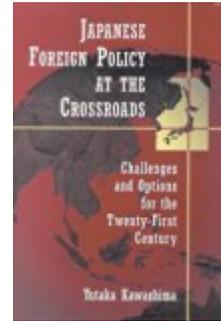


Yutaka Kawashima. *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003. xii + 163 pp. \$32.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8157-4870-0.

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Published on H-US-Japan (April, 2006)



Dabbling in Japan's International Relations

Kawashima's book on Japanese foreign policy offers a comprehensive survey of the island state's relations with other countries and explores salient paradigms that governed its postwar diplomacy.

One of his main arguments is that "a sense of drift or uncertainty about the future course of foreign policy seems to prevail in Japan" (p. 1). Furthermore he argues that against the background of heightening regional insecurity and fluidity, a sensible option for Japan would be to cooperate with as many like-minded countries as possible. However, the historical development of Japan's foreign relations is not examined in detail. One of the strong points of this volume is its pragmatism, which may in part be due to the author's vocational experience. Born in 1942, Kawashima entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1964; he served as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1999 until his retirement from politics in 2001. In 2001 he was Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies and in 2002 he lectured at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Kawashima's 37-year experience in the diplomatic service proves to be both a pro and a con in writing this book: on the one hand, Kawashima evidently draws on his expertise, making astute comments with a strong pragmatic tinge throughout the volume. On the other hand, the reader is confronted with a number of passages of platitudes. About his motivation to write this book he explains, "I never imagined that one day I might be

tempted to produce a book for the general public. However, in 2002, while teaching a course, 'Decision-making in Japanese Foreign Policy,' jointly with Ezra Vogel at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, I was shocked to find that the supply of material in English covering the evolution of Japan's foreign policy since the end of the cold war was very meager. The paucity may be due to the fact that the era is still too fresh to pique the appetite of historians. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that as Japan's economy lost much of its dynamism and no longer was perceived as a threat, curiosity on the part of Americans and other foreigners about the "inscrutable" Japanese started to wane" (p. vii). Indeed, it is true that Japan's politics and security have attracted less scholarly attention than economics, and the quantity of material written in Western languages cannot possibly be compared to research carried out in the native language.[1] Surely we have to acknowledge that the last fifteen years have brought new momentum into (Western) academic discourse on Japan's international relations. To make a claim to the contrary would amount to ignoring contributions by Thomas U. Berger, Gerald Curtis, Yôichi Funabashi, Warren Hunsberger, Peter Katzenstein, Mike Mochizuki, Hanns W. Maull, Reinhard Drifte, to name but a few. The mere emergence of different theoretical approaches to analyze Japan's dealings with foreign countries testifies to the scope and depth of studies into the subject.[2] With this in mind, the following remark is rather unconvincing: "In any case, I began to think that it would be worthwhile to produce a book analyzing the

evolution of Japan's foreign policy in the postwar era, with emphasis on the period since 1990" (p. vii).

The book is divided into eight chapters. Firstly, Kawashima examines the historical parameters of Japanese foreign policy, pointing out the sense of uncertainty about the future course of Japanese diplomacy to start with. This observation is nothing novel in itself. However, given Japan's traditional sensitivity to its perception in the United States and Europe, not to speak of the scope of globalization as such, it seems hardly plausible that "the main reasons for the sense of uncertainty evident in Japan today are indigenous" (p. 2). The section on Japanese foreign policy since the Second World War addresses the issue of dichotomy in Japan's national identity, only going back as far as Nakae Chomin, one of the representative thinkers of the enlightenment movement in Meiji Japan. It is a pity that Kawashima does not refer to the likes of Fukuzawa Yukichi or Okakura Tenshin, to provide the reader with more historical details.

An elaborate investigation into the dispute between pacifists and realists on the security of Japan provides a good introduction to the main points of the dispute such as the definition of concepts of "deterrence" or "use of force." Equally, readers unfamiliar with Japan's security agenda will appreciate the survey of issues such as the inability of Japan to come to terms with its past, nationalism versus internationalism and its paranoia about its economic vulnerability. The focus in the second chapter is mainly on Japan's security ties with the United States. In the light of Kawashima's glimpse into the historical development of security cooperation (a euphemism given the circumstances in which it evolved and its resulting asymmetrical nature) with the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Security Treaty between the two nations in 1951 as the main pillar, one learns that "in the course of negotiating a defense commitment, for which mutual trust is essential, countries should not take the risk of destroying that trust lightly" (p. 28). The comment is perhaps appropriate, but informed readers will wonder. At the beginning of the chapter the author indicates that "the fascinating historical process that culminated in the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan in 1951 is covered in many books. This chapter does not attempt to elaborate further on the actual course of history; rather, it reflects on the hypothetical as well as the realistic options available to decision-makers at that time—and perhaps more importantly, on the extent to which new options may present themselves half a century later" (p. 23). The author's combination of historical episodes re-

