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Introduction

On November 29, 2023, Henry Kissinger passed away at the age of 100. It is probably very rare for a scholar and diplomatic practitioner to have been recognized by a wide range of people around the world. His role during the Nixon-Ford administration, when he served as National Security Advisor and then Secretary of State, is broadly known. Kissinger directed U.S. foreign policy, leading to U.S.-Soviet détente, U.S.-China rapprochement, Middle East peace negotiations, and the end of the Vietnam War. In addition, he continued to advise successive presidents after leaving office. The "Kissinger diplomacy," rooted in realpolitik, was even one type of postwar American diplomacy.

However, Kissinger's style of balance of power, without regard to differences in political systems or values, has inevitably been criticized. As *Politico* noted, there is no doubt that “Loathed and loved, reviled and revered, hailed as a brilliant statesman and condemned as a shameless war criminal, the German-born academic inspired fierce debate for decades[2].” His self-confident attitude and his self-promotion after leaving office seem to have accelerated such controversy[3].

Kissinger was also a complication in U.S.-Japan relations. It is hard to say that he and Japan were a good match. Kissinger himself admitted that “When I came into office, there was no major country I understood less

2 “‘My Mother Told Me No to Speak Ill of the Dead’: Political Experts on Henry Kissinger’s Legacy,” *Politico*, Nov. 30, 2023, https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/11/30/henry-kissinger-legacy-00129420 (accessed on December 30, 2023; the same applies hereafter).

3 After leaving office, he has used a variety of media outlets to successfully promote himself. Thomas A. Schwartz, *Henry Kissinger and American Power: A Political Biography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2020), p. 412. Furthermore, in an interview at Harvard University in April 2012, when asked if he would have done anything differently in hindsight under U.S. Presidents Nixon and Ford, Kissinger replied, “No.” Joseph S. Nye, Jr. “Judging Henry Kissinger: Did the Ends Justify the Means?” *Foreign Affairs*, November. 30, 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/henry-kissinger-obituary-judging-ends-means.

than Japan. ……I did not grasp Japan's unique character[4]" and "therefore made many mistakes.[5]" U. Alexis Johnson, who once served as ambassador to Japan and undersecretary of state during the Nixon administration, also later wrote that "Kissinger was fascinated by the Chinese, especially the urbane and sophisticated Chou Enlai. By contrast, the Japanese always seemed prosaic, obtuse, unworthy of sustained attention.[6]"

On the other hand, the Japanese side also has a severe evaluation of Kissinger in the U.S.-Japan relations. For example, Ryozo KATO, who was then a official in the First North American Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and later served as Ambassador to the United States, stated that "I am well aware of Mr. Kissinger's reputation, but I have never appreciated him in the context of U.S.-Japan relations. I don't remember him working hard for Japan at any important juncture[7]."

What, then, was the actual relationship between Kissinger and Japan? In this paper, I would like to review and organize Kissinger's relations with Japan during the Nixon-Ford administration, including the background of those relations.

1. Two Major Issues: Okinawa Issue and Textile Negotiations

Prime Minister Fumio KISHIDA sent a message to Mrs. Nancy Kissinger after news of Henry Kissinger's passing. In his message, Prime Minister KISHIDA mentioned Kissinger's "a critical role in the reversion of Okinawa to Japan" in relation to Japan[8]. In fact, at the time, complicated negotiations over Okinawa were taking place between Japan, which was insisting on "Kaku-nuki, Hondo-nami (an Okinawa with no nuclear weapons and the same)," and the United States, which was in the midst of the Vietnam War at the time. At issue in these negotiations was the U.S. concern that the prior consultation system with Japan would prevent the U.S. military from conducting combat operations and operating nuclear weapons in Okinawa, since the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty would naturally apply to Okinawa if administrative rights over the Okinawa were returned to Japan. Finally, in the U.S.-Japan Joint Statement of November 1969, the U.S. and Japan agreed on a return policy of "Kaku-nuki, Hondo-nami." However, previous studies have shown that behind the scenes, the " Agreed Minute," a non-public document that authorized the introduction of U.S. nuclear weapons and the use of the facilities in an emergency, was prepared. A key player on the American side in this process was Kissinger.

