

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan**

Makoto Iokibe (ed.)

London: Routledge, 2011, 246 pp.

Translated and annotated by Robert D. Eldridge

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Makoto Iokibe is, without question, the leading academic and public intellectual of his generation working on issues of Japan's diplomacy both historically and in the contemporary period. Iokibe has done great service for the Japanese academy in his authoritative studies of United States–Japan relations, and in his contribution to public life through performing key roles on prime ministerial advisory commissions and as president of the National Defense Academy. Iokibe is also known for helping to nurture a generation of highly talented Japanese researchers in the fields of diplomatic history and contemporary international relations.

*The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan* edited by Iokibe is in many ways representative of the significance of his overall contribution to Japanese scholarship. Originally published in Japanese in 1999 and now running to several revised editions, this first English translation finally brings to a wider Western audience the excellence of Iokibe's scholarship and his team of younger scholars, although many of these are highly established in their own right. The volume displays Iokibe's renowned skill in

marshaling a research team and is given additional coherence by the fact that many of the contributors are graduates of Kyoto University. Hence, much of the team shares a common outlook, derived not just from association with Iokibe but also with the traditions of Kyodai's most influential international relations specialist, the late Masataka Kosaka. Moreover, not only do the individual chapter authors contribute to the excellence of this volume, but its quality is further enhanced by the adept translation work of Robert Eldridge, one of the leading non-Japanese scholars based in Japan.

The Japanese original of *The Postwar Diplomatic History of Japan* was a pleasure to read, and in many ways unique when it first appeared as perhaps the first comprehensive history concentrated within a relatively compact format. The English version has been an equal pleasure to read, and offers fresh appreciation of the universally high quality of the scholarship involved. The volume unfolds across a substantial introductory chapter, six very detailed and meticulous main chapters organized chronologically, and another substantial conclusion. The introductory chapter by Iokibe himself outlines some of the key historical trends in Japanese diplomatic history, and particularly Japan's difficulties of how to relate to the surrounding great powers through cooperation but also at times confrontation. Chapter 1, again by Iokibe, examines the post-war period and diplomacy during the Occupation. Chapter 2 by Kazuya Sakamoto analyzes diplomacy in the 1950s and establishment of the Yoshida Doctrine. Chapter 3 by Masayuki Tadakoro explores the 1960s and Japan's emphasis on expanding its economic influence. Chapter 4 by Hiroshi Nakanishi looks at Japan's expanding diplomatic horizons during the fluid period of the 1970s; and then chapter 5 by Koji Murata demonstrates the further expansion still during the 1980s and the period of the strengthening of the United States–Japan alliance. Iokibe then rounds off the volume with two further contributions: chapter 6 analyzes the international challenges faced by Japan after the Cold War; and the conclusion draws together some recurring themes from its overall diplomatic history.

All of these chapters are crafted with great skill, and link smoothly to form a brilliant narrative, but just as equally can be read as standalone analyses of each different phase of Japanese diplomatic history. As essentially a compilation of well-known diplomatic history, there is not a great deal that is new in terms of raw research, but what each of the chapters does is to gather together and recast many of these facts in a fresh light because of the way that each chapter builds off the others to produce a complete picture of the development of Japanese diplomatic history. Moreover, the presentation of these facts is clearly done as something of a labor of love and there is an extraordinary level of expertise displayed

in integrating historical facts, however small, into the larger account. Indeed, when reading the volume, there is a sense of marvelously rich detail, a total mastery by all of the authors of the historical material, and just so much packed into the relatively short chapters.

*The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan*, as the title, of course, suggests, is just that—a very straight diplomatic history. So if there is a criticism that might be made of the volume from other cognate disciplines it might be that a wider set of arguments or concepts is not always apparent from the volume. The impression by reaching the end of the volume is that just exactly what are the key drivers and instruments of Japanese diplomacy is not entirely explicit. Indeed, it might have been hoped that because of the shared intellectual pedigree of the authors, they may have looked to project through this volume a more distinct perspective beyond providing just such a coherent historical account. But this type of distinct Kyodai approach is somewhat elusive, apart from the clear reverence displayed for the pragmatic effectiveness of the Yoshida Doctrine.

Nevertheless, this is a truly excellent volume. There certainly does not exist any other volume in English or Japanese which provides in a relatively short format such depth of historical analysis. It should be the starting point for any new student of Japanese diplomatic history, and many more advanced specialists in the field will want to read this work to remind themselves of key events and to enjoy the mastery the contributors.

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## **China, The United States, and Global Order**

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At a time when American power is seen by many pundits to be in decline, one of the most important and pressing security issues that continue to