lating to the emergence of the security alliance between the United States and Japan and observations on the nature of the alliance provides interesting background information to the audience, whether it is familiar with the subject matter or not. His comments on the asymmetrical nature of the security arrangement, which consists of the United States assuming a legal obligation to defend Japan, and Japan permitting the United States to maintain bases in Japan. The argument of mutual interest seems valid given Japan's constitutional constraint against the exercise of collective self-defence. Nonetheless we still need to take into account that the concept of collective self-defence has been undergoing essential changes since Japan's dispatch of SDF (Japanese self-defense forces) to Iraq. This may eventually lead to a new interpretation of the alliance as such.

Kawashima observes that because "the security arrangement was not negotiated between two equal, sovereign countries but between victor and vanquished to terminate the occupation of the latter by the former, some sense of frustration and humiliation persisted among the Japanese. Those sentiments resembled somewhat the sentiments of the Japanese in the early Meiji era toward the "unequal treaties" with the Western powers and often manifested themselves in the criticism that the government doggedly followed U.S. policy. Nor were such feelings the monopoly of the pacifists; they were shared by the Asian identity school described in chapter 1. Occasionally, one gets the impression that in Japan any policy that openly opposes U.S. policy is the surest way to get applause" (p. 32). This remark attests to the lack of maturity and equality in the bilateral security arrangement, making some wonder for how much longer the tradition of the *oyakoko* (filial piety) relationship will be sustainable. Kawashima concludes this chapter with an evaluation of prospects and options for how to organize the alliance in the future, discussing unarmed neutrality, Gaullism, a regional multilateral framework and an alliance without bases in Japan. As for the war on terror, the author eventually concludes that "in the final analysis, Japan's best option seems to be to work closely with the United States, with which Japan shares not only many interests but also basic values" (p. 54).

The third chapter deals with the economic relationship between Japan and the United States. It opens with a succinct observation: "As long as the friction is confined to the affected sectors in each country, it remains an economic problem. More often than not, however, politicians in both countries mobilize to defend the interests of the affected sectors, and it becomes a political

problem. When it is presented as an example of the unfairness of Japan or the high-handedness of the United States, evoking public indignation and anger, it evolves into an international problem” (p. 55). Then Kawashima distinguishes four phases throughout the history of trade friction between Japan and the United States, providing the reader with the most important facts and details of conflicts: the first concerned the penetration of the U.S. market by Japanese goods, the second related to the difficulty of offering U.S. goods and services in the Japanese market and the third type of trade friction occurred in the field of macroeconomic policies. With concise and informative remarks about patterns of dispute resolution concrete examples shed light on the subject step by step. It is a pity that Kawashima’s critical observations of U.S. behavior tend to lack further elaboration: “The fact is that the increased competitiveness and deregulation observed in various sectors as a result of U.S. demands have enhanced the overall efficiency of the Japanese economy. Japan could have carried out those measures voluntarily. If it had, the frustration arising from the perception that Japan always succumbs to U.S. pressure could have been avoided. It should be pointed out, however, that in certain cases the United States was not especially excited with the Japanese government’s unilateral and voluntary measures for structural reforms, simply because they could not be presented as the result of painstaking efforts by the United States” (p. 72). This leads to another shortcoming.

In the fourth chapter, which focuses on Japan’s relations with North and South Korea, Kawashima depicts the “Endgame on the Korean Peninsula,” employing terms such as “abduction of many innocent Japanese,” “clandestine development of nuclear weapons,” “serious challenge to the security of Japan,” “utterly untrustworthy state” (p. 73), “[the abductions were] a truly outrageous, unforgivable, and perhaps unprecedented state crime” (p. 81). Even if such polarizing language matches many of the statements in the Japanese media about the abductions of Japanese citizens to North Korea, it would have been conducive to the academic quality of this chapter and the book itself to use less polemic expressions.