However, Kissinger does not seem to have had a strong interest in the Okinawa reversion issue from the beginning of the Nixon administration. Although he stated in March 1969 that "By far the toughest and most crucial issue we face today with Japan is reversion of Okinawa[9]," before and after the Nixon administration took office, Kissinger was not at all familiar with the policy toward Japan, including Okinawa, and was skeptical

4 Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1982), p. 735.
5 Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little Brown and Co. 1979), p. 324.
6 U. Alexis Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc. 1984), p.521.
7 Ryozo KATO, "【Seiron】Teki Mikata no Gainen wo Seiri Shite Miyou [Organizing theconcept of friend and foe]," *Saknkei Shimbun*, June 20, 2017, morning edition.
8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Message of condolence from Prime Minister KISHIDAFumio on the passing of Dr. Henry Kissinger, Former Secretary of State of the United States of America," December 1, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/na/na1/us/pageite_000001_00011.html.
9 Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, "Okinawa," March 12, 1969, *Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS)*, 1969-1976, vol. XIX, no. 4.

about the urgency of the Okinawa issue[10]. According to Takuma NAKASHIMA, diplomatic historian and a leading scholar on the Okinawa reversion negotiations, a back-channel meeting between Kei WAKAIZUMI and Kissinger took place in June, but "As far as I can research the American diplomatic documents, Kissinger was not fully involved in Okinawa issue as of June." Kissinger's arguments to WAKAIZUMI had much in common with the State Department's demands to the MOFA, and were based on the advice of Morton H. Halperin, Johnson, and others[11].

Although negotiations continued between Japan and the U.S. over the issues of the free use of bases in Okinawa by U.S. forces in emergencies and the reintroduction of nuclear weapons, Kissinger himself did not take the initiative to advance the negotiations. The front channel was at a stalemate due to the State Department also taking a stubborn negotiating stance toward the MOFA on the back of the U.S. military's strong insistence on the reintroduction of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the final phase of negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa was left to the back channel. What was little possibility of information leakage was also one on the reasons. Prime Minister Eisaku SATO, after much deliberation, authorized both leaders to sign their initials on WAKAIZUMI's " Agreed Minute" and conveyed the Japanese proposal to Nixon via the WAKAIZUMI-Kissinger channel. Kissinger then accepted one of the Japanese proposals, confirming Nixon's policy, and again used back channels to convey Nixon's intentions to SATO via WAKAIZUMI[12]. Kissinger arranged a procedure for SATO and Nixon to sign the "Agreed Minute" during the Japan-U.S. summit in November, and then he actually accomplished.

Based on the above, Kissinger's role may not have been to influence the substance of the Okinawa reversion issue itself, but rather to secure a path for the difficult negotiations, to bypass the communication of the intentions of the leaders of the two countries regarding highly sensitive information to each other, and to coordinate the process once it was decided. In this context, he could be characterized as a competent bureaucrat rather than an acrobat.

As for the U.S.-Japan textile negotiations, Kissinger, rather than actively taking the initiative, seems to have been "caught up" in the issue and played a role in bringing the negotiations to an early conclusion by supporting the negotiators from the White House perspective. Kissinger, who himself admitted that "my ignorance of the subject was encyclopedic," got involved with this issue at the request of Nixon[13]. Nixon needed to move forward on the textile issue, which had been a pledge since his Republican primary campaign based on the so-called Southern Strategy[14].

A meeting between WAKAIZUMI and Kissinger at the September 26, 1969, WAKAIZUMI tried to raise the nuclear issue from the beginning of this meeting, but Kissinger interrupted him by emphasizing the importance of the textile issue. He thought that the textile issue was a matter of presidential prestige and that something had to be done about it. At this point, it was clear that the textile issue had emerged as an important bargaining chip

10 Takuma NAKASHIMA, *Okinawa Henkan to Nichibei Anpo Taisei [Reversion of Okinawa and the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements]* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2012), pp. 139-140.
11 Ibid., pp. 183-184, 192, 235.
12 Ibid., p. 248; Yasuko KONO, "Okinawa Henkan to Yuji no Kaku no Sai Mochikomi [Reversion of Okinawa and reintroduction of nuclear weapons in case of emergency]," *Iwayuru "Mitsuyaku" Mondai ni Kansuru Yushikisya Iinkai Hokokusyo [Report of the Expert Committee on the So-Called "Secret Agreements" Issue]* March 9, 2010, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/mitsuyaku/pdfs/hokoku_yushiki.pdf, pp.57-80.
13 Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 330.
14 Nixon shown his idea as below: "exploratory discussions have taken place and will be taking place with the major countries involved to see if we can handle this on a volunteer basis rather than having to go to a legislation which would impose quotas, and I think would turn the clock back in our objective of trying to achieve freer trade." Richard Nixon, "The President's News Conference," February 6, 1969, American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-151.

with the reversion of Okinawa[15].

