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24 March 1980

Japan Report

(FOUO 8/80)

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JAPAN REPORT

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CONTENTS

PAGE

POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

Ushiba Interviewed on U.S.-Japan Relations
(Nobuhiko Ushiba Interview; THE JAPAN TIMES, 10 Mar 80) 1

'JAPAN TIMES' Refutes Polyanskiy Remarks on USSR-Japan Relations
(Masaru Ogawa; THE JAPAN TIMES, 9 Mar 80) 4

'JIJI' Poll: Popular Support for Ohira at 27.6 Percent in February
(JIJI, 4 Feb 80) 7

ECONOMIC

Briefs
Qatari Investments 9
Mitsubishi-Saudi Project 9

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Cyanide-Free Acidic Bath Zinc Plating Gaining Favor
(NIHON KOGYO SHIMBUN, 21 Dec 79) 10

'Genetic Engineering' Attracts Attention of Academic Circles
(MAINICHI SHIMBUN, 10 Feb 80) 13

APPROVED FOR RELEASE: 2007/02/08: CIA-RDP82-00850R000200060037-3

APPROVED FOR RELEASE: 2007/02/08: CIA-RDP82-00850R000200060037-3

POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

USHIBA INTERVIEWED ON U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

OW110244 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 10 Mar 80 p 5 OW

[Excerpts from interview with Nobuhiko Ushiba, head of Japanese Party Japan-U.S. Economic Relations Group, by Yoshikazu Ishizuka--place and date of interview not indicated]

[Text] JAPAN TIMES: We understand you were critical of the way the government responded to a series of international and bilateral problems, from the Iranian hostage issue to the recent clamor from U.S. automotive industry and labor leaders. You said Japan was giving the impression that it was succumbing to U.S. pressures. Do you still think so?

Ushiba: Japan must not give the impression that it is yielding to unreasonable pressures--this is the most important point. Japan should always say clearly what we have to say. That's the way to deepen mutual understanding. As for the Iranian hostage incident, Japan should have made clear its basic position and denounced the hostage-taking immediately. It was regrettable Japan did so only after evolution of strong unfavorable reactions from abroad. Japan's credibility would be in jeopardy if similar faux pas should be repeated frequently.

Question: What problem needs to be tackled first in Japan-U.S. trade relations?

Answer: The NTT procurement problem should be resolved as quickly as possible, because it has been pending for almost three years when we negotiated the Tokyo round (of multilateral trade agreements). The basic framework for the solution was already worked out last July between (the then trade representative Robert) Strauss and me. The U.S. Government also wants to settle it once and for all quickly. Foreign Minister (Saburo) Okita will visit the U.S. this month and Prime Minister (Masayoshi) Ohira will visit President Carter in mid-May. Mr. Askew is coming here. It is highly desirable that the NTT issue should be resolved around that time through these steps. There are a considerable number of people in industries and Congress who may want to politicize the dispute. Unless the dispute is settled, Japanese firms may run the risk of being shut out of the public procurement market in the U.S.

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Question: Japanese "wise men" recently told Prime Minister Ohira that they would not recommend any immediate action concerning the car trade and investment dispute between Japan and the U.S. Did you mean by that the problem does not need hasty action on the part of Japan?

Answer: The U.S. Government has not yet made clear its position regarding this. They will sooner or later tell us their views and may ask for our favorable consideration on the automobile problem. Then Japan can decide whether or to what extent Japan can accommodate the U.S. requests. Of course, the Japanese Government cannot tell the industry what to do, particularly with respect to the investment.

Question: In what field do you foresee potential trade frictions between the two countries?

