

# Japanese leaders, Asian governments blast Nakasone military strategy

by Richard Katz

From the Japanese public and Asian neighbors alike, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has been hit with a firestorm of protest against his discussions in Washington of a greatly expanded Japanese military role. The criticism ranged from the Prime Minister of Malaysia to the official press agency of China.

During his Jan. 18 meeting with President Reagan, Nakasone had labeled Japan America's "unsinkable aircraft carrier" as he talked about the possibility of giving his nation a regional military posture. Hitherto, in accordance with the famous "no-war" Article 9 of Japan's constitution, Japan has limited itself to self-defense only. Thus, the controversy swelled when Nakasone told the Diet Jan. 24 that Japan should seriously consider revising the Constitution. Just before that "State of the Nation" address, his Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), for the first time ever, had officially recommended such a revision.

For the Japanese public and Japan's Asian neighbors—who share bitter memories of Japanese militarism during the 1930s and 1940s—Article 9 and the prohibition of a regional military posture seemed a safeguard against a repetition of the past. Nonetheless, report Japanese sources, Nakasone decided that he had to commit Japan to an expanded military role in order to "revitalize" ties with Washington. Nakasone told a Tokyo audience the week after his summit: "The United States would not seriously defend Japan if the determination by Japanese to defend their own country is lacking."

Under both Carter and Reagan, Washington has pushed Japan to expand its "self-defense" definition into regional deployments, in order to allow the diversion of U.S. forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. In meetings with Reagan Secretary of State George Shultz, Nakasone discussed meeting such U.S. desires in the following ways: acting as an "aircraft carrier" against Soviet Backfire bombers; gearing up Japan's military to protect 1,000 miles of sea lanes (a commitment first made in 1981 by Nakasone's predecessor); and possibly enlarging its naval forces so that in time of war Japan could bottle up the Soviet Union's Pacific fleet in the latter's port of Vladivostok by means of blockading three

key straits.

Reagan issued a statement expressing "appreciation" for Nakasone's "personal leadership" on the defense issue; Asia erupted. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, just arrived in Tokyo for a seven-day summit, demanded of Nakasone assurances that Japan's sea-lane naval activity would not extend into Southeast Asia. Defense of the Malacca straits bordering Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, he declared, is the responsibility of those nations alone. Did Nakasone intend, Mahathir asked, to extend the purview of sea-lane protection as far as Guam or Taiwan or the Philippines? Nakasone promised Mahathir that the sea-lane perimeter would stop short of any such extension, and Mahathir declared himself satisfied.

Newspapers in the former Japanese colony of Korea raised alarms about Nakasone's discussion of the Vladivostok fleet. That would require Japanese naval action in straits bordering on Korea, they protested. China's official Xinhua news agency warned that Nakasone's Washington statements "would change the entire structure of Japan's defense relations with the United States," and approvingly cited harsh opposition party attacks on Nakasone.

Within Japan, the press almost universally criticized him in terms going far beyond their habitual knee-jerk responses to proposals for military upgrading. The leading daily *Asahi Shimbun* headlined "Nakasone's Proposals Unconstitutional." Toshio Komoto, who was Nakasone's chief opponent in the November contest for the premiership, declared that Nakasone's comments were "the wrong message to send to the Soviet Union."

One day after the Nakasone-Reagan summit, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told reporters in West Germany that, due to the buildup of theatre nuclear weapons in North Asia, Moscow did not intend to scrap its SS-20 nuclear missiles should they be removed from Europe, implying that they might one day be redeployed to the Far East. Tokyo filed an official diplomatic protest against Gromyko's statement.

A leading Japanese analyst told *EIR* that due to immense

domestic and foreign opposition, "Nakasone will never be able to fulfill his pledges to Reagan. And, if he could, that would be even more dangerous, because this would change the entire direction of postwar Japan." He added that the turmoil surrounding the defense issue, when combined with other political difficulties, portends an early downfall for Nakasone.

