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## RETHINKING WORLD WAR II IN ASIA

John W. Dower

**Akira Iriye.** *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941-1945.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981. xi + 304 pp. Bibliography and index. \$24.00 (cloth); \$8.95 (paper).

Even the casual follower of contemporary affairs must have observed that, where the United States and Japan are concerned, "convergence" and "culture" are popular concepts. They have lingered with us for decades – but deceptively, for their meaning is constantly being altered. Today the Japanese model is the vogue, and the fashionable query is whether Americans can bridge the culture gap. Yesterday's topic was the Americanization of Japan. Forty years ago, of course, it was more common to speak of collision rather than convergence, and rare was the commentator then or thereafter who could resist describing World War II in Asia as a clash of cultures.

Now we are beginning to see that war with different eyes. The passions have cooled. The archives are open. It is becoming clearer what the significant legacies of the war were. And in the shadows of Vietnam, the Manichaen portrayals of the Japanese and Allied antagonists that characterized most Western accounts of the earlier struggle in Asia are viewed with particular skepticism. Still, it seems of more than passing interest that familiar signposts remain in the midst of this revisionism; and "convergence" and "culture" are conspicuous among them. The evocative words that weave in and out of the discussion of more recent developments now also are being applied to the war years in a manner that encourages comparative analysis and greater recognition of similarities, rather than just differences, among the antagonists.

The most direct and provocative recent presentation of this approach is Akira Iriye's *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941-1945* (1981), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1982.<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of his first monograph in 1965, when he was thirty-one, Professor Iriye has distinguished himself as the most prolific scholar writing in English about the foreign policies of the United States, Japan, and China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is the author of six major scholarly books and over thirty articles, and the editor or coeditor of four other volumes; in addition, Iriye has written three books in his native Japanese,

including one on the Pacific War which won a prestigious Japanese prize in 1979. This is an impressive record of productivity by any standards, and doubly so when one considers the language difficulties and sheer burdens of translation involved. In the study of U.S.-Asian relations, no scholar now commands more attention than Akira Iriye. His study of the "Japanese-American War" predictably will become a basic point of reference for rethinking World War II in Asia.

Like all of Iriye's writings, *Power and Culture* is a rich compendium of information and quotations, and introduces a variety of suggestive points en passant. Its central argument, however, can be summarized fairly succinctly. The book's title reflects a broad premise: that nations must be viewed as "cultures" as well as "powers"; and that the more informal mechanisms of culture — the traditions or central symbols of the nation — can meliorate as well as reinforce the pursuit of bald power. In a paper titled "Culture and Power" presented shortly before the publication of *Power and Culture*, Iriye introduced the concept of "international relations as intercultural relations" in a more general and abstract way, with passing reference to theorists ranging from Antonio Gramsci to Michel Foucault to Clifford Geertz.<sup>2</sup> *Power and Culture*, somewhat surprisingly, eschews definitions and methodological generalizations almost entirely, although it is stated at the outset that the book is primarily concerned with the "symbolic aspect" and "cultural significance" of the war. However ambiguous this theoretical framework may be, the main conclusion is nonetheless clear and unmistakably revisionist.

It is Iriye's thesis that, despite the cataclysmic upheaval and confrontation of the 1930s and early 1940s, "Wilsonian" ideals of liberal, cooperative, interdependent international relations persisted as a ground bass in U.S. policy throughout the war years, especially where long-range policy toward Japan was concerned. Moreover, in Japan as well a comparable strain of "Wilsonian internationalism" carried through the years of darkness and death — through all the frenetic rhetoric of Pan-Asianism, and all the fierce denunciations of Western values — to color wartime Japanese attitudes and ensure the relatively easy and natural post-1945 rapprochement of Japan and the United States. In a bitter war that cost two million Japanese lives and left tens of thousands of American servicemen dead, Iriye has called attention to the elements of continuity, compatibility, and convergence in the global perceptions and professed ideals of the antagonists.

In developing this thesis, Iriye suggests that, at the very least, a parallelism between American and Japanese world views had become apparent at several critical points well before the war ended. Leaders in both countries, for example, became extremely skeptical about their long-term prospects in China. They looked in more or less similar ways upon the countries of Southeast

Asia as being destined to a future status somewhere between autonomy and outright imperialist subjugation (embodied, on the U.S. side, in the trusteeship concept). Similarly, both the Japanese and Americans took it for granted that the Soviet Union would be a major power in Northeast Asia after the war. (Although Iriye does not press the point, his summary of the Japanese fixation on the U.S.S.R. as Japan's last hope for extricating itself from its predicament in 1945 invites comparison to President Roosevelt's felt need to work closely with the Russians.) At the same time, the elites in both nations shared a strong fear of communism and the political left. The most conspicuous point of convergence between the two antagonists, however, lay in a common attachment to Wilsonian ideals of internationalism, as revealed in both wartime rhetoric and the more confidential proposals of specific groups on each side.

