

# Which Japan-basher will Clinton send to Tokyo?

by Kathy Wolfe

University of San Diego professor Chalmers Johnson is a prime Clinton prospect for ambassador to Japan, and the other major choice is Johnson's friend Glenn Fukushima, a former U.S. trade negotiator, National Public Radio reported on Nov. 5. Johnson, 61, is known in Tokyo as the "godfather" of Japan-bashers, for his many books and articles attacking Japan as an authoritarian state (see especially *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*, Stanford University Press, 1982).

Johnson is known in the United States as the mentor of former U.S. Special Trade negotiator Clyde Prestowitz, whose 1988 book *Trading Places: Giving Our Future to Japan* opened a new round of Japan-bashing.

Reached for comment, Johnson told *EIR* that if nominated, he would serve, although he would prefer that the younger Fukushima get the job. Johnson would rather go to Washington, he said, to direct U.S. policy toward Japan from a seat on President Clinton's new Economic Security Council, where he could coordinate the U.S. side, with Fukushima running U.S. operations in Tokyo.

"The cozy relationship with Japan is over," Johnson told *EIR*, after the U.S. election. "We need a radical change in domestic and foreign economic policy." Japan should be slapped with tough trade barriers, and threatened with a U.S. troop pullout, in his view. "We have to raise our tariffs and slash our defense spending, especially our foreign defense spending—whatever it takes," he said. "I think Clinton will tell the Japanese, 'Open your markets now, or we will begin to close ours.' I think he will use that aspect of [the North American Free Trade Agreement] NAFTA. . . . The tariff walls and 70% domestic content laws are going to go up against Japan and hit them hard. NAFTA is a response to Japan!

"The Japanese are going to get hit by this," he predicted. "Americans will now demand an industrial policy, as Daniel Yankelovich says in the Fall 1992 *Foreign Affairs*." *Foreign Affairs* is the quarterly journal of the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Yankelovich's article, "Foreign Policy after the Election," asserts that there is "immense pressure" for protectionism in the United States now, because Americans believe the U.S.-Japan alliance is a "nonsensical fantasy" and that Japan is actually intent upon burying the United States.

"There are demonstrations against Sumitomo building trolleys in California," Johnson went on. "There are riots in Los Angeles against Asians. This means that Japan's lobby

in Washington can't stop history any more."

Johnson also stated that however shaky the Maastricht Treaty may look, Europe, too, will soon "slam the door on the Japanese." Maastricht is "not falling apart as far as Japan is concerned," he said. "They are going to put those barriers up, and do it hard."

Johnson has written Clinton "a very strong memo" outlining his proposals for getting tough with Tokyo along just these lines.

## 'Do we keep the alliance?'

"We need some real radicals in there," Johnson said of Clinton's new Economic Security Council. Perhaps most radical is Johnson's demand that the United States cut off defense expenditures to Japan and withdraw troops, which would leave Tokyo facing two nuclear powers, China and Russia, alone.

"Should we keep the same alliance with Japan?" Johnson asked rhetorically; his answer was: "no." "Americans are not going to tolerate the current situation. Starting with this election, the U.S. public will no longer tolerate America borrowing from Japan, going into debt, in order to defend Japan! That was fine when Japan was weak and we were loaning *them* money. Now, why should we spend \$40 billion a year to defend Japan and Germany?

"Japan's game is up! Americans now realize that we no longer have to tolerate Japanese blackmail. While Russia was around, the Japanese could say that they were the world's biggest strategic port. Everyone in Washington argued that policy with Japan was: 'Keep the ally, we need that military position.' No more! Now the American people will say: 'Fine! Let them throw us out of the naval base at Yokosuka! Is that a threat—or a promise? We don't want to pay for it.' "

Johnson went even further, to argue that it is Japan which is a growing military threat. "One does have to recognize that all restraints on Japanese use of military force are now being hollowed out," he said. "That's worrying us, and worrying the Japanese public, too. Japan has the famous non-nuclear clause in its Constitution, but they have American aircraft at Yokosuka with nuclear weapons, and now they're importing plutonium to make nuclear weapons. They say they are going to use it for power plants. Well, maybe they are going to use it for power plants, and maybe not! Maybe

they will use it for something else! But the point is the principle is being hollowed out.

"Then there is Japan's so-called 'Peace Constitution' clause which states that Japan will never export arms or allow arms to become more than 1% of GNP. Nonsense, Japan is exporting arms to the United States and everywhere else. The Stealth bomber is not the Stealth bomber without TDK's technology. Look at all the other U.S.-Japan joint military projects. Who's benefiting from whom?"

