Asia. It is important to bear in mind that the share of the EU, Turkey’s traditionally largest trading partner, has generally remained at about the 50% level throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, but it has recently come down to levels below 40% along with the increasing share of China and some Middle Eastern countries.

**Figure 2: Percentage Shares of Japan, China and CIS Countries in Turkey's Total Trade (1990-2014)**

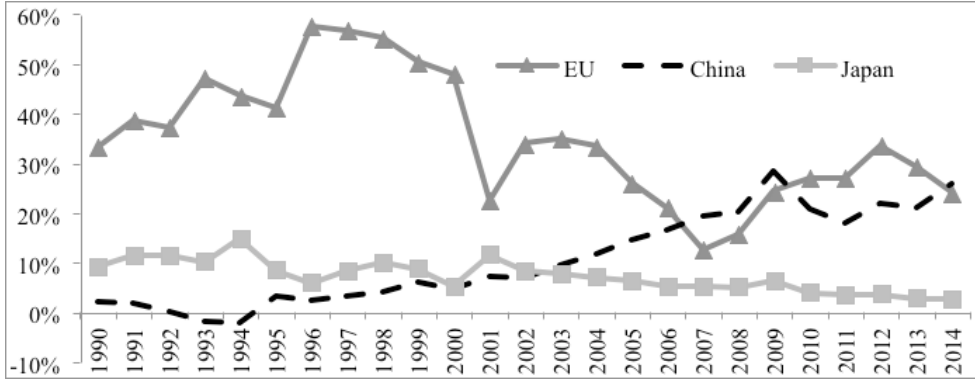


Data source: Turkstat

Figure 3 presents the shares of the EU, China, and Japan in Turkey's total trade deficit for the period 1990-2014. In conjunction with its declining share in Turkey's trade, Japan's share in Turkey's total trade deficit decreased over the years. China accounted for a larger share of Turkey's trade deficit since her accession to the WTO. During the period 2009-2014, the EU and China each have accounted for about a quarter of Turkey's trade deficit. Japan's share,

however, averaged only 4% during the same period. China's share in Turkey's trade deficit passed 10% in 2004, and 20% in 2008, reaching its peak at 29% in 2009, second only to the CIS (43%), which is mainly due to large energy imports to Turkey from the CIS countries (basically, Russia). Japan's share in Turkey's trade deficit peaked at 15% in 1994 and has remained below 10% since 2001, below 5% after 2009 in particular.

**Figure 3: Percentage Shares of Japan, China and EU Countries in Turkey’s Total Trade Deficit (1990-2014)**



Data source: Turkstat

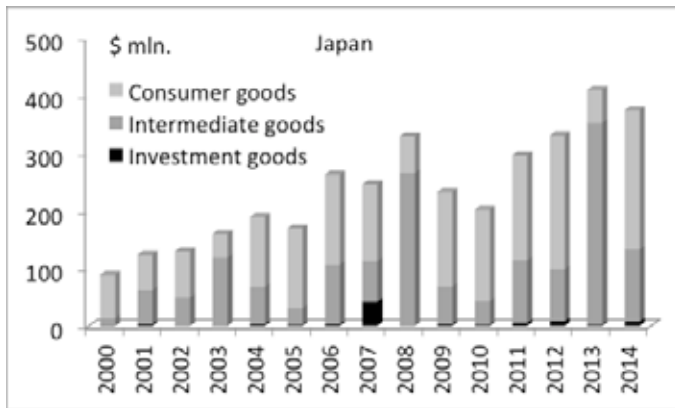
The abovementioned trends in trade relations imply that Japan has lost its importance for Turkey as a major trading partner and that gap has been filled exceedingly by China, the rising powerhouse of the world economy. The analysis of trade relations is not complete without a thorough analysis of the product composition of trade. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate the composition of trade between Turkey and Japan with respect to broad economic classifications, i.e., investment goods, intermediate goods, and consumer goods. Figure 4 reveals that while the shares show variety over the years, Turkey has generally exported consumer goods to Japan. Figure 5 shows that Turkey has mostly imported investment goods, which are generally heavy industry products, as

well as intermediate products. In other words, Turkey has imported necessary investment goods and inputs from Japan to be able to add to its production capacity and hence to produce in the future. Japanese imports, on the other hand, have been limited to lower-end products. While one may argue that this is the result of differing industrialization levels and productivities between the two countries, it can be interpreted from a political economy viewpoint as a case recalling Marxist dependency theory. Dependency theory postulates that foreign trade and foreign direct investments from “core” countries towards the countries in the “periphery” cause less developed market economies to remain underdeveloped. This is because the international division of labor and specialization patterns

between the periphery and the core lead to specialization of the periphery

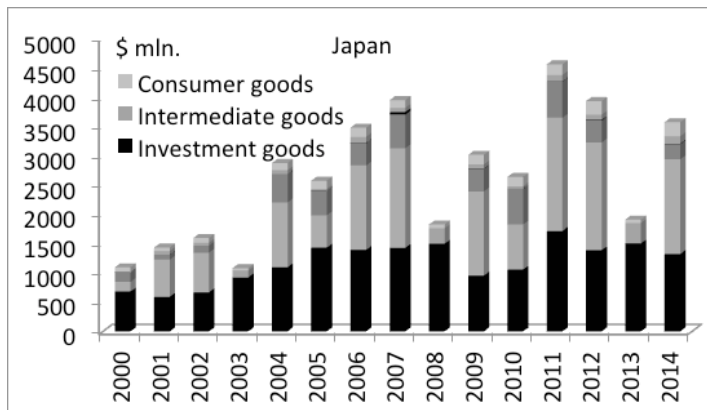
in industries with less technological sophistication.

**Figure 4: Turkey's Exports to Japan, Broad Economic Classification (2000-2014)**



Data source: Turkstat

**Figure 5: Turkey's Imports from Japan, Broad Economic Classification (2000-2014)**



Data source: Turkstat

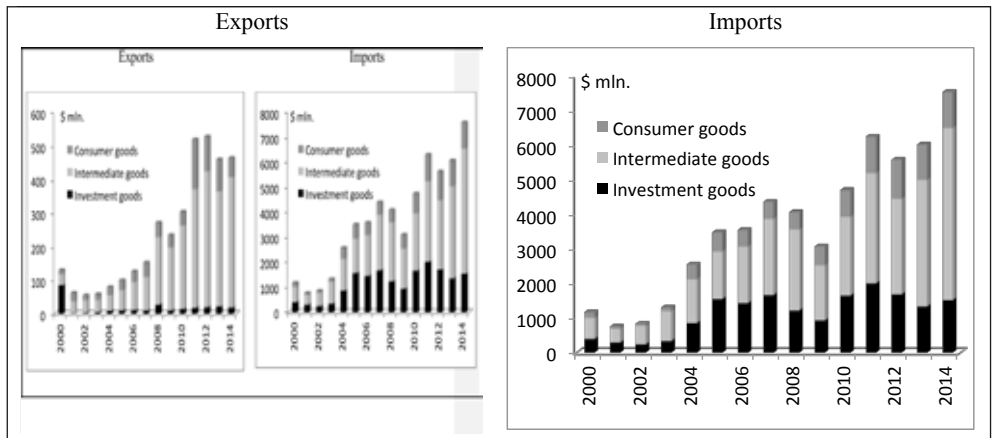
A detailed product-level decomposition at a higher level of disaggregation is available in the Appendix, but for convenience, we only refer to products whose recent shares have been more than 5%. Major Turkish exports to Japan are agricultural products, food products, textiles, clothing and automotive products, the last of which are most likely to be re-imports of Japanese car manufacturers back to their homeland. Turkey’s major imports from Japan are heavy industry products including iron and steel, industrial chemicals, finished motor vehicles and parts, and electronic machines.

To put the structure of Turkey’s trade with Japan into perspective, Figures 6 and 7 present the structure of Turkey’s

export to and imports from the other two industrial giants of East Asia, namely Korea and China, for the period 2000-2014. Unlike its exports to Japan, Turkey basically exports intermediate goods to Korea and China and imports intermediate inputs and investment goods from these two countries. The structure of Turkish imports from all three Asian countries, Japan, Korea, and China exhibit quite a similarity.

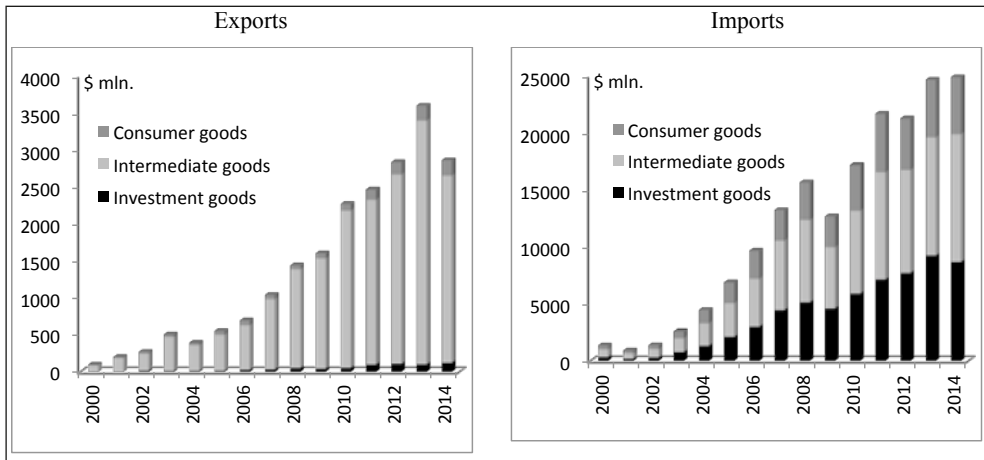
Unlike its exports to Japan, Turkey basically exports intermediate goods to Korea and China and imports intermediate inputs and investment goods from these two countries.

**Figure 6: Turkey’s Trade with Korea, Broad Economic Classification (2000-2014)**



Data source: Turkstat



**Figure 7: Turkey's Trade with China, Broad Economic Classification (2000-2014)**

Data source: Turkstat

The detailed statistics explained so far indicate that Turkey developed trade relations with East Asian economies that made her dependent on imported intermediate products, i.e., industrial inputs from these countries. Turkey sells low-value-added manufactured items to these countries and purchases higher-value-added products. Considering the high dependence of Turkey on imported inputs and the government's recent economic growth strategy, it is important to examine Turkey's dependence on foreign intermediate inputs. A comparison of dependence on Japan with other major countries, including Korea and China, yields important policy implications. The following section elaborates on this subject.

