

Japan will help bring about SDI

by David Barnes

The Cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone announced Sept. 9 its long-awaited decision for Japan's strategic agreement for government-to-government participation in the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The Sept. 9 formal decision, announced by Chief Cabinet Secretary Masaharu Gotoda, capped a three-year process of Japanese study and consideration of the SDI, led by Prime Minister Nakasone, who has often repeated his personal belief that SDI participation is crucial for Japan's defense and technological survival.

The decision has no conditions from the Japanese side, and adheres to a "vague agreement" worked out by President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone at the Bonn Summit of May 1985. A key point of that agreement was the continued offer from the Reagan administration to the Soviet Union for the joint and parallel development of the beam weapons defense systems—the content of Reagan's July 25 letter to Soviet leader Gorbachov.

The decision for Japan's full participation in the U.S. defense program was virtually assured on July 28 when Nakasone led the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to a landslide victory. Like that victory itself, Japan's participation in the SDI will not only strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance, but also give added strength to that faction in the West committed to resistance against Soviet global war plans.

The likely possibility of Japan's joining the SDI had been a focus of irate Soviet propaganda since mid-1984, and Moscow lost no time in demonstrating its wrath at the Japanese cabinet's formal decision. By Sept. 9, TASS had released a statement attacking the decision. The next day, *Pravda* complained that Japanese technology will "form the nervous system" of a network of U.S. military satellites.

The formal protest came on Sept. 11 in Moscow, when the Japanese ambassador to the Soviet Union was summoned to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. There Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa, who had been to Tokyo the week before, presented the ambassador with a letter stating, "The Japanese government's allusions to the defensive nature of research under the SDI cannot be recognized as convincing."

U.S.-Japanese agreement

As revealed by Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotoda, negotiations toward a "Memorandum of Understanding" will work out details of Japan's role in the research and development

phase of the SDI, allowing Japan, for the first time, an active relationship with the United States in the realm of strategic planning.

Though strict secrecy will be maintained, the talks will include arrangements for patents and other guarantees by which Japan's civilian economy can benefit from technological spin-offs generated by SDI research. Japanese companies, said one source, look forward to the "peaceful" spin-offs of SDI technology.

that led to the hydrogen bomb," said one Japanese observer, "but now we hope that Japan can take a major role in developing the new technologies associated with the SDI."

Fields in which Japan is expected to be involved include command and control, communications management, and logistics. A focus will be weapons-aiming and target identification. Japan's contribution in these areas will shorten research time for deployment by a full two years.

By participating in the SDI, Japan will be assured protection against a Soviet nuclear strike. With Japan covered by the SDI's anti-missile defense, U.S. nuclear deterrence capability will be enhanced, and Moscow's nuclear blackmail against countries of the northern Asia-Pacific Basin region undercut. Russian plans for aggressive military expansion there will be hampered.

The negotiations for the U.S.-Japan Memorandum of Understanding will be carried out between the Pentagon and the prime minister's office—not the Japanese Foreign Ministry nor the U.S. State Department—thus eliminating the danger of outright sabotage.

Exemplary of efforts to derail Japan's commitment to the SDI, were the antics of Richard Perle, the U.S. assistant secretary of defense in charge of the Pentagon's Technology Transfer Branch. Perle, who popped up in Tokyo immediately after Defense Secretary Weinberger's trip to Japan last April, spent much time telling Japanese policy-makers that the SDI would not last beyond Reagan's second term, and hence should not be a Japanese priority. Perle's lies had the "chilling" effect he hoped for. But for a crucial intervention by the Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) and the Schiller Institute, Perle's game and similar attempts to drive Japan away from the SDI, might have succeeded.

On April 23—shortly after Perle's trip, and during the final phase of a series of ministerial meetings held by Nakasone's cabinet to consider SDI participation—180 members of Japan's government and industrial elite attended a conference sponsored in Tokyo by the FEF and the Schiller Institute on "The Strategic Defense Initiative: Its Strategic, Economic, and Scientific Dimensions." Japanese participants emerged with a unanimous mandate for full Japanese participation in the SDI. The conference, Japanese sources in both military and diplomatic circles affirmed, had a "major positive impact" in determining the outlook of Japanese leaders toward the SDI. Nakasone's landslide victory then "locked in" the decision that was announced Sept. 9.