Answer: Apart from Japan's rice export problem, which is currently being negotiated between the two governments--and I will not comment on this--Japan's exports of such defense-related goods as semiconductors, bearings, machine tools, specialty steel and titanium, would increase considerably when the increased U.S. defense expenditure begins to be disbursed in the new U.S. fiscal year. Since the U.S. industry alone seems unable to meet the increased demand, Japanese industry expects the U.S. to turn to Japan to satisfy considerable parts of the demands. If these kinds of exports are counted as ordinary export cases like those of television sets and automobiles, and subsequently Japan's trade surplus increase--which is the usual case in Japan-U.S. trade relations--it would be embarrassing both for Japan and for the U.S. Such exports should be rather construed as Japan cooperating in the U.S. defense efforts. We should make the difference clear. Some arrangements and understanding must be sought in advance, if not immediately, to ward off a possible trade dispute in these areas.

Question: You have said Japan cannot sidestep the U.S. demand for Japan's increased defense spending.

Answer: Some Americans may be satisfied with Japan's increased economic assistance to strategically important regions, such as Pakistan. But the main-line U.S. demand is that Japan increase its own defense spending. The U.S. will keep pressing this demand until it is actually met. In the past such a demand was only sporadic. When I was negotiating trade problems with Mr. Strauss two years ago, there was no serious talk of such a demand at all. Iran and Afghanistan have changed the situation. Japan cannot continue to resist the U.S. demand, saying that the present structure of Japan's budget does not allow an increase in defense spending. But what the U.S. demands is a change in the structure. It is my view that we must change the way of thinking about the increase in the defense spending, which could take place over several years, if not in a year or two.

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Question: Do you think Japan-U.S. trade frictions, or Japan-U.S. relations in general, have undergone qualitative changes as Japan's economic and technological levels go up? Ten years ago, the U.S. was demanding Japan restrict textile exports. Next came its demand for Japan's import liberalization and then for decontrol of capital investment here. Over the past few years, it was asking Japan to buy more goods, especially manufactured goods, from them and finally, it is now asking Japan to invest.

Answer: I think it is diversification, rather than qualitative transformation, of the relations. Because the relations are diversifying, U.S. pressures are diversifying, or being diffused, instead of being concentrated on one particular area. That makes our relations with the U.S. more balanced. We not only receive complaints from the U.S. but also can do the complaining to the U.S. There is no reason why we have to be sitting in the defendant's dock all the time. We should tell Americans we are helping them out in their fight with inflation and energy with the supply of our high quality inexpensive goods.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

'JAPAN TIMES' REFUTES POLYANSKIY REMARKS ON USSR-JAPAN RELATIONS

OW100527 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 9 Mar 80 pp 1, 4 OW

["Our Times" column by Masaru Ogawa: "Japan-Soviet Relations"]

[Text] Soviet Ambassador Dmitri Polyanskiy admitted quite frankly last week that recent Japanese-Soviet political and diplomatic relations were not only cool but were taking a downward course as well.

It did not seem to bother him that there have been very few signs of improvement in the four years of his diplomatic tour in Tokyo.

But as he told a meeting of the Japan National Press Club, he believes the cause for the deteriorating relations was due entirely to the "unfriendly attitude" of the Japanese Government.

Polyanskiy, in fact, pictures government officials organizing and directing various "campaigns" to build up an anti-Soviet mood among the Japanese people. This is doubtlessly normal practice in the Soviet Union.

But it is not so in Japan where the freedom of speech and press is guaranteed and adhered to strictly. Majority support from a discerning and knowledgeable public must be obtained before the government takes any action.

It is rather sad that the Soviet ambassador and his embassy staff, for all their years in this country, continue to blind themselves to the reality of the democratic processes at work in Japan while ignoring the "unfriendly attitude" of their own government as a cause of the cooling off of Russo-Japanese relations.

At his first appearance before the Japanese and foreign press, Polyanskiy said little in the way of an attempt to improve the links between the two nations. What came through was the image of an egocentric nation wielding a "big-nation" club.

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What seemed most significant, however, was the fact that the ambassador, who had previously turned down all invitations to speak to a press club, picked this moment to present the Soviet case.