## Dependence of the Turkish Economy on Japan: Cross-Country Comparison

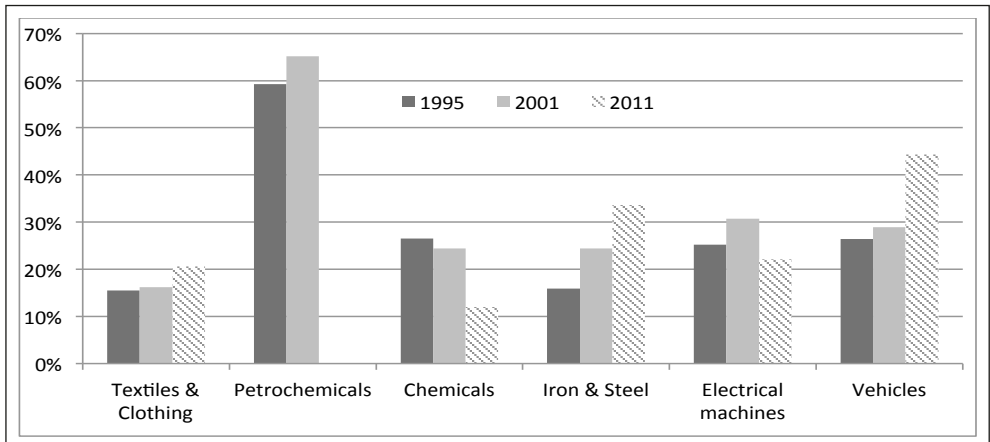
The Turkish economy has become dependent on imported intermediate products over the years. To trace the degree of this dependence, we make use of data provided by the World Input Output Database<sup>6</sup> (WIOD). Using these data, it is possible to compute the shares of foreign-provided (imported) intermediate inputs used in production activities by each sector, as well as by trade partners. To economize on space and abstain from unnecessary details, we refer the reader to WIOD related materials online about the technical details on how the database has been prepared.<sup>7</sup> We take the five most

important countries that have been major sources of intermediate inputs for Turkey: Japan, Korea, China, the USA, and Germany. The WIOD database spans the period 1995-2011. We take the initial and terminal years 1995 and 2011 and the year 2001 for the purpose of intertemporal comparison. 2001 is an important year since China joined the WTO in November of that year. It is also this year after which China's share in Turkey's trade rose remarkably. A detailed analysis of Turkey's import dependence is available elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 8 shows trends in the import dependence of major Turkish

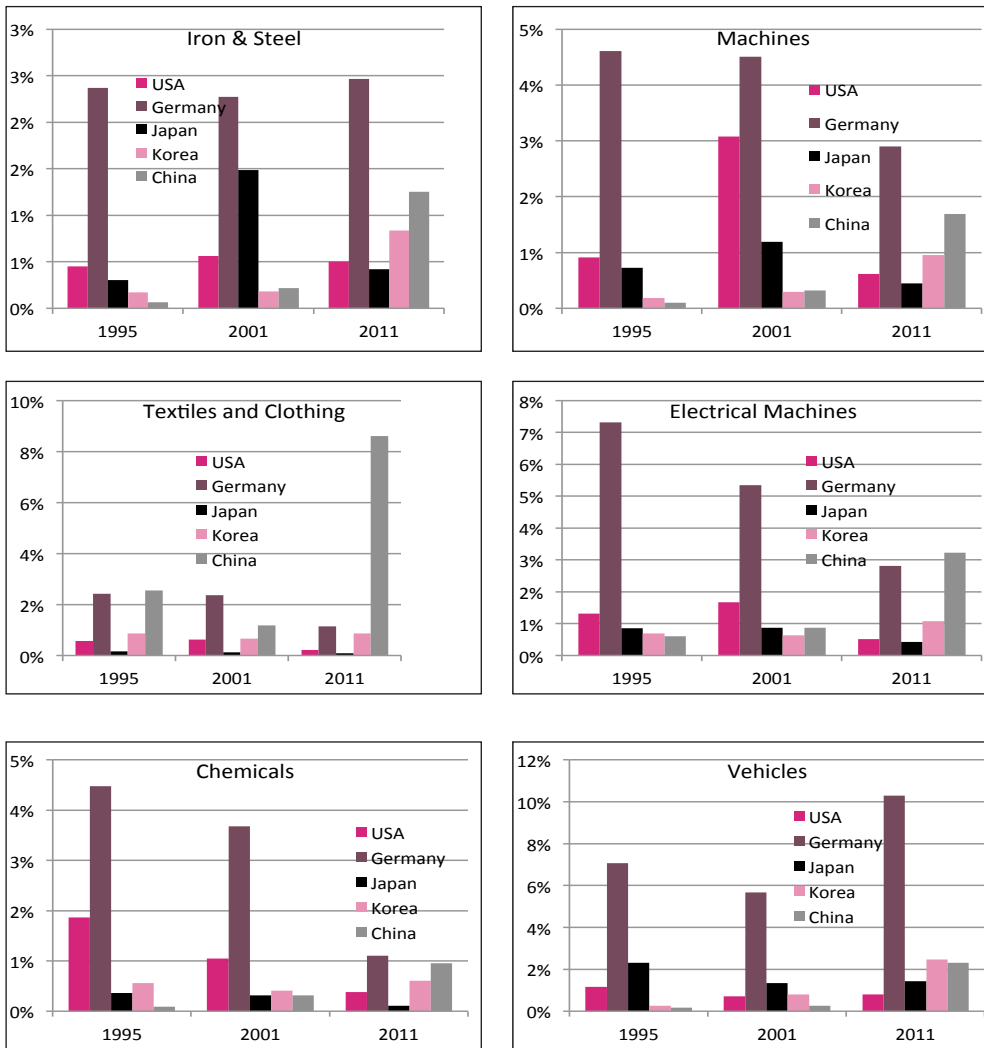
industries and Figure 9 presents the decomposition by five countries. Figure 8 reveals that the import dependence of Turkish industries has remained high and increased in iron and steel, petrochemicals, textiles, and vehicles industries. There is a decline in import dependence of intermediate inputs in the chemicals industry. There is also a modest decline in the electrical machines industry. Overall, it can be concluded that the import dependence of Turkish industries was high during the period 1995-2011 and the degree of dependence exhibits large variety.

**Figure 8: Import Dependence of Major Turkish Industries (1995-2011)**



Source: Akkemik (2015). Data source: WIOD Database.

**Figure 9: Import Dependence of Turkish Industries by Countries (1995 and 2001 and 2011)**



Source: Akkemik (2015). Data source: WIOD Database.

Figure 9 shows the import dependence of intermediate inputs for each industry by country of origin. The figure shows that Turkey's dependence

for intermediate inputs has increased largely for China from 1995 to 2011, but remarkably after 2001 in textiles, chemicals, iron and steel, electrical

machines, vehicles, and machine industries. The dependence on Korea has also increased contemporaneously over the same period. The declining dependence on Japan is visible from the declining share of imported intermediate inputs from Japan in total intermediate input use in all industries. This finding implies that there has been a shift away from Japan towards China and Korea for supply of intermediate inputs.

The trends in trade in commodities and intermediate inputs imply that Japan is no more an important partner for Turkey, compared with Korea and China. The demise of Japanese industries in the world markets is

also reflected in the abovementioned transformation in Turkey's trade relations with East Asia. This should be interpreted in conjunction with the recent problems surrounding Japan's ailing industries. China and Korea adapted to the changes in production technologies and new ways of doing business while Japanese firms lagged behind. China and Korea materialized their comparative advantages in the supply of intermediate industrial products in the global supply chains.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, compared to Japan, these two economies made better use of globalization of production. Declining shares of Japanese firms in global markets are remarkable, as seen in these figures:

|                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lithium-ion batteries: | from 90% in 2000 to 50% in 2008  |
| LCD panels:            | from 80% in 1997 to 10% in 2005  |
| DVD players:           | from 90% in 1997 to 20% in 2006  |
| Car navigation device: | from 100% in 2003 to 20% in 2007 |
| DRAM memory:           | from 40% in 1997 to 10% in 2004  |

## Japanese FDI to Turkey

Table 1 presents the trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow to Turkey by country of origin. Much of the FDI inflows have traditionally

come from European countries and the US. FDI from East Asia has generally been negligibly small. According to the official statistics, Korean and Chinese FDI has not yet reached levels of Japanese FDI. Therefore, it can be

safely argued that Japan has established itself as an investor in Turkey, with its long history of investments, including the intercontinental bridge on the Bosphorus, and the recent investments including the Marmaray

Tunnel, Izmit Bridge and the nuclear power plant in Sinop. This high investment performance by Japanese firms in Turkey, however, is yet to be materialized for trade between the two countries.

**Table 1: Foreign Direct Inflows to Turkey by Country of Origin (2001-2012)**

|                   | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Japan             | 58   | 6    | 32   | 1    | 2    | 11   | 3    | 347  | 231  | 106  |
| US                | 52   | 36   | 88   | 848  | 4212 | 868  | 260  | 323  | 1402 | 439  |
| Korea             | 1    | -    | 1    | 3    | 74   | 57   | 169  | 20   | 52   | 58   |
| China + Hong Kong | -    | -    | 2    | 4    | 33   | 30   | 3    | 21   | 163  | 48   |
| Germany           | 142  | 73   | 391  | 357  | 954  | 1237 | 498  | 597  | 665  | 491  |
| France            | 121  | 34   | 2107 | 439  | 367  | 679  | 617  | 623  | 999  | 86   |
| Netherlands       | 51   | 568  | 383  | 5069 | 5442 | 1343 | 718  | 486  | 1425 | 1222 |
| UK                | 141  | 126  | 166  | 628  | 703  | 1335 | 350  | 245  | 904  | 2004 |
| Austria           | -    | 1    | 9    | 1108 | 370  | 586  | 1019 | 1584 | 2418 | 1519 |

Source: UNCTAD Bilateral FDI Statistics Database

## Expectations from the Turkey-Japan FTA

Turkey and Japan have recently started negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the preceding step before signing the

FTA.<sup>10</sup> One major reason for this FTA is to compensate for any potential trade diversion effects that would arise from the Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the EU when Japan signs the FTA with the EU. This was also the rationale behind the signing of the FTA between Korea and Turkey in

2013. The FTA negotiations between Japan and the EU started in 2013 and the talks between Turkey and Japan for the EPA started right afterwards. The two parties met in Tokyo in 2014 and in Ankara in 2015. The next round of talks is scheduled to take place in Tokyo in 2016. The governments in both countries expressed positive sentiments towards the development of trade relations as well as investments.

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Japanese investments in Turkey are a matter of concern not only for Turkey. The Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) in Japan recently announced the government's interest in investing overseas as a policy priority. Three of the major pillars of the recent New Growth Strategy of Japan as stated by METI are (i) maintaining the competitiveness of Japanese industries through active investment and employment policies, (ii) increasing overseas investments by Japanese firms in order to enlarge the Japanese firms' shares in overseas markets, and (iii) easing international business operations through policy actions such

as stabilization of electricity supply, reducing corporate tax rate, providing support for investments in Japan, and economic partnership agreements.<sup>11</sup> Turkey offers an opportunity to realize these expectations of the Japanese government.

