

## Japanese Parliamentary Diplomacy on the Eve of the Cold War: Focusing on the Taiwan Channel

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*This study explores the diplomacy of the conservative ruling party lawmakers in Japan toward Asia on the eve of the Cold War. It shows— based on interviews and latest archival material released in Japan and Taiwan—that a structure for ending the Cold War existed in East Asia on the eve of the Cold War, which is different from the Second Cold War framework centered on the West. This research may also play a significant role in the study of the long-term governments of conservative parties and their foreign policies during the Cold War. Before the Cold War was over, the governments of Nakasone Yasuhiro and Takeshita Noboru in Japan had access to both China and Taiwan, and there were already movements within the conservative ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its factions toward a de-Cold War structure and ideology. Pro-Taiwan and pro-Korea factions in the party, which had overlapped since the formulation of the Cold War ideology, diverged. In this context, despite the timely utilization of personal relations between Taiwan and Japan since the prewar Japanese colonial period, an effective systematization of channels between the two governments that could be sustained over the long-term was not achieved.*

### Introduction

This study explores the diplomacy of the conservative ruling party lawmakers in Japan toward Asia on the eve of the Cold War. It shows that a structure for ending the Cold War existed in East Asia, which is different from the Second Cold War framework centered on the West.

In international political history, the 1980s are considered as the era of the Second Cold War, which ended in 1989. In Asia, the normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China in 1979 had already produced a major structural change, leading to the collapse of the Cold War structure centered on anti-Communism in the 1980s. Democratization occurred one after another in Asia in the 1980s, including in South Korea and Taiwan, which can be attributed to the emergence of regimes that were unbound by the Cold War structure but switched their bases to support by the masses. How did the Second Cold War and Asia's disestablishment affect the politics of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan, which had become a "member of the West" and an Asian power? Considering the 1980s, it is beneficial to explore the political situation in Japan, which has particularly strong interactions with both the West and Asia, on the premise that this period is between the "end of the Cold War" in the West and the "collapse of the Cold War structure" in East Asia. The influence of Japanese

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politics on international politics can also be discerned.

Cold War history has been mainly discussed in the context of Europe and the U.S. Recently, however, the view that the political process in Asia had a significant impact on the dynamics of the Cold War, including Europe and the U.S., has attracted attention.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously, the interrelationship between Asia's ideology, regionalism, and indigenous Asian culture and the Cold War is drawing attention.<sup>2</sup> Many Third World countries tried pursuing a path of non-alignment rather than confrontation between the Cold War camps. However, Japan and the Republic of China (Taiwan) (ROC),<sup>3</sup> which had been firmly in the Western camp from the beginning, conversely strengthened their external strategies by exploiting the Cold War structure. The Taiwanese government was among the most anti-Communist governments during the Cold War, and the Japanese LDP was a conservative anti-Communist party that cooperated with the Western camp. Given the current need to understand the multidimensional aspects of the Cold War beyond the U.S.–Soviet framework,<sup>4</sup> examining how Taiwan used the Cold War ideology of “anti-Communism,” and how it affected its relations with Japan, will provide a case study for the Cold War historical research.

The study of the history of Japan–Taiwan relations during the Cold War has made progress recently, with the disclosure of diplomatic archives in both governments.<sup>5</sup> However, many scholars have viewed the Japan–Taiwan relationship as a microphenomenon, paying little attention to the international positions of Japan and Taiwan, and have not analyzed this relationship in the context of the Cold War. Additionally, the role of LDP lawmakers has not been a subject of research, whereas the Japanese foreign affairs bureaucracy has been a major actor in the development of research.

This study uses political history research methods to examine changes that cannot be captured within the existing framework. The focus of this research is on the relationship between Taiwan and Japanese conservative lawmakers. The latter

1. Vu Tuong, and Wasana Wongsurawat (Eds.), *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Luc Van Dongen, Stephanie Roulin, and Giles Scott-Smith (Eds.), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks* (Springer Nature, 2014).

2. Richard H. Immerman, and Petera Goedde (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

3. Its official name is the Republic of China, and even the Republic of China had used this name. However, as the government in Taiwan was commonly called—and is still called—“Taiwan” by many countries, this article generically refers to the government in Taiwan as “Taiwan.”

4. Immerman and Goedde, *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, 2013, 7.

5. Shin Kawashima, Shimizu Urara, Matsuda Yasuhiro, and Yo Eimin, *Nittai kankeishi 1945–2020* (Tokyo University Press, 2020); Urara Shimizu, *Taiwangaiko no keisei* (Nagoya University Press, 2019); Feng-Lin Chen, *Zhanhou ritai guanxishi* (Hong Kong Social Sciences Publishing, 2004); Hang Xu, *Sengo nikka Keizai gaikoushi 1950–1978* (Tokyo University Press, 2019).

had replaced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the primary and most useful contact for Taiwan after diplomatic relations between the two governments, established under the banner of the Western camp, were severed.