It can be taken as a part of the Kremlin design to roll back the unfavorable publicity the Soviets have been receiving on a worldwide scale from their aggression against Afghanistan.

Polyanskiy dutifully reiterated that the Soviet armed intervention was a result of repeated requests by former Afghan President Hafizullan Amin, who was subsequently killed, for military assistance. The dead, of course, cannot speak up.

But it seems more likely that Amin was deposed for his inability to hew the Moscow line and to control the Afghan people, who are now demonstrating their feeling towards the Soviet military occupation.

The ambassador also repeated the essence of the earlier speech by Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, saying that Soviet troops would be withdrawn when all outside "imperialist" interference against Afghanistan is terminated. But this is an unlikely proposition when it is the Afghan people who are battling the Soviet invaders.

Polyanskiy also gave little hope to the concept of a "neutral" Afghanistan, stating it was still a vague plan and it would be up to the Afghan people to decide. It does present an excellent opportunity for the Soviets to pull out--if they have any intention of doing so, which appears unlikely.

But the present Kremlin "rollback" offensive is also aimed at foiling the American attempt to organize an effective economic sanction--besides the Moscow Olympic boycott--against the Soviets. If this succeeds, it would turn the table and isolate the United States.

On this point, Polyanskiy threw out a bait to Japanese business interests involved in Siberian development to enlist the pressure they could exert on the government. The ambassador said his nation could go it alone in developing Siberian resources and did not necessarily require Japanese assistance.

And he warned that Moscow will be "watching closely" whether Japan will carry out the contracts already concluded between the two nations. These would include lumber and coking coal.

Apparently, the Soviets would regard any hitch in Japanese cooperation on Siberian projects as an outcome of "artificial pressure," meaning the U.S. call for economic sanction, being exerted on Tokyo.

A prompt response came from one prominent business leader, Shigeo Nagano, president of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who has long been

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associated with the Siberian development plans. He argued that the joint projects must be continued because halting them would not only mean a heavy loss to Japanese taxpayers but also a blow to the nation's need for raw materials.

The Soviet ambassador can report back to the Kremlin that he has at least one supporter. But it is not likely that the U.S. will "fully understand," as Nagano hopes it will, his argument for not including the Siberian projects in the economic sanction proposals.

Polyanskiy, however, was less than convincing on the other points of Japan-Soviet relations he mentioned--his insistence that Japan's demand for the return of the northern islands was the "biggest barrier" to improved ties; his argument that the Japanese refusal to enter into a good neighbor and cooperation treaty was unconstructive (after Afghanistan!); and his maintenance that the Soviet military buildup in the Far East posed no "threat" to Japan.

Russo-Japanese relations could turn for the better speedily if Moscow would drop its belligerency in Afghanistan and turn off its high-handed attitude toward Japan's legitimate territorial claims as a start.

Indeed, it is the Soviets' "unfriendly" posture toward Japan which is the "biggest barrier" to improved relations.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

'JIJI' POLL: POPULAR SUPPORT FOR OHIRA AT 27.6 PERCENT IN FEBRUARY

OW041315 Tokyo JIJI in English 1231 GMT 4 Feb 80 OW

[Text] Tokyo, 4 Mar (JIJI PRESS)--The popularity rating of Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira's cabinet almost leveled off at 27.6 percent in February compared with 27.4 percent in the previous month, according to the latest opinion survey by JIJI PRESS.

Non-supporters declined from 44.6 percent to 44 percent, while the "Don't know" answer came from 28.4 percent, up from 28 percent.

The opinion poll was conducted for four days from 10 February after the 91st ordinary sitting of the Diet (parliament) was reconvened following a yearend and New Year recess and Ohira delivered a policy speech before both chambers of the Diet on 25 January.

The support ratio for the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party dropped slightly from January's 30.0 percent to 29.8 percent and that for the Japan Socialist Party, the No 1 opposition, also fell from 10.9 percent to 10.1 percent.