## Conclusion

For a long time, Japan has been an important trading partner and source of industrial inputs for Turkey. Recently, with the rise of China and South Korea as the new powerhouses of the world economy, Turkey's trade with these countries has increased, largely to the detriment of trade relations with Japan. In this paper, it is shown that the shift in Turkey's trade with East Asian countries away from Japan and towards South Korea and China has already reached a degree that can be interpreted as a serious transformation. The decline of Japan and the rise of China and South Korea took place not only in the trade of final products but also in the trade of industrial inputs and materials.

The remarkable transformation in the trade and intermediate input relations between the three Asian powerhouses and Turkey will necessarily stimulate changes in the relations between these countries and Turkey in the near future. Turkey's trade relations with the East Asian region are still limited compared

to those with her historical trade partner, the EU. However, we showed in this paper that China has become an important source of industrial inputs for Turkey, recently exceeding the US and Germany in particular.

The declining importance of Japan for Turkey in the trade of final products and inputs show that economic relations between two countries can worsen when there are emerging regional rivals for one of these countries. To compensate for that, the recent FTA talks between Turkey and Japan are important. It is expected that the FTA will bear

benefits for Turkey and Japan in the coming years.<sup>12</sup> This study brought forth some recent trends, which should be of concern to policymakers in both countries, and should be addressed in the upcoming FTA talks.

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### Appendix: Percentage Decomposition of Turkish Exports to and Imports from Japan (2000-2014)

| Unit: %                   | Exports   |           |           |           | Imports   |           |           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                           | 2000-2004 | 2005-2009 | 2010-2014 | 2000-2014 | 2000-2004 | 2005-2009 | 2010-2014 | 2000-2014 |
| Agriculture               | 14.4      | 6.8       | 6.1       | 9.1       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.1       | 0.0       |
| Forestry                  | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Fisheries                 | 6.0       | 22.5      | 11.6      | 13.3      | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Coal                      | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Metal ores                | 5.6       | 5.5       | 1.0       | 4.1       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Other mining              | 6.8       | 3.2       | 3.4       | 4.5       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Food and beverages        | 24.7      | 22.6      | 22.4      | 23.2      | 0.0       | 0.1       | 0.1       | 0.1       |
| Tobacco                   | 4.7       | 0.0       | 0.9       | 1.9       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Textiles                  | 13.4      | 10.9      | 15.9      | 13.4      | 0.5       | 0.6       | 0.5       | 0.5       |
| Clothing                  | 6.3       | 4.4       | 6.3       | 5.6       | 0.1       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Leather                   | 0.3       | 0.7       | 0.7       | 0.6       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Wood products             | 0.2       | 0.1       | 0.0       | 0.1       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |
| Paper products            | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.2       | 0.2       | 0.3       | 0.2       |
| Printing products         | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.1       | 0.4       | 0.4       | 0.3       |
| Coal and refined oil      | 0.6       | 0.0       | 1.3       | 0.7       | 0.0       | 0.2       | 0.3       | 0.2       |
| Chemicals                 | 1.6       | 1.7       | 5.4       | 2.9       | 11.4      | 10.4      | 10.2      | 10.7      |
| Rubber and plastic        | 1.1       | 2.3       | 1.1       | 1.5       | 2.4       | 3.6       | 4.7       | 3.6       |
| Non-metallic minerals     | 3.3       | 2.2       | 1.4       | 2.3       | 0.5       | 0.4       | 0.5       | 0.4       |
| Iron and steel            | 0.5       | 1.4       | 2.1       | 1.3       | 7.4       | 2.3       | 7.4       | 5.7       |
| Fabricated metal products | 0.4       | 0.2       | 0.7       | 0.5       | 1.9       | 2.6       | 2.3       | 2.3       |
| Basic machines            | 2.1       | 1.9       | 3.1       | 2.4       | 29.6      | 27.6      | 30.9      | 29.4      |
| Office equipment          | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 4.5       | 3.6       | 3.6       | 3.9       |
| Electrical equipment      | 0.7       | 1.2       | 2.8       | 1.6       | 5.9       | 8.0       | 5.4       | 6.4       |
| Telecom, radio, TV        | 0.6       | 0.1       | 0.2       | 0.3       | 4.8       | 5.6       | 2.7       | 4.4       |
| Medical equipment         | 0.4       | 0.5       | 0.5       | 0.5       | 6.3       | 7.0       | 7.0       | 6.8       |
| Motor vehicles            | 2.2       | 6.1       | 7.8       | 5.4       | 18.9      | 22.2      | 17.5      | 19.6      |
| Other transp. equip.      | 0.4       | 3.3       | 0.1       | 1.3       | 4.0       | 3.9       | 4.6       | 4.2       |
| Furniture                 | 3.3       | 2.1       | 3.9       | 3.1       | 1.4       | 1.4       | 1.4       | 1.4       |
| Waste                     | 0.2       | 0.2       | 1.2       | 0.6       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       | 0.0       |

Note: The figures refer to annual averages for each respective period. Data source: Turkstat.



## Endnotes

- 1 For a detailed analysis of Turkey-Korea FTA, see, K. Ali Akkemik and Utku Ören, “Kore-Türkiye Serbest Ticaret Anlaşması’nın Genel Denge Analizi”, in K. Ali Akkemik and Sadık Ünay (eds.), *Doğu Asya’nın Politik Ekonomisi: Japonya, Çin ve Güney Kore’de Kalkınma, Siyaset ve Jeostrateji*, İstanbul, Boğaziçi University Press, 2015, pp. 238-262.
- 2 Reviews are available at Sebastian Edwards, “Openness, Productivity and Growth: What Do We Really Know?”, *Economic Journal*, Vol. 108, No. 447 (March 1998), pp. 383-398; Jeffrey D. Sachs and Andrew Warner, “Economic Reform and the Process of Global Integration”, *Brookings Papers in Economic Activity*, Vol. 1 (1995), pp. 1-118.
- 3 Recall that Turkey is not a member of the EU, but did sign a Customs Union Agreement with the EU in 1996, effectively forcing Turkey to sign an FTA with any third party country signing an FTA with the EU.
- 4 A recent study by Ceren Gündoğdu has found using the WIOD Database that China accounts for a substantial part of foreign value-added in Turkish exports. See, Ceren Gündoğdu, “Domestic Contents of Exports and the Vertical Specialization: An Analysis for Turkish Exports, 1995-2011”, unpublished MA Thesis, Middle East Technical University, September 2015.
- 5 The discussions in this and the following sections are based on data prepared for a presentation titled “Türk-Japon Ekonomik İlişkileri ve Serbest Ticaret Anlaşması” (Turkish-Japanese Economic Relations and the Free Trade Agreement) and presented at “Uluslararası Ertuğrul’un İzinde Deniz Kuvvetleri ve Diplomasi Sempozyumu” (*International Symposium: Naval Forces and Diplomacy Tracing Ertuğrul*) held at Deniz Müzesi (Naval Museum) in İstanbul during 15-17 September 2015.
- 6 The WIOD Database is available at <http://www.wiod.org> (last visited 12 June 2016).
- 7 See <http://www.wiod.org> for the technical details.
- 8 See, for instance, Ali Eşiyok “Türkiye Ekonomisinde Üretim ve İhracatın İthalata Bağımlılığı, Dış Ticaretin Yapısı: Girdi-Çıktı Modeline Dayalı Bir Analiz”, *Uluslararası Ekonomi ve Dış Ticaret Politikaları*, Vol. 3, No. 1-2 (2008), pp. 117-160; Şeref Saygılı, Cihan Yalçın and Türknur Hamsici, “Türkiye İmalat Sanayii İthalat Yapısı”, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası Çalışma Tebliği*, No 10/02, 2010.
- 9 Details about Japan’s declining industrial power is available at, K. Ali Akkemik “Recent Industrial Policies in Japan”, in Murat Yülek (ed.), *National Strategic Planning and Industrial Policy in the Globalizing Economy: Revisiting Concepts and Experience*, Heidelberg, Springer, 2015, pp. 181-206.

- 10 The developments in Turkey-Japan FTA talks can be followed in the press: “Turkey, Japan take Important Step Toward Reaching Free Trade Accord”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 August 2013; “Japanese Bosses to Visit Turkey to Explore Ties”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 February 2014; “Japan, Turkey Foreign Ministers Eye Working for Free Trade Talks”, *Kyodo*, 13 April 2014.
- 11 See <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/economy/growth/report20100618.pdf> (last visited 18 September 2016).
- 12 See Scott Morrison, “Japan and Turkey: The Contours and Current Status of an Economic Partnership/Free Trade Agreement”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2014), pp. 183-195. Morrison is quite optimistic about the future of trade and investment relations between Turkey and Japan.

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# From Peace State to Peacekeeping State: Japan's Changing National Role Conception and Foreign Policy Norms

Bahadır PEHLİVANTÜRK\*

## Abstract

*With the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan is passing through a transformative era in which it is in the process of forming a new national role conception. This study argues that as a result of international pressure, changes in domestic leadership and social norms, and a growing desire for respect in international affairs, Japan has been changing its foreign policy norms and its national role conception. The change in Japanese foreign policy manifests itself most clearly in Japan's international peacekeeping behaviour and the accompanying new legislation governing the functional limitations on its armed forces. This study suggests that path dependency increases the chance that Japanese foreign policy norms and the resulting behavioural effects will push Japan towards a more internationalist path, with contribution to peacekeeping being its most definitive behavioural outcome, thus offering "peacekeeping state" as a new National Role Conception that has the potential to define Japan's role in the world in the future.*

## Key Words

Japanese Foreign Policy, National Role Conception, Peacekeeping State, Humanitarian Security, Diplomacy, Foreign Policy Norms, Prestige Gap.

## Introduction

With the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan watchers have started to witness a substantial shift of foreign policy activism in Japan. Its traditional low-key, passive and muted post-war foreign policy character has started to change. One can argue that this change has already been going on since the 1980s in a gradual fashion, but started to manifest itself more clearly with the 2010s. The increased foreign policy activism is coupled with various domestic political initiatives to reinterpret -and if possible- to change the Japanese Peace Constitution. As a result, these developments brought about a proliferation of speculations on Japan's changing role in international politics, and changes in the domestic and international norms that have

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defined Japan for more than half a century. While it is early yet to reach a consensus on what kind of behavioural change Japan's changing foreign policy character will bring about, the fact that Japan is trying to redefine its role in the world through a new kind of activism is undeniable.

