

Japan under Ohira

In the weeks following the late 1978 election of Masayoshi Ohira as prime minister of Japan, a chorus of voices was raised in the Japanese and foreign press "analyzing" the political significance of his victory. The same theme was sounded by all the political pundits: an Ohira victory will not significantly change Japanese economic and foreign policy. According to the long accepted political wisdom on Japan, Japanese economic and foreign policy is formed by a "consensus" which emerges from a complex intermeshing of the bureaucratic, business and political world and which is known to the rest of the world as "Japan Incorporated." In such a world, the chance that Ohira, who was most commonly described as the most "Japanese" of all of Japan's political leaders, and a man who had emerged from the depths of the postwar machinery of "Japan Inc.," would challenge that "consensus" was seen as almost nil.

This political "consensus" on Ohira's ability (or inability) to alter significantly Japanese foreign policy was rejected by this publication as early as his rise to power in late November, 1978. In our view, Ohira's election was in effect the first major step in a London and New York orchestrated coup d'etat, their attempt to take control over Japan's foreign and economic policy. Now nine months after Ohira's victory, his actions as premier have torn away his mask. Ohira's own actions have directly changed Japanese foreign policy, and Japan's economic policy, and have changed these policies drastically.

Ohira's unmasking has occurred in fits and starts ever since he came to power in a victory that delighted his most prominent fan in the Anglo-American policy elite dealing with Tokyo—Edwin O. Reischauer. As Reischauer made clear to this publication at the time Ohira was the favorite candidate of the back-room Council on Foreign Relations crowd. Other hints about Ohira's personality, including the surprising fact that this most "Japanese" of all politicians was in fact a Christian, began to come to public attention.

A startled Henry Kissinger revealed in an interview with the Japanese paper *Yomiuri* that at a Trilateral Commission meeting in Tokyo this spring, Ohira addressed the gathering in perfect English. Despite his years of negotiating with Ohira, even Kissinger was unaware of Ohira's fluency in English!

Yet it was only in the time period beginning just before the Tokyo Summit, and continuing to today, that Japan has begun to experience the full Ohira policy in service to the Anglo-American elite. In this brief space of time Ohira has moved in a coordinated way on both the economic and foreign policy fronts to dismantle any semblance of an independent Japanese policy. Under the rubric of leading Japan into a "post-industrial" society Ohira has been waging an attack on the dirigist core of postwar Japan. Ohira's actual policy is in fact the dismantlement of "Japan, Incorporated" both domestically and as a significant influence on Japanese foreign policy.