The Japan Communist Party and the middle-of-the-road Democratic Socialist Party scored rises from 2.1 percent to 2.3 percent and from 2.3 percent to 3 percent, respectively.

The Komeito (Clear Government Party) was supported by 3.3 percent, slightly down from 3.4 percent, and the New Liberal Club by 0.2 percent, also down from 0.3 percent.

The survey covered 2,000 adults selected by the random sampling method across the country. Of them, 1,541 or 77.1 percent replied.

Of the total, a record 96.4 percent replied they think prices will go up with growing numbers of people answering they feel the business trends are worsening and their daily living is getting difficult.

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Earlier, the prime minister's office announced on 25 January that Tokyo's consumer prices in January jumped 1 percent over the preceding month and 6.2 percent over the like month of last year.

Then on 12 February or during the opinion poll, the Bank of Japan said wholesale prices in January shot up 2.1 percent over the preceding month and 19.3 percent over a year earlier. This was the biggest monthly gain in the 15-month upward streak.

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ECONOMIC

BRIEFS

QATARI INVESTMENTS--Teikoku Oil Co. of Tokyo disclosed that the government of Qatar Investment Fund acquired 370,000 shares of its stock as of the end of last year. The Qatari Investment Fund now ranks 35th among its shareholders, the company said. The Qatari action substantiated rumors that Mideast nations with huge oil revenues are actively investing in the Japanese stock market. Kuwait had earlier been reported to have acquired a total of 35.5 million shares of common stock in three major Japanese electric machinery makers--Hitachi, Toshiba and Mitsubishi Electric. Teikoku Oil also disclosed shares of its common stock owned by foreign investors totaled 21 million at the end of 1979, 10 percent of total stock outstanding on that date. [Excerpt] [OW071019 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 80 p 5 OW]

MITSUBISHI-SAUDI PROJECT--The Mitsubishi Group, pushing a petrochemical complex project in Saudi Arabia, sent Tsutomu Tago, director of Saudi Arabian petrochemical development, Wednesday to Riyadh for final talks on feasibility studies on the project. During his week's visit, Tago is expected to discuss details of the proposed feasibility studies with the Saudi Arabian Basic Industry Co. (SABIC). Saudi Planning Minister Sheikh Hisham Nazer and SABIC executives are expected to come to Tokyo at the end of this month to sign a feasibility study agreement with the Mitsubishi Group. [Text] [OW071019 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 80 p 1 OW]

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CYANIDE-FREE ACIDIC BATH ZINC PLATING GAINING FAVOR

Tokyo NIHON KOGYO SHIMBUN in Japanese 21 Dec 79 p 4

[Text] The cyanide bath has been the mainstay in zinc plating methods of the past, but now the use of the "acidic bath" is gaining favor. The trigger that is instigating this change is the demand from the automobile production related areas. This is because this technique enables ready compliance with membrane thickness specifications and also lowers production cost among the merits that have been evaluated in its favor. According to industrial circles, it is said that between 30-50 percent increased productivity is expected over the cyanide bath or zincate methods, and the demand seems about to increase even more.

Up to now the cyanide bath method was considered the "almighty" where zinc plating was concerned, and it was a fact that all the automobile makers and household electric appliance makers used to say "we want zinc plates by the 'cyanide method'." There have been confrontations in the industrial ranks between the cyanide faction and the noncyanide faction, and either side has valid arguments in its favor.

There is the one point that the noncyanide method has overwhelming advantage in the matter of pollution countermeasures, and the increased demand for this type of product has resulted in the various companies promoting improvements to the superior technology from both the physical front and the bath control front.

There are two major lines under the same noncyanide bath system. In the past, the alkaline zincate bath obtained by the combination of acidic zinc and caustic soda was the noncyanide bath most commonly used, but the acidic bath consisting of zinc chloride and ammonium chloride recently has found increased demand. Up to 2 or 3 years ago, when one mentioned noncyanide bath, the finger was immediately pointed at the alkaline zincate method, and the zincate method presently accounts for roughly 70 percent of the noncyanide plating while the acidic bath accounts for the remaining 30 percent.

