



Michael Blaker, Paul Giarra, Ezra Vogel. *Case Studies in Japanese Negotiating Behavior*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2002. 170 pp. \$12.50 (paper), ISBN 978-1-929223-10-7.

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The Ambivalent Dance: Economic and Political Negotiations between Japan and the United States

This book provides an informative look at four sets of negotiations between Japan and the United States from 1977 to 1996. It is part of the US Institute of Peace's Cross-Cultural Negotiation Project that has produced other books on China, Russia, North Korea, France, and Germany, including a number of books on the negotiation process. However, the authors admit that this book is "less ambitious than most of these studies insofar as it focuses on a limited number of cases rather than on portraying the full range of its subject's motivation, style, and conduct" (p. 4). The authors set their overall theme in the introduction to the book when they ask the question as to whether Japan has its own distinctive style of negotiation and then proceed to answer that question affirmatively. For these authors, Japan has a distinctive pattern of negotiation where "particular moves are not unique to any given country" but the "mix of tactics" is unique (p. 4). For the authors, Japanese style is "more cautious and more reactive, less demonstrative and less visible, than that of other powerful nations" and is heavily influenced by Japan's culture, domestic institutions, and subordinate position to the United States (p. 5). In the conclusion, Patrick M. Cronin characterizes the Japanese negotiating style as possessing the following recurring patterns: defensive coping, the use of *gaiatsu*, consensus building, the use of back channels, a slow pace, and confidentiality.

In the body of the book, there are four case studies of negotiations between Japan and the United States, which provide the data for the generalizations made in the introduction and the conclusion. Three of the case studies are by Michael Blaker and focus on the negotiations from 1977 to 1988 over orange imports, the negotiations from 1986 to 1993 over rice imports, and the negotiations from 1985 to 1989 over the FSX aircraft. In the negotiations over oranges, Blaker reveals how the Japanese government negotiated at two levels to build a consensus with the United States and with the various groups in Japan. Early in the negotiations, a number of delegations from

various groups in Japan went to the United States to plead the Japanese case. Despite the US rejection of their arguments, these groups gained credibility in Japan that they later used to argue for a modification of the Japanese position in light of the continuous pressure from the United States in the negotiations (*gaiatsu*). While the Japanese eventually gave in to the US demands, they succeeded in delaying changes for fourteen years.

Of the issues examined in the book, the negotiations over rice represented the most emotional issue for the Japanese because of the historical and cultural significance of rice. The Japanese reaction was confounded by the fact that the United States dismissed the emotional arguments of the Japanese and instead responded with a number of economic and rational arguments. Initially the Japanese pressed their case by presenting a number of reasons why Japan should not have to import rice. In the end, the Japanese gave in, using face-saving rationales based on the fear of international repercussions and the unexpected shortage of rice of 1993. Blaker uses these negotiations to illustrate the elements of the Japanese "coping strategy" that consisted of issue avoidance and issue minimization, the building of an internal consensus, and the playing of "defense" while the United States played "offense."

The final study by Blaker involved the FSX fighter jet negotiations that occurred during the same time period as the rice negotiations; however, it was fundamentally different because it represented an issue of defense and security, not trade. In trade negotiations, Japan usually saw itself in conflict with US interests, but in the case of defense, the two sides were ostensibly partners and, despite some limitations on both sides, the issues were framed in terms of a kind of cooperation. Perhaps because of the difference in the framework of negotiations and the seeming commonality of interests, the negotiations were constantly plagued by misinterpretations, which Blaker presents in the words of the Japanese

when they said that the negotiating parties were “lying in the same bed, but dreaming different dreams” (p. 90).

The other study, by Ezra Vogel and Paul Giarra, examines the renegotiation between 1991 and 1996 of the US-Japan Security Agreement. During most of the years of the US-Japan Security Agreement, which was originally signed in 1951 and renegotiated in 1959-1960 and 1969, the Agreement, though limited in scope, shaped the overall pattern of relations between Japan and the United States and overshadowed negotiations over issues such as the FSX fighter. The Japanese both feared being entangled in broader issues of the United States’ making and being abandoned by the United States. The history of the agreement also showed that there was a broad domestic opposition in Japan to expanding its ties with the United States. All of this changed with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent Gulf War in 1991 and the North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993-1994.

