

Ohira victory a setback to 'Bremen East'

Already, business leaders press Prime Minister to continue Fukuda's policies

Masayoshi Ohira, whom Henry Kissinger has described as his favorite Japanese politician, pulled off a stunning coup d'état in Tokyo this week, defeating Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda in the first round of elections for the presidency of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Fukuda has announced that he will not contest Ohira in the election runoff, and he is expected to resign the premiership later this week. At that time Ohira will be formally named LDP President and thus the new Japanese prime minister.

The victory of Ohira, who is currently the Secretary-General of the ruling party, was a complete shock to Fukuda personally, as well as to virtually every political pundit in Japan. The country's major newspapers as late as last week were unanimous in predicting a Fukuda victory, and widespread charges have surfaced that Ohira's late surge to victory was fueled by waves of "dirty money" vote-buying.

Tokyo summit plans

Ohira's victory marks a huge setback for the political and business leaders of West Germany and Japan, who have worked together for the establishment of a new international monetary system. Fukuda had been playing a key role in guiding Japan along this course, and through his relationship with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt the two nations have been coordinating plans for the Tokyo Summit of industrial democracies, scheduled for June of next year. Both Fukuda and Schmidt hoped to use the Tokyo Summit to expand the scope of the new European Monetary System into an international effort to "clean up" the speculative Eurodollar market and other sources of instability in the world economy, and revive high economic growth through the industrial development of the Third World countries.

When he assumes office Ohira is sure to make subtle but determined efforts to shift Japan away from the course outlined by Fukuda. Ohira has long been a protégé of Japan's leading pro-British monetarist grouping, the Shibusawa family, and maintains close ties to the "Jewish Lobby" of the United States and Great Britain.

In an interview with the West German daily *Die Welt* yesterday, the Prime Minister-elect gave a clear

indication of things to come. Ohira stated that he too, like Fukuda, is committed to "cleaning up" the 500-600 billion excess dollars around the world, but he hopes this will be accomplished through the City of London plan to increase the use of the International Monetary Fund's "Special Drawing Rights"!

While the U.S. State Department yesterday issued a typically bland statement on Ohira's victory, which said President Carter expects the change of leadership in Japan to have no impact on the "friendly relations between our two countries," the British have openly expressed their pleasure that one of their allies will assume the top position in Japan. The *Financial Times* of London, closely associated with the Rothschild-led British Round Table, commented in an editorial yesterday that Ohira will "be less effective than Mr. Fukuda at selling the Japanese line to his American and European colleagues."

The paper noted that whereas "Fukuda is confident of his intellectual ability to convince others that his point of view is right," Ohira "is likely to be less forceful." The editorial concluded that "Fukuda prided himself as an innovator as far as Japan's relations with the outside world were concerned," while Ohira "is thought to be in much less of a hurry than Fukuda."

"Consensus system"

Despite the British optimism, however, Ohira will not be free to alter Japanese policies on his own. Rather, because of the unique political process in Japan known as the "consensus system," Ohira will be forced to take into account the pressures and demands of other political and business leaders. The single most important thing that will determine the policies of Japan under Ohira will be whether the faction of industrialist leaders that backed Fukuda's foreign and economic policies — especially Nippon Steel, the Mitsubishi zaibatsu, the dirigist banks like the Industrial Bank of Japan, and the "pro-German" wing of Japan's powerful bureaucracy — "capture" the new prime minister by publicly elaborating on Fukuda's policies and demanding that Ohira adhere to them.

Experienced observers of Japanese politics have expressed the fear that the industrialist leaders, known in Japan as the "Zaikai," will increase their

losses by retreating into the "byzantine" world of Japanese backroom maneuvering, to work out "compromises" and "deals" with Ohira.

