



**Tomohito Shinoda.** *Koizumi Diplomacy: Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007. 216 pp. \$18.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-295-98699-9.



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## The Evolution of the Role of the Prime Minister's Office in Crisis Legislation

This book draws from a wide range of Japanese and English language sources to provide a detailed picture of the evolution of the role of Japan's Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in diplomatic and security affairs. Early on, the author, Tomohito Shinoda, provides a very useful explanation of the key Japanese term *Kantei*, which is present in the title and throughout the book. The literal meaning of *Kantei* is the prime minister's official residence. Shinoda compares Japan's *Kantei* with the U.S. White House or Britain's 10 Downing Street. All three terms infer the broader meaning of the prime minister or president and their respective staffs and assistants. In Japan, this is formally called the *Sorifu* or PMO. It might better be compared to the West Wing of the White House, although a similar *Kantei* television series has not yet appeared.

The book's focus is on the role of the *Kantei* in the formulation of policy and legislation during the time from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 through the dispatch of Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) units to Iraq in 2004. Chapter 1 provides necessary background on

Japan's traditional bottom-up policy process and earlier attempts by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone to change the bottom-up policy process in the 1980s. Nakasone's objective was to promote top-down leadership and govern as a U.S. president-like prime minister. The commentary on the "Ron-Yasu" relationship between President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone is interesting. However, the primary insights are into how Nakasone used his chief cabinet secretary (CCS) and his assistant, Atsuyuki Sassa, for crisis management. Chapter 1 also includes background on the role of current Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader, Ichiro Ozawa, as deputy CCS in the Noboru Takeshita administration from November 1987 to June 1989. It notes how Ozawa played a central role in foreign affairs at the *Kantei* in key U.S.-Japan trade issues, like construction, telecommunications, and the selection of a next generation fighter aircraft, the FSX project.

Chapter 2 contains details on Japan's response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the lessons learned by what ended up being described as "checkbook diplomacy." It

also includes an overview of the successful passage of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Law by the Ki-ichi Miyazawa administration (November 1991-August 1993). The passage of this law set a precedent of the Kantei drafting a key piece of legislation on national security.

In chapter 3, Shinoda provides some insight into the inner workings and restructuring of the Kantei prior to the Junichiro Koizumi administration. This chapter includes some interesting figures designed to describe the existing and proposed policymaking process related to the Kantei. It sets the stage for the following chapters, which describe how the Koizumi administration was able to take advantage of changes in the Kantei legislated under the Ryutaro Hashimoto administration (January 1996-July 1998).

The administration of Koizumi lasted for 1,980 days from April 26, 2001, to September 26, 2006. Koizumi was the first Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) president and prime minister to be selected outside the traditional LDP factional power struggles. The Koizumi administration ranks third in longevity since the end of World War II. The book presents three case studies as examples of how Prime Minister Koizumi orchestrated Kantei diplomacy in foreign and security affairs during his administration. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 each contain a case study that describes how Koizumi's Kantei originated and passed three laws that revolutionized Japan's foreign and defense policies.

In chapter 4, we see how Japan and Koizumi's response to the 9/11 incident were remarkably different than the Toshiki Kaifu administration's response to the invasion of Kuwait. Within one hour of the 9/11 incident, Koizumi created the Emergency Anti-Terrorism Headquarters, with himself in charge. He took advantage of a newly created institution, known as the Situation Center, and dispatched the senior vice minister of Foreign Affairs to Pakistan to explain Japan's support for the United States. Koizumi met with President George W. Bush on September 25, 2001, and pledged support to the United States. By late September 2001, his cabinet's approval rating was 79 percent. This and other factors allowed the Kantei to oversee the passage of the 2001 Anti-Terrorist Law by October 29, 2001. It is interesting to note that current DPJ leader Ozawa criticized Koizumi for not including the issue of collective self-defense and U.N. approval for the dispatch of JSDF units in this law. Ozawa's continuing focus on these two issues caused the recall of JSDF ships from the Indian Ocean in the fall of 2007, and the need to revise and reinstate the 2001 antiterrorism

legislation.

The 2003 Emergency Legislation described in chapter 5 was designed to improve the ability of the JSDF to respond to crisis or attack. This included response to natural disasters and to the perceptions of increased threats from North Korea. A North Korean spy ship had entered Japan's exclusive economic zone, fired on Japanese coast guard vessels, and blew itself up to avoid capture in December 2001. North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in January 2003 and then fired a missile into the Sea of Japan. Koizumi's Kantei was effective in linking these events to the situation in Iraq and passed Emergency Legislation on June 6, 2003. The process even included public comments by then CCS Yasuo Fukuda, the current prime minister, that Japan might change its three non-nuclear principles. Although Fukuda's statement drew broad criticism, it demonstrated the strength and confidence of Koizumi's Kantei, since no one was forced to resign, and the related legislation was passed.

The third case study in chapter 6 describes the drafting and passage of the Iraq Special Measures Legislation. This led to the unprecedented dispatch of JSDF units into what many people clearly saw was a war zone. The Kantei deftly used U.N. Security Council Resolution 1483, which requested support for the reconstruction of Iraq, to gain support for this new legislation. The author notes that Koizumi had felt confident enough in his ability to pass this bill that he had given President Bush a promise to provide visible cooperation for the reconstruction of Iraq. This was reportedly done at a meeting at Bush's private residence in Crawford, Texas, on May 23, 2003. The Koizumi administration provided strong support for the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 on October 16, 2003, to provide legitimacy for the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq. The description of how Koizumi's Kantei was able to pass legislation leading to the dispatch of six hundred JSDF ground troops to Iraq demonstrates the very strong leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi in spite of opposition from opposition parties and limited public support.

The book provides useful information about how Japan and Japanese politics have changed since the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990. It contains insights into how Koizumi led the Kantei within the new political and administrative environments created by the Hashimoto administration's administrative reform bills. Koizumi himself owed his election as LDP president to the creation of single-seat election districts. His reputation as a lone

wolf, without strong factional ties or obligations, seems to have placed him as the right person in the right place at the right time. Koizumi's legacy is yet to be determined. However, the pros and cons of Kantei diplomacy are well enumerated, assessed, and explained by the author in chapter 7.

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