The acidic bath made its appearance about 7-8 years ago. The original acidic bath was associated with such shortcomings as 1) comparatively high

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metal concentration which resulted in plating imperfections and 2) the external appearance of the plate was a blackish luster. As a result, this type of plating did not win very wide acceptance.

This was the situation to which advances resulting from research and development on the part of reagent makers brought forth high performance chemicals which enabled the plating makers to use these reagents with secure feelings.

At the same time, there was the demand for more strict specifications on the thickness of plates which prompted the plating industry to consider more seriously the use of acidic bath plating which would enable shorter plating time.

One factor here has been the problem of salt trouble continually experienced by export cars which prompted Toyota Motor to increase its specifications for plating thickness from 5 microns to 8 microns, and this was a major influence.

The acidic bath has been used in the past, but its use was rather limited because of deficiencies such as 1) severe scatter in the plating thickness realized, 2) high rate of corrosion of the plating facility, 3) the plate peeled off too readily, and 4) the plate did not withstand post plating finishing processes such as bending.

The industry has been working to overcome these shortcomings through technological innovations while even suppressing production costs, and it has been forever trying to develop acidic plating methods which will produce plates of greater thickness.

For example, roughly 25 minutes is required to place a 5-8 micron thickness plate by the cyanide method while an acidic bath requires about 5 minutes. This enables a reduction in power cost to between one-half to one-third required with the cyanide method, and this greatly aids in lowering total cost.

It is very difficult to place a plate of greater thickness while suppressing the total cost using the zincate method. A specification of 8 microns is equivalent to specifying average plate thickness of 10-12 microns. That is to say, the acidic bath is the only path to produce a thicker plate without lowering productivity.

This is why there has been the conversion from the cyanide and zincate baths to the acidic bath in the Toyota Motor plating plants located in Joge-cho and the surrounding areas in Aichi Prefecture which is readily evident today.

The plating industry is faced with the two major problems of improving the working environment and lowering production cost. First of all the use of the cyanide bath makes difficult any improvement to the environmental conditions. The noncyanide bath is one approach to resolving this problem. Even when plating specifications necessitate thicker plates, the production

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costs do not increase in extreme manner, and the use of an acidic bath to improve productivity became the counterpolicy on the part of industry. In this manner the main stream of a noncyanide bath was the zincate bath. According to shop talk, the acidic bath taking over the plating of automobile parts is a reality, and this trend is evident in the Aichi district including Nagoya and other Chubu area as well as northern Kanto and the Tokyo periphery.

The higher current efficiency seems to be the major attribute of the acidic bath. The current efficiency is barely 70 percent when the cyanide or zincate bath is employed, and this current efficiency suffers the higher the current density. This is because polarization takes place resulting in large loss of current dissipated in hydrogen production.

On the other hand, the acidic bath enables current efficiency better than 90 percent, and gas production at the anode is essentially eliminated as a result of which there is little loss in current efficiency with higher current density.

In other words, the acidic bath is a plating bath which enables greater plating thickness in shorter time. There is no need for ducts because gas production is essentially nonexistent, and the working environment is improved. By combining the waste water treatment with the preliminary water treatment, precipitate removal is improved, and relatively rough control will suffice during this treatment.

It is said that the acidic bath is well suited to the plating of bolts and nuts, but it is necessary to vary the quantity of plating material and the current in order to improve the cladding of items of odd shapes. The policies observed to prevent pinholes in plating barrel shaped objects include 1) lower current, 2) cut grooves on the inner wall of the barrel so that the plate does not undergo tension, 3) raise the zinc chloride concentration, 4) raise bath temperature, 5) use short cathode, 6) increase barrel rotation rate, and 7) remove iron ions and lower their concentration below the permissible level.

