

**Office of the Historian
Bureau of Public Affairs
United States Department of State**

July 18, 2006

The Department of State released today *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIX, Part 2, Japan*, the penultimate volume to be published in the Johnson administration sub-series. This volume documents U.S. policy toward Japan during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. It is a companion volume to *Foreign Relations, 1964-1968, Vol. XXIX, Part 1, Korea*, which in addition to U.S. relations with the Republic of Korea, includes chapters on the *Pueblo* crisis and the settlement between the Republic of Korea and Japan that ended their estrangement since World War II. The present volume documents a relationship that was fundamentally sound, but suffered from irritants and problems arising from a number of issues.

One problem was that the leaders of Japan, a principal exporting nation, were concerned with what they saw as protectionist tendencies in the United States that could hinder—and even threaten—Japanese economic development. The two countries used joint mechanisms, such as the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs and the Japan-U.S. Policy Planning Committee, as well as direct meetings between President Johnson and Prime Minister Sato, to coordinate their economies and avoid strife. Another theme of the volume is the U.S. encouragement of Japan to take a larger international role, especially as a key supporter of economic development in the rest of Asia. When Japan broached the idea of normalizing relations with China, however, the United States successfully discouraged this move.

The question of the reversion of the Bonin Islands—and the more important issue of reversion of the Ryukyu Islands—to Japanese control is a main theme of the volume. After an extended internal debate within the Johnson administration, the Bonin Islands, including the historically and symbolically important island of Iwo Jima, were returned to Japan. Reversion of the Ryukyu Islands, including Okinawa, proved more difficult, and the decision was deferred. Indicative of the strength of pro-reversion feeling in Okinawa were the results of the first popular election on Okinawa in 1968. The pro-reversion candidate defeated the pro-American one.

The question of visits of nuclear powered ships to Japan caused heated demonstrations by Japanese students and raised the greater problem of potential nuclear weapons in Japanese waters. As the only nation to be attacked by atomic weapons, Japan had an aversion to nuclear weapons and its policy of ambiguity caused problems for both countries. Other issues documented in the volume are U.S. pressure on Japan to increase its military establishment and Japanese concern about the connection between U.S. bases on Okinawa and the Vietnam War, as well as a general uneasiness within Japan about the course of events in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. For its part, the Johnson administration was not happy with what it perceived

as Japanese lack of concern over the *Pueblo* incident and increased tension in the Korean peninsula.

The volume acknowledges a small covert program begun in the late 1950's and continuing into the 1960's to support key pro-American Japanese politicians and to split off the moderate wing of the leftist opposition, and shows that the Johnson administration concluded that this program was neither appropriate nor worth the risk of exposure. As a result, in 1964 the program was phased out, but broader covert programs of propaganda and social action to encourage the Japanese to reject the influence of the left continued at moderate levels until 1968.

The volume, the summary, and this press release are available at the Office of the Historian website at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xxix2>. Copies of this volume can also be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> (GPO stock number 044-000-02593-1; ISBN 0-16-072509-7). For further information contact Edward Keefer, General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, at (202) 663-1131; fax (202) 663-1289; e-mail to history@state.gov.