

Japan's Nakasone leads Asian fight to join U.S. beam-defense program

by Paul Goldstein

At a time when U.S. allies Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific Basin are attempting to weaken the strategic position of the United States, the Japanese government of Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone continues to express its commitment to "understand the necessity" for President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Albeit Nakasone's public pronouncement is couched in diplomatic language, his policy thrust in defending the SDI represents one of the most significant postwar events in U.S.-Japanese relations.

Following the Jan. 2 meeting between President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone in Los Angeles where the Japanese prime minister indicated his support for the SDI, the central focus of the Japanese Diet debate is on this issue and on Nakasone's push to break the psychological barrier of the 1% budget spending ceiling on defense.

The Diet debate began on Jan. 25 and continued through the week of Feb. 3. The pro-Moscow propaganda campaign is led by Socialist Party head Masashi Ishibashi, who has been unrelenting in his attacks on Nakasone's defense policy. In addition, certain forces inside the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have voiced their "concerns" about the defense issue.

However, the effect of Prime Minister Nakasone's move has been to initiate a transformation of Japan's role in the strategic defense of Asia and the Western alliance, based upon a common understanding of the Soviet threat and its ominous potential for dominance in the Pacific Basin and Western Europe.

Nakasone has publicly declared that his "defying the taboo" means broadening the role of Japan in the world. He said on Jan. 25 that "since assuming the weighty responsibilities as prime minister, I have been saying that this is the time for settling the accounts for postwar politics and making every effort to make Japan an international state that contributes positively to world peace and prosperity." "Defying the taboo" in terms of U.S.-Japanese cooperation means that Nakasone has decided to allow U.S. access to Japanese military technology and more importantly, the break-up of the "consensus-making" apparatus of postwar Japan through a revision of the postwar Japanese Constitution.

During a recent trip to Japan this writer met with officials and experts concerning these recent developments. One in-

formed editor of JJI press acknowledged that Nakasone is attempting to move away from the consensus-making deliberations inside the cabinet by defining and defending positions which are not only unpopular inside the LDP but are guaranteed to enrage Nakasone's opponents, such as the faction around former Prime Minister Suzuki. Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe has given support to Nakasone's "qualified" support for the SDI, but has refused to back the drive to push the defense budget over the 1% barrier. The editor stated quite frankly that in November 1986, when the LDP holds its elections, Nakasone will not remain as head of the party and therefore the government.

The danger of the byzantine internal party factional realignment in the LDP is that any weakening of Japan's strategic stance will encourage the Soviet Union to continue escalating tensions in the Pacific theater. Although Nakasone is extremely popular with the Reagan administration for his strategic support of the SDI, nonetheless, the stupidity of the U.S. policy on trade and economic questions will encourage the wrong forces in Japan. This, in turn, will undercut Nakasone's position on the SDI.

For instance, the former U.S. secretary of state and Soviet agent of influence, Henry Kissinger, recently went to Tokyo to meet with Japanese officials. According to one Japanese insider informed of Kissinger's talks with Japanese leaders, Kissinger was looking to profile Nakasone and his factional position in the LDP. Kissinger came away with the impression that Japan's support for the SDI could be weakened if Nakasone were removed from power.

The Kyioshi Miyazawa forces, identical to the Trilateral Commission apparatus, are looking to Kissinger and the U.S. State Department to help end the support for Nakasone by the faction under Kakuei Tanaka, the prime minister who was ousted in the Lockheed scandal. The all-powerful Tanaka faction, upon which Nakasone's position of power balances, is splitting between its younger members and the Tanaka-backed head of the faction, Nakaido. Although the reasons behind the growing split are somewhat unclear, one Japanese source reported that Nakaido and Tanaka met with Kissinger to discuss their support of Nakasone.

Kissinger's profiling operation occurred before the arrival on Jan. 25-27 of a high-level U.S. delegation led by Un-

dersecretary of State for Economic Affairs S. Allen Wallis, to "open up Japan's markets for U.S. exports." The delegation included officials from the National Security Council, Treasury, Agriculture, and U.S. Trade Office and ostensibly was aimed at acquiring Japanese cooperation in the areas of pharmaceuticals, forestry products, telecommunications, and electrical products.

The result was that Kissinger Associates partner and ex-Foreign Minister Saburo Okita will head a 10-man ministerial advisory group to meet with their U.S. counterparts in Hawaii during February and March. Okita has been one of the most vociferous opponents of the SDI and U.S.-Japanese cooperation in the projected construction of Thailand's Kra Canal, the key project for the rapid economic development of the entire Pacific Basin region.

Whether Kissinger and his State Department allies will be capable of undercutting Nakasone and the ongoing secu-

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urity cooperation between the United States and Japan depends on the pace of the incorporation of the Japanese into the SDI project. The Soviet-backed forces in Japan are looking to chip away at U.S.-Japanese SDI cooperation before the consolidation takes place.

The Soviet military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) has attacked Nakasone for supporting the SDI. The role of the Japanese Socialist Party, according to another Japanese source, will be to whip up the latent anti-nuclear hysteria against Nakasone's position not just in parliamentary debates, but by beginning to mobilize political demonstrations against him. Informed sources in Japan were quick to point out that the New Zealand announcement that it will deny U.S. nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered ships port of entry will fuel the anti-nuclear hysteria inside Japan.

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Alliances changing

by Thierry Lalevée

The unexpected announcement that Algeria's President Chadli Benjedid will visit the United States on April 17 will create waves for quite some time. Not only will it be the first visit ever of an Algerian President to Washington, but it represents a significant shift of alliances in North Africa. A direct result will be to enhance the ability of the United States to consolidate what is often rightly considered the southern flank of NATO, across the Strait of Gibraltar.

Ever since Chadli became chief of state after Houari Boumedienne died of a long illness in a Soviet hospital, Algerian-American relations have been put on a new footing. Indeed, after the regime of Ahmed Ben Bella which had brought Algeria near bankruptcy in 1965, and the more than 15 years of Soviet-sponsored "Islamic socialism" under Boumedienne, Chadli Benjedid was chosen as one of the remaining historical figures of the independence war considered a moderate. Over the years, this assessment was confirmed: Chadli first oriented Algeria toward more diversified relations, away from the Soviet bloc to Europe, then toward the United States. Economic realities, such as the need to export Algerian gas to America, played a key role. More recently, military and commercial ties in general between the two countries have increased.

The stage for Chadli's trip to Washington was set last October when one of U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger's closest associates, General Burns, undersecretary for North African and Middle East affairs, led a high-ranking military delegation to Algeria. Little of the discussion filtered through publicly until December when it was revealed that the first units of the Algerian Popular Army would be sent to the United States for training—the monopoly held by the Soviet Union and its allies was broken.

Preceding and following Burns were visits to Algeria of other U.S. officials, including Agriculture Secretary John Block and many representatives of the State Department—among them the grotesque Gen. Vernon Walters, an intimate of Henry Kissinger very familiar with the entire Mediterranean terrain and intent on making sure the Reagan administration does not "break profile" and launch economic development policies outside the framework of the International Monetary Fund.

Opportunity for Reagan

The Washington trip of President Chadli will represent a unique opportunity for precisely the break in "profile" Kis-