

12-1-2018

Iokibe, Makoto. (Ed.). Minohara, Tosh. (Trans.). The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

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Recommended Citation

Arnold, Wayne E. Ph.D. (2018) "Iokibe, Makoto. (Ed.). Minohara, Tosh. (Trans.). The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.," *Journal of International and Global Studies*: Vol. 10 : No. 1 , Article 28.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs/vol10/iss1/28>

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Originally published in Japanese in 2008 and now in its third edition in that language, the English translation of *The History of US-Japan Relations* expands Makoto Iokibe and Tosh Minohara's original project to a global audience. The collection of 12 articles by Japanese and foreign scholars provides a concise, yet detailed look across the 180-year relationship between the United States and Japan. Primarily focused on the political spectrum, the chapters sequentially move through the decades, highlighting the important government changes in both Japan and the United States while discussing the ramifications these political changes brought. Over the course of the book, one noticeable aspect of this history is that particular issues of discontent between the two countries continue to exist, in some form, into present day. Matters concerning racial tensions, island disputes, nuclear issues (in a variety of forms), trade and tariffs quarrels, and political favoritism have many of their roots further in the past than might be expected—or remembered. The various wars through the decades are not emphasized in the text, as the focus lays more on the political maneuvers before, during, and after these times of crisis. What the reader is provided is a consistent focus on the political spectrum, driven by individuals and societal conditions that have ultimately shaped US-Japan relations.

One consistent theme across the chapters is the special relationship that exists between Japan and the United States. Except for the period leading up to and including World War II, the authors demonstrate that the tie between the two countries has almost always been amicable and cooperative. This theme is stressed throughout the chapters and the high and low points of the bond are clearly delineated, with much attention given to the intricacies of particular disagreements. While World War II was undoubtedly the low point, the subsequent American occupation was a means of mending the relationship—although certainly not without its own drawbacks. Chapter Six is noteworthy for the specific attention given to the American occupation of Japan. The chapter briefly covers the first three years of the war before the authors devote the rest of the space to the procedures for rebuilding Japan. During the occupation, numerous reforms were introduced into Japanese law, including Article 9, by which Japan denounced war as a means to solve disputes. There were, of course, various tensions between the two countries arising from the occupation, and each subsequent chapter highlights the issues and then details the steps that were taken by the United States and Japan in order to ameliorate, in most cases, these concerns. Covering each decade with a focus on the problem/solution of the two political parties provides readers a succinct encapsulation of the period, allowing for each chapter to be read individually.

There are, not surprisingly, certain historical moments that seem to be covered from a more “moderate” perspective. The events in Manchuria in the 1920s and '30s are perhaps more sympathetic to the Japanese perspective. Such an approach has been an ongoing criticism against some Japanese historians' efforts to whitewash this particular point in history. In the chapter covering the 1920s, the two authors note that “the major points of contention between Japan and America leading up to the Manchurian Incident in 1931 were threefold: the state of affairs in China; the issue of naval disarmament; and racial discrimination” (Hattori and Minohara, p. 78). Overall, the Manchurian Incident is portrayed in a clearly negative light, with other authors noting that the Imperial Japanese Army had “planned to blame [the incident] on the Chinese and use it as a pretext to take military action” (Kubo et al., p. 84). On the other hand, the discussion of the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the ensuing radiation nightmare, appear to be too lightly covered. This editing choice may be a result of the English version being intended for, among others, an American reading public. In all, these two issues I mention are more directly

connected with wartime activities, and, to reiterate, the focus of the book is indeed more about government decisions.

That being said, the historical period surrounding the two World Wars is discussed with a justifiably heavy finger pointed at the Imperial Japanese Army and the efforts of the Japanese generals to control the political direction of Japan. The misuse of power by the army, and the impact in the political spectrum, clearly highlight the powerful forces working counterproductively within Japan during this period. The memory of these events carries over into the next several decades with both the Japanese government and its citizens being wary of extensively building the Japan Self-Defense Forces. American presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Reagan all pressed Japan to increase their budgets for defense spending, thereby reducing the need for an American military presence that was accountable for protecting Japan. The authors highlight certain political parties in Japan, such as Hatoyama Ichirō's Liberal Party, during the 1950s, that did push for more defense force spending with the goal of decreasing the amount of money being paid for the services of the American troops stationed in Japan. Across the post-WWII chapters, this topic of defense spending is a recurring theme, and the various authors highlight the pressures that the lack of spending put on the political relations between the two countries.

To be sure, as mentioned in the introduction, there are lingering issues between Japan and the United States that have yet to be resolved. News headlines in 2018 draw attention to these continued points of contention, and the chapters within *The History of US-Japan Relations* help to elucidate the political background for these disturbances. Every few years, the disquietude concerning the presence of American military bases in Japan reappears, and we learn that such discontents have existed at least since 1957, with the "Girard incident," when an American soldier shot and killed a Japanese woman (Sasaki and Nakanishi, p. 141). Various tariffs over the decades have caused political and economic uncertainty, especially during Japan's economic boom in the 1980s, when the United States placed tariffs on all Japanese automobiles. Concerning disputes over island territories, the authors give special attention to the political tensions that have been going on for decades between Japan, China, and Russia. As mentioned before, military spending has been a constant source of debate between the two countries, with the United States always pushing for Japan to spend more on its military budget. These issues are still present in today's political spectrum, with Shinzo Abe and Donald Trump both emphasizing their position. In this sense, the articles in this collection serve as a valuable historical backdrop to recent US-Japan news.

The History of US-Japan Relations is an ambitious undertaking to try and summarize 180 years of political history, but the effort has been worthwhile. Each chapter highlights the important events giving the reader a cohesive overview. While each chapter is independent, editor Iokibe has ensured that there are references to both past and future events that provide the chapters a sense of interconnectedness. Such links are valuable in giving the collection a much more integrated overview of the political exchange between the two countries. In addition to the text, Palgrave Macmillan has published a physical book of superior quality, in both the binding and page texture. Included is a 15-page index, a 60-page chronology of events (from 1825 to 2015), as well as a 20-page bibliography. Overall, Iokibe and Minohara have effectively brought about the English publication of an informative and well-balanced overview of the US-Japan political relationship.

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