Both Vogel and Giarra were part of what was known as the Nye Initiative under the Clinton administration. They claim that it represented a new approach to negotiating with Japan, in that it placed a high priority on the negotiations and at the same time adopted a bottom-up approach (as opposed to previous top-down approaches). The approach emphasized close relations between US and Japanese officials and intellectuals, while using a number of informal approaches such as discussion groups, “nonpapers,” and unofficial draft positions. The Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1995-1996 and the Okinawan schoolgirl rape in 1995 provided increased urgency for an agreement, which was achieved in 1996. The authors argue that the negotiations were a success, but that they would be hard to repeat because the circumstances would be difficult to duplicate.

The four authors bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to this volume. Blaker has held a number of academic and think-tank positions related to Japan and has written one of the few previous books on Japanese negotiating behavior, *Japanese International Negotiating Style* (1977), while Vogel has taught at Harvard since the 1960s and has written extensively about Japan and China. Giarra and Cronen have held a number of government and think-tank positions related to Japan and international relations. Additionally, Vogel, Giarra and Cronen bring an insider’s perspective to the renegotiations of the US-Japan Security agreement having been involved in the negotiations on the US side. However, their insider status provides both advantages and disadvantages to their analysis in terms of their detailed inside information and their vested interest in the outcome of the ne-

gotiations. Insiders are in a position to provide information about negotiations that outsiders might never know. However, the author’s portrayal of such events can be suspect because of their interest in a positive presentation of their role and understanding of the events.

Singular human events, let alone a series of negotiations over a number of years, are complex interactions. By nature, researchers must be reductive in an effort to understand such events (which is not necessarily problematic), and, unfortunately, individual disciplines are often even further reductionistic in their singular approaches to human behavior. The authors of this book are to be applauded for the multiplicity of factors that they take into account in their efforts to explain the various negotiations. For example, they look at elements of history (e.g., Japanese militarism, US occupation), current events (North Korean nuclear crisis, end of the Cold War, etc.), economics (e.g., trade advantages and jobs), social groups (e.g., agricultural groups, different government ministries), political goals (international respect, votes), psychological processes (e.g., attribution of motives), and communicative behavior (e.g., direct and indirect messages).

However, there are places in the book where the multi-dimensional analysis gets lost. For example, in the introduction, the authors see the pattern of Japanese negotiating behavior as a result of three factors: culture, domestic institutions and political processes, and Japan’s subordinate position. Such an analysis makes the negotiating behavior and interactions sound more deterministic and static than the subsequent analyses reveal. However, time after time, the authors show that in specific cases, bargaining behavior is often in response to the communicative behavior of the other side and the subsequent tactics and messages reveal specific strategies and goals (for example, see the discussion of the final phase negotiations on rice, pgs. 52-57). These cases suggest a dynamic process of interaction where the various factors evoked (e.g. culture, etc.) result from the interplay of message elements and processes of interpretation. The result is a dynamic process where factors such as culture and political institutions are grounded and constituted in the specific communicative behaviors of the negotiators.

Another strength of this book is the description of specific cases and the grounding of analysis in the details of the negotiations. The book attempts to present the inner workings of both the Japanese side (Blaker’s analyses) and the US side (Vogel and Giarra’s analysis). The resulting inductive approach allows us to see how particular factors interact with each other and form the

basis for generalizations about the Japanese negotiating style. The interplay between theory and research manifests itself in the arguments about the value of an inductive approach versus a deductive approach. While there is certainly a place for the formulation of theoretical explanations that are tested by specific examples or data, there is also a place for looking at examples to see what kind of generalizations might result. The inductive approach of this book provides an important building block in the construction of theories about bargaining in Japan and across cultures.

Finally, the various cases and the time span they cover allow us to see the evolution of negotiations between Japan and the United States. The book suggests that there are at least two eras in Japan's negotiations with the United States. During most of the time covered by this book, the issues were negotiated with the backdrop of the Cold War, which cemented Japan to the United States in certain ways but also limited the nature of the relationship. Much of the book's analysis focuses

on the coping behavior of Japan in the face of the actions of the United States. The cases that were discussed concerning the 1990s suggest an evolving second era in Japanese-US relations. The Japanese economic strength of the early 1990s and the growing confidence of younger politicians seemed to preface a more equal and collegial relationship, even though the Japanese style still tended to be cautious. However, it is also clear that the continuing evolution of Japanese behavior will depend on the degree to which the Japanese economy recovers, the outcome of negotiations concerning the future of North Korea, the growing role of China, and the growing pressures on Japan to take a more active role in international organizations, peace-keeping operations, and military intervention.

Overall, this book provides important data about negotiations between Japan and the United States over the past thirty years that can serve to further our understanding of Japanese bargaining behavior.

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