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An important part of this effort to find a new role for Japan in the world involves participation in international peacekeeping activities, which has become an important dimension of its foreign policy. As a matter of fact, humanitarian diplomacy and peace-building efforts have become important tools of Japanese foreign policy not only in its search for prestige, but in terms of its security policy as well. To encompass Japan's own national security goals and its aim to attain prestige, the term "comprehensive security" was coined.<sup>1</sup> While this concept has been around since the 1970s, it has become more useful in recent times, as it not only

explains the heightened diplomatic activism but also provides rational justification for the changes proposed to the constitution and the push to increase military capabilities as well, while enabling Japanese policy makers to argue that Japan still remains pacifist.

This study aims to recap various ideas and arguments probing the questions of why Japan was so reluctant to engage in peace keeping in the beginning, why this attitude has changed considerably in recent years, and how peace activities and contribution to peacekeeping has become one of the most important tools of Japanese foreign policy. While trying to answer these questions it attempts to analyse the transformation of the normative foundations of Japanese foreign policy and changes in its domestic politics, as well as its international ambitions. As part of this effort, the change in the way that Japan has participated in peacekeeping and related international activities, and the inevitable domestic legal changes that had to be brought about are also explained. This study first summarises J. K. Holsti's work on national role conceptions, in which he attributes the role of *Developer* for Japan. It then probes the normative foundations of Japanese foreign policy in relation to its peacekeeping policy. It then goes on to analyse changes in Japanese foreign policy norms, through analysing Japan's desire for international prestige

and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent membership status and the legal changes in Japanese laws governing SDF (Self Defence Force) and international peacekeeping activities, together with the transformation of public opinion towards both. It continues the analysis of normative change through analysing the Japanese Comprehensive Security concept and the transformative role of the new foreign policy elite. After revisiting the Japanese understanding of the Human Security concept, this study concludes with offering a new addition to Holsti's typology of national role conceptions that can explain Japan's potential future role as a *Peacekeeping State*.

## The National Role Conception of Japan as *Developer*

It has been more than 40 years since K. J. Holsti published his influential study on role theory in international relations. Holsti, following his times and borrowing heavily from role theory developed in other disciplines, approached states and their behaviour in the international system from an actor based vantage point, taking states as andropomorphised objects, thus trying to explain foreign policy behaviour through identifying states with state leaders' self-conception

of their international roles, in turn projecting them unto the international system as "national role conceptions". In Holsti's words:

"A national role conception includes the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate systems. It is their 'image' of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment."<sup>2</sup>

J.K. Holsti defines many national role conceptions that classify a broad range of typical diplomatic behaviours and attitudes of world countries.<sup>3</sup> If we were to analyse Japan's foreign policy norms through the taxonomy of Holsti, "Japan as *developer*" could be defined as a role conception to be attributed to Japan that can explain its interest in peacekeeping and humanitarian security policies. *Developer* is the tenth item in Holsti's classifications and is defined as follows:

"The themes in this national role conception indicate a special duty or obligation to assist underdeveloped countries ... Reference to special skills or advantages for undertaking such continuing tasks also appear frequently".<sup>4</sup>

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The above paragraph was preceded by a statement from the ex-Prime minister of Japan, Nobel prize winning Eichi Sato, complementing the idea of "Japan as developer," and showing that Japan has held this role conception since at least the 1960s:

"... Things are considerably fluid in Asia today and I hope to cope with this situation always keeping in mind Japan's national mission as a member of the Asian family.... Japan will actively fulfill its role as an Asian nation. Japan will assist the development of less developed Asian neighbors. It is Japan's duty, in particular, to strengthen as much as possible its economic cooperation toward Asian countries (Statements to press by Premier Sato and Foreign Minister Shiina, January 1966)."<sup>5</sup>

Holsti used the above statement to define another role conception for Japan, that of *regional-subsystem collaborator*. However today one can

easily replace the word "Asia" in Sato's statement with the word "world", and he/she would be reflecting the internationalist discourse of Japanese foreign policy of the 2000s.

Holsti, after citing Sato's defining of assisting Asian neighbours in economic cooperation as a "duty", maintains that a "developer" national role conception "indicates a special duty or obligation to assist underdeveloped countries".<sup>6</sup> Even though he does not tie this role conception to prestige directly, in a world of anarchy and selfish pursuit of national interest, assisting other countries' peace-building purely out of altruism would be hard to explain. As will be explained further, a "developer" national role conception not only provides international (or domestic for that matter) prestige to Japan, it is also encompassed within the concept of "comprehensive security", which seeks to achieve Japan's security through the humanitarian development of its regional neighbourhood.

This study argues that Japan has outstripped its role as a *developer* and that this term is no longer sufficient to explain Japan's national role conception. Since the early 1990s, Japanese economic aid activities have spilled over into peacekeeping activities, and these -together with the development of a human security concept- have become the backbone of Japanese diplomacy. Taking part in peacekeeping missions

and its partner activity, humanitarian diplomacy, not only provides Japan an avenue to international prestige, but is also hoped to serve to national security through international comprehensive security. One could also add that Japan's increasing activity in peace-building and humanitarian diplomacy should not come as a surprise, as this is expected to be among the main foreign policy activities of major countries in the world. Japan had been the second largest economy in the world until 2011 and it will continue to be a major economy for a long while to come. It has been actively involved in international institutions that have acted as the backbone of the international system since World War II, and it has been regarded more as a developed Western nation rather than an Asian country.

From this perspective it should be seen as natural for Japan to actively participate in peace activities, be one of the major aid donors in the world, and make civilian and military contributions to global peace building efforts. However, Japan's military contribution to peacekeeping took place with great limitations and was rather infrequent up until the 2000s. The reason for this has been that Japanese foreign policy carries a character with its own idiosyncratic normative foundations, and Japan also has legal limitations seriously obstructing its foreign activities, unlike nations such as

Canada and Australia, which contribute to the world system in similar ways. Thus, even though Japan became active in civilian peace missions and in foreign aid, it remained unduly passive in terms of military contribution to international peacekeeping. Only after the end of the Cold War, and, rather unenthusiastically in the beginning yet getting more and more active and eager gradually, Japan started to militarily contribute to peacekeeping in an incremental way.

## Normative Foundations of Japanese Conflicting Peacekeeping Policy

As mentioned above, Japan has transformed from being a very reluctant participant in peacekeeping, to being one of the most eager and active peacekeeper nations, for which peace activities form an important part in defining its foreign policy character. To be able to understand Japan's foreign policy character and why participation in peacekeeping is an important issue in itself, and also to understand why it also plays an important role in transforming Japan today, one has to look into the norms on which Japan has based its foreign policy after World War II. Japan emerged from World War II with a trauma that forced it to construct a totally new set of domestic political values and

norms, and in turn these played an important role in shaping its outlook to the international world. The political norms that define Japan's domestic and international policy can be defined as internationalism, pacifism, economism, and developmentalism.<sup>7</sup>

It is the norms of internationalism and pacifism that concern the peacekeeping activities and Japanese security understanding. Pacifism and the definition of Japan as a "peace state" has its roots in World War II, and is epitomized in Article 9 of Japan's Peace Constitution. Even though the Constitution was drafted by the USA occupation administration, it came to be embraced by the majority of Japanese society first and then by its government later, maybe more than its drafters wished it to be. As Japan became demilitarized by the USA occupation, Article 9 was intended to assure the sustainability of this situation. With Article 9, Japan declared that it renounced the sovereign right of belligerency and declared that it aims at an international peace based on justice and order. Legally outlawing war for Japan as a means to settle international disputes, Article 9 also goes further and states that "to accomplish these aims, armed forces with war potential will not be maintained".<sup>8</sup>

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It not only seems radical that one country would renounce its right to have armed forces, it is also doubtful that this was indeed the intention of the drafters and Japanese political leaders of the time who prepared and accepted this Article. As a result, the onset of the Cold War immediately resulted in a dent in the Article, as very shortly after the constitution was accepted, Japan proceeded to establish armed forces, land, sea and air, calling them Self Defence Forces (SDF). Japan also signed a Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with the United States.<sup>9</sup> The constitutionality of the SDF and the security agreement with the USA has always been a topic for debate in Japanese domestic politics,<sup>10</sup> yet both have continued for more than half a century. This has allowed Japan to concentrate only on the defence of its borders and domestic order, and various interpretations of the



constitution defined the legal basis of its armed forces as well as their structure and limitations. Interpretations of the article have also defined Japanese arms procurement and trade policies as well. For a long while, the common interpretation of the constitution forbid SDF to be stationed abroad in any possible way, thus hindering Japanese participation in international peacekeeping. This interpretation was not questioned throughout the Cold War, except during the first decades, when political leaders tried to change the legal basis of the SDF and turn it into a normal army. However, this effort met with severe opposition in the parliament and by the general public, even creating some level of social unrest.

As a result of this, Japan chose what is called the “Yoshida Doctrine”, defined by the Japanese Prime Minister during the occupation era, Yoshida Shigeru, as the foundation of its both domestic and international politics, and concentrated on economic reconstruction and development (norms of economism and developmentalism) and following a minimalist security policy.<sup>11</sup> Thus, by making economic development the main agenda for the society and the state, and pushing security matters to the back, Japan not only managed to direct different and potentially competing groups within the country to the common goal of economic

development (thus easing discussions concerning the SDF), it also alleviated to a certain extent the worries of its neighbours who had been invaded by the Japanese Empire during the Second World War. This practice helped Japan open the way for beneficial economic relations with its neighbours as well as further helping Japan economically. It has also allowed Japan to deflect US pressure to join its various Cold War international military missions by giving constitutional limitations as an excuse.<sup>12</sup> The Yoshida doctrine was thus beneficial in many aspects by forming the basis of Japanese foreign policy identity, defusing domestic and international tensions, and allowing Japan to concentrate on economic development. With this doctrine forming Japanese domestic and international identity, Japan redefined its international role as a trading state (*shonin kokka*)<sup>13</sup> and managed to climb the economic ladder, turning into an economic superpower.

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As Japan became more successful economically it also started to slowly develop the norm of *internationalism* as another role conception. While this norm was in development all throughout the Cold War era, it gained prominence and recognition towards the end of the Cold War era when the then Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, (Prime Minister 1982-1987) was in power, and argued that it was time for Japan to overcome and go beyond traditional Yoshida limitations. Nakasone wanted Japan to assume a more active role in global initiatives, and tried to establish the vision of an “international state”, believing that Japan should follow a more autonomous foreign policy role vis-à-vis the USA.

However, he was not successful in changing the character of Japanese foreign policy. The change in the mindset that made it possible for Japan to actively participate in peacekeeping became possible only after four important developments. The first of these is related to what I will be calling Japan’s “prestige gap”. The developments associated with the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait exposed Japan’s weakness in acquiring international prestige. One should not forget that this war also coincided with Japan’s emergence on the world stage as an economic super power<sup>14</sup> and carried with itself an augmentation of domestic self-confidence, thus making Japan more

ambitious to increase its international prestige as a nation. This development was coupled with US calls for Japan to engage in more burden-sharing. The second development is related with changes in Japanese domestic politics and society; especially the change of perception in Japanese public opinion towards international peacekeeping. The third development is related to the termination of the Cold War, which resulted in a transformation of Japan’s foreign policy conceptions. This development forced Japan to move away from a traditional threat-based security understanding to a more comprehensive security concept. The fourth development is the rise of a new policy elite, who are sometimes branded as “revisionist”, gaining more influence and discursive freedom within the country.

