

Japanese Books

Realpolitik In Japanese Diplomacy

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CHUSO NO SENRYAKU: Nihon no Sentaku (CHINESE STRATEGY, SOVIET STRATEGY: What Should Japan's Position Be?); by Mineo Nakajima; PHP Kenkyujo; 246 pages; ¥1,300

Mineo Nakajima, a professor of international relations at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, is one of the deans of China studies in this country. He has penned many volumes, and his views carry considerable weight in the corridors of power.

Lately, Westerners (and I use the term liberally to include the Japanese) seem to have lost some of our Nixon-era fascination with the Middle Kingdom and now look to Gorbachev's Soviet Union for trendiness in international comradeship. At such a time, when cuddled up in the warm cocoon of wishful thinking, it is worth reading a realpolitik look at what the Chinese and Soviets (and Americans) are really up to.

Nakajima's book, a collection of dozens of short articles which appeared in magazines or newspapers over the last few years, traces recent developments in the two communist giants, such as the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev ("the commissar's Kennedy") and his policies of glasnost and perestroika, paying special attention to their respective foreign policies as they affect Japan.

The new era in U.S.-Soviet relations ushered in by U.S. President Ronald Reagan's trips to Moscow is, according to Nakajima, a reflection of the fact that the regimes in Moscow and Beijing have apparently finally realized that the internal reforms so essential for their survival require a rethinking of their foreign strategies as well; that is, if they are to have the leeway to experiment on the home front.

With the world order changing so

rapidly, argues Nakajima, it is imperative for Tokyo to face reality if it does not want to be left behind by the other major powers in the complex diplomatic square dance on tap for the 1990s and 21st century. "However, I am extremely apprehensive about how deep the recognition is among Japanese policymakers or among the general public concerning these new evolving strategies of the United States, China and the Soviet Union," he writes.

At the same time he notes that Japan's colossal economic power and the effective end of the Cold War provide it with the opportunity to pursue its own interests with greater assertiveness. He also makes the very cogent point that many Japanese, eager to look on the bright side and ever dreaming of business opportunities, tend to forget that both the Soviet Union and China are still revolutionary nations controlled by one-party dictatorships, which for all their talk of "reform" are hidebound by their ideology.

Nakajima concurs with the iconoclastic French political philosopher Raymond Aron in his *Peace And War Among Nations* that you can only understand a nation's domestic and foreign policies by comprehending the thinking of its leaders. In that sense, he goes beyond the classical balance of power theories. China's actions, for example, are affected by communist ideology, nationalism and the traditional Chinese self-centered world view; although the exact mix thereof determining conduct depends on who controls the party machinery at any given time.

It should be noted that during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, when the vast majority of Japan's China experts and all but a fraction of the mass media hopped with giddy delight onto the Mao-worship bus, Nakajima was one of the few opinion makers to de-

clare that the events which were then in progress constituted nothing less than one of the greatest disasters in China's long history.

Nakajima's appraisal of the recent reproachment between Beijing and Moscow is also interesting. He believes it is due primarily to the present weakness throughout the entire socialist bloc. In fact, at present all the major powers with the exception of Japan are wracked by ethnic and other forms of domestic upheaval. Witness the riots in Tibet and several Soviet republics. The U.S. crime and drug problems hardly need be commented on.

Space prohibits my giving a fair summary of all of Nakajima's views, since the essays concern a large number of interrelated topics. Some readers might get a bit of a start when he confides that a large number of international relations experts believe the reason that Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev hit it off so well during their summit talks was a desire to discuss candidly in secret meetings the challenge of a super-dynamic Japan fast gaining on their respective countries. To the world's two most powerful men, still firmly committed to their respective political philosophies, it must have seemed as if while the German shepherd and the Doberman pinscher had been quarreling, the fox terrier had got away with the bone.

It should be emphasized that Nakajima is no extremist, simply a man concerned about the route his country is taking. He feels that continued economic growth, not balanced by a coherent national strategy, can only result in a "double vision" Japan riddled by contradictions. Nakajima argues that a super-rich but lightly armed Japan will be easy prey for international *ijime* if it does not quickly develop more forceful diplomatic and strategic policies vis-a-vis the other great powers.