### Revitalizing Washington links

Not a stupid man—in fact nicknamed the "weathervane" for his pragmatic shrewdness—Nakasone could have foreseen the turbulence his comments would cause. Why did he act as he did? Japanese analysts point to two factors.

Nakasone, a fervent patriot, has long advocated both military buildup and revision of the constitution in the belief that Japan cannot really be politically or psychologically independent unless it has a significant military capability. However, he has often proven capable of suppressing his own political positions in order to advance his career. His willingness to risk turmoil at home on this issue, say Japanese observers, was dictated by the need to "revitalize" frayed ties with Washington, which has put immense pressure on Tokyo over the defense issue.

All Japanese leaders agree that, though they might diverge from Washington on this or that issue, they must never allow a fundamental break between Japan and the United States. Like the rest of the men who now rule Japan, Nakasone came of age during the 1930s. He saw Japan submerged in depression, subject to trade cut-offs, and desperately isolated in the world due to its activities in China—and he saw how this situation led to a disastrous war with the United States.

The determination to never allow that experience to recur is the cornerstone of Japan's political structure. International, and often domestic, politics in Japan is often a contest between the demands of Washington and the sometimes incompatible demands of Japanese national interest and public opinion. The defense issue perfectly exemplifies that tension.

Nakasone referred to the experience of the 1930s in explaining his actions in Washington:

Japan is at a major turning point in its postwar history. . . . Japan's postwar prosperity has flourished under our present Constitution . . . the U.S.-Japan security arrangements as the basis for our longterm peace and stability . . . [and] the availability of plentiful low-cost oil, technological advances, the establishment of global financial and economic institutions, such as the IMF, World Bank, and GATT. . . .

However, conditions have changed dramatically . . . the world today suffers from [economic] ailments which do not lend themselves to ready recovery.

The stormy seas which plague the world also strike

relentlessly at Japan, as seen in the increasingly harsh trade friction. It must be understood that *to err in our response is to orphan Japan in the international society*. . . [emphasis added].

Protectionism is gaining force. . . . If unthinking nationalism, aseptomized by this protectionism, gains prevalence, the world economy will go into decline and we run the risk of repeating the terrible tragedy of the 1930s.

This, Nakasone explained, was why he agreed to concessions on trade in Washington which he knew to be unpopular at home.

Preserving unity with America was also responsible for Nakasone's response on the issue of developing-sector debt. According to Japanese sources, Shultz pressured Nakasone not to break with Washington regarding the latter's support for International Monetary Fund (IMF) "conditionalities" against the developing nations. He also urged Japan and Japanese banks to be ready to supply funds for urgent cases, repeatedly mentioning Yugoslavia.

At present, there is a fierce fight in Japan around this question. Sections of industry, the banking community, and the government's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) are considering proposals to "write off" portions of developing country debt, according to leading officials of those institutions. They consider the IMF's blockage of industrial projects in Brazil, for example, to be suicidally stupid.

Yet, the Japanese finance ministry and central bank are putting pressure on the banks to participate in London-New York rollover schemes in cooperation with the IMF.

In the speech to the Diet, Nakasone fulfilled the first part of Shultz's demand. He declared that a vital part of any world recovery scheme is "to secure the full functioning of international trade and finance institutions," i.e., GATT, the IMF, and so forth. Yet he was extremely vague about Japan's role in any bailout schemes, limiting himself to saying that "we must make coordinated international efforts to resolve the financial difficulties facing many countries at present." Beyond that, and some lip service to the need for technological innovation, Nakasone had little to say about restoring the world economy; he gave more attention to maintaining unity with the United States in the context of economic decline.

### Nakasone's own defense ambitions

Subject to U.S. pressures on rearmament, previous Japanese prime ministers have tried to finesse the issue, to accommodate the anti-military fervor of the Japanese people. Now American pressure has mounted, as never before; but that is only one reason Nakasone acquiesced to Washington's demands. In part, using the opportunity of American pres-

sure, Nakasone is trying to fulfill his own dream of restoring Japan's military.