During the September 30 meeting, Kissinger also handed WAKAIZUMI a document on the textile negotiations and another on the reintroduction of nuclear weapons in case of emergency after the reversion of Okinawa. In handing over the former, he asked the U.S. negotiators to prepare last-minute proposal that would give Japan the maximum possible concessions, and requested that the contents of the document be implemented by Prime Minister SATO. Takashi SHINOBU, an expert on U.S.-Japan textile negotiations, noted that this Kissinger's action was "very important in understanding the subsequent history of the textile issue" and showed that he "left the textile issue to others regarding the substance of the textile issue[16]." Kissinger would continue to discuss how to resolve this issue between the U.S. and Japan, leaving the details of the negotiations to the negotiation team. In fact, as Kissinger himself later confirmed in his negotiations with Japan, he did not inject in any of the detailed textile discussions[17].

Even after the agreement to the reversion of Okinawa, the textile issue continued. The U.S. side was particularly frustrated that Prime Minister SATO was taking so long to make domestic adjustments. Under these circumstances, Kissinger expressed his own feelings on the textile issue. He reported that he had just overruled a proposal from a "very high source" to "hold up signing the Okinawa agreement until we had some guaranteed agreement on textiles," and stated that "he was personally sick of textile negotiations and didn't want to get involved in any more of them[18]." Kissinger was not interested in the details and completely off the textile issue by December 1970[19].

When negotiations were largely concluded in October 1971, he was not playing any particular role. Kissinger, who was "caught up" in this issue, was responsible for bringing the negotiations to an early conclusion under Nixon's direction, but he ended up setting the stance and direction of the negotiations, fading out of the negotiations themselves as the issues became more micro and technical. It is clear from the above that Kissinger never provided leadership. But it is not surprising, because the strategic level issues that were high on Kissinger's priority agenda were also moving at the same time.

2. Strategic Issues, Kissinger, and Japan

Needless to say, changes in the international political structure at the strategic level occurred during the Nixon administration. These were mainly due to the U.S.-China rapprochement and the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). Accordingly, Japan also became part of the framework of the international political structure.

Regarding the U.S.-China rapprochement, Kissinger was initially not as optimistic as Nixon, but rather skeptical. However, Kissinger's thinking on relations with China changed when Soviet diplomats began asking the

15 Takashi SHINOBU, *Wakaizumi Kei to Nichibei Mitsuyaku: Okinawa Henkan to Senni Kousyo wo Meguru Misshi Gaikou [Kei WAKAIZUMI and the U.S.-Japan Secret Agreement: Secret Diplomacy over the Reversion of Okinawa and Textile Negotiations]* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoron Sya: 2012), p. 22.
16 Ibid., p. 29.
17 Memcon, "Conversation Between Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Yamanaka on Okinawa Reversion and Textiles Issue," June 1, 1971, *FRUS*, 1969-1976, vol. XIX, no. 73.
18 Ibid.
19 SHINOBU, *Wakaizumi Kei to Nichibei Mitsuyaku*, p. 369.

United States what action the United States would take in response to the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1969[20]. As Ryo SAHASHI, an expert on U.S.-China relations, pointed out that "The approach between the two countries began for strategic reasons to contain the Soviet Union[21]."

The first official U.S.-China talks after the inauguration of the Nixon administration took place on January 20, 1970, and talks continued thereafter[22]. In this process, Nixon and Kissinger, who had called for Japan to increase its defense capabilities in the context of the US-Japan bilateral relationship, used this as a threat in the context of the US-China rapprochement[23]. Kissinger, who secretly visited China from July 9 to11, 1971, shared this Japanese threat in his meeting with Premier Zhou Enlai, and used this "pawn" in a way that was in line with their priorities at the level of the international political structure[24]. Nixon then announced he would visit China in a televised speech on July 15. It is said that the Japanese government received this information 30 minutes before the start of the speech, which was truly a "Nixon Shock" for Japan.

