

Japan under rearmament pressure

Washington wants both a broad military role for Tokyo, and U.S. strategic arms for Peking, writes Richard Katz.

Air flights multiplied between Washington, Peking, London, and Tokyo in recent weeks as a host of China Card factioneers tried to engineer a Japan-China-Washington military alliance they could dump into President Reagan's lap as a fait accompli. The busy travelers included two foreign ministers, a former U.S. President, a former Japanese prime minister, a CIA director, and scores of government officials, think tankers, and military officers.

Though there are differences within the China Card group, they agree on two main immediate objectives:

1) **Initiate U.S. arms sales to China**, as called for in a high-level March 19-22 Arden House seminar of present and past government officials and think tankers sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations (see *EIR*, April 14), and bring China into a multilateral anti-Soviet security link including Japan as well as the U.S., as called for March 26 by former President Gerald Ford during his discussions in Peking.

2) **Dramatically change Japan's military role** from the traditional one of self-defense to *regional* military activities as part of security arrangements revolving around the China Card. Haig has reportedly urged Japan to make a major economic commitment to shore up Deng Xiaoping's increasingly fragile regime. Weinberger privately told visiting Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ito March 24 that Japan should take on sea-lane responsibilities for the "entire Northwestern Pacific region" extending as far as Guam and the northern Philippines.

These policies are far from accepted within the White House. Asked by *U.S. News & World Report* in January whether he would sell arms to China, Reagan responded, "We don't ever again want to find the weapons we've provided being used against us." Similarly, in an interview with Japan's *Asahi Evening News* March 9, National Security Adviser Richard Allen downplayed a direct regional military role by Japan, proposing that Tokyo use foreign aid and economic policy to contribute to regional stability. On the issue of arms sales to China, Allen remarked that this issue had been raised by the Carter administration and that the new administration would have to study it.

As a result, the pro-China Card faction has tried to pressure Reagan to continue Carter's policy. On "Face the Nation" March 27, Senate Foreign Relations Com-

mittee Chairman Charles Percy said that the response to any Soviet intervention in Poland should be "realigning ourselves with China," including approval of the arms-sale policy drawn up by the Carter administration. When the press tried to get Weinberger to echo Percy's call he said only, "there is no such linkage yet."

Most of the attendees at the Arden House China seminar, which called for "expanded security cooperation" with China, with sales of "defense-related technology" and possibly "lethal but defensive weapons," said they were referring to a long-term conventional buildup. But one dissenting attendee indicated that a "limited nuclear warfare" role for China is in fact being considered. "It is ridiculous to think China can project any conventional military power," he said. "Their economy cannot support it. [They] don't talk about conventional capacity but stress building up strategic nuclear capacity. So when we say we are supplying dual-use technology, like computers and such, what we are really doing is giving them a delivery system for nuclear weaponry."

He warned, "The Soviets will feel a lot more threatened by this than by some tanks. People don't know how close Vietnam in 1979. If we help China get a nuclear delivery system we could get a Cuban missile crisis in reverse. If any Japanese had been in attendance, they would have pointed that out."

Many Japanese are concerned about any arms sales to China, not just nuclear. Indeed, a study commissioned by the U.S. government's International Communication Agency showed that short of a general global war, the top Japanese defense experts believed that the most likely cause of a Soviet attack on Japan would be the formation of a Japan-U.S.-China military alliance.

Yet, the China Card proponents seek to give Peking an "umbrella" of protection by embroiling it in multilateral defense arrangements including the U.S. and its allies, like Japan. This was the focus of the trips to China and Japan by former President Gerry Ford and Lord Carrington.

Carrington, the British foreign minister, praised the "close accord between China and Britain on strategic questions" in toasting his Peking hosts March 31. Ford made the message even more explicit, saying that an anti-

Soviet front "requires that we, China and the U.S., not only work together bilaterally, but seek to work with other non-Soviet nations to thwart the territorial ambitions of the Soviet Union."

A regional military role for Japan

There is a great deal of resistance in Japan to playing any multilateral military role, much less adopting Ford's proposal. Japan's bilateral security treaty with the U.S. only calls for Japan to take self-defense measures to repel enemy attack while the U.S. retaliates against the aggressor. Japan has nothing but "defensive" weapons such as fighters; it has no long-range bombers, aircraft carriers, or long-range ballistic missiles.