First, this research will examine the role of Japan–Taiwan channels in the context of the severance of diplomatic ties for each actor. Next, the administrations of Nakasone and Takeshita, who served as prime ministers of Japan on the eve of the Cold War, will be analyzed. The Nakasone administration (1982–1987) was the leading Japanese administration of the 1980s, and Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, along with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, is recognized as a Western leader who actively embraced the Cold War ideology and its framework.<sup>6</sup> The Takeshita administration (1987–1988) was the last stable government before the end of the Cold War and a milestone in Japan,<sup>7</sup> known as the last government of the Showa era. Takeshita Noboru was a leader of the next generation in Japanese politics, different from previous prime ministers. What changes did this generation, which could look ahead to the post-Cold War era, produce in the LDP – the long-ruling conservative party?

Japan's LDP, founded in 1955, has been the ruling party for most of its existence. After World War II, under the Cold War structure, the LDP—it had cooperated with the West during the Cold War—continued to win elections against the Socialist Party. Due to the Cold War structure and the influence of the U.S., Japan had diplomatic relations with Taiwan, not the People's Republic of China (China) (PRC), from 1952 to 1972. For Taiwan, which sought a continental counter against the Chinese Communist Party, it was a good thing that the LDP was the ruling party, as it facilitated an alliance with Japan based on anti-Communism. However, Taiwan, with its anti-Communist banner, strengthened its connections with the most right-wing members of the LDP—a conservative party; in fact, there were members within the LDP who were pro-China and pro-Taiwan. Until the 1970s, the pro-China and pro-Taiwan members of the LDP could be distinguished relatively clearly, with the pro-Taiwan and pro-South Korea members overlapping around the anti-Communism ideology during the Cold War.<sup>8</sup> However, this structure has changed since the 1980s.

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6. Vu and Wongsurawat, *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture*, 2009; Westad Odd Arne, "The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms," *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 556.

7. The Uno administration, which succeeded Takeshita, lasted only two months.

8. In the 1970s, the governments of Taiwan and South Korea clearly distinguished between "pro-Taiwan" and "pro-South Korea" LDP members (國會議員訪華" Congressman's visit to Republic of China, 11-02-07-01-033, 中日航空(2)" Republic of China and Japan Airlines, 11-01-02-16-02-005, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan); however, this distinction disappeared in the 1980s ("日本國會議員組團訪華參與七十年國慶(一)" (Japanese Diet Members Visit Republic of China for 70th National Day), 020-19 0200-0048, Academia Historica in Taiwan).

## Japan–Taiwan Channels and Important Factors in the Context of Severance of Diplomatic Relations

First, this chapter will examine what kind of significance “Taiwan,” which no longer has diplomatic relations with Japan, had for the Japanese government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, maintaining good relations with China—China had implemented the reform and opening-up policy after normalization of diplomatic relations with the U.S.—became more important than relations with Taiwan. Furthermore, in the 1980s, when Japan–China–Taiwan relations were relatively stable, China–Taiwan issues were rarely raised within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan reduced contact with Taiwan, with the policy of immediately responding to Taiwan-related issues only when a political incident occurred.<sup>9</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, which had normalized diplomatic relations with China, continued to show consideration for China until Taiwan’s democratization. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan was careful to not make public its exchanges with Taiwan, while simultaneously seeking to deepen exchanges with Taiwan on the practical side.<sup>10</sup>

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan’s perception of Taiwan was as discussed above, the pro-Taiwan LDP members believed that there was a historical foundation to Japan’s friendship with Taiwan, whether it was under the presidency of Chiang Ching-kuo or under Lee Teng-hui after the democratization of Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan) (hereinafter MFA, Taiwan) also had more confidence in Japanese lawmakers than in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan), Taiwan, even during the Chiang Ching-kuo era, was hardly autonomous in its diplomatic exchanges with Japan.<sup>13</sup> The respective Association for East Asian Relations in Taipei and Tokyo were not organized hierarchically—both received instructions directly from President Chiang Ching-kuo.<sup>14</sup> It can be inferred that

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9. Former Japanese diplomat Kohara Masahiro, personal communication, August 2020 and Former Japanese diplomat Ogura Kazuo, personal communication, February and June 2022.

