This book addresses two key questions. The first of these is why and how Japan and the US reached agreement in November 1969 in negotiations over the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty. The other question concerns the meaning of the reversion in the broader history of the US–Japan security alliance. The book’s original contribution lies primarily in its response to the first question, a response which comprises political process analysis of back-channel negotiations and sheds light on the nature of these channels and their role in the diplomatic process.

Firstly, the author Nakashima examines the lead-up to the Joint Communiqué issued by Japanese Prime Minister Satō and American President Johnson in 1967, describing how a back channel established by Satō was used by Wakaizumi Kei (Satō’s personal emissary) to reach an agreement with Special Assistant to the President W.W. Rostow that the reversion issue was to be determined ‘within a few years’. This exact wording was included in the Joint Communiqué. Nakashima’s assessment of Satō’s initiative in these discussions is thus more positive than previous studies.

Nakashima goes on to examine several issues in regard to the actual reversion agreement of 1969. The key point of contention in the negotiations was the handling of the ‘prior consultation’ system introduced at the time of the renewal of the Security Treaty in 1960. This system placed restrictions on US military forces operating on Japanese territory. At the time of the 1960 renewal, however, the Security Treaty did not apply to Okinawa, which was still under US administration, and the US military was thus able to use its bases on Okinawa free from the restrictions that applied to mainland bases under the terms of the treaty. When it came to negotiating the reversion in 1969, the Japanese government sought to have the prior consultation system apply correspondingly to post-reversion Okinawa, which, it argued, must be ‘on par with mainland Japan’.

There were, however, two problems in applying the prior consultation system to the Okinawan bases. The first was that such an application would restrict free use of the bases; in other words, it...
would limit the US military’s capacity to launch combat operations at will. The second issue was that the US would be prevented from bringing nuclear weapons to Okinawan bases in emergency circumstances. The US government had already agreed to remove the nuclear weapons stored in Okinawa by the time of the reversion, but it wanted to retain the capacity to bring nuclear weapons back to the bases in times of crisis. On this point, the Japanese government used the Joint Communiqué and a Press Club speech by Prime Minister Satō to indicate its consent to flexible application of the prior consultation system in the case of mobilization of US forces for action in Korea and Taiwan. In this way, they dealt with the problem without resorting to a special agreement regarding the Okinawan bases alone.

The government’s approach here was premised on the idea that Japan would have a ‘security interest’ in any military emergency in either Korea or Taiwan. At the same time, a clear distinction was made between the nature of that interest in each case (Sumio 2013). The Joint Communiqué and Press Club speech indicated general affirmation of the use of force in Korea, but in the case of Taiwan, Japan’s involvement was endorsed in more equivocal language. This distinction was reflected in the inclusion of a ‘Korea Clause’ and a ‘Taiwan Clause’ in the Okinawa reversion agreement.

The Japanese government had a specific intention in regard to the Korea Clause. In the Kishi–Herter Exchange of Notes, which formed part of the earlier negotiations leading the renewal of the security treaty back in 1960, Japan and the US concluded a secret ‘Korean Minute’ stating that in the case of a military emergency on the Korean peninsula, US forces operating under the command of the United Nations could be mobilized immediately—that is, without prior consultation with Japan if circumstances required. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs hoped that this Korean Minute would be rendered a dead letter by the inclusion of the Korea Clause in the Joint Communiqué and Satō’s Press Club speech on the Okinawa reversion.

The issue of US military mobilization was framed by a series of events within Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Senior figures in the ministry planned to conclude a special memorandum on the Okinawan bases rather than applying the prior consultation system directly. However, mid-level officials in both the American Affairs Bureau and the Treaties Bureau believed that if such a memorandum was to be put in place, it would be essential to amend the agreement on prior consultation contained in the Kishi–Herter Exchange of Notes. They also, however, envisaged that obtaining parliamentary authorization, which they saw as necessary for such an amendment, would be unfeasible in the prevailing political climate. Thus, by 1969, consensus was reached within the ministry on seeking status ‘on par with mainland Japan’ rather than a special memorandum. In this way, that Japanese government agreed on a flexible application of the prior consultation system, as demanded by the US, not through any act of lawmaking, but through executive actions in the form of the Joint Communiqué and Press Club speech.

A more vexing question was that of the handling of nuclear weapons in emergency circumstances. The Nixon administration maintained its opposition to the inclusion of a nuclear weapons clause in the Joint Communiqué right through to the final stages of negotiations. The administration’s position reflected the US military’s concern over the use of Okinawan bases, which they viewed, unlike the bases on mainland Japan, as playing a critical role in maintaining regional security in East Asia. In order to address these concerns, the Nixon administration initially used its State Department and Embassy in Japan to present the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a proposal for an off-the-record agreement securing the option of bringing nuclear weapons on to the bases.

Both Prime Minister Satō and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were extremely wary of this proposal, envisaging the political fallout if the agreement happened to be leaked. However, the US would
not acquiesce even to the ministry’s final proposal for the inclusion of a nuclear clause in the Joint Communiqué, made in the eleventh hour of negotiations just before Satō departed for the US in November 1969. To the contrary, the State Department demanded a counter-proposal, leaving the ministry in a quandary.

