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## President's Notes

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## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

The U.S. Naval War College and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) have had a long and mutually profitable relationship. Since the Naval Command College (the course for senior officers from other navies) was instituted by Admiral Arleigh Burke over 25 years ago, an unbroken chain of Japanese officers has been in attendance. The quality of these officers is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, of the 25 graduates, to date 19 have achieved flag rank. We expect more recent graduates to add to that most impressive list.

During a visit to Japan I made in January with a group from the CNO Executive Panel on which I serve in an *ex-officio* status, I had an excellent opportunity to see first-hand how well our Japanese graduates are doing. At a dinner hosted by Admiral Maeda, the current Chief of Staff (CNO), JMSDF, three former CNOs were present: Admirals Nakamura (NCC '61); Uchida (NCC '63); and Oga (NCC '67). On a visit to Yokosuka, we met Vice Admiral Hozumi (NCC '71) who currently commands the Yokosuka Naval District and his chief of staff, Rear Admiral Okada (NCC '75). In Tokyo, I had a pleasant reunion over lunch with Captain Takeo Fukuchi (NCC '81) and Lieutenant Commander Hideya Shirahata (Naval Staff College '81) and their wives.

It was an interesting time to visit Japan. Two major issues dominate the current U.S.-Japanese relationship: the lopsided trade situation and the Japanese defense expenditures.

Japan's trade surplus with the United States is expected to exceed \$20 billion this year, more than ten percent over last year's surplus of \$18 billion. This has become a significant political problem which has generated a great deal of pressure in the United States to persuade Japan to open further its markets to foreign goods. American charges of Japanese protectionism stem not only from tariff barriers but also from non-tariff problems, such as import testing procedures. Japan has now acted to reduce this friction by hastening cuts in the existing tariffs and, more recently, by revising import examination procedures and their associated paper work in 67 areas of complaint by Japan's trading partners. A great deal more remains to be done if this friction is to be attenuated and if growing U.S. Congressional concern over the trade imbalance is to be satisfied.

The issue of Japan's defense expenditures is closely allied to the debate over the trade surplus. At the end of 1981, the Japanese government announced a military budget for 1982 of \$11.7 billion, an increase of 7.75 percent over the

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1981 total. This increase is at a faster rate of growth than the rest of Japan's budget but the defense budget still represents only 93 hundredths of 1% of Japan's gross national product. Some U.S. Congressional critics have been urging that Japan raise defense spending at least to 1 percent. Japan's defenders argue that, if their country were to include pension costs and survivors' benefits as is done in budgets of NATO members, the true percentage devoted to defense would be between 1.3 and 1.4 percent of the GNP. The debate over defense expenditures also frequently overlooks Japan's contributions to base facilities for U.S. forces. The U.S. Administration has hailed Japan's recent boost in defense spending as "... an important first step toward obtaining a meaningful self-defense capability on the part of Prime Minister Suzuki's government."

There now appears to be a greater Japanese awareness of the risk to Japan. A continuing sore point in Japan-USSR relations is the issue of the northern islands claimed by Japan and now armed by the Soviets at divisional strength. The Japanese are also acutely aware of increased Soviet deployments in the Far East of Backfire bombers and SS-20 missiles. Moreover, this island nation

cannot ignore the strategic reality that it is heavily dependent upon the sea for commerce and energy.

Against these realities, Japan has a naval force which, though of modest size, is of extremely high quality, both in materiel and personnel. We visited Fleet Headquarters in Yokosuka and toured the DDH *Shirane*, a modern, sparkling destroyer carrying 3 ASW helicopters and fitted with NATO Sea Sparrow Sam and ASROC.

There is a very evident close degree of cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the JMSDF. Commander Seventh Fleet and Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan have done much to promote this harmonious relationship. Though much remains to be done to alleviate the outstanding political issues, the U.S.-Japanese relationship remains sound and augurs well for the future. I know that the Naval War College and the Naval Command College have made positive contributions to the continuation of the U.S.-Japanese partnership.



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