

Solidarity vol.1 ~~IV~~ VIII, No.2

AUGUST 1973

Sino-American Rapprochement and Japan-China Relations

Mimco Nakajima

The drama of Sino-American rapprochement has taken place in an international milieu that is decisively different from the bipolar, cold war pattern of the past. At least on the surface, the world today is moving fast toward a tripolar or four-polar, possibly five-polar structure. As is clear from President Nixon's foreign policy speech to the Congress in February, 1972, the United States is seeking a new international political stability through a balance of power in the new multipolar structure. A closer look at the situation, however, seems to show that multipolarization involves an infinite variety of power combinations which will increase the complexity and fluidity of international relations. Thus, as the U.S. and China edge toward a better relationship, friction between the combination and other combinations of powers will be generated.

Within the framework of multipolarization, colorful great power diplomacy will be carried on in the future among

the U.S., China, and the U.S.S.R. The three great powers will find themselves in a kind of closed circle wherein "the snake fears the leech; the leech fears the frog, and the frog, in turn, fears the snake."

Apart from the entanglements of national interests and ulterior objectives of such "great-power politics," the world will continue to suffer from local hostilities caused by national, racial, religious or ideological antagonisms. Wars in the Middle East and Indochina, north-south tension in the Korean peninsula, and the recent partition of East Pakistan are all examples of the hostilities that the rational approach of big-power politics cannot solve.

With the advent of a truly international age and the admission of mainland China into the United Nations, one would expect that international politics would become better organized and more institutionalized. But, one hostility after another keeps breaking out in

vulnerable parts of the world. As these areas are left behind by sweeping steps forward in big-power diplomacy, serious repercussions and frustrations will inevitably arise in the countries concerned.

This will be particularly true of countries surrounding China — South Korea, Taiwan, and even North Vietnam and the Liberation Front in South Vietnam. The last two will stress more than ever before the role of the Paris Conference in the settlement of the war; otherwise they risk allowing an agreement by the U.S. and China over their heads. The Soviet Union will definitely stand behind the Vietnamese demands, which will in turn further complicate the way toward peaceful settlement of hostilities in Indochina. In other words, the most serious repercussions of the Sino-American talks will be the intensification of the Vietnam War at its final stage. Herein lies the basic dilemma for both China and the United States.

Next is the Taiwan question. It became very clear by the joint Communiqué that both China and the United States are going to take the time to find a permanent solution which will be sought in long-range, careful negotiating. Both are going to move cautiously. China, for example, did not demand immediate abrogation of the USA-Taiwan mutual defense treaty, nor immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Taiwan. The United States, for its part, while admitting that the People's Republic is the sole legitimate government of all China, did not back down on its "One China, but not now" policy stand.* We are given the slightest suggestion in the communiqué that they seem to have agreed on withdrawal of American troops in the near future (perhaps during Nixon's second term in office).

*For discussion of the formation of the new Nixon-Kissinger China policy, characterized by "One China, but not now," see Morton Abramowitz and Richard Morsteer, *Making China Policy: U.S.-China Relations and Governmental Decision-Making*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

If there was such an agreement, on the face of it Nixon would be able to sustain his commitment to the present treaty with Taiwan, for some time to come, without abandoning his "old friend." At the same time, he would actually be able to work for a solution of the "China problem." It is important to note here that Peking has not recently demanded the abrogation of the treaty. Behind the change in policy on the Taiwan issue, I believe, lie considerations of the threat from the Soviet Union. The more threatened China feels by the U.S.S.R., the more softened and compromising she will be in negotiations with the United States. If China did not feel such a great threat from Russia, she would probably have taken a much tougher stand toward the U.S. on the Taiwan issue.

In 1969 when Soviet troops representing superior military strength massed at the Chinese border, they initiated small-scale hostilities. Even now, according to one source, 1,300,000 Soviet soldiers are stationed near the northern areas of China. But this by no means comprises the entire threat China feels from her Russian neighbor.

The Brezhnev doctrine, once so unpopular in Asia, has been making diplomatic and military headway for the U.S.S.R., and recently in Asia, this has been truly impressive. (Military gains here refers to the growing Soviet naval force in the area.) The Brezhnev doctrine became increasingly more effective with a drift toward American evacuation from Asia and in proportion to China's Asian policy failures. The first tangible result was the signing of a treaty between the U.S.S.R. and India in August, 1971. The significance of that treaty may have been overlooked so far, but while it takes the form of a peace treaty, providing for immediate consultation between the two countries should an emergency arise, it has all the earmarks of a military treaty.