In 1971, Japan also appeared in the SALT context[25]. At the January 9 meeting, Kissinger talked about interesting issues related to East Asia, Anatoly Dobrynin said. Kissinger described the rise of Japan and China, and his concerns about them[26]. In other words, Kissinger was advocating cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, using Japan and China as leverage. At the June 8 meeting, Dobrynin pondered whether China and Japan would really cooperate or become rivals, and began to wonder if they might work together as "anti-Whites," and the Soviet side could no longer remain indifferent[27]. Moreover, at the August 17 meeting, Dobrynin claimed that the real threat to the world is the alignment of China and Japan[28], indicating that the threat of Japan and China existed in the common understanding of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In this way, Japan was used as a "pawn" to take advantage of issues at the strategic level that were priorities of the Nixon administration. And it was Kissinger who led it. On May 22, 1972, Nixon became the first incumbent U.S. president to visit Moscow, Soviet Union, and SALT I was concluded on May 26. Japan was treated as a " pawn" in this process as well[29].

This Japan's position would continue through SALT II[30]. Negotiations on SALT II had been deadlocked from the start due to fundamental differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as political turmoil in the U.S. caused by the Watergate scandal. This situation moved forward with the inauguration of the Ford administration in August 1974. Soon after, SALT II finally made progress at the U.S.-Soviet summit in Vladivostok in November, and the Vladivostok Accord was signed, which confirmed how the two countries would proceed in future negotiations. In this process, Kissinger would again mention Japan.

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20 Schwartz, *Henry Kissinger and American Power*, p. 129.
21 Ryo SAHASHI, *Beichu Tairitsu: America no Senryaku Tenkan to Bundan Sareru Sekai [The U.S.-China confrontation: American strategic shift and a divided world]* (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 2021), p. iii.
22 Kissinger, *The White House Years*, p. 684.
23 Ryoya ISHIMOTO, "Nikuson Seiken Kara Fodo Seiken ni Kakete no Tainichi Seisaku no Henyou: Tainichikan Oyobi Gurando Sutoratezi heno Nihon no Ichiduke ni Chakumoku Shite [The Transformation of Policy toward Japan from the Nixon to Ford Administrations: Focusing on Government Officials' Views on Japan and Japan's Position in the Grand Strategy]," *Doushisha America Kenkyu [Doshisha American Studies]*, no. 57 (March 2021), pp. 5-6.
24 Memcon, "[Conversation with Zhou Enlai in Peking; Attached to Cover Memorandum Dated July 29, 1971]," July 9, 1971, Digital National Security Archive, The Kissinger Transcripts: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977, KT00303 (hereafter DNSA, KT00303).
25 For details on SALT I and Japan, see Ryoya ISHIMOTO, "Beiso Kaku Gunbikanri Kousyou to Nihon: Nikuson Seikenki ni Okeru SALT I wo Chushin ni [U.S.-Soviet Nuclear Arms Control Negotiations and Japan: Focusing on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks[in the Nixon Administration]," *Doushisha Hougaku [Doshisha Law Review]*, vol. 72, no. 5 (November 2020).
26 Memcon, no title, January 9, 1971, *Soviet-American Relations: The Détente Years, 1969-1972* (hereafter *SAR*) (Washington D.C.: USGPO, 2007), no. 110.
27 Memcon, no title, June 8, 1971, *SAR*, no. 163.
28 Memcon, no title, August 17, 1971, *SAR*, no. 190.
29 Memcon, "First Plenary Session," May 23, 1972, *SAR*, no. 349.
30 For details on SALT II and Japan, see Ryoya ISHIMOTO, "Nikuson Fodo Ki no SALT II wo Meguru America Gaikou: Nihon no Ichiduke no Keizoku to Henyou [U.S. Foreign Policy on SALT II during the Nixon-Ford Administration: Continuity and Change in Japan's Position]," *Doushisha Hougaku [Doshisha Law Review]*, vol. 75, no. 3 (August 2023).

