

Naval War College Review

Volume 30
Number 1 *Winter*

Article 15

1977

Japan's Nuclear Option

J.K. Holloway Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Holloway, J.K. Jr. (1977) "Japan's Nuclear Option," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 30 : No. 1 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol30/iss1/15>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

88 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

regard almost surely overshadowed whatever collateral desire they may have had for staking out a position of tangible influence in hemispheric diplomacy. This is not to say that Professor Dinerstein is wrong in underscoring the Cuban political connection as an important factor in shaping the Soviet missile decision. It is, however, to suggest that his argument—impressive and elegant though it is—has not altogether convincingly repudiated the more traditional explanation of the decision as having been grounded, first and foremost, in the context of bilateral U.S.-Soviet strategic relations.

Obviously, no review of this brevity can do adequate justice to such a major work of scholarship as Professor Dinerstein has produced, and it must remain to the reader to provide the detailed assessment which lack of space has prevented here. It can be asserted, however, that *The Making of a Missile Crisis* will find a lasting place in the literature of the October 1962 crisis and will have to be carefully pondered by future commentators on that crucial event in the nuclear age. It illuminates in unprecedented detail the relationship between Moscow's Cuban policy and the ultimate Soviet missile decision, offers important new insights into the timing of the decision, and provides a fascinating speculative discussion of possible Soviet internal factional infighting over alternative strategies once the venture broke down into a confrontation of countervailing resolve. It also conforms scrupulously to accepted rules of evidence, displays proper modesty where ambiguity dictates circumspection, and shows seemly cautiousness in advancing its admittedly provocative hypotheses. As such, it deserves attention not only as an important reexamination of the missile crisis itself, but also as a model of sophisticated micropolitical analysis.

Endicott, John E. *Japan's Nuclear Option*. New York: Praeger, 1975. 289pp.

After India had exploded a nuclear device and after a U.S. "leak" had made clear that Israel has nuclear devices, it should have been strange that Japan chose this spring to end its long holdout against ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Not so strange to Colonel Endicott of the Air Force Academy. His book predicts Japanese ratification by 1976 and discounts that Japan will be moved towards nuclear weapons because other middle powers are going nuclear.

Yet, Colonel Endicott can foresee circumstances in which Japan would go nuclear. The mid-1980's is postulated for time. There would be a breakdown or exhaustion of bilateral or multilateral mechanisms serious enough for the Japanese to believe that their national existence is at stake. Based on this the book sets forth several scenarios for development of weapons, delivery systems, targeting plans, etc. Colonel Endicott envisions the Japanese strategy to be a second strike capable of destroying enough Chinese or Soviet cities to make even the complete destruction of Japan (a fairly easy nuclear task) not worthwhile. Japan could assure this with 160 one-megaton warheads. Time to develop a nuclear device is given at somewhat over 9 months from decision date, but because of Japan's lack of enriched uranium resources (except under foreign controls) the time-consuming centrifuge system would have to be used. Colonel Endicott does not see the NPT as an obstacle because of the treaty's reliance upon Security Council sanctions which require unanimity. All of this is illustrated with an abundance of technical data that reflects impressive research.

If we accept this statement of Japan's technical capability, questions that arise are the prospects for a break-

BENJAMIN S. LAMBETH

The Rand Corporation

down of the U.S. security guarantee to Japan and the role of Japanese public opinion on the nuclear question.

Strains in the U.S. alliance have been obvious since 1969. Most are economic, some psychological, none, thus far, strategic. Chinese development of an ICBM force capable of threatening U.S. cities would introduce the most obvious strategic strain—an Asian version of the Gaullist argument that the United States would not risk Washington for the sake of Paris. Colonel Endicott believes that one factor in Chinese delay in construction of an ICBM system is fear that it would trigger a Japanese decision to go nuclear. The existence of a Soviet ICBM capability against the United States (while not politically comparable to a Chinese one, perhaps) has not affected Japanese thinking about the alliance, although Japan's relations with the U.S.S.R. are not good and are not promising of early improvement. While Japan is acutely aware of the strains in the alliance (few of her making) she is trying to reduce these and has shown no inclination to seek alternatives. By 1985 China might be an alternative, particularly in an Asian regional system, but neither Japanese political nor economic systems, as now constituted, could be easily fitted to such an arrangement. More likely is continued Japanese caution, relying on the U.S. alliance while awaiting a political breakthrough (Sino-Soviet war, reconciliation of internal breakdowns) or a technological breakthrough (the laser ABM defense system, for example) which would obviate a nuclear decision.

The Japanese system of consensus building is so painstakingly slow that one wonders if Colonel Endicott does not underestimate the inertia of public opinion. For a successful 1985 decision to go nuclear, the government would have had to start to prepare public opinion yesterday. The author thinks he sees a gradual shift toward a less

uncompromisingly negative attitude toward nuclear weapons brought about by fears of the Chinese. Yet, even at the peak of the Cultural Revolution when events in China dominated the front pages of Japanese newspapers one in three Japanese did not know China had a Communist government, but 80 percent knew China had exploded nuclear weapons. Like the hedgehog, the Japanese in nuclear matters may know only one thing, but they know it well.

That Japan has a nuclear option Colonel Endicott has clearly demonstrated and his own scenarios are technically and logically consistent with his assumptions. It does not denigrate this achievement to say that reality is probably something else.

J.K. HOLLOWAY, JR.
Naval War College

Goldman, Marshall I. *Détente and Dollars: Doing Business with the Soviets*. New York: Basic Books, 1975. 337pp.

Some of the major stories in the business press in recent years have been about spectacular trade agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union. From generally less than \$100 million a year prior to 1971, U.S. exports to the Soviet Union jumped to over \$1 billion in 1973. The easing of political tensions, détente, has been intimately connected with the burgeoning commercial relationships. Marshall Goldman in *Détente and Dollars* provides a lucid account of these developments. His analysis should be studied by national security policymakers as well as by corporate executives.

Goldman is an expert on the Soviet economy, serving as an Associate of Harvard University's Russian Research Center as well as Professor of Economics at Wellesley College. He has published several books and numerous articles on the Russian economy. In this