The United States literally poured aid into India after the war, but even that seemed to have little effect. As the Americans were ready to give it up as

a lost cause, the Soviets were given a plum chance to tie up relations with India. With the groundwork laid, the India-Pakistan and the independence of Bangladesh handed over an even bigger slice of influence in that area to the Soviet Union.

On the one hand, China remained consistently on the side of the oppressors, supporting West Pakistan's military tyranny, in consideration of her own interests and because of conflicting relations with the Soviet Union and India. The *People's Daily* had not a line about the suffering and discrimination of the Bengalis in Pakistan, and not a word of sympathy for the hopes and urgency of independence for Bangladesh. All it did was to condemn the "aggression of the Indian reactionaries" and the "plots of the Soviet socialist revisionist imperialists."

Moreover, the *People's Daily* in an editorial flung away the public commitment of China to uphold the poor and oppressed of the world, simply by regarding the "so-called state of Bengal as nothing more than history repeating itself, from the old Manchukuo [puppet government] to today's Bengal."*

Seen either from the basic nature of the issue or from what has actually happened, China's logic was "extremely irresponsible." According to the Chinese logic, the Sihanouk government" could exist in exile in Peking as the "United National Government of the Cambodian Kingdom," while Bangladesh was regarded only as a puppet regime. Such logic proved totally unconvincing. Furthermore, the Maoists within East Bengal were given no support and were forced into extraordinary difficulty because the problem of Bangladesh involved delicate issues for the Asian mentality as a whole. It had the effect of deepening and widening the scepticism about China. The image of China among Asians plummeted as they watched her reactions to Bangladesh. She committed a grave breach of faith

*Extremely Irresponsible Logic, Open Aggression," *People's Daily*, December 6, 1971.

in the long run and what was left behind was the fact that among the weapons of the oppressors were guns made in America, and also guns made in China.

Earlier, I spoke of the increasing influence of the Soviet Union in Indochina, growing in the shadow of Sino-American rapprochement. There is less reason than ever now to deny the possibility that, in view of Soviet naval power in particular, the influence of the Soviet Union might extend to the Taiwan Straits, and then to the Nationalist government itself. Further, the question of Taiwan is fast becoming an international issue. There is no guarantee that, depending on internal shifts of power, Taiwan will not consider some kind of tie with the Soviet Union, especially if there should be only limited options in the future or if a crisis more trying than the present one looms on the horizon.

China is perhaps most apprehensive about this possibility. One month before President Nixon visited Peking, a representative of the China-Japan Friendship Association went so far as to disclose before a visiting group of Japanese labor leaders the fact that in 1958 Khrushchev had put in a bid for a China-Soviet joint fleet, which would, in effect, have put China in the bag. It was already in the cards, as far as China was concerned, however, that there would be a détente with the United States, and in the process, American troops would be withdrawn from the Taiwan Straits and from the island itself. It was clearly necessary to check, therefore, any Russian moves to come in and fill the vacuum.

From the above, it is possible to conjecture about the failure of China to include in the joint Communiqué its demand for the abrogation of the Taiwan-United States treaty. In any case, the points where the two were most fully in agreement during the recent talks include the eventual evacuation of American military forces from Asia, including Taiwan, and the freezing of the Asian status quo emerging therefrom;

in other words, they agreed that any drastic change in the situation in Asia should be avoided.

This very policy of freezing conditions in Asia, however, conflicts with the current tendency in this part of the world toward greater fluidity; it also clashes head-on with Soviet interests in East Asia. The Soviet Union is trying to establish itself as the leading force for change in the Asian status quo by encouraging the trend toward increased fluidity. Thus, the results of the China talks have the double possibility of building a lasting bridge between China and America, and at the same time creating a plethora of tensions in the future of Asia.

The Sino-Soviet rift, then, going beyond the framework of both the socialist countries and the international Communist movement in Asia, has the potential of involving various Asian countries at the governmental level. In the sense that it is deepening its presence both economically and socially in Asia today, the position of Japan, the number two power for change in this region, will also conflict at times with that of China and the United States.

One other point wherein the interests of the United States and China converge is said to relate to stopping Japan from developing a nuclear capability. We must recognize that Japan's international environment is by no means simple or easy to deal with.

The Future of Sino-Japanese Relations and Japan's Options

How did most Japanese feel when watching the "amity" of the Chinese and American leaders as they came through the screen via satellite? They probably did not feel as antagonistic as did the North Vietnamese and other fairly wide segments of the Asian population. Many Japanese, however, were left with a feeling of discomfort; they did not want to pass it off with congratulations, but felt vaguely alienated, with a sense of uneasiness. Watching the political craftiness and dexterity of the Chinese and American leaders right

before their eyes, perhaps the Japanese said to themselves that Japan is different, after all, from both China and the United States. I myself believe that such a response among Japanese is the natural one, even a sound reaction.

