

Issue Date: **August 25, 1978**

China, Japan Sign Treaty of Peace and Friendship in Peking

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Pact Ends 6 Years of Talks

China and Japan signed a 10-year treaty of peace and friendship in Peking August 12. [See 1978 [World News: U.S. Security Aide Visits China; Other Developments](#); 1976 [Japan: U.S.S.R. Rebuffed on China Pact](#)]

The pact pledged mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territory, mutual nonaggression and noninterference in the domestic affairs of each country, and called for settlement of all disputes through peaceful means. It also urged promotion of economic and cultural exchanges.

The accord had been under intermittent discussion since 1972, when both countries established diplomatic relations. The last discussions had been suspended in 1975 after Japan refused to accept an anti-Soviet "hegemony" clause in the treaty proposed by China.

The latest negotiations had started July 21 between delegations headed by Shoji Sato, Japan's ambassador to China, and Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Han Nien-luang.

The document was signed by Foreign Ministers Sunao Sonoda of Japan and Huang Hua of China. The signing ceremonies were attended by Communist Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping.

Sonoda had flown to Peking August 8 to help break a deadlock in the talks that centered on the proposed Chinese clause dealing with hegemony, Peking's reference to Soviet domination of Asia. Under a compromise arrangement, the conference adopted a key clause stating that Japan and China "declare that neither of them should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region and that each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony."

Originally, China had demanded that any anti-hegemony clause deal specifically with the Soviet Union. Japan, concerned about its already strained relations with Moscow, had insisted on a more general reference to hegemony.

China had further cleared the way for an agreement by dropping its claim to the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, Sonoda said. The island chain, also claimed by Japan and Nationalist China, had been the scene of a near-clash in April between armed Chinese fishing vessels and Japanese patrol boats. Sonoda said the Chinese had pledged that there would be "no recurrence" of the incident. [See 1978 [World News: Japan-China Pact Talks Imperiled](#)]

Sonoda also disclosed that the Chinese had indicated to him that they would abrogate the 30-year Sino-Soviet treaty when it expired in 1980. The accord specified Japan as a threat to both nations. [See 1950 [China: Soviet-Chinese Pact; Other Developments](#)]

Soviets Protest Treaty

The Soviet Union assailed the Chinese-Japanese treaty before and after its signing. [See 1978 [World News: Japan Charges Soviet Threat](#)]

In a note handed to the Japanese government June 19 by Soviet Ambassador Dmitri Polyanski, Moscow accused China of "hostility" toward the Soviet Union, "of undermining progress in detente, [and] fanning the menace of war.... Under these circumstances, Japan...will be linked with the diplomatic line of Peking. This would run counter to the cause of maintaining peace and security in the Far East."

Japanese Premier Takeo Fukuda later June 19 rejected the Soviet warning and said his government would continue its negotiations with Peking. "Japan's relations with China are one thing and Japan's relations with Moscow are another thing," Fukuda said.

The Soviet protest followed an announcement in Tokyo June 14 that China and Japan had agreed to resume negotiations.

After the signing of the pact August 12, Moscow responded by charging that its hegemony clause "is directed against the Soviet Union, which was repeatedly noted in speeches by Peking leaders themselves." The statement, cited by the Soviet news agency Tass, quoted Chinese Foreign Minister Huang as saying that common opposition to "hegemonism" was the "basis of the Sino-Japanese treaty."

Tass also criticized Japan, saying that it had "capitulated to Peking" although Tokyo was "aware of including into the treaty an article which is of an openly anti-Soviet character and serves the selfish interests" of Peking's leaders.

Taiwan: Pact Null and Void

Nationalist China declared August 12 that it regarded the Japanese-Chinese treaty as null and void.

Foreign Minister Shen Chang-huan also asserted in a statement that in signing the accord, Japan not only had harmed its relations with Taiwan, "but also will bring untold trouble to Japan herself as well as to other free nations in the Asian and Pacific region."

A Taiwan Foreign Ministry spokesman took issue with China's apparent acceptance of Japan's stand on the Senkaku Islands. Taiwan had "repeatedly declared that its sovereignty over the territory was indisputable," the spokesman said.

U.S. Lauds Agreement

The U.S. State Department August 12 welcomed the treaty, saying it promoted Asian peace and stability.

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