In the fifth chapter Kawashima tackles the complex nature of Japan’s interaction with China. He manages to offer the reader a compact outline of the way bilateral relations evolved throughout the past thirty years, which challenges emerged since the 1990s and what perceptions of threat and policy debate have arisen in Japan. However, it would have been more rewarding to provide a more in-depth analysis of the history issue be-

cause Japan’s reluctance to come to terms with its past aggressions in China (and other Asian countries) undoubtedly poses a key problem in bilateral relations. The sub-chapter entitled “Key Parameters of Japan’s China Policy” contains some illuminating observations on the paradigms on both the Japanese and the Chinese side, although reference to some representative academic works in this field such as John K. Fairbank’s *The Chinese World Order* (1968) was called for here.

Chapter 6 on Japan’s Southeast Asia Policy outlines the region’s importance in Japanese diplomacy, first predominantly in the economic sphere, later in the political domain. Although Kawashima mentions the Fukuda Doctrine (p. 112), for some reason he omits its emotionalist slogan “heart to heart” which was designed to rid the Japanese government of its hawkish image and contain anti-Japanese sentiment. Similarly, even with due respect for brevity, the 1988 New Miyazawa Initiative also deserves attention. After all, it was this that brought about change and initiated Japan playing a more active role in East Asian regionalism.

A chapter that attempts to capture the entirety of Japan’s relations with Europe on nine pages, as the seventh chapter does, is bound to fail in its task. It is true that compared to the abundance of studies into the U.S.-Japanese relationship, Japan’s relations with Europe since World War II have elicited little attention so far. Why Kawashima finds the episode of “a European politician” (without mentioning then-French premier Edith Cresson by name) describing the Japanese as living in “rabbit hutches” worth relating here, can only be left to the reader’s imagination. The author’s appeal for more symmetry in relations with Europe in favor of Japan may fall on deaf ears today, as they resound with the growing popularity of Japanese pop culture in Western countries: “Although after World War II there was a massive inflow of U.S. culture, many Japanese continued to have a predilection for things European, whether French art or English literature. Whether a similar feeling existed among average Europeans towards things Japanese is debatable. Perhaps the relationship was indeed asymmetrical. Still, the Japanese were impressed with the depth of the intuitive understanding among many leading European intellectuals of various aspects of Japanese culture” (p. 128).

The last chapter “Striving for Peace and Saving Failed States” surveys Japan’s role in United Nations peace efforts and presents several hypothetical worst-case scenarios in the region, closing with some observations

on foreign policy challenges and options for Japan in the coming years. Kawashima's point that Japan's consensus-oriented culture (*nemawashi*) constitutes a problem when decisions need to be made rapidly, is important; however, he does not come up with any constructive suggestions as to how to cut down the lengthy process of consensus building. The individual worst-case scenarios on the Korean Peninsula, in the Taiwan Strait, Indonesia, and in other areas are succinct and instructive since they are followed by suggestions as to how to avert each crisis. Here Kawashima's long experience in the foreign service is evident.

In his closing remarks, he opts for omni-directional diplomacy: "In the current international setting, the basic orientation of Japanese foreign policy should be fairly obvious. Since, as discussed, neither Japan nor any other state can ensure its national well-being and security single-handedly, Japan must continue its quest to help construct and maintain an international as well as an Asian regional system of order. For that purpose, Japan must work with as many countries as possible to deepen and widen the sharing of interests and values among them, although finding common values may be a more difficult and sensitive undertaking" (p. 150). In principle, Kawashima advocates an internationalist line, cautioning Japan against attempts to ensure its security and well-being outside of an international framework. However, his rhetoric is quite vague at times (compare the state-

ment above about finding common values) and seems to lack tangibility.

This book ends with a two-page bibliography containing literature in both Japanese and English. However, the selection criteria do not seem lucid since representative reference works such as studies by Tanaka Akihiko, Inoguchi Takashi, Reinhard Drifte and many others are not included.

Loose diplomatic style and minor matters aside, the book contains a range of important facts about Japan's international relations. Nonetheless, a number of themes would have benefited from more depth and a focus on analytical aspects as opposed to an all-encompassing flurry of historical episodes. Finally, Kawashima's mooted of possible worst-case scenarios in the last chapter is particularly thought-provoking and provides an approach that could be enforced in future discussions of Japan's international relations.

Notes

[1]. Glenn D. Hook et al., *Japan's International Relations: Politics, Economics and Security* (Routledge: London and New York, 2001), pp. 8-13.

[2]. See Graham Gerard Ong, "Building an IR Theory with 'Japanese Characteristics': Nishida Kitaro and 'Emptiness,'" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 1 (2004): pp. 40-41.

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Citation: Susanne Klien. Review of Kawashima, Yutaka, *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century*. H-US-Japan, H-Net Reviews. April, 2006.

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