Another feature of the acidic bath is the ability to plate on carbon steel and nitrided steel typical of cast and forged products.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

'GENETIC ENGINEERING' ATTRACTS ATTENTION OF ACADEMIC CIRCLES

Tokyo MAINICHI SHIMBUN in Japanese 10 Feb 80 p 3

[Text] Genetic engineering, a new academic field in which attempts are being made to mass produce insulin and growth hormones from microorganisms, is now in the limelight. Research results continue to pour in from overseas and, in Japan, the lifting of the ban on experiments dealing with the re-arrangement of genes last year has opened the door for scientific inquiry. Eighty universities and research institutes have already begun experimentation regarding the re-arrangement of genes, and next year that number will also been sensitive to this trend, and the popularity of classes which are related to the field of genetic engineering has increased rapidly. In addition, private industry, perhaps fearful of missing the boat, has sponsored researchers in Japan and abroad and has been catering to universities in an attempt to obtain outstanding students in that field. Theoretical physics, once the superstar of the academic world, has been replaced by genetic engineering.

"All of the students who sought to enroll in our department this spring were outstanding, so it's too bad that some of them could not enroll even though they had good school records," relates Haruhiko Noda, Tokyo University Professor of biochemistry which is one of the science departments closely related to genetic engineering. In fact, at Tokyo University there was a tendency for students with outstanding records to be concentrated in the physics and mathematics departments. However, the scholastic records of students entering the biochemistry department has now become the equal of those in physics and mathematics.

Moreover, last summer when 40 freshmen in the Agricultural Technology class of the Agriculture Department of Tokyo Agriculture and Industry College were asked to write a composition, one-third of them wrote that they would like to do research related to genetic engineering.

Not only students but also teachers and researchers have expressed a strong interest in genetic engineering. Last spring permission was granted to proceed with genetic re-arrangement experiments at universities and national research institutes. According to the statistics of the Education

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Ministry's International Science Department, at present (1 Feb 80) 77 research projects related to genetic engineering are now in progress and of those 77, 50 are receiving scientific research funds granted by the Education Ministry.

Furthermore, when one looks at scientific research funding applications for the next fiscal year from each university, there are 130 applications related to genetic engineering. This doesn't mean that all of these applications will be approved. However, it appears that quite a lot of research is done without the benefit of scientific research funds, so the number of research projects related to genetic engineering next fiscal year is certain to show an increase over the number this year. The number of facilities which will enable researchers to conduct even experiments which contain some element of danger is also gradually increasing.

Besides basic research being done at universities, private companies attempting to mass produce valuable hormones and antibiotics also have high expectations regarding genetic engineering. Particularly recently with the announcement that the American genetic engineering research company, Biogen, had succeeded in producing a drug from bacteria of the colon called interferon which is particularly effective against various kinds of viruses, the impression was given that the commercialization of genetic engineering had advanced one step, and this caused Japanese companies to step up their efforts, too.

Because of company secrecy, when Japanese companies are directly questioned about genetic engineering the only replies are, "We're not doing anything in particular yet," or "We haven't even formed a project team." However, besides Asahi Kasei which sent researchers abroad to study, many Japanese companies are sending researchers to universities and research institutes in Japan to become thoroughly proficient in genetic engineering technology. Also, some companies have solicited the cooperation of universities in the research. According to one source in the field, Takeda Pharmaceutical, Kyowa Fermentation, Meiji Confectionary, and Aji No Moto Food Seasoning Company are leading with respect to genetic engineering-related research.

Finally with regard to the future, there is on one hand a strong expectation that genetic engineering will make our daily life more fruitful. However, there is another point of view which suggests that experimental results will not lead so easily to practical applicability. The person responsible for research at one company calmly states that "Today's society expects too much of genetic engineering. Three or 4 years from now I think we'll look back and admit that perhaps we made too much of it."

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