10. Former Japanese diplomat Ogura Kazuo, personal communication, June 2022.

11. LDP lawmaker Takemi Keizou, personal communication, April 2021.

12. Former Taiwanese diplomat Chen Pengren, personal communication, March 2020; former Taiwanese diplomat Chung-Hsi Kuo, personal communication, October 2021; and LDP lawmaker Takemi Keizou, personal communication, April 2021.

13. Teng-hui Lee, and Nakajima Mineo, *Ritouki Jitsuroku* (Sankei Shimbun Publications, 2006), 63-64.

14. Former Taiwanese diplomat Chen Pengren, personal communication, March 2020.

Taiwan's diplomatic actors toward Japan were dispersed.<sup>15</sup>

The severance of the Japan–Taiwan diplomatic ties makes it difficult to establish an official relationship. The above factors, however, establish that the role of pro-Taiwan lawmakers in Japan, as in the 1980s, is more important than official diplomatic channels between the two governments.

### Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro and Taiwan

Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro built a personal relationship of trust with Chinese General Secretary Hu Yaobang, which led to a period of stability in Japan–China relations.<sup>16</sup> However, the impression that Taiwan gained through its observation of Nakasone—both before and during his tenure—was not flawed.

As early as 1971, before the severance of the Japan–Taiwan diplomatic ties, the Kuomintang -- ruling party that had established a de facto dictatorship in Taiwan -- had a good impression of Nakasone. Within the Kuomintang, it was reported that Nakasone was an anti-Communist who intended to visit Taiwan to meet key government officials and anti-Communist comrades.<sup>17</sup> The MFA, Taiwan, had predicted Nakasone's appointment as prime minister eight years earlier, during the Tanaka administration in 1974, and expected that he would take office within five years.<sup>18</sup> Although the actual inauguration was delayed, the inauguration of Nakasone as prime minister did not surprise Taiwan. Among the LDP factions, which tended to be either pro-China or pro-Taiwan, the Nakasone faction was unique in that it embraced both the so-called pro-China and pro-Taiwan factions.<sup>19</sup> Following the severance of diplomatic ties, a pro-Taiwan group, the Sino–Japanese Legislators' Council was formed in the LDP, and when the first large

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15. As any Japanese visiting Taiwan tended to place a high priority on meeting with Chang Gun Gun until his death in 1990 (former Taiwanese diplomat Chen Pengren, personal communication, March 2020), the diversity of Taiwanese factors that influenced the LDP legislators visiting Taiwan should be assumed.

16. Hattori Ryūji, "Nakasone Koyouhou Kankei to Rekishi mondai 1983–86 nen," in *Nitchu Kankeishi 1973–2012 Seiji* (eds.) Takahara Akio, and Hattori Ryūji (University of Tokyo Press, 2012).

17. 總裁批簽 (President's endorsement), 60/0007, Kuomintang Archives.

18. "日本政情 1973-12~1974-05" (Japanese Politics 1973-12~1974-05), 11-01-02-02-01-031, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

19. As of October 1973, 19 members of the Nakasone faction participated in the Sino–Japanese Legislators' Council, 16 members were from the Japan–China Friendship Parliamentarians' Union, and four members belonged to both. This is an overwhelmingly unbiased distribution compared to other factions (Refer to "國會議員訪華" Congressman's visit to Republic of China, 11-02-07-01-033, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan).

delegation visited Taiwan in 1973, many members of the Nakasone faction were among those who participated.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, when Nakasone assumed power, Taiwan placed its hopes in the new administration. This was due in part to the fact that several members of the Sino-Japanese Legislators' Council—an organization of LDP lawmakers who were pro-Taiwan—had joined the Cabinet. The Tokyo Office of the Association for East Asian Relations reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan) that 12 of the 20 members of Nakasone's cabinet were members of the Sino-Japanese Legislators' Council. Miyazawa Kiichi, who became Minister of Finance in the new cabinet, belonged to the Kochi-kai, a faction considered pro-China, but was seen by the Taiwanese side as a Taiwan-friendly figure who had contributed to the restoration of Japan-Taiwan air routes in 1975. The Taiwanese had high hopes from him.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike the Kochi-kai, the Nakasone faction had no training sessions, and as can be seen from the mixture of pro-China and pro-Taiwan factions, it was a faction with no ideological unity among its members.<sup>22</sup> A lawmaker from the Nakasone faction evaluated Nakasone as a person who transcended ideology.<sup>23</sup> Nakasone is recognized as a leader who actively embraced Cold War ideology and frameworks. However, in fact, the nature of the Nakasone administration and Nakasone faction, as well as Nakasone himself, led to a de-Cold War shift in LDP politics in Japan, especially in terms of foreign policy, by diminishing the Cold War tone that had been strongly held by LDP members. Taiwan also had expectations from Nakasone and his administration, partly because of their ideological affinity. In fact, Prime Minister Nakasone, the Nakasone faction, and the Nakasone cabinet were not unified in an ideological sense, but had, at best, a balanced attitude.