"And the Japanese Constitution says Japan won't dispatch troops—but now they are dispatching troops. Soon it will be more than building a few bridges."

Of course if one thinks Japan is such a terrible military threat, it does seem strange to be advocating the U.S. pull its military out of the Asian theater, but these inconsistencies do not appear to trouble the professor.

Johnson says he's not calling for a precipitous U.S. pull-out from Asia, in any case, but rather for "an orderly retreat, a staged withdrawal—but one under which the Japanese are going to have to begin to pick up their own tab, and soon, for their own defense."

Asked how the United States could defend even its own interests in Asia without troops, the answer comes very close to talk of nuclear blackmail. "The U.S. is the only nation in the world with a global capacity to project power," Johnson says. "From now on, we will do that, but we will do it from the continental U.S. We are the only ones in the world who can project nuclear power, that far. We are going to use that fact."

"Why should the Japanese think we would defend them, in particular? We should not leave our ships and men on Japanese soil, so that the Japanese assume we are their ally. We are going to stop having our military in Japan as hostage, so that the Japanese will no longer be able to rely on exactly what we do with our military. We are going to make all Japanese decision-making, which was very simple up to now, very complicated."

It is likely that Johnson's rhetoric is in fact only a threat from these circles, meant to extort more general cooperation out of Tokyo, and that Clinton's mandate in any case is too weak to carry out such dramatic strategic shifts. Even if a threat, it is, however, unprecedented.

### **Tokyo reactions, Washington realities**

While the Clinton team publicly has played down such foreign policy issues, Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe said on Nov. 4 that U.S.-Japan trade friction could intensify under Clinton. "The Democratic Party has been supporting trade-protectionism and attempting to put a brake on the sale of cheaper Japanese goods," he told constituents in Tochigi. "It's possible [that Clinton as President] would reactivate Bill 'Super 301.'"

The U.S. Super 301 legislation imposes tariffs of up to 100% on shipments to the United States by any country which does not "open its markets to U.S. goods" to

Washington's thorough satisfaction.

Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa himself told the Diet (Parliament) on Nov. 5, "We hope the new U.S. administration will take a decisive attitude against protectionism." Miyazawa has already begun preparing for an early visit to Washington to meet Clinton, Tokyo officials said on Nov. 4, as soon as possible after his January inauguration.

Meanwhile, the process of choosing the Tokyo ambassador seems to be firmly in the hands of circles around Johnson. Derek Shearer, a student chum of Clinton while the two were Rhodes Scholars together in England, is "now holding the Japan portfolio on the transition team," Johnson told *EIR*. He is also a great friend of the professor. "I nominated him for a Japan Society fellowship in Tokyo a few years ago," Johnson said.

"The Japanese are trying to set up a pro-Tokyo dodo bird" as Clinton's Japan ambassador, Johnson said, "but that's the last thing we want." Johnson said that his own choice for ambassador is the only other name in the running so far, Fukushima, who was a deputy special trade representative under Ronald Reagan. Fukushima was close during the Reagan administration with Johnson's protégé Prestowitz, who was counselor for Japan affairs to Reagan's Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and deputy assistant secretary of commerce.

Fukushima is a second-generation Japanese-American who grew up partly in Tokyo and is completely fluent in Japanese. Educated at Harvard Law School, he was "eased out" of the Special Trade Representative's office, Johnson said, "because he knew too much about Japan," and was pushing the Bush administration to confront the Japanese more on trade issues. He now works at AT&T in Tokyo.

The basic thesis of trade developed by Johnson, Prestowitz, and, so they claim, Fukushima, during the 1980s, is that Japan is responsible for the destruction of the U.S. economy. As Johnson summed up the philosophy, on the jacket of Prestowitz's book *Trading Places*: "The failure of America to comprehend the Japanese economic challenge . . . is the greatest national scandal since the end of World War II . . . [which] allowed Japan to destroy many of America's high-technology industries."

To succeed, Clinton's Economic Security Council cannot get anything done within "domestic policy only" but must address the fundamental problem in America, which is not America, but Japan, Johnson avers.

"If the Economic Security Council wants to accomplish anything, it will have international aspects as well," he said. "Certainly, 'competitiveness' begins at home, but even if we put everything in the Democratic Party platform into practice tomorrow, Japan would still be out-investing us 2 to 1, on a per capita basis. We need a radical change in domestic and foreign economic policy and you can't have one without the other. Sure we need to increase investment here, but we also have to deal with the foreign threat."