

history of arms-control proposals, that has been the Russian tactic: if they are ahead, they say nothing. If the United States is catching up, then they want an agreement to prevent the Americans from moving too quickly.

'Moscow buildup toward Japan is backfiring'

Masashi Nishihara is Professor of International Relations at the Japanese National Defense Academy. He was interviewed at the Shimoda conference by EIR's Richard Katz on Sept. 3.

EIR: You said in your background paper for this conference that Japan and the United States might have different conceptual frameworks on security, and this might put Japan into a different, or even conflicting, attitude from the United States at the time. You mentioned in particular Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's concept of "horizontal defense" that might involve Japan in a conflict not of its own choosing because of some incident in the Persian Gulf.

Nishihara: The United States would like to develop a multi-theater strategy. If a conflict starts in the Middle East, it would like to be able to cause military tension in other areas, for example Japan and the Northwestern Pacific. In this case, if Japan's national interests happen to match the Americans', this is fine. But if Japan does not agree, then Japan might not want to go along with it.

There is another problem. If there is a nuclear conflict, the battle may happen over Japanese territory, causing a great deal of damage. Suppose, after that, the United States reaches a compromise with Moscow and stops the war. The United States may not be damaged, but Japan would be destroyed. The superpowers would be involved, but they might, in effect, sacrifice the Japanese or European theaters for their own survival. This fear is rather strong among the Japanese, not just among the people, but also among some of the strategists. Of course, even strategists don't think nuclear war is a strong possibility, and this is an ultimate case. This presents another possible conflict between Japanese and U.S. security interests.

EIR: Right now the Sea of Japan area is becoming a cauldron of tension in an unprecedented way.

Nishihara: Well, the Soviet Union thinks the Pacific Ocean is very important to them. And they have built up their power. Therefore, the United States has to balance this.

EIR: Do you think one of reasons for renewed emphasis on the northwestern Pacific is Reagan administration reaction to the fact that the "China card" is less reliable than people used to think it was, so direct U.S. presence and Japanese military buildup is needed?

Nishihara: I don't think that's the cause. I would like to think the main reason is the Soviet increase. U.S. cooperation

with China still continues. Defense Secretary Weinberger is going to China.

EIR: Of course. I just meant that the momentum had slowed. And the Chinese are improving their ties with the Soviet Union. If that trend continues, will that lead the Soviets to change the pace of their Asia buildup?

Nishihara: If Sino-Soviet ties improve, there could be some impact on Soviet policy, maybe slowing its pace of buildup in Asia overall. But I don't think they will reduce their buildup toward Japan. Their major objective remains to separate Japan from America. They threaten Japan, hoping Japan will try to accommodate to those threats by creating some distance from the United States.

EIR: Do you think that's working or is it backfiring?

Nishihara: It's backfiring, but I don't think Moscow really understands that. I think the Soviet Union believes that if it continues to apply pressure, Japan *may* consider a more neutral position.

EIR: Do you think Moscow has given up on the idea of major Japan-Soviet economic cooperation for the medium term, or on a reduction of tensions? In other words, do you think Moscow is presuming a continuation of tensions for the next several years, and will rely on what you called the intimidation strategy?

Nishihara: I think so, because U.S.-Soviet relations are bad. And I think they realize that Japan-Soviet relations are a function of American-Soviet relations.

EIR: One issue that was not discussed here is the relation between economics and security. The IMF austerity against Southeast Asian countries is similar to their policy toward Latin America; perhaps a year behind. This will undermine the political stability of Southeast Asia. Yet, Secretary Shultz on his last trip supported this kind of austerity. In contrast, Japan's concept of "comprehensive security" seems to embody a relationship between economics and security. How does that work in this situation? And what does this mean for a U.S.-Japan "division of labor" in which Japan takes on the economic underpinning of security responsibility? For example, Shultz said that Japan gives Pakistan more aid than does the United States.

Nishihara: The Japanese economy is in serious recession, and cannot do as much as we would like. Still, the Nakasone administration has given much aid to South Korea, Singapore, and so forth. In a way, we are taking over the responsibility the United States used to bear. In that way, there is a sharing of roles. But, if the United States really has to cut back, and Japan then has to take over much of the aid, this will cause a new problem, because then ASEAN will become dependent on Japan. It is better for aid to be diversified, to avoid ASEAN-Japan tension, or to avoid any sense of U.S.-Japan competition for economic influence.