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20. See “日本國會議員訪華團案” (Delegation of Japanese Diet Members to Republic of China), 012.2/89004, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan, “國會議員訪華” (Congressman's visit to Republic of China), 11-02-07-01-033, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

21. “日本政情” (Japanese Politics), A303000000B/0075/001.2/0006, National Archives Administration in Taiwan.

22. Former LDP lawmaker Kouno Youhei, personal communication, March 2021.

23. Former LDP lawmaker Kouno Youhei, personal communication, March 2021 and LDP lawmaker Takemi Keizou, personal communication, April 2021.

## LDP Lawmakers and Taiwan/Korea: Disappearance of the Anti-Communist Banner

During the Nakasone administration, as the problem of historical dispute worsened, the distinction between the “pro-Taiwan” and “pro-South Korea” factions became more pronounced. Within the LDP, pro-Taiwan and pro-South Korea lawmakers were deemed conservative lawmakers with the same anti-Communist views. In fact, the Japan–ROC Cooperation Committee and the Japan–ROK (Republic of Korea) Cooperation Committee, which were unofficial organizations, had formed alliances in the past. However, after the establishment of the Chun Doo-hwan administration through a coup in 1980, the people-to-people relationship between Japan and South Korea was severed,<sup>24</sup> and the pro-South Korea and pro-Taiwan factions in the LDP began to diverge. This differentiation became even more pronounced with the escalation of the history dispute during the Nakasone administration.

During the Nakasone administration, the LDP conservative members, who were originally pro-South Korea, resisted the harsh criticism of Japan from South Korea over the history dispute. The Minister of Education, Fujio Masayuki was recognized as pro-South Korea by South Korea government in the mid-1970s,<sup>25</sup> but South Korea harshly protested against Fujio’s remark that South Korea had some responsibility for Japan’s annexation of the former. Taiwan responded differently from Korea and China, defending Fujio as a good friend of Taiwan.<sup>26</sup>

China, while ostensibly opposing the “two-China” movement, was promoting a peaceful unification policy with Taiwan, and, behind the scenes, sometimes asked the pro-Taiwan faction to mediate with Taiwan.<sup>27</sup> Thus, while a distinction between the pro-South Korea and pro-Taiwan factions emerged, the distinction between the pro-Taiwan and pro-China factions, which had been clarified by Taiwan and China, was blurred, resulting in the overlapping of the two.

The “Association to Honor the Legacy of Chiang Kai-shek,” founded in 1986 and initiated by Kishi Nobusuke and Nadao Hirokichi, who were pro-Taiwan, represented a significant collaboration of the pro-Taiwan and Taiwanese sides of the time. However, the association used Chiang Kai-shek as its symbol, instead of

24. Former Japanese diplomat Ogura Kazuo, personal communication, June 2022; Hidekazu Wakatsuki, *Reisen no Syuen to Nihon gaikou, Suzuki Nakasone Takeshita Seiken no Gaisei 1980–1989 nen* (Chikura Shobo, 2017).

25. “한국의 대일본 의회 안보외교 활동방안 1975” (South Korea’s Security Diplomacy Activities Plan for Japan’s Parliament 1975) 721.1JA 1975: 17992, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea.

26. “本邦歴史教科書検定問題 / 中国” (Japanese history textbook certification issue / China), 2018-0225, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “日本政情” (Japanese Politics), A303000000B/0075/001.2/0006.

27. Former LDP lawmaker Nakayama Masaaki, personal communication, August 2020.

including the word anti-Communism, which indicates that the possibility of an anti-Communism alliance had virtually disappeared. At that time, Kishi Nobusuke, Kanemaru Shin, and Fujio Masayuki, who were pro-Taiwan, were supposed to visit Taiwan upon the invitation of the Taiwanese government. However, Prime Minister Nakasone and Chief Cabinet Secretary Fujinami Takao persuaded them to cancel their visit as that would have caused diplomatic inconveniences. The pro-Taiwan members argued that it was not an official, but a personal visit; however, later, Kanemaru stepped down as an initiator. The LDP lawmakers, thus, struck a balance that was considerate of both Taiwan and China.

### Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru and Taiwan

As indicated, “The Tanaka faction and its successor, the Takeshita faction, have been almost exclusively engaged in diplomacy with China.”<sup>28</sup> The Takeshita faction maintained a strong connection with China, and surprisingly, in Taiwan, it was considered an important contact point on the Japanese side.<sup>29</sup> For example, Kanemaru Shin, a “sworn friend” of Takeshita Noboru and a member of the Takeshita faction, was a powerful pro-Taiwan and pro-South Korea lawmaker, and had even visited China and North Korea.<sup>30</sup> Diplomats at the time later recognized that Kanemaru was both pro-Taiwan and pro-China.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, Takeshita Noboru and Lin Jinjing—who served as former vice president of the Association of East-Asian Relations and representative to Japan—were alumni of the Waseda University and enjoyed a personal equation during the Japanese colonial period. The MFA, Taiwan, noting the alumni relationship between Lin and Takeshita, sought to resolve the issue of Asian Development Bank participation by creating an opportunity for Yu Kuo-hwa, Minister of Finance of Taiwan, and Takeshita to negotiate with Lin as a mediator.<sup>32</sup> Many Taiwanese of this generation, including Lin Jinjing, had personal relationships with the Japanese established during the Japanese colonial period. Lin, using his connections with Waseda graduates, built a close relationship with Obuchi Keizou, Kaifu Toshiki, and Mori Yoshiro—all of whom rose to the office of the prime minister.<sup>33</sup>

According to a lawmaker from the Takeshita faction, there was an atmosphere

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28. Miyagi Taizou, “Jimintounai habatsu to Ajia gaikou; Fukudaha Tanakaha wo cyushinni,” in *Sengo Ajia no keisei to Nihon* (Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2014).

29. Former diplomat Chen Pengren first cites Takeshita Noboru as the Japanese lawmaker who was closest to Taiwan (Former Taiwanese diplomat Chen Pengren, personal communication, March 2020).

30. 岸と金丸、対日政界工作＝親台派取り込み－中国建国70年秘史 (Jiji Press Ltd, October 5, 2019). Available at: <https://www.afpbb.com/articles/-/3248156>.

31. Former Japanese diplomat Ogura Kazuo, personal communication, February 2022.

32. Honda Yoshihiko, *Nicchutai no miezarute* (Nikkei Business Publications, 2006), 121-123.

33. *Ibid*, 125.



in which the Takeshita faction was welcomed in both China and Taiwan.<sup>34</sup> The Takeshita faction, successor of the Tanaka faction, had strong ties with China,<sup>35</sup> but for Taiwan, Takeshita and the Takeshita faction were regarded as important contacts on the Japanese side.<sup>36</sup> Abe Shintaro, who became the leader of the Seiwa-kai—a faction generally perceived as pro-Taiwan—served as a minister in the 1980s, and did not have close ties with Taiwan at the time. In contrast, for Taiwan, Takeshita of Keiseikai represented the “pro-Taiwan” faction.

In this way, the genealogy of factions and their foreign orientation during this period shows a cross phenomenon. This was supported, in particular, by the personal relationships among those who had spent their youth together during the period of Japanese colonization of Taiwan.

### Conclusion

Even before the end of the Cold War, a movement had begun toward a de-Cold War structure and ideology within the LDP and its factions. Nakasone Yasuhiro is recognized as a leader who actively embraced the Cold War ideology and frameworks; however, in Japan, the attitude of the Nakasone administration and Nakasone faction—as well as of Nakasone himself—led to a de-Cold War shift in LDP politics, especially in terms of foreign policy, by diluting the Cold War atmosphere that LDP members had previously supported.

Both the Nakasone and Takeshita factions had pro-China as well as pro-Taiwan members, and during the Nakasone and Takeshita administrations, the cabinets had access to both China and Taiwan. Japan–China relations reached their peak in the 1980s, and Taiwan also had favorable expectations from Nakasone and Takeshita. The “pro-China” and “pro-Taiwan” factions, which had been clearly divided, began to cooperate and merge within Japanese politics, whereas the hitherto anti-Communist “pro-Taiwan” and “pro-South Korea” factions exhibited signs of growing differences. During the Takeshita administration, in particular, the ideological basis (i.e., anti-communism) of the Japan–Taiwan alliance was considerably diminished.

The deepening of Japan-Taiwan relations in the 1980s was not based on ideology, as had been the case in the past. It was based on the personal relations formed between leaders from both sides before World War II.

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34. LDP lawmaker Takemi Keizou, personal communication, April 2021.

35. LDP lawmaker Takemi Keizou, personal communication, April 2021.

36. Former Taiwanese diplomat Chen Pengren, personal communication, March 2020.

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