At the Vladivostok summit, Kissinger told Andrei Gromyko that he was very concerned about the close relationship between Japan and China because of the possibility that the combination of the two countries would be very unfortunate due to the potential for racial overtones. Kissinger indicated to the Soviets the importance of the agreement by emphasizing this point[31]. Even before this meeting, the Soviet Union had underlined the threat from a "third country," namely China. Kissinger tried to reach the agreement that was desirable for the U.S. and unfavorable for the Soviet Union by adding the element of Japan to the Soviet Union which felt threatened by China's nuclear weapons.

In the first place, Kissinger argued in the policy-making process leading up to the Vladivostok summit that President Ford "could mention to Brezhnev the danger of a Japanese-Chinese alliance" and suggested the possibility of using Japan as a "pawn." "[T]hat is why we want to keep Japan tied to us," he said. Kissinger also added that "[t]he Japanese are a great danger. In all their history they've never had permanent alignments," and he believed that if the U.S. lost global power, it would lose Japan[32]. Thus, Kissinger tried to keep Japan on "our side" while at the same time using Japan as a "pawn" in negotiations with the Soviet Union. For Kissinger, the priority was progress on strategic issues rather than U.S.-Japan relations.

3. U.S. Security Policy toward East Asia and Kissinger

Although Kissinger had prioritized strategic issues and treated relations with Japan as secondary, he could not remain in this position indefinitely[33]. First, by including Japan in the strategic relationship between the U.S., China, and the Soviet Union, even if only as a "pawn," Japan's actions have come to have an impact on strategic issues. Second, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, the White House lost credibility, resulting in a backlash against the "Nixon style" from within the United States, making it more difficult than ever for the president to take a leadership role in foreign policy and for the United States to take effective steps in foreign policy. Furthermore, from the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union not only began to expand its power in the Third World, but also greatly increased its Pacific fleet. These events centered on East Asia, and after 1975, the U.S. began to promote regional stability in East Asia as part of its global strategy[34].

The diplomatic staffs surrounding Kissinger, who was also Secretary of State, actually emphasized the importance of East Asia. For example, Winston Lord, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, William Hyland, Director of Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, and Philip Habib, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, have presented a global strategy to contain the role of the Soviet Union in East Asia with the relationship between the United States, China, and Japan[35]. They not only incorporated Japan into the U.S. grand strategy, but also positioned it as an important partner in it.

31 Memcon, "SALT II," November 23, 1974, *FRUS*, 1969-1976, vol. XVI, no, 91.
32 Memcon, no title, November 16, 1974, *FRUS*, 1969-1976, vol. XXXVIII, no.48.
33 For details, see ISHIMOTO, "Nikuson Seiken Kara Fodo Seiken ni Kakete no Tainichi Seisaku no Henyou," pp. 13-16.
34 Yukinori Komine, *Negotiating the U.S.-Japan Alliance: Japan Confidential* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 233.
35 Action Memo from Lord to the Deputy Secretary, "Whither Japan: Another Look [Includes Papers]," September 18, 1974, DNSA, JU01874; Memo from Sonnenfeldt and Hyland to Kissinger, "Foreign Policy in the Next Phase," April 4, 1975, *FRUS*, 1969-1976, vol. XXXVIII, no. 54; Briefing Memo from Habib, Lord to the Secretary, "Issues Paper on Future Pacific Strategy [Includes Paper Entitled "Post-Vietnam Asia Policy"]," May 6, 1975, DNSA, JU01933; Briefing Memo from Lord to Kissinger, "US Strategy in Asia: Trends, Issues, and Choices," October 16, 1975, DNSA, JU01958.

Kissinger, who was receptive to these ideas, increasingly expressed similar thoughts. He said that the security interests of all the major powers intersect in Asia, especially in Northeast Asia, and that the U.S.-Japan relations is important in this new international structure and is central to the stability, progress, and prosperity of the international community[36]. Kissinger's insights at that time were so well developed that they showed a deep understanding of Japan and gave the impression that he had studied Japan very carefully[37]. Later, he expressed his priority for relations with Japan, an ally in Asia, where the security interests of all the major powers are complex[38]. This trend intensified especially after the fall of Saigon. The stability of East Asia became directly linked to the global strategy of the United States.