By contrast, the Japanese government, political leaders, the business community and the mass media have been so shaken by recent changes in the international order that they have completely lost the perspective from which to look at the world analytically, from a wide viewpoint. They have lost the sense of balance with which to discern and qualify the interior and exterior of each occurrence, and they have been corrupted by a sense of psychological tension. Not knowing what to do, they seem to be running about in utter confusion.

Among the people, however, there is growing a very collected and cool, although still unsophisticated, sense of international issues and the China problem. I think that people have learned a great deal, although perhaps unconsciously, from the series of events that took place in China during the six months preceding Nixon's visit. The first of those lessons is that despite the glorification of the Cultural Revolution by our mass media, the fact remains that the Lin Piao incident did occur. This revelation and the growing awareness of what it meant planted in the minds of the people some deep doubts about what China is doing.

The media did not clarify the scepticism that this state of affairs brought about; on the contrary, by being very secretive about it, they helped magnify the doubt. The result has been a steadily increasing mistrust of the China-image that our media has been offering us. In the second place, by gaining admission to the United Nations, China has lost the veil of mystery that once surrounded her in the eyes of many. In the third place, as a reaction that can be seen especially among the younger generation, there is distrust of China stemming from her response to the Bangladesh issue. Fourth, the view of

China has been much affected by Sino-American rapprochement and the Chou-Nixon talks.

All these factors have combined, and even multiplied, to create a Japanese citizenry which is better prepared psychologically to see China and the world in a more balanced perspective. As a result, one can feel the image of China undergoing significant change in Japan.

As we have already noted, Japan's international environment is expected to grow considerably more harsh from now on. Such an eventuality will not allow Japan to approach China and other international issues with inertia or a traditional attitude of dependence on others' good will and tolerance.

Japan's difficulty in relations with the United States, for example, stems not simply from economic problems but from the political problems which have in turn arisen from China-United States rapprochement. We must pay special attention here to the fact that the White House closely analyzed the minutes of the San Clemente talks in January, 1972 between Prime Minister Sato and President Nixon, coming to the conclusion that internal disagreement within the Japanese government existed over the clause in the 1969 Sato-Johnson communiqué that dealt with the defense of Taiwan and South Korea. The White House took the trouble to make such an analysis only because America saw a safe way to change its Asia policy and China policy by transferring its burdens to Japan. There can be no doubt that America wishes Japan to assume her due responsibilities for peace in the Far East.

If only for that reason, it is necessary that Japan develop a more autonomous foreign policy. As far as the problems of Taiwan and South Korea are concerned, ultimately, the United States considers herself to be a third party. Japan will have to be clearly aware, however, that she faces much greater obstacles than does the U.S.A. in this area. Here is where we can actually see one of the crucial differences in the difficulty in America's relations with

China, and China's relation with Japan.

But in Japan, it seems not to have been sufficiently acknowledged that our country, China's stepbrother by destiny, must maintain during the 1970's and '80s, even into the twenty-first century, a kind of coexistence and competition with China that is unprecedented in the history of Sino-Japanese relations. China is perhaps more atune to this reality than is Japan. Chou En-lai has been quoted as stating that "We have no big expectations from the next government of Japan, either," by which he meant, more than simply anti-Japanese propaganda, that China is expecting considerable difficulty in her relations with Japan in the future.

China welcomed Nixon with much enthusiasm, nevertheless, despite the fact that the United States and Taiwan are bound by a military treaty with concomitant military presence. China continues to take a totally different attitude toward Japan, however, by bluntly refusing to hold any government-level talks until the Japanese government abandons the treaty with Taiwan. China has consistently demanded this of Japan, even though the treaty is not a military treaty but a peace treaty, and even though the Sato government has finally begun to move, albeit timidly, toward seeking official talks with Peking.

Today, when Sino-American relations are progressing very quickly, we must very carefully determine if China really wants normalization of relations with Japan. If they feel that a trade relationship through "friendly firms" such as that which exists at present is more advantageous, even at the expense of normal China-Japan relations, and that the gains for China in this abnormal relationship are economically and politically sufficient for the time being, then we must objectively reconsider our China policy. I think those Japanese who are ready to bow to any wish on the part of China, are only to be condemned for their lack of strength. Such attitudes only encourage Peking to become more high-handed and de-

manding.

