CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE DULLES-YOSHIDA TALKS, 1950–1951

Chihiro Hosoya

On 8 January 1951, Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson and Secretary of Defence George C. Marshall agreed on the dispatch of the Dulles mission. President Truman's letter to Dulles stated that the United States should immediately proceed with negotiations for an early Japanese peace treaty. He explained the policy of the United States as follows: (1) 'the United States will commit substantial armed force to the defence of the island chain of which Japan forms a part'; (2) 'it desires that Japan should increasingly acquire the ability to defend itself', and (3) it is willing 'to make a mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia)'. Having spent some days talking with the Senate and House committee concerned with East Asian affairs and conferring with the British and Soviet ambassadors, Dulles left Washington for Tokyo on 22 January.

I have dealt with the shaping of American policy on the Japanese peace treaty from September 1949 through January 1951 in other articles.¹ It is my major purpose in this paper to analyse the process of the Dulles-Yoshida talks of January-February 1951.

Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida knew well that Japan's position in a peace settlement had considerably been improved with the passing of time. But he could not wait long, since discontent with the occupation was mounting among the Japanese. Like official Washington, his government needed an early peace settlement. Yoshida was pleased with the American idea of a peace outlined in the 'Seven Principles', which met his expectation of a soft peace. Certainly, he expected that his government could have

some bargaining power in its talks with the Dulles mission. Most likely, however, he was not aware of the supersensitivity of official Washington to the impact upon the Japanese of the military setback in Korea and its fear that the United States might have to pay a higher price to secure Japan on her side.

It was Yoshida’s definite policy to align Japan with the United States. He wanted the post-treaty presence of US forces in Japan to insure her security. As early as May 1950, he had directed Hayato Ikeda, Minister of Finance, to convey his intentions to Washington when Ikeda visited the United States to talk with Joseph M. Dodge.2 Although his intention had been consistent, he often took an evasive attitude on the matter. When Dulles visited Tokyo in June to meet Yoshida for the first time, Yoshida made only evasive and ambiguous responses regarding the security problem and said nothing definite about his intention of having US forces stationed in Japan: ‘Yes’, he said vaguely, ‘security for Japan is possible, and the United States can take care of it, but Japan’s amour propre must be preserved in doing so.’ In any event, he added, Japan could have security through her own devices, by being democratic, demilitarized, and peace-loving and by relying upon the protection of world opinion. He was not in a mood to take Dulles into his confidence. Dulles was ‘flabbergasted’. Later he told William J. Sebald that ‘he felt very much like Alice in Wonderland’.3 John M. Allison recalled later: ‘Their first meeting was a dismal failure…. When I saw Mr Dulles after the meeting he was completely frustrated and almost bitter. It took the combined efforts of Bill Sebald and myself to calm him down and get him to agree to show a little patience.’4

Yoshida’s public Statement remained non-committal even after the outbreak of the Korean War. For example, he told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Councillors on 29 July that he did not want the lease of Japanese bases to the United States.5 However, he took Sir Alvary Gascoigne, the head of the British Liaison Mission in Japan, into his confidence, revealing several times his intention of having US forces stationed in Japan to insure her security.6 It was characteristic of Yoshida to maintain his official stance on one occasion and speak his real intention in another at his discretion.

---

5 *Asahi Shimbun*, 30 July 1950.
6 Memorandum by Gascoigne, 26 November 1950, F0371/83838 7358 (Public Record Office).