Even after 1976, Kissinger continued to indicate that security policy in Asia would shape that in the global realm, and that Asia policy was part of a global strategy. He expressed his belief that the U.S.-Japan relations played a central role in Asia, and that strengthening these relations was important for the global balance of power[39].

As a result of changes in the environment of U.S. foreign policy, Kissinger began to emphasize the importance of U.S.-Japan relations. This was in the context of the strategic level. A comparison of the early years of the Nixon administration and the Ford administration shows that Kissinger's relationship with Japan changed dramatically.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the relationship between Kissinger and Japan during the Nixon-Ford administration. What can be said about the relations between Kissinger and Japan?

Certainly, as is generally believed, Kissinger's understanding of Japan was inadequate, and he undoubtedly had biased views. However, it seems more plausible that Kissinger did not engage with Japan on the basis of his view of Japan as described above, but that he was concerned only with the international political structure, which he regarded as a guarantee of national interests, and that he used Japan for this purpose. The use of Japan as a " pawn" for China and the Soviet Union, or conversely, to keep Japan on "our side," was used ad hoc, depending on the importance of the moment for Kissinger. In light of this, it is not surprising that Kissinger's mentions and responses to Japan were inconsistent.

To understand Kissinger's relationship with Japan, it is important to consider what Kissinger's prioritized “ends” are and what his “means” are for achieving them. In addition, both the international political environment and the U.S. domestic political environment were quite fluid at the time, and the “ends” and “means” were even changing. Japan, as a “major power,” was part of this larger puzzle. As one expert noted, Kissinger was not

36 “Kisshinzya Kokumu Chokan no Zyapan Sosaeti Nenzi Bansankai Enzetsu [Secretary of State Kissinger's Address to the Japan Society Annual Dinner],” June 18, 1975, Database “Sekai to Nihon [World and Japan],” https://worldjpn.net/.

37 Hiroaki FUJII (Yuichi HOSOYA, Junichiro SHIRATORI, Mizuki YAMAMOTO eds.), *Kokusaisyakai ni Oite Meiyo Aru Chii wo Shimetai to Omou: FUJII Hiroaki Gaikou Kaisouroku [We Desire to Occupy an Honored Place in an International Society: Diplomatic Memoirs of Hiroaki FUJII]* (Tokyo: Yoshida Shoten, 2020), p. 87.

38 U.S. Department of State (hereafter DoS), *The Department of State Bulletin*, vol. LXXIII, no. 1903, December 15, 1975, pp.841-848.

39 DoS, *The Department of State Bulletin*, vol. LXXV, no. 1938, August 16, 1976, pp. 217-232.

familiar with Japan or East Asia and had no interest in bilateral relations with Tokyo, but circumstances did not permit it[40].

Almost 50 years have passed since the "Kissinger years." But this past is not just the past. There are many analogies to today, such as the relative decline of U.S. national power, the disruption of U.S. domestic politics and declining support for foreign policy, and the transformation of relations between the major powers in East Asia, and much to be learned from the "Kissinger years" in thinking about U.S.-Japan relations today. As Hal Brands and John Gaddis pointed out that "[t]he study of history is the best compass we have in navigating this future-even if it turns out to be not what we'd expected and not in most respects what we've experienced before.[41] "

The only problem is that there is no one like Kissinger in the U.S. today. In the absence of someone like him, we have to live in this world of great changes in international politics. Can organizations and institutions replace Kissinger's presence? Has the U.S.-Japan alliance been strengthened so much over the past 50 years? The answers to these questions emerge, paradoxically, by clarifying the role Kissinger played in U.S.-Japan relations. Kissinger probably left us with some homework to do at the end. What can we learn from the "Kissinger years" and apply it to today? This is also a matter that those of us living in the present must tackle, and a "an unending dialogue the present and the past.[42]"

40 Liang Pam, "Whither Japan's Military Potential? The Nixon Administration's Stance on Japanese Defense Power," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 31, no. 1 (January 2007), p. 117.
41 Hal Brands and John Lewis Gaddis, "The New Cold War America, China, and the Echoes of History," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 100, no. 6 (November/ December 2021).
42 E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 30.