In pursuing our relations with China we must carefully weigh the responses and attitude of China. If we can appreciate the deep-seated difficulties involved in workable and lasting relations between the two countries, then we can begin to understand the flimsy superficiality of a Sino-Japanese relationship based on the immediate interests and motivations of individuals.

If, on the other hand, we are to plunge into relations with China simply out of a sense of mission or emotional identity with our neighbor, we will only end up repeating past mistakes. The whole issue is not merely a matter of time, but more, one of quality. What kind of relation will be most stable and lasting if we restore relations with China? The time has come for us to think into the very heart of that question. Therefore, even if there had been no such blow to Japan as the American approach to China, I think that we must recognize that in the fate of these two Asian countries, Japan was destined to be later than the United States in normalizing China relations. With such an awareness, we must then choose the course of action that will be the most appropriate and acceptable to the Japanese people.

That necessitates more than anything else a minimum required consensus on specific issues. It is not enough to say that the majority of the Japanese people wish for restored relations with China. A national consensus is necessary on the Taiwan question, reparations, and such problems as "Japanese militarism." How seriously are our business leaders, political leaders, as well as the mass media, concerned about this vital necessity? I believe that long-term stability in bilateral relations depends in the final analysis on the kind of national consensus acceptable to the common people and on the level of mutual understanding among them.

It will be necessary, then, to achieve a breakthrough in our relations with China using a somewhat roundabout approach to diplomacy. Such an approach

would aim at more than just reinforcing Japan's diplomatic position to prepare for future negotiations with China; it is perhaps one of the only ways in which the long-term stability of that relationship can be assured. It is also one way in which China can be made aware of the most natural road toward conciliation with Japan. It seems to be auspicious, therefore, that our Foreign Ministry at last has shown signs of awakening from its long sleep and bureaucratic lethargy, to begin operating on the basis of a new, original thinking pattern.

It is possible to view the visit to Japan by Foreign Minister Gromyko some time ago as a turning point indicating new developments in Japan-Soviet relations. Certainly, the Soviet Union is concerned about the rapprochement between China and the United States, and also about the beginnings of future China-Japan relations. It is at times like that, however, that Japan's response must be more than a very narrow nationalism whose perspective focuses immediately on "After Okinawa, the northern islands." While territorial problems must be taken into consideration, Japan's foreign policy outlook must be broader than that. It is absolutely necessary to create relations with the Soviet Union that are truly established and opened. Here, we must read carefully into the subtle change in the position of the Soviet Union.

This last February, First Section Chief in charge of Southeast Asian Affairs Miyake and a delegation went to visit Hanoi in an attempt to open communication. After that, we witnessed the declaration of the establishment of relations with Mongolia, informal contact by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry officials with high-level officials of North Korea, and other significant events. Along with the predicted recognition of Bangladesh, these are signs of change and new direction in the thinking of our Foreign Ministry. I, myself, since last year, have written about the possibilities inherent in this kind of roundabout diplomacy, call-

ing it "pluralistic diplomacy." Such diplomacy must be based on well-constructed planning, of course, but it also involves the potential risk of inviting unnecessarily negative repercussions from China. It is thus imperative that "pluralistic diplomacy" be based on ideals appropriate to Japan in a new age. Only then will Japan be confident enough to assert herself vis-a-vis China in the international sphere.

To what extent have the Japanese government and the Foreign Ministry become aware of this necessity? To what extent are they capable of analyzing ways to handle the fluid international situation and to formulate new concepts of foreign policy? We have

reason to be sceptical on these points. As already shown, however, the changing international relations, wider foreign policy options, all add up to an ever greater need to create a more flexible foreign policy position for Japan. That flexibility must then be mobilized to check the increase of tensions on many sides that are predicted in Asia's future. Only by making steady, step-by-step cumulative efforts to freeze those tensions can Japan hope to gradually dissolve the mistaken images surrounding this country. I believe that effort will pay off in the long run, toward developing and straightening out our relations with China as well.

YUKIGUNI

Kawabata Yasunari

*Three hours before
In his boredom,
 he moved his index finger back
 and forth and looked at it,
Strange that
Ultimately only this finger
Remembered vividly
 the woman he was to meet,
And the more he struggled to clearly
 bring her to mind
In the vague and fading
 unreliability of memory
Only this finger
 even now damp with her touch
Seemed to draw him close to her so
 far off,
And he brought it to his nose,
 tried to smell it,
Then suddenly drew a line across the
 window
And a woman's eye
 clearly loomed before him.*

Translated by Marvin J. Suomi