Thus outrage hit Tokyo when Kyodo News Service, the *Asahi Evening News*, and others reported that Weinberger had urged Foreign Minister Ito to go beyond Japan's self-defense concept to take sea-lane responsibility on a regional basis extending to the waters of Guam and the northern Philippines. Pentagon sources confirmed to *EIR* that Weinberger had taken this position. Moreover, a *Mainichi* report of March 19 that Assistant Secretary of State John Holdridge also brought up the idea with a visiting Komeito party delegation indicates that the Weinberger request was no trial balloon or misstatement; it is being seriously pushed. Carrington, too, "intended to discuss Japan's role in safeguarding the security of Northeast Asia" in an early April meeting with Japanese Defense Agency Director Joji Omura, according to the April 6 London *Times*.

Ito told questioners in Japan's parliament that Weinberger had been less explicit than reported. In any case, the foreign minister said, he had replied to Weinberger that it was impossible for Japan to play such a regional role. Japanese sources told *EIR* that in fact the Japan Defense Agency and foreign ministry had conducted contingency studies along the lines of Weinberger's policy. They added that Ito supports the idea privately but doubts its present acceptability in Japan.

The above-cited Arden House attendee commented, "Weinberger knows this is not going to happen this year, but what he is putting on the table is simple reality. The U.S. is going to have to continue diverting forces from the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean. This will protect oil supply lines that are a lot more important to Japan than to the U.S. The Soviets have so far filled that vacuum, particularly since the U.S.-China treaty. Japan has to help fill in that gap. They have to play a regional role."

The attendee added: "Japan has to understand if it doesn't fill in the vacuum, the U.S. has no choice but the arming of China." Asked whether Washington has presented this alternative so starkly to Tokyo, he re-

plied; "No. But they should have. The reason they haven't is that they want both, the regional military role for Japan and the arming of China."

Ito: anti-Soviet sanctions indefinite

Significant antagonism has arisen between Japan and the U.S.S.R. specifically because Japanese rearmament and an emerging Japanese regional military role are posed as part of the China Card. Two years ago, the Ohira government abandoned Japan's traditional "equidistant" diplomacy of good ties with both the Soviet Union and China in favor of good ties with China *instead* of the Soviet Union. Now, while directing Japanese business to a chimerical China-market boom, Ito has told the Diet that the post-Afghanistan economic sanctions against the Soviet Union would be enforced indefinitely. Using an unprecedented formulation, Ito claimed the sanctions had been imposed not only because of Afghanistan, but because of a growing Soviet military presence on "the northern islands," four small islands occupied by the U.S.S.R. after World War II and claimed by both countries.

In a February interview with Kyodo News Service, Soviet General Kiriyan had said that the target of Soviet military installations on the islands is not Japan but China. Although the Soviets have held the islands since 1945, the military presence was built up only after Carter's normalization with Peking.

All previous Japanese governments have demanded the return of the islands, but the Suzuki administration's actions are unique. It has sponsored anti-Soviet commercials on television regarding the islands, and obstructed economic cooperation with Moscow, citing the islands as a justification. Japanese industrialists, having lost billions of dollars in deals, are particularly unhappy about the sanctions, and often publicly urge imitation of the much looser French and West German attitude toward the sanctions. Japan's steel firms now stand to lose a \$3 billion steel pipeline deal that was part of the Soviet natural gas deal with those two European countries, due to the Suzuki government's obstruction of Export-Import Bank credits. Tokyo has virtually refused to discuss economic cooperation at the state-to-state level until the islands are returned.

The Haig and Carrington strategists have urged Ito to maintain this stance against the wishes of Japanese business. Carrington told the foreign ministers to maintain the sanctions, according to the London *Times*, while Ford told a Tokyo audience that "certain Europeans," a reference to Paris and Bonn, were "swallowing the Soviet line," a comment intimidating to Japanese suggesting policy coordination with Europe. At the same time, Tokyo is being urged to favorably consider Peking's request for a \$2 billion 30-year loan at 3 percent to bail out the Deng regime.