## The “Prestige Gap”, the Gulf War, and Aspirations for UNSC Permanent Member Status

The first development, defined as the problem of the “prestige gap”, was exposed beginning with the international developments in August 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. This development is important as it became the catalyst for initiating discussions in Japan about what role and duties Japan

in general and the SDF in particular should have in international society. It also holds a very important place in commencing the formation of a Japanese peacekeeping policy. After Japan refused the USA's pressure to contribute to the war, pointing its constitutional limitations, it was instead asked to contribute to it financially. As a result, Japan assumed the burden of much of the costs of the war, extending to US\$ 13 billion, arguably continuing its pacifist policy by avoiding direct bloodshed. However, when the Kuwaiti government placed advertisements in prominent international journals thanking the countries involved in the effort for Kuwaiti liberation, it did not mention Japan at all. This brought strong domestic and international criticism that the Japanese government was a country primarily engaged in so-called "checkbook diplomacy", and it did not bring prestige. This initiated a country-wide discussion that, in addition to financial contribution to the world system, it was necessary for Japan to make humanitarian contributions to peacekeeping as well.<sup>15</sup> Japan came to understand that its large financial contribution to international organizations' budgets, and its activities of humanitarian help and aid were not sufficient to achieve prestige in international society. The Japanese foreign policy elite recognized that as Japan was becoming an economic

superpower, it had to make long term and concrete contributions for the resolution of international security problems to increase its international standing. These developments paved the way for discussions on the aspired character of Japan's role in the world—discussions that still continue today.<sup>16</sup>

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The second development is related with the quest for international respectability and search for a legitimate status as a great power, and these in turn are directly related with Japan's desire to achieve a veto wielding permanent member status on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Even though Japan makes the second greatest contribution to the UN's budget,<sup>17</sup> is one of the countries with a substantially large population as well as being one of the top economies in the world, the fact that it does not have permanent member status started to attract domestic criticism. As a result, the desire to achieve this status became

one of the most important goals and aspirations of Japanese diplomacy in the post-Cold War era. Japan does manage to be elected to a non-permanent seat once in every two terms, so it has been able to be on the UNSC for most of the history of the UN, which is quite a feat. However, Japan also realized that its refraining from peacekeeping as a result of its interpretation of Article 9 also damaged its claims for permanent member status. As this realization deepened, Japan started to see contribution to peacekeeping as a road that would lead to UNSC membership.<sup>18</sup>

## “International Responsibilities” of an Economic Superpower and Changing Laws and Norms to Accommodate an Increased Peacekeeping Role

The second development that pushed Japan towards being a peacekeeping power relates to international economic success and resulting changes both in the expectations of its society and in the character of political leadership. Japanese society, which had arguably assumed an introverted character towards world affairs after the defeat of World War II, started to aspire to a role more in tune with its economic might and technological leadership

in the world. As a result, aspirations to be recognized as a legitimate great power started to increase in some parts of its society. Consequently, the Japanese public’s reluctance to send the SDF abroad has started to change, and support for an international role for the SDF started to gradually increase. In a survey conducted in 1990 by the newspaper *Asahi*, 78% of the people opposed deployment of the SDF abroad, however another survey done in 2012 showed that support for Japan’s contribution to international peacekeeping has increased to an astounding 90%.<sup>19</sup> While *Asahi* supported the protection of Article 9, a survey by the newspaper *Yomiuri* also reported a similar result even though the questionnaire was worded differently.<sup>20</sup> Surveys also show that even though most Japanese are for revision of Article 9, they cite increased need to contribute to international security, such as UN peacekeeping operations, as the primary reason for constitutional change.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that contribution to peacekeeping has become a new norm and has become internalized as one of Japan’s international responsibilities. As a result, the SDF has started to join international peacekeeping activities with increasing frequency.

In line with this normative change, the legal framework that governs and limits the SDF’s activities had to be

changed in a piecemeal fashion to accordingly match the SDF's increased international activism. In this process, "international responsibilities" has achieved a status almost equal to the defence of borders. The first legal change was realized in 1992 with the passing by the Japanese Diet of the International Peace Cooperation Law (called the PKO Law).<sup>22</sup> This law, which was only able to pass after lengthy discussions, brought serious limitations to the SDF's participation in peacekeeping (such as a requirement to be under the UN flag, a requirement that a ceasefire had to be realized before any deployment of forces, a requirement of neutrality, and a weapons use ban for SDF personnel other than in situations requiring self-defence etc.). Thanks to this law, for the first time after the war, Japan sent soldiers abroad in 1992 to Cambodia as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to supervise the ceasefire, the end of foreign military assistance and the withdrawal of foreign forces, as well as other peacekeeping and peacebuilding duties. As a result of foreign pressure, in 1998 Japan later had to further amend the law by removing the ceasefire requirement and allowed its personnel to use arms if ordered by officers.<sup>23</sup> This was required so that Japan could participate in peacekeeping operations in East Timor as a ceasefire had

not yet been achieved at the time of deployment. In 2001 limitations were further relaxed by allowing the SDF under certain conditions to use arms for the defence of people under their control and to protect weapons and weapons stores. In Japan's contribution to the war in Iraq in 2003, the lack of a UNSC decision necessitated a new special law, called the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSMML), to make SDF participation possible. With this law, use of arms became possible for the protection of refugees and wounded service personnel.<sup>24</sup> Thus Japan created the legal basis to allow it to contribute to peacekeeping even when the SDF was not "under the UN flag". Japan had sent non-combatant SDF personnel such as doctors and engineers to Iraq, and this personnel had to function under the protection of the wider Dutch peacekeeper force. Japan wanted to form a similar system in Afghanistan and negotiated with the Turkish government so that the SDF could function under the protection of Turkish forces on duty there. However, since Turkey was also contributing to peacekeeping with non-combatant army forces, cooperation in this regard could not be realized.<sup>25</sup>

As can be seen from these cases, the extent of the SDF's participation in international settings has become more and more extensive over time and each of these international

crises have become opportunities to reinterpret the constitution to circumvent its restrictions concerning Japanese troops abroad. Since all of these international involvements were peacekeeping activities, international peacekeeping not only became one of the major functions of the SDF but has also started to change the SDF's self-perceptions as well: Being chosen for peacekeeping operations became something hoped for by SDF personnel and getting a position in the peacekeeping department of the SDF became the most desired position for career advancement.<sup>26</sup> Arguably, the SDF has started to see itself as an "international peacekeeping organ" in a certain vague sense.

## The End of the Cold War and the Transformation of Japan's Foreign Policy Goals: "One Country Pacifism" to "Comprehensive Security"

The third development concerns the systemic change that came about with the end of the Cold War and the way it has transformed Japan's foreign policy norms. Japan's increasing involvement in international peacekeeping has allowed it to strengthen its "international state/internationalism" norm without departing too much from its "peace state/pacifism" norm. Japan has started

to see participation in peacekeeping as not only a matter of prestige or as a part of its international responsibilities, but also as a foundation of its new security understanding. The previous "peace state" security understanding had defined security as the security of Japan's borders. Throughout the Cold War era the Japanese ruling elite regarded Japanese national security as different from the wider regional and international security framework, and formulated their security policies accordingly. These were to strengthen the SDF's military capacity according to requirements derived from a perception of strict self-defence, and seek refuge under the USA security guarantee. Thus its functions were limited to defending borders, providing domestic security and order, and, in a hypothetical conventional attack to Japan, providing support for the USA forces that were to come to Japan's defence. This limited national defence understanding is sometimes referred to as "one country pacifism".<sup>27</sup>

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In contrast to this, the internationalism norm that encompasses Japan's comprehensive national security understanding rejects the distinction between national security and the larger regional and international security framework. In this understanding, Japan's national security is taken to be overlapping with the security of other countries, both those in the immediate neighbourhood as well as in distant geographies of the world. It rests on the understanding that in an environment of global insecurity and global dangers, it is meaningless to talk about a distinct national security.<sup>28</sup> In other words, this security approach understands that as long as one is residing in a dangerous neighbourhood, building walls and fences around the house is insufficient. A complete and sustainable security can only be achieved by making the whole neighbourhood secure, and this neighbourhood is the whole world.

In this sense, as one of the prominent countries in the world, Japan is *obliged* to take responsibility for global security. As a result, this understanding requires that the SDF must also define its utility and basic goals accordingly, and aim to achieve national security through a contribution to international security by participating in international peacekeeping. In order to reach this end, legal restrictions against the SDF's effective participation in international peace activities had to be mitigated.

## Change in the Foreign Policy Elite and the New Security Understanding

However this is easier said than done. Because of historical reasons, the possibility of Japan's military forces being active beyond national borders with the potential to use force was greeted with suspicion and even resistance by not only a large part of the public but by many in the state bureaucracy as well. Japan's transformation from "one country pacifism" to "international peace state" could only be possible if there were changes in the collective character of the Japanese ruling political elite, which is the fourth development further making Japan an active peacekeeping country. From the perspective of this actor driven viewpoint it could be argued that certain groups, which

could be termed as “revisionist,” have gained prominence among institutions leading Japanese foreign policy such as the Prime Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, and also certain academic circles. Actually, in the past, the phrase “revisionists” was used to define a political group of the 1950s, among which was the grandfather of current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Kishi Nobosuke, who unsuccessfully tried to change the constitution to remilitarize the new democratic Japan in line with West Germany at the onset of the Cold War. The so-called revisionists of the 2010s, on the other hand, are defined by a stream of politicians, starting with Yasuhiro Nakasone, Prime Minister in the 1980s, to Ichiro Ozawa, one of the most influential heavyweights of Japanese domestic politics through the 1990s up until 2010 (and coiner of the term “Normal Japan”), and also including the charismatic politician of the early 2000s, Junichiro Koizumi, who revitalized the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP), and, most recently, the Prime Minister of the 2010s, Shinzo Abe. Especially with Shinzo Abe’s coming to power, and his defeating of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) at the end of 2012 (the first serious opposition to the LDP in Japanese domestic politics), the new proactive internationalist security understanding became dominant in Japanese foreign policy.