Two of Japan's most powerful Zaikai, Nippon Steel chief Shigeo Nagano and big-business federation (Keidanren) leader Toshio Doko, have apparently begun a pressure drive on Ohira. Nagano yesterday called for outgoing premier Fukuda to be named the new Finance Minister with special responsibility for coordinating the Tokyo Summit, while Doko called on Ohira to maintain all of Fukuda's economic policies.

The makeup of Ohira's Cabinet — whether it includes members of Parliament associated with prodevelopment politicians such as former Prime Minister Takeo Miki, Yasuhiro Nakasone, and Fukuda or whether it is made up mainly of members associated with Ohira and his allies — will be an important indicator of Ohira's ability to change the Fukuda policies.

How Fukuda lost

Despite the intensive "vote-buying" campaign run by Ohira and his factional ally, former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, Fukuda's defeat was mainly caused by the election tactics adopted by himself and his allies. Fukuda was overconfident of his reelection, and concentrated his campaign on the backroom wheeling

and dealing that has come to dominate Japanese elections.

Fukuda rarely emphasized his leadership role in world affairs as a reason for his reelection, and presented himself to the LDP voters as an extremely skilled bureaucrat who deserved to be prime minister based on his "competence." Thus, as is often the case with elections in western countries, the rank-and-file members of the LDP saw little difference between Fukuda, the prodevelopment leader, and his arch-rival Ohira.

The failure of Fukuda's own election campaign thus set the stage for the massive vote-buying operations conducted by the pro-China groups inside the LDP, led by Ohira and Tanaka. The "black money" support for Ohira in this campaign was so blatant that another candidate for the LDP presidency, Yasuhiro Nakasone, publicly denounced Ohira, charging that Ohira supporters had gotten control of secret LDP membership lists, enabling them to "canvass" for votes by paying large sums of money. It is not yet known how much money Ohira and Tanaka spent to buy this election, but the amount is widely believed to have been enormous. Every Japanese voter knows that each LDP faction, including Fukuda's, spends money massively at election time, but Tanaka, who has an enormous "grass roots" machine throughout

A weak Prime Minister

The general consensus in Japan is that Ohira is a weak man. Some prefer the term "flexible"; others call him a "faceless bureaucrat." As the London *Financial Times* noted, whereas "Fukuda is confident of his intellectual ability to convince others that his point of view is right.... Ohira is likely to be less forceful." The *Financial Times's* publishers, the Rothschilds, should know; since his public life began in the 1930s, Ohira has propitiated what he considers to be the most powerful force in Japan and the world: the pro-British Shibusawa-Mitsui business and political group in Japan and its international patrons in London and among the London-linked investment houses in New York.

One reporter described Ohira's personality in the following way: in

the early 1970s, Japanese Prime Minister Sato sent a Defense Minister to Washington with a letter, giving him firm instructions to give the letter only to President Nixon himself or to a senior cabinet member. Henry Kissinger, at the time only the National Security Adviser and not in the cabinet, intercepted the official and demanded the letter. When the official refused, Kissinger went into a classic rage, but still the official refused to disobey Prime Minister Sato. The reporter concluded, "Ohira would have wilted and given him the letter."

A top official described how Kissinger terrorized and controlled Ohira when Ohira served as Foreign Minister in 1973. Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, Deputy Prime Minister Takeo Miki, and

International Trade and Industry Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone all supported a Japanese policy of securing closer ties to the Arabs through oil-for-technology deals. During the Yom Kippur War and ensuing oil crisis, Kissinger demanded that Japan instead follow his own, pro-Israel line to the letter. Ohira agreed, after being warned by a pro-Zionist lobby, pro-Peking Japanese Foreign Ministry official that the "Jewish lobby controlled America," and that they would retaliate if Japan crossed Kissinger on the mideast issue. Tanaka overruled Ohira.

When London succeeded in deposing Tanaka at the end of 1974, Ohira hoped to replace him, but Takeo Miki succeeded and continued Tanaka's policies. Nonetheless the entire experience only increased Ohira's awe of London's powers.

As a result, when U.S. Treasury

Japan, has shown the ability over the years to outspend his rivals.