As Nakasone wrote in a May 1982 autobiographical essay, "I was convinced that complete independence [for Japan] would only come when Japan was capable of administering and defending itself and of contributing in some measure to the security and well-being of other states. . . . A people that have become used to the protection of another country will soon lose the will to defend themselves. They degenerate into weak and selfish materialists who put the pursuit of economic prosperity above all else."

Nakasone terms the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty the foundation of Japan's security. Yet, many Japanese believe he wishes eventually to build up a somewhat "independent" military capacity. Others fear that, if there is a new depression and the United States shows itself incapable of defending Japan, then moves toward an 'independent' military could be extended to a "dangerous" degree.

Nakasone returned to the 'patriotism' theme in his Diet speech, calling for a revival of appreciation for the Japanese state and traditional culture, both of which, he believes, have, along with the military, been somewhat denigrated in the postwar period. "The postwar economic development and spread of a philosophy of respect for the individual has . . . brought about changes in the community, state, home, company, and other institutions which had claimed Japanese loyalties," he said. "Have we not sought to shut the state itself out of our consciousness because of our unpleasant memories of an extreme nationalism that compelled the people into war? However, I think that Japan's postwar prosperity was a brilliant achievement bringing together cooperative efforts toward a shared goal on a national base."

"We live within shared cultural and social foundations shaped by our long history as a state."

## Out by June?

The turbulence surrounding Nakasone can only increase. As it becomes clear to Washington that he cannot fulfill their hopes on defense, Nakasone's credibility there will fall. At the same time, opponents within the ruling LDP are sharpening their knives. Former Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa is reportedly getting ready to issue an early challenge to Nakasone over defense and other issues. On Jan. 26, the prosecutor in the Lockheed case demanded the maximum sentence of five years in jail and \$2 million fine against former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka; this hurts Nakasone, who is criticized for owing his accession to the premiership to Tanaka.

As this turmoil makes political management of the Diet more and more difficult, rumors are growing that Nakasone will call new elections for the Lower House, perhaps as early as April; others say by June. If, as expected, the LDP does poorly, Nakasone will be blamed. The combination of all of these troubles leads a knowledgeable minority in Tokyo to forecast that Nakasone will be out of power by June.

# What Henry Kissinger

by Christian Curtis

There were no complaints from the State Department during the Carter administration about human-rights violations in Bolivia during the regime of the "cocaine colonels," and certainly no second-guessing about the lack of enthusiasm shown by those Bolivian officials in cracking down on the narcotics trade. And in 1980, under at best a blind eye from the very liberal Carter White House, Col. Luis García Meza staged a putsch that brought to power such a band of drug runners, homicidal sadists, death-squad commandos, and hard-core Nazi fugitives that the takeover became known in every Ibero-American capital as the "cocaine coup." The regime was powered by cocaine. Cocaine revenues outstripped income from every other legal source of income in the economy. But the State Department remained silent.

Now, however, the lovers of democracy and justice at Foggy Bottom are putting out the line that the administration of Hernán Siles Zuazo, Bolivia's first elected president in almost two decades, is doing "worse on the drug question than Siles Zuazo's predecessors, the cocaine colonels." "Siles Zuazo has made a lot of nice noises, but they really haven't done much on drugs," a State Department official recently told *EIR*. "The drug pushers have greater freedom now than ever before. Government authorities are not even going into the production areas any more."

These utterings are not as casual as they might seem. *EIR* has learned that they reflect a well-orchestrated disinformation campaign aimed against the President of the United States. The State Department, still as much Henry Kissinger's franchise as it was a decade ago, is vigorously working to overthrow one of the few bright spots for constitutional government to emerge south of the equator since the 1960s. And casually leaking the "evaluation" that the Siles government is getting poor marks in the area of drug enforcement is one of the surest ways to do it. It has been precisely a common fight against narcotics that has linked Siles Zuazo to Ronald Reagan, overriding various appeals to the President from within Washington that the new Bolivian government is dangerously "leftist." If Reagan can be "turned" to believe that Siles has sold out on dope, the Bolivian government's days will have been strictly numbered.