Revisionists see the relief of systemic pressures of the Cold War era as an opportunity to raise the profile of the Japanese armed forces and make it a part of Japan’s security policy. They also see this as an opportunity to base Japan-USA relations on a more equal basis. To this end, efforts to change (or reinterpret) Japan’s “Peace Constitution” in a manner that permits Japan to responsibly contribute to the resolution of international problems has been sped up. These developments, together with the weakening of the Yoshida Doctrine, created the opportunity for the ruling elite to redefine Japanese security policies and made it possible to strengthen the active regional and international security role of the SDF.<sup>29</sup>

### Japan’s *Human Security* Doctrine

Japan’s human security doctrine is rather developed both conceptually and in practice, and rests mostly on its Official Development Assistance (ODA) policies. According to this doctrine, the attention given to “freedom from want” is higher than that given to “freedom from fear”, as far as human security is concerned. Japan’s human security understanding has been the backbone of Japan’s diplomacy throughout the post-war era. The importance Japan attributes to its humanitarian diplomacy also



stems from the fact that Japan saw this as a tool to realize its long-standing goal of reforming the UNSC. Japan's argument in this regard can be summarized as follows: Japan sees the human security doctrine as an enlargement and sophistication of the world security agenda, and argues that this would thus necessitate expansion of the UNSC permanent memberships. As the country most involved in and sophisticated with respect to humanitarian diplomacy, Japan believes that it should be regarded as a natural member of the reformed UNSC.<sup>30</sup>

It can also be argued that Japan's human security understanding plays a role in unifying not only the political elite but also various different political identities as well, regardless of whether they are pacifist or internationalist. One argument is that the successful production of human security discourse was made possible by close cooperation between the academic and political circles in Japan.<sup>31</sup> Even though the human diplomacy concept did not originate in Japan, the fact that it has been discussed extensively in political and intellectual spheres in the country has made Japan almost a factory in the production of this discourse, to the extent that the human security concept could now even be argued to have become a "Japanese concept" in itself. It should not be forgotten that, as a country with a population

of over 100 million, and an economic and technological giant, Japan not only was deprived of one of the most important tools of foreign policy, military power, for more than half a century, but also was not able to flex its diplomatic muscles completely for historical reasons. Even at times when Japan transported itself to the world stage with its economic power, it could not escape anti-Japan demonstrations in the USA and Southeast Asia. For these reasons, humanitarian diplomacy remained the most comfortable tool that Japan could utilize in its foreign policy, paving a road that could keep it away from popular reactions. In this regard, the Japanese political-academic complex's heavy emphasis on this subject is understandable. It is also understandable that a foreign policy based on human diplomacy and peacekeeping efforts is a unifying element that different parts of Japan and Japanese society can collectively agree on, and which can serve as a replacement for the Yoshida Doctrine.

## Conclusion

Holsti might have found the *Developer* national role conception as ideally best representing Japan. However the above discussions show that Japan's post-war humanitarian security concept have transcended beyond the frame of ODA policies to assist neighbouring Asian

nations. Japan now targets the whole world in its humanitarian diplomacy, tying it up with a comprehensive security understanding and actively engaging with increasing decisiveness in international peacekeeping. Since the 1990s it has consistently moved to reduce the legal limitations for military participation in international peace activities, and this process is still continuing as of the mid-2010s. All these factors indicate that a new national role conception is in the process of taking shape. Developments up until the mid-2010s show that there is a strong potential that Japan will redefine itself as a *Peacekeeping State*, thus adding another type of national role conception to the taxonomy offered by Holsti. This change is significant, as even though there are other states in the world that engage in active peacekeeping, none define this as the backbone of their foreign policy or as a major duty of their national armed forces. It is too early to confidently claim that Japan will indeed choose this role conception for itself, yet the developments so far makes this conceivable.

Japan is leaving behind one of those eras of quest for identity that it has found itself in at various times in its history. A quick glimpse into Japanese history from early-modern to contemporary times reveals a number of eras when the shape of domestic

and foreign policy identities were unclear and Japan seemed to be lost in deciding on its policy directions. These eras witnessed extensive debates about the country's role in the world, and Japan seemed to be grossly wavering both domestically and internationally. These eras of exploration and soul-searching have been observed to last for 15-20 years. However it has also been observed that Japan - which is dubbed as a consensus society- once the discussions get crystalized and the country's identity gets established and accord is achieved, can lift itself up from indecisiveness and move with astounding speed, for good or bad. At the end of the Tokugawa period, Japan wavered between traditionalism and modernisation, and after a lengthy civil war chose modernisation and became very successful in it. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japan discussed extensively whether it should be a strong introspective nation-state or an expansionist empire. In the end it chose the path of imperialism, which led it to a major catastrophe. After the war, Japan tried to choose between the paths of becoming a pacifist/developmentalist state or an armed/normal state, and preferred the pacifist/trading state model, which has led it to become an envied successful economic superpower. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan is again at a crossroads. At the end of the Bubble era, Japan

faced a long economic slump and an aging population, and seem to have lost its purpose in the world. This initiated a range of discussions, starting in the mid-1990s and strengthening throughout the 2000s, engulfing the agenda of the whole country. As of the mid-2010s this debate still continues as to whether Japan should choose between the paths of continuing its introspective foreign policy character together with a heavy dependence on the USA, or should adopt internationalist norms as a peacekeeping state and normalize its defence policies. The latest developments, and as mentioned above, the unifying effect of the humanitarian diplomacy on Japanese society, suggest that Japan will choose internationalism and will take on a larger role in world peacekeeping activities, even though

this is far from guaranteed. If indeed Japan chooses this path based on human security and internationalism, which it has been developing for a long time, it has the potential to contribute immensely to world peace.

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Especially with Shinzo Abe's coming to power, and his defeating of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) at the end of 2012 (the first serious opposition to the LDP in Japanese domestic politics), the new proactive internationalist security understanding became dominant in Japanese foreign policy.

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# Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a Platform for Regional Understanding: Its Economic, Political and Security Potential

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## Abstract

*The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is one of the newest, multi-purpose regional organizations, with an agenda that ranges from broader security concerns to economic cooperation. The founding members of this organization are China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, known as the “Shanghai Five”. It was on June 15, 2001 that these five regional countries, along with Uzbekistan, signed the Shanghai Convention for combating terrorism, extremism, and separatism—sometimes referred to as ‘the three evils’. The SCO is a combination of permanent, observer members and dialogue partners, each having divergent interests. The most recent (July 2015) significant enhancement to the SCO was the final agreement to include Pakistan and India as permanent members. It has yet to be measured whether this grouping of nations revolves more around mere rhetoric and goodwill meetings or whether the understanding can be translated into meaningful and concrete deliberations.*

## Key Words

Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Central Asia, China, Russia, Pakistan, India.

## Introduction

After the emergence of a new world order in the post Second World War era, regional organizations mushroomed as a compromise between nationalism and internationalism. Their significance and utility gradually developed, leading to the formation of various types of regional setups, ranging from those concerned with security considerations to those focused on economic interaction, and later extending to common language/ethnic and religious groupings. These organizations spread from Latin America to the Far East. From 1945 to the 1990s, their main focus was to attain the objectives of rapprochement, economic cooperation and security development, within near similar circumstances. In particular, the newly independent states of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean were inclined

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towards such cooperation. Since the 1990s, the trend of regional integration with a concept of “new regionalism” further spread, establishing new collaborative networks like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and MERCOSUR (derived from the Spanish *Mercado Común del Sur*, which means Southern Common Market, MERCOSUR is an economic and political agreement among Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela). Already existing regional associations like the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) changed its nomenclature to the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), while the European Community (EEC) became the European Union (EU), and the previously named Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was renamed as the African Union (AU). Historically, the regional organizations formed for economic objectives became more successful than the others, while those who initially aligned on the basis of security later expanded their cooperation in other areas like trade, human rights, environmental issues and democracy. We cannot neglect that in both instances, security concerns nevertheless remained in the background.

In Asia, there are approximately eleven regional organizations that have security concerns, at least by implication.<sup>1</sup> Originating from the

concerns of domestic security of Central Asian member states, the newly evolved Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in a short timespan has managed to widen its scope to the political and economic fields. With both Russia and China as its members, the SCO also holds the potential of presenting an effective platform for reflecting the various preferences of its member states and exhibiting the capability of resisting the United States’ “dominance” over the region.

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This paper attempts to examine the potential of the SCO in resolving the regional threat perception of Central Asia and its vicinity, encompassing the common concerns and involvement of its members. In order to examine this concept, we need to understand the evolution and development of the SCO as an effective political and economic alliance, by keeping in view its performance since 2001. The article seeks to understand the political trends towards the effectiveness of the SCO, in



order to provide regional security for its member states. In addition, the paper will study the challenges hampering the effectiveness of the SCO, from national, regional and global perspectives.

## Evolution and Development of the SCO

The SCO is a relatively newly formed organization, which has emerged as a main security arrangement in the region of Central Asia and its surroundings. The foundation of the SCO can be traced back to the early 1990s, when an issue of shared borders between China and the Central Asian Republics arose. In April 1996, the “Shanghai Five” was designed, including Russia, China, and three Central Asian countries; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In 1997, these five countries signed two border related agreements. The first was “the Shanghai Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area”, followed by the “Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas”. The coordination of these countries began from security concerns and later the agenda was extended to various other fields, including the economy and domestic terrorism. The summit of the “Shanghai Five” on 15 June 2001 had historical relevance because of two developments. First, during this summit, the “Shanghai Five” changed its name to the “Shanghai Cooperation

Organization (SCO)”. Second, yet another country, Uzbekistan joined its fold as a permanent member. In July 2015, the most important expansion took place with the induction of Pakistan and India as its permanent members, followed by Belarus as an observer member (having previously been a dialogue partner), and four others; Belarus, Afghanistan, Iran and Mongolia became observer members. Subsequently, the SCO has accepted four new countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia and Nepal) as dialogue partners, along with already present Turkey and Sri Lanka.

A unique feature of the SCO is that it comprises a fairly large geographic area, occupying a territory of around 27,406,927 square kilometers, and comprising a quarter of the planet’s populace. The main objective of this organization, as spelled out in the Charter, revolves around the principles of, “mutual trust, mutual advantage, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural variety and aspiration for joint development”.

In the structural makeup of the SCO, the Heads of State Council (HSC) is the highest institution of policy making, and meets once a year in one of the member States’ capital cities. The second important body of the SCO is the Heads of Government Council (HGC), which, apart from the approval of finances for the organization’s budget, also engages

itself in the modalities of multilateral collaboration during their annual meetings. Another important body is the Council of Foreign Ministers, which is assigned with the task of devising strategy for collaboration with other international organizations. The permanent executive body of the SCO is its Secretariat, situated in Beijing. The main purpose of this Secretariat is to enforce the program of the organization. Another permanent body of the SCO, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), addresses the urgency of ongoing security needs. This structure aims to confront, “terrorism, separatism and extremism”,

particularly in the contemporary environment, where hardly any region is safe from the threats of domestic, as well as inter-state terrorism and violence. RATS depicts the seriousness and commitment of this organization against regional and international terrorism. Its headquarters are in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, which is a permanent member of the SCO. The term of office for the head of RATS is three years. Every member state is entitled to send a permanent representative to RATS. Apart from the mentioned institutions of the SCO, there are various other departments, dealing with diverse subjects.