Chinese connection?

In his election strategy, Fukuda severely underestimated the help Ohira would get from the Tanaka machine. Tanaka is still under pressure for the Wall Street engineered "Lockheed scandal" and it was thought Ohira would try to minimize his dependency on Tanaka as long as the cloud of political corruption hung over the former premier's head. It was also thought that Tanaka's political troubles would undercut his ability to raise money through his huge political patronage machine.

That Tanaka and Ohira were able to raise so much money to, in effect, buy the prime minister's office for Ohira, has raised the question of just where the money came from. Undoubtedly, a major source of the funds for the Ohira campaign came from the massive intelligence and "black operations" network in Japan controlled by the People's Republic of China. The Chinese have never hidden their intense support for Ohira and Japanese press reports have noted that China was very happy with Ohira's victory. Chinese Vice-premier Teng Hsiao-ping made clear Peking's continued interest in Tanaka when he visited the former premier while in Japan last month.

Tanaka's money, however, was only one crucial factor in determining Ohira's victory. Tanaka knew if he publicly pushed strongly for Ohira early in the campaign Fukuda would tar Ohira with Tanaka's "Lockheed" image. Tanaka only mobilized his forces at the last minute in a massive one-shot karate chop against Fukuda.

The Tanaka question

In the end, it was the support of Tanaka that was crucial for Ohira's victory. The alliance between the two LDP leaders is little more than one of convenience however, as Tanaka now hopes to be able to use his influences over Ohira to ease the political and legal pressures on him due to the Lockheed scandal.

It is a bitter irony that Tanaka helped put into power a man whose political mentors were largely responsible for engineering the "corruption" scandals that led to his downfall in 1974. Though Tanaka set a precedent during his period as premier for many of the policies later pursued by Fukuda, today he is completely embroiled in legal battles and a political drive for undefined "revenge." This confused state of mind has opened the former premier to the kind of political manipulation represented by his alliance of convenience with Ohira:

—Peter Ennis

Secretary Blumenthal attempted over the past year and a half to blackmail Japan to abandon development-oriented economic policies at home and abroad, then Liberal-Democratic Party Secretary-General Ohira advocated concessions to Blumenthal every step of the way, such as reducing exports. He opposed privately — he dared not oppose publicly — Fukuda's international economic initiatives this year. Instead, Ohira supported increased power by the International Monetary Fund.

Ohira's roots

Ohira's beginnings as a public official came under the aegis of the pro-British Shibusawa-Mitsui networks in Japan. He was picked up by the Shibusawa Fabian "Christian" networks in the mid-1930s, when he joined the Salvation Army and began espousing the theories of 19th century "Christian Pacifist" Kanzo Uchimura. To this

