

A 'Schmidt-Brezhnev Deal' For Japan?

The visit of Soviet Vice Foreign Trade Minister Yuri Brezhnev, the son of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, to Japan last week, although virtually ignored in the Western press, signals a major shift in Japanese-Soviet relations. On the Soviet side, the Russians appear to be committed to pulling Japan into "Grand Design"

INT'L TRADE

development policies along the lines that Chancellor Schmidt and President Brezhnev outlined for West German-Soviet relations at Bonn in May.

The changed attitude of both the Soviets and the Japanese is the direct result of the successful strengthening of the "Grand Design" alliance in the wake of the Bonn summit. Especially key to this process is the role Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is playing. Schmidt and Fukuda at Bonn formed a virtual pact to directly integrate Japan into Europe's moves, especially with the Soviet Union and the Arab states. The Japanese are indicating their clear willingness to take the Soviet offers very seriously.

According to the July 28 *Mainichi Daily News*, Brezhnev went to Japan with a program calling for massive economic cooperation between the two nations. *Mainichi* reports that officials of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, whose boss, Toshio Komoto, met with Brezhnev, believe "that the Soviet Union was considering an agreement comparable to the one signed with West Germany in May calling for a wide range of economic cooperation, including energy supply" with Japan.

Brezhnev, who was in Japan at the invitation of 12 leading Japanese trading companies, also met other key Japanese leaders, including Toshio Doko, the head of Japan's big-business federation Keidanren. Doko led the first major Japanese business delegation to the Soviet Union in 1975, when the Japanese delegation met with Leonid Brezhnev personally. Doko today is a leading supporter of both massive fusion power development and the Mitsubishi Research Institute's plans for a new \$500 billion international development fund outside of any International Monetary Fund control.

Although Yuri Brezhnev himself has kept the details of his proposals secret, there can be no question that the size of the economic deals he is offering to the Japanese are formidable. Brezhnev made a point during his visit of touring Japanese steel production and advanced harbor facilities, both necessary components of any major Siberian development push.

The Importance of Detente

The Japanese have recently made major efforts to make clear to the Soviets that Japan is completely opposed to the lunatic "play the China card" option now being pushed by National Security Council head Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Zionist Lobby-linked

Committee on the Present Danger. Japan's leading newspapers have blasted the Brzezinski strategy, with the managing editor of Japan's leading paper, the *Asahi Shimbun*, calling the NSC chief's ploy "extremely dangerous."

Japan's Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda recently gave an interview to the *Christian Science Monitor* saying that when Brzezinski visited Japan after his China tour the Japanese government itself warned him that his policy was dangerous, and that the Japanese believed it proper to "mediate, not aggravate" the Sino-Soviet split.

The Japanese government has for its part reached a major decision to follow the leads of both Helmut Schmidt and French President Giscard to have Europe and Japan work in cooperation to maintain detente. According to a Japanese journalist who covered the Bonn talks between Schmidt and Fukuda, the major topic of the discussion was "NATO and East-West problems."

In the days following Bonn, the Japanese government has dramatically moved to discipline its own pro-Brzezinski forces inside the defense establishment. On July 28, the government removed a major block to the improvement of Japanese-Soviet relations by firing the chairman of Japan's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hiroomi Kurisu.

Kurisu in the past has become notorious for publicly advocating a rethinking of Japan's stated defensive military policy to include an offensive capacity against the Soviet Union, whom Kurisu has said is Japan's major military enemy. Since his appointment to the chairmanship of the Joint Staff last year, Kurisu has consistently mouthed a Brzezinski-type line about the need for Japan to become eventually involved in a "NATO style" defense alliance with the U.S. and the PRC against the Soviet Union. In the past the Fukuda government only verbally repudiated Kurisu's wild statements.

Japan is also starting to coordinate its detente policy with French President Giscard, something that German Chancellor Schmidt is undoubtedly helping to mediate. Last week Giscard gave his first interview to a Japanese paper, the *Yomiuri*, since he took office as President. He underlined the need for Europe to take the lead in maintaining peaceful relations with the Soviet Union. Former Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki will personally meet with Giscard this month to further work out Japanese-French cooperation.

The Arabs

Japan's increasingly independent orientation to the Soviet Union has been followed by major Japanese moves in the Mideast to publicly identify the Japanese government with key leaders of that region, especially Egyptian President Sadat and the Saudi Arabian government and against Israel.

In the past the Japanese have hesitated to go all out in promoting direct political ties with the Mideast Arab states for fear of alienating London and its New York-based "Jewish bankers." Instead, the Japanese have conducted an intensive round of "economic diplomacy"

in the region in part to guarantee a secure supply of oil.

The Japanese now however are becoming much more open about their own role in the region, especially since the Japanese share Saudi Arabia's own concern with the weakness of the U.S. dollar. In the Middle East, too, the West German government is undoubtedly helping to smooth the way for an increased Japanese presence in the region.

This week former Japanese premier Takeo Miki left Tokyo for a trip to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt. Miki's trip will also lay the basis for Japanese Premier Fukuda's historic visit to the Middle East in September,

the first ever by a Japanese head of State. Fukuda will stop off in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt.

Miki, under the prodevelopment Tanaka regime, played a key role in first establishing Japanese-Arab ties. The Tanaka government's efforts to build those ties during the "oil crisis" following the October 1973 war met with ferocious opposition from Henry Kissinger, who was supported by the then Minister of Finance, today Fukuda's leading opponent inside Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Masayoshi Ohira. Miki will also stop off in France during this tour for his meeting with Giscard.

—Kevin Coogan