**Figure 1**



Source: “Council on Foreign Relations”, <http://www.cfr.org/china/shanghai-cooperation-organization/p10883> (last visited 12 October 2016)

**Table 1: SCO Member States**

| Member Countries         | Joining Date | Area in km | Population     | Per-capita Income  |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Permanent members</b> |              |            |                |                    |
| China                    | April 1996   | 2,717,300  | 1,357 billion  | 11,850 ppp dollars |
| Russia                   | April 1996   | 17,098,242 | 143.5 million  | 23,200 ppp dollars |
| Kazakhstan               | April 1996   | 199,900    | 5.72 million   | 3,070 ppp dollars  |
| Tajikistan               | April 1996   | 143,100    | 8.208 million  | 2,500 ppp dollars  |
| Uzbekistan               | June 2001    | 447,400    | 30.24 million  | 5,340 ppp dollars  |
| India (Acceding)         | July 2015    | 3,287,590  | 1.252 billion  | 5,350 ppp dollars  |
| Pakistan (Acceding)      | July 2015    | 796,095    | 182.1 million  | 4,920 ppp dollars  |
| <b>Observer Members</b>  |              |            |                |                    |
| Mongolia                 | June 2004    | 1,565,000  | 2.839 million  | 8,810 ppp dollars  |
| Iran                     | July 2005    | 1,648,195  | 77.45 million  | 15,600 ppp dollars |
| Afghanistan              | June 2012    | 652,225    | 30.55 million  | 2,000 ppp dollars  |
| Belarus                  | July 2015    | 207,560    | 16.950 million | 16,950 ppp dollars |

Source: Compiled by the authors, from various sources, including the “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Secretariat”, <http://www.sectsc.org/>

The diversity of the member states, in terms of geographic area, population, and per-capita income, as well the date of joining is reflected in Figure 1 and Table 1, as above.

## Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Their Interests

The basic concern of any regional arrangement lies in the mutual interest

of its member states, which provides a platform to address and resolve the emerging concerns. Common as well as individual interests motivate the member states to devise a strategy for such regional understanding. As far as the mutual interests are concerned, they range from the joint security network; threats both from within and outside surroundings, to the sphere of economic development. Apart from the common interests, the diversity of member states enables them to design

policies and concerns, which can be best resolved with the help of the collective effort of the member states. Thus, this diversity, instead of creating hindrance, can facilitate the member states to come to terms on a common agenda, simultaneously providing a space for their specific interests. The best optimistic account would be to visualize these ethnic, linguistic and geographical features creating a mosaic-like dynamic regional arrangement.

### *Relevance of the SCO Member States*

Two of the original members, China and Russia, share a commonality of being nuclear powers, as well as occupying the status of being permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Besides these common features, both countries have committed to build their regional relations for peace and harmony, shedding away decades of fear and suspicion for each other. According to one opinion, one of the reasons for their committing to regional relations is the Chinese pecuniary dissemination into Russia's Far Eastern Federal District, which in future is expected to make the local population dependent on them.<sup>2</sup> These speculations further supplemented China's growing economic progress, which has effectively challenged the US as well as the EU. However,

Russia's undefined world status and its limitations make its position less significant in the new World Order. According to an assessment, "the smooth and complementary meshing of defensive elements in Russian motives with ambitions for "soft"—that is, economic and cultural—hegemony on the Chinese side is the central secret of the SCO's success and the key to its hopes of survival."<sup>3</sup> Apart from the suspicion and differences, these two neighbors share some common and individual interests for being in this regional arrangement. As far as the common interests of both countries are concerned, first, through this forum, they strive to maintain their borders without tension. Second, both partners believe in designing a mechanism for synchronicity in Central Asia. Third, both powers struggle to shape a network for regional security, which could in the long run prove to be an international bloc, with a capacity to operate independently from Western influence. Apart from these shared objectives, both countries also have their individual agendas in the SCO. First, for Russia, the SCO plays a constructive role in developing its cordial relationship with China and with members of the Central Asian states, which were not long ago a part of the Soviet Union. Second, by being a part of this regional cooperation, Russia aims to demonstrate its capability to resist US

dominance in this region, by providing a platform for political discourse, as an alternate to the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Similarly, apart from the mentioned combined vision of these two powers, the individualistic interests of China in the SCO remains in the significance of the Central Asian region. The reason being that this region has been “opened up by the end of the cold war after generations of Soviet seclusion; an intriguing market for both goods and technologies; and a source of much-needed energy that China can afford to pay for but would like to reserve to itself under long-term agreements based on material interdependence.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, with a great potential of economic development, China finds this regional arrangement serves to its fiscal interests. The second most important interest of China in the SCO is the apprehension that some of the fellow member states harbour Chinese dissidents, thus becoming a security hazard to its non-Chinese North West Region. The SCO charter provides a provision to discourage such dissenting elements, as Article 2 reaffirms that “the member States of the SCO shall adhere to the mutual respect of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of States and inviolability of State borders, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of its

use in international relations, seeking no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas.”

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On the other side, the landlocked member countries of Central Asia have few links with the outside world. Even within the regional context they are diversified. The oil and gas reserves of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan distinguish these countries from the rest. Another diversity is landmass, which sets these two apart from the relatively “small” Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Collectively, the Central Asian member states of the SCO face a challenge of trying to protect their solidarity while upholding their individual concerns, in a region characterized by weak political systems, shaky economic arrangements and fragile social structures. Apart from the mentioned diversity and multiplicity of problems, the SCO member states have made a pledge in the Charter and in various Summits to coordinate their interests in a regional context. For these Central Asian member states,

the biggest challenge is to find their place in a region where a dominant Russia and an economically developed China are also located. In the above-described situation, the SCO on the one hand provides a platform for the Central Asian states for understanding the diversity and multiplicity of interests of each member; while on the other enables them to interact with the regional powers on various fields. Another important contribution of the SCO is that it can provide for these states' security, particularly when all of them face serious extremist threats, internally as well as inter-state, particularly after 2002, stemming from the Afghan situation, as acknowledged by the Deputy Director of the SCO Research Centre at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS), Hu Jian. Mr. Jian states that, "terrorism and extremism are key factors in the region and Afghanistan has been a cradle for terrorism and extremism since the US invasion."<sup>5</sup> Apart from the security concerns, there is an encouraging prospect of closer economic ties within the regional context. Article 3 of the SCO Charter, under the heading of "Areas of Cooperation", mentions that the member states will "[support and promote...] regional economic cooperation in various forms, fostering a favorable environment for trade and investments with a view to gradually achieving free flow of goods,

capital, services and technologies." An example of this is the Chinese investment to support other members' power infrastructures, including "the development of the hydroelectric power sector and electricity networks that are important for their own energy needs; and major road and rail transport projects that could mitigate the geographical isolation of—in particular—Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, while offering profits from the growing transit trade to countries such as Iran, India and Pakistan as well as the West."<sup>6</sup>

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In July 2015, Pakistan and India became acceding permanent members of the SCO, after having been observer members since 2005. Despite divergent interests of both countries, within the SCO structure, they are expected to share some common interests. First, they gain access to the Central Asian region, including the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI)

gas pipeline project. Second, it is an opportunity through which these two important South Asian countries could explore ways of resolving their various contentious issues within the parameters of a regional context. Third, as parts of this organization, both countries can seek ways of promoting mutual regional policies. Apart from these inspiring factors, there are some fears in both countries regarding this region. First these two rival South Asian powers might not be able to overcome their unilateral interests. Second, India in particular is fearful of the long history of Central Asian rivalries and alliances during the post-Cold war period. While assessing this aspect, Major Jefferson Turner writes:

“For India this aspect is based on perceived threats whether from Chinese encirclement or regional instability generated by the Afghan Taliban government. India also views the potential lack of access to a new east-west economic corridor – replacing the Cold War north-south orientation – as troubling. Finally, Central Asia represents an area for potential cooperation and conflict with the United States over state interests (e.g. countering Chinese influence or energy development and transportation routes).”<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the factors as mentioned above, the expected monetary benefits from this region are the most attractive

driving force for India and Pakistan to participate actively in this regional organization. However, Pakistan’s aspiration to get maximum benefit from this regional organization has two serious challenges. First is the influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, who, according to some analysts, are getting support from the border areas of North Western tribal Pakistan. In this situation, Pakistan’s firm commitment against terror activities has its handicaps, becoming an irritant for China in particular. Second is the conflict within the South Asian region. Apart from China and Pakistan, India has issues with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It also has problems with Bhutan and Burma over Nagaland and Assam separatists. Along with this, its interference in Maldives further weakens its position in the SCO.<sup>8</sup>

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**Pakistan has extremely cordial ties with China which is the founder and dominant member of the SCO.**

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In a commentary justifying Pakistan’s keen interest to join the SCO, a newspaper article expresses that “the resolve of the SCO to fight the menace of terrorism, promoting regional peace and security and working for shared

economic prosperity are very much in harmony with what Pakistan is looking for and needs desperately. Pakistan's resolve to look to the region where it belongs, for finding solutions to its economic woes and other debilitating challenges, represents a paradigm shift in the conduct of its foreign relations".<sup>9</sup> Pakistan's most paramount interest in this organization however, remains the fact that it has extremely cordial ties with China, which is the founder and dominant member of the SCO. In this context, upon becoming a full member of the SCO, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, at the Zhengzhou (China) 14th Heads of Government Council meeting, held on December 15, 2015, made it clear in his acceptance speech that his country would "collectively confront the challenges of extremism, separatism, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, organised crime and environmental and natural disasters... (as) the security situation around us remains precarious...(and) Pakistan is seeing challenges to state sovereignty, territorial integrity".<sup>10</sup>

### *Interest of Observer States in SCO*

Apart from the permanent members, the observer states are also allowed to send their representatives to higher-level meetings. As one such state,

Afghanistan has a strategic significance within the regional context, which could be enhanced, especially after the withdrawal of NATO forces led by the US. Contact between the SCO and Afghanistan was established in 2005, when the Afghan leadership showed its interest in this regional forum. This was followed by a dialogue resulting in its participation in various meetings of the SCO, and becoming an observer member in 2012. The interests of Afghanistan and the SCO member states increased after the announcement of the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014. It was estimated that as a consequence there would be repercussions for its Central Asian neighbors and Pakistan. While sharing views at a roundtable discussion at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in Islamabad; a senior researcher of China Foundation of International Studies (CFIS) and a former Ambassador to India and Pakistan, Zhou Gang, expressed concerns that NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan "might not be a smooth transition", and although some US military presence in Afghanistan would undoubtedly extend beyond 2014, it was "not clear how the US would consolidate the government of Afghanistan post-2014 and keep its relations with its immediate neighbours stable."<sup>11</sup> At the same event, Chairman of China Foundation of International



Studies (CFIS) and former SCO Secretary General, Zhang Deguang, stressed that China and other Central Asian states along with Pakistan, should devise a strategy for the Afghan glitches. China's interests in a post-US Afghanistan could stabilize the situation and help bring together the warring factions to the negotiation table.<sup>12</sup>

Another keen aspirant for full membership in the SCO is Iran, which has already solidified its bilateral relations with China. The main hindrance for Iran, in the past, has been the US and Security Council sanctions over its nuclear program. The SCO member states were thus reluctant to accept Iran as a full member because in their perception it would not be beneficial to offend the United States. Recently, the sanctions are being lifted as a result of an accord signed between the P5+1 and Iran,<sup>13</sup> and with this, Iran's prospects of becoming a full member have become brighter.