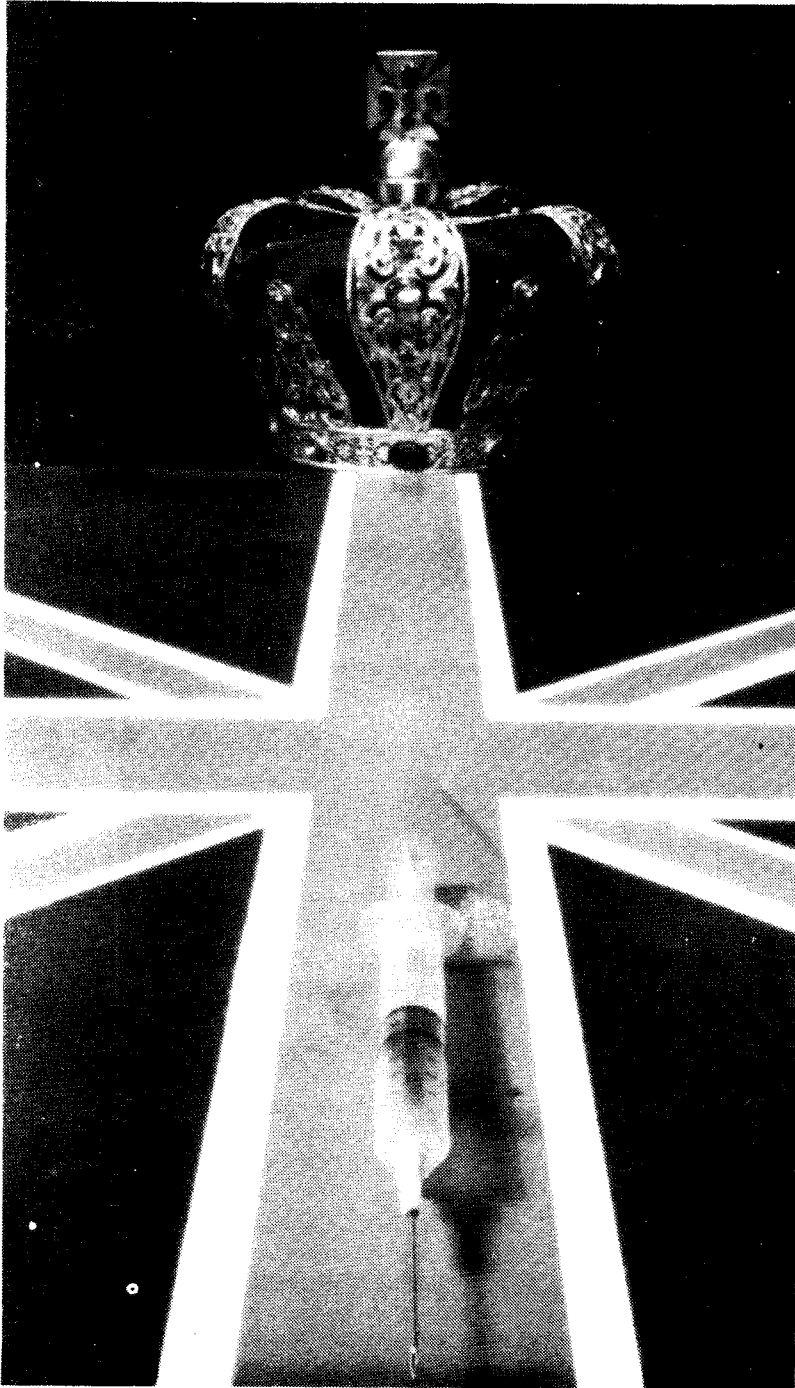
day Uchimura is a model promoted by the Shibusawa family-run International House of Japan, which also sponsors the terrorist Japanese Red Army and the anti-industrial terrorists who tried to shut down Tokyo's new Narita Airport this summer. Are Ohira's own Shibusawa family connections the reason he attacked Fukuda for "repressing" the Narita demonstrators?

In 1936, Ohira joined the Finance Ministry, then under the control of Sehin Ikeda, the head of Mitsui Bank and the self-described Hjalmar Schacht of Japan. Ikeda was the most important British and Shibusawa family agent within the Mitsui cartel and within Japan as a whole. He funded the pro-British "strike north" faction of the army in the 1930s. To this day, Ohira's advisers and political backers comes from this Shibusawa-Mitsui network.

On China policy as well, Ohira

differs markedly from the mainstream in Japan. The predominant policy in Japan is to seek friendship with China without letting that effort harm the establishing of close economic cooperation with the USSR. Ohira in contrast includes among his advisers men who have traveled to China to discuss military cooperation between Japan and China against the USSR, i.e., the Brzezinski "China-Japan card." It is known, in fact, that Peking provided funds to members of Ohira's faction this past summer. Ohira has admitted, however, that in practice it will be impossible for him to carry out his own inclinations in this matter.

Despite his own pro-London obsequiousness, that very weakness of will means that if sufficient pressure is put on Ohira in public to follow the "Bremen East" policies of the Fukuda administration, he can be forced to go along.



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