It was at this point that Satō revised his previous position and embarked on the drafting of an off-the-record agreement, employing back-channel diplomacy to do so. Thus an off-record ‘Agreed Minute’ regarding the nuclear clause was prepared by Wakaizumi and Special Assistant to the President Kissinger. On the first day of the meeting between President Nixon and Prime Minister Satō, the two leaders signed this Agreed Minute alone in a separate room. In this book Nakashima evaluates this result positively, noting that in exchange for the signing, the US assented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ final proposal for the nuclear clause with just a few minor amendments.

Nakashima’s assessment of the events leading to the signing is interesting in several respects. Firstly, he appears to regard back channels as functioning in a kind of dual diplomacy system, but at the same time shows that the back-channel agreements reached in 1967 and 1969 did not operate to obstruct the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ official diplomatic objectives. His key argument is that back-channel diplomacy functioned to strengthen and indirectly facilitate the ministry’s approach. In this sense, the book’s assessment of dual diplomacy is far from negative. In previous studies, opinion has been divided as to the role of the 1969 Agreed Minute. This book’s unequivocal position on this matter is noteworthy.

Let us turn to examine the book’s second major concern: that of the significance of the Okinawa reversion in the history of the US–Japan security alliance. The book’s treatment of this issue is by no means extensive. In the preface and conclusion, Nakashima writes that the reversion ushered in a new phase in the alliance, in the sense that it occasioned a new division of responsibilities for security in East Asia between the US and Japan. Nakashima’s position is that the reversion was a watershed that established the basic framework for a bilateral division of security responsibilities that endures to the present day.

Nakashima also, however, suggests that in the sense that both Article 9 of the Constitution and the Security Treaty were preserved, the Okinawa reversion was achieved within the framework of the Yoshida Line. In this way the book takes a broad view of the reversion, addressing both Japan’s security role in the context of the US–Japan alliance, and its political and economic roles in the Asian region. There is a certain lack of clarity in the book’s coverage of this point. Nevertheless, book’s positioning of the reversion in the historical context of the US–Japan security alliance is likely to be taken up in future research. One article already been published that deals with the nullification of the Korean Minute in the context of the Korea Clause in the Sato–Nixon Joint Statement. This article acknowledges the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ role in nullifying the Korean Minute, but makes the interesting suggestion that the US may have kept the minute as evidence that a secret agreement had been reached.

We are likely to see more in-depth scholarly discussion of the history of the US–Japan security relationship emerging as time goes on. This discussion will require fresh attention to the processes leading to the inclusion of the Korea and Taiwan Clauses. The Okinawa reversion negotiations also marked the start of a shift in Japan’s security outlook, as it became clear that the US was scaling back its involvement in Asian regional security; there is still scope for future research to reassess the reversion negotiations in this light. Despite these unaddressed research challenges, however, Nakashima’s volume still makes an important contribution to scholarship, particularly in terms of raising the overall standard of empirical inquiry into the negotiation process. It is sure to remain an important reference for many years to come.
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The term ‘Afro-Asian Solidary’ has had a rich and multifaceted history over the course of the 20th Century. One influential variant was popularized by thinkers and government officials from several African and Asian nations during the Cold-War era. Adherents of this statist conception of Afro-Asian Solidarity were largely concerned with promoting a postcolonial political sphere connecting the African and Asian continents. Ideally, this would provide an alternative power structure beyond the influence of the US, Europe, and the Soviet Union. Ideas and agreements concerning this version of Afro-Asian solidarity were settled upon during the Badung Conference of 1955 and would later galvanize the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1960s and beyond.

A second, slightly older, conception of Afro-Asian solidarity arose out of the political moment during the first decade of the 20th Century. While the focus of the Cold-War era solidarity movement was legitimating and strengthening the nation-state, this earlier conception of Afro-Asian solidarity saw racial groups as central players. The central premise remained the same: the project of white supremacy is responsible for instituting a racial hierarchy that subjugates non-white people throughout the world. Under this more race-centered approach however, the solution lies not within state building under the existing racial order, but rather with coalition building and consciousness-raising among the subjugated non-white races to mobilize and deconstruct these longstanding social and political manifestations of white supremacy and racism. It is this race-centered version of Afro-Asian solidarity with which Onishi’s ‘Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in 20th Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa’ is concerned.

Onishi’s Afro-Asian solidarity narrative features Black Diasporan, Japanese, and Okinawan radical thinkers and activists as they struggled to make sense of one another during a period of racial rupture between the late 1910s to the early 1970s. Prior work exists that addresses similar material and/or framing. Reginald Kearney’s research (Kearney 1998) on US Black attitudes towards Japan before World War II and Nico Slate’s ‘Colored Cosmopolitanism’ (Slate 2012), which deals with Indian and Black American freedom struggles over the same period as Onishi’s book, are particularly good examples of this earlier literature. However, ‘Transpacific Antiracism’ stands out in that it seeks to connect multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives and encounters of Black, Japanese, and Okinawan peoples while treating those divergences as sites of meaningful analysis. Onishi adapts W.E.B. DuBois’ concept of a ‘racial groove’ to name this divergent space in which the prime architects of Afro-Asian solidarity operate to make connections over shared racial oppression and push forward with demands for liberation (pp. 10–11). Onishi divides ‘Transpacific Antiracism’ into three major parts: the first considers how prominent Black American intellectuals and radicals grew to

Reference

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