During the 2013 summit of the SCO, the Iranian President showed his eagerness to work with the economic organization and assured his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that "Iran would like to accept supervision from the International Atomic Energy Agency and to eliminate worries from international society through cooperation."<sup>14</sup>

As far as Mongolia is concerned, its interest in the SCO revolves around its desire to establish a smooth relationship with China. During the 12th SCO summit, on 6th June 2012 in Beijing, the President of Mongolia, Tsakhia Elbegdorj, expressed his keenness by stating that "within the framework of the SCO, Mongolia is interested in many sectors, such as economy, culture, education, nature and environment, prevention of natural disasters and reducing disaster casualties. Mongolia also seeks to enhance its cooperation in the fields of combating drugs, narcotics and terrorism. In the future, Mongolia will continuously administer its policy to expand its involvement in the SCO operation on mutually beneficial grounds."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Belarus, as the only country from Europe in the SCO and the most recent to be accepted as an observer member, also expressed its keen interest in this organization, by endorsing its multilateral purposes. Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko stated, "this is not just another platform for conversations and talks, though this is important. Still, the organization includes giant states, giant economies. This is of great interest to us even from the practical point of view, not to mention diplomacy, politics, etc."<sup>16</sup>

## *Potential of the SCO as a Viable Regional Arrangement*

The prospects of the SCO as an effective regional organization can be studied from three different dimensions; economic, political and security. As far as the economic dimension of the SCO is concerned, an established fact is that no regional arrangement can progress without fiscal cooperation among its member states. By becoming an economic global giant, China has all the potential to accelerate economic activity through this forum for the benefit of all SCO member states. In one example of such activity, China in 2003 suggested a free-trade zone amongst the members of the SCO.<sup>17</sup> To facilitate this suggestion, four working groups were structured from 2002 to 2006,<sup>18</sup> 100 associated programs projects were accepted, and the SCO and the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) signed a memorandum of understanding, particularly for trade. However, the low developmental cultural infrastructure of the Central Asian member states created a hindrance in actualizing China's wishes. Realizing this uneven status of its fellow members, in 2004 China offered a loan of \$900 million to the Central Asian States. While announcing this loan, Chinese President Hu Jintao stated, "We should fully take advantage of the high complementary

economy among members and the rich natural resources and start cooperation in various forms."<sup>19</sup> China also promised to fulfill its need of hydrocarbon from Kazakhstan and Russia, who are its major manufacturers.

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*The prospects of the SCO as an effective regional organization can be studied from three different dimensions; economic, political and security.*

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Apart from providing economic incentives to its member states, the SCO also contributes towards political and security prospects. In this regard, the SCO aims to discourage the practice of armed skirmishes, while promoting military collaboration for defensive purposes under the "New Security Concept", which can pose a challenge for the agenda of United States-led security arrangements in this region. Matthew Oresman reflects this suspicion when he writes, "some analysts in the United States, particularly those still trapped in a Cold War mentality, believe the SCO is an attempt to limit Washington's influence in Central Asia. U.S. policy toward the SCO remains ambivalent, lacking a comprehensive or vocal response. Yet, as China's first attempt at shaping a new international system, the

SCO reveals much about China's plans to engage the world in the coming years."<sup>20</sup> Despite the reassurances of China and Russia through their statements, the Western powers still have apprehensions about this unique regional setup. So much so that an American critic of the SCO equates it as a rival to NATO. He goes on to say that China is the main force behind this organization, as well as beneficiary.<sup>21</sup> It is explained by Tyler Roney that "as the most powerful and involved country in the SCO by far, China has the power to shape the domestic policy of the whole of Central Asia, an upsetting prospect for many...."<sup>22</sup>

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On the other hand, expressing a self-assured view, Junfel Wu states, "the SCO is not an aggressive alliance against the US and will not become one in the near future either. Both Russia and China have been repeatedly stressing that the SCO plays an important and positive role in safeguarding regional security and promoting member states' common development."<sup>23</sup> The reason ascribed to such Western sensitivity

arises from at least two developments: 1) the United States in 2005 was denied observer status in the SCO; and 2) in 2006, Iran, the main critic of US policies, was accepted as an observer. In fact, according to a faculty member of Peking University, China has adopted a sobering policy by "cautiously downplaying the anti-U.S. rhetoric played up by some member states (particularly Uzbekistan and Iran)."<sup>24</sup>

The 14<sup>th</sup> Dushanbe summit of September 11-12, 2014 made further commitments through its agenda, in more clear and specific terms. It took measures to finalize modalities for the organization's expansion. In order to do so there were legal requirements to be fulfilled. It was agreed that the process would be created before the Russian 2015 Summit. Out of the eight non-permanent members, three (India, Iran, Pakistan) were chosen for permanent membership. It was acknowledged by Shannon Tiezzi, writing for *The Diplomat*, "...should the SCO expand, as it is now primed to do, the organization would see a corresponding jump in prestige and influence."<sup>25</sup> Further quoting *Xinhua* writer Li Li, the above mentioned commentator, as seen from the Chinese perspective, wrote that the expansion is expected to "infuse fresh vigor into the group's future development and boost its influence and appeal on the international arena."<sup>26</sup>

Spelling out the interests and perceptions of some key permanent members on the expansion of the organization, Shannon Tiezzi wrote:

“Russia is eager to see the expansion of the SCO. Moscow cares more about the geopolitical value of the SCO than economic cooperation or cultural exchanges among the members. Russia believes that the more members it has, the more geopolitical significance will be added to the SCO, especially during a time when the rivalry between Russia and the West is intense. Central Asia has been the focus of SCO attention. Even when new members are added, it will not direct the organization’s gaze toward other regions. The four Central Asian members also have the right to allow or not allow new members. China will stick to SCO principles and procedures for expanding membership. It welcomes any new members and will continue to push forward pragmatic cooperation and internal unity.

It is true that there are huge differences among SCO members such as their geographic size, economic strength, and resource reserves. This is a problem that any regional or international framework faces.

Nonetheless, the SCO has managed to move forward since its founding, and this sets the condition for its possible expansion in the future”.<sup>27</sup>

In yet another opinion from the Chinese perspective, Shannon Tiezzi explained that the expansion of the SCO would be regarded as a positive measure for the stability and utility of the region:

“An expanded SCO will be in a better position to achieve Xi’s (Chinese President Xi Jinping) vision of becoming the regional security heavyweight. Despite a tendency to see the SCO as a competitor to NATO, Chinese leaders stress that the SCO is something entirely new. In Dushanbe, Xi announced, ‘SCO members have created a new model of international relations – partnership instead of alliance’. An op-ed in *RT* by a former Russian deputy foreign minister struck a similar tone, contrasting the SCO with ‘the rigid discipline that exists within old-fashioned, cumbersome alliances of the previous era, which imposed serious constraints on the sovereignty and freedom of their member states’. By comparison, the SCO is described as ‘fully in tune with the realities and requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ – the model for future international relationships. With three new partners added to

its ranks, the SCO is now better positioned to truly challenge those ‘cumbersome alliances’ for primacy in shaping regional security”.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from its expanding aspect, the SCO is expected to focus on the recent rising threat from such global terrorist groups as the *Islamic State* (IS). The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov in particular, mentioned the threat of IS. He defined the *Islamic State* as “the most obvious challenge” to the SCO members.<sup>29</sup> However, the organization is yet to formulate a comprehensive strategy to cope collectively with such terror groups. An active collective pursuit in this matter can take shape if the threat grows either in Afghanistan or in some other neighborhood of the member states.

## Conclusion

We may assess from the discussion as well as questions raised in the preceding pages that the SCO has a considerable potential to serve the wider interests of its member states. It is more relevant to Central Asian states, which are striving for political maturity and economic development, by taking cognizance of their internal challenges. In this regard, China and Russia have a great responsibility. As far as the defensive nature of this organization is concerned, the SCO can be graded as a security alliance instead

of military alliance as perceived by some US writers, mentioned elsewhere in this paper. Unlike the structure and objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), both China and Russia have described this organisation as a “partnership instead of alliance”.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, having as members two important regional powers, China and Russia, the SCO is not only a platform for under-developed member states to seek solutions for their internal problems, but is also a relevant forum to integrate economically, through trade and investment.

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The integration and development of this regional organization depends on effective economic and security cooperation, and on managing or reducing the ongoing as well as potential tensions, within the regional framework.

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No matter what the critics in the West say, we may present some suggestions that could make the SCO a more effective regional forum. First, there is a need to design comprehensive laws and policies to more effectively administer the regional affairs. However, for this to succeed the efficient functioning of its various institutions must play a supportive role. Second, the SCO

should work exclusively to ensure its prime objective of regional security by devising a strategy to resolve traditional and non-traditional threats to the region. Above all, the organization must take serious note of the ongoing issues of contention between the member states and make all efforts to find fruitful solutions. Third, the SCO should realize that the economic integration and cross-cultural linkages

of this region is only possible if a peaceful environment is ensured along with strong security imperatives.

Thus, the integration and development of this regional organization depends on effective economic and security cooperation, and on managing or reducing the ongoing as well as potential tensions, within the regional framework.

## Endnotes

- 1 Pacific Community (1947); Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), 1951; Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), 1967; Pacific Islands Forum, 1971; Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), 1982; South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), 1985; Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), 1989; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA), 1992; ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), 1994; ASEAN Plus Three (APT), 1997; Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), 2001.
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- 3 Alyson J. K. Bailes and Pál Dunay, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a Regional Security Institution”, *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Policy Paper*, No. 17, May 2007, p. 9.
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- 10 *Dawn*, 15 December 2015.
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  - 18 These working groups were formed in Moscow on electronic trade, customs, inspection of goods and unification of standards, and investment cooperation.
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  - 23 Junfel Wu, “Will SCO Become Another Warsaw Pact?”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 39 (September 24-30 2005), p. 4207.
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