

Siberian Energy for Japan and the United States

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SIBERIAN ENERGY FOR JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

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Access and availability to energy sources have long played an historically important role in the geopolitical landscape of the Asia-Pacific region, and continue to do so today. Following World War II, the success of the U.S. and Japan's post-war economies relied on steady and dependable sources of energy to fuel their respective economies. Japan in particular has been especially reliant on foreign sources of energy for its economic survival given its lack of any indigenous energy sources. Recently, China's global search for new energy resources has accelerated in order to feed its massive economy, a growing middle-class, as well as fuel its burgeoning military presence in the Pacific. Given Russia's abundance of natural resources in fuel, especially in natural gas and petroleum, the relevance of Albright's analysis for energy cooperation remains pertinent due to the increase in demand of energy throughout Asia, as well as the potential for armed conflict in areas such as the Spratlys, Parcel, and Senkaku islands, which may contain large deposits of natural gas.

Raymond J. Albright's 1973 report analyzes the possibility and importance of cooperation between the United States and Japan to diversify its sources of energy by obtaining access to energy sources in then Soviet Siberia. The report examines the feasibility and potential roadblocks to collaborative development and exploration projects between the U.S., Japan, and the Soviet Union by expounding upon the difficulties that must be overcome on the part of companies and governments to make these projects successful, and their mutual benefit to the participating countries involved in such a partnership.

Albright writes:

“It is in the US interest to see that Japanese policies toward Moscow and Peking run on parallel tracks with our own. The US is seeking an economic world environment based on international cooperation in trade and monetary affairs, and would be concerned about energy resource competition running in a contrary direction. Thus, it appears in the US interest to take initiative with Japan to build a coordinated policy approach on energy resources abroad, rather than to allow incipient tendencies toward competitive nationalism to expand.” [37]

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