In a manner that seems apropos, in the most literal way, to a work primarily concerned with "the symbolic aspect of the war," Iriye's thesis — and indeed his style of argument — is most effectively illustrated by a small symbolic vignette. One of his central examples of the Wilsonian strain on the American side is the Atlantic Charter issued by Roosevelt and Churchill in August 1941. If we search for a comparably grand statement of international objectives and ideals on the Japanese side, the declaration issued at the Great East Asia Conference of November 1943 is a logical candidate. And what do we find upon close examination of that widely trumpeted pronouncement? First, in Iriye's analysis, that it coincided with the Atlantic Charter in espousing "mutuality, cooperation, economic development, prosperity, autonomy, and self-determination, ideals that went back to the shared Wilsonian internationalism of the 1920s" (p. 120). And second, that this was not mere happenstance: the Japanese consulted the Atlantic Charter when they were drafting their 1943 proclamation. Iriye similarly describes a speech on Japan's war aims by Foreign Minister Shigenori Tōgō in April 1945 as marking "an almost complete return to Wilsonian internationalism" and being "virtually interchangeable with the Atlantic Charter and all other wartime enunciations by the United Nations" (p. 241).

These particular illustrations of the existence of a purportedly Wilsonian strain among Japanese as well as American leaders carry a substantial burden in Iriye's account; he has singled out the same or similar examples in other writings on the war.<sup>3</sup> In *Power and Culture*, the theme is elaborated by identifying key groups within both the United States and Japan who espoused these "universalistic principles" in general, and a cooperative relationship between Japan and the Anglo-American powers in particular, even in the midst of all the killing. On the U.S. side, he focuses on a small group of Asia specialists in the State Department who were charged with drafting position papers con-

cerning postsurrender policy toward Japan. Although Iriye does not identify them as such, these individuals, who were closely associated with former ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew, were generally known as the "Japan Crowd" at the time. They were also the *bête noire* of virtually everyone who advocated a "hard peace" with Japan — leftists and conservatives alike — in good part because they recommended retention of the emperor and reliance on a small group of upper-class Japanese "moderates" in the postdefeat period. And, indeed, it is precisely among these same socially privileged "moderates" whom the Japan Crowd counted on that Iriye finds his Japanese Wilsonians. In addition to certain Foreign Ministry officials, Iriye calls attention to a handful of Japanese loosely clustered around Prince Fumimaro Konoe, who served three terms as prime minister between 1937 and October 1941 (and was in power when the China Incident occurred as well as when the Axis Pact was signed). These old-guard figures on the periphery of influence in wartime Japan produced no documents remotely comparable to the presurrender State Department position papers on Japan. Their major piece of representative prose was the famous "Konoe Memorial" presented to the emperor in February 1945, in which it was argued that if Japan did not surrender and trust the Anglo-American powers not to destroy the imperial institution and "national polity," the country faced the prospect of internal revolution and possibly bolshevization. As Iriye interprets it, the memorial is best read as yet another plea to return to the internationalist framework of the 1920s.

Iriye is an indefatigable researcher whose every book is guaranteed, for good reason, to carry a publisher's send-off concerning "new materials." Although *Power and Culture* is no exception, there is really no astonishing new information in this study. What is new that is of significance is the emphasis, which itself represents a reworking and reordering of several themes that have preoccupied Iriye since the start of his career. One such concern is the role of "images" in international affairs — or, more particularly, mutual perceptions and misperceptions among nations. "Wilsonianism" is another abiding interest, dating back to Iriye's first scholarly monograph, which dealt with the United States and Asia from 1921 to 1931 and was titled *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (1965). The title of that maiden work is suggestive in itself insofar as Iriye's general approach to international relations is concerned, for it quite accurately proclaims his distance from those who find the concept of imperialism still useful in analyzing Wilson's "internationalism" and the Great Power politics of the post-World War I period.

Emphasis on the Wilsonian strain in U.S. foreign policy is not a new line of analysis, of course; but recognition of the place of this concept in postwar

historiography is helpful in clarifying Iriye's own approach. In this respect, the title of this latest work is also revealing, although perhaps in unintended ways, for it really amounts to a synonymous rendering of the familiar old dualities of "Wilsonianism" and "Realpolitik" associated with such scholars as Hans Morgenthau, or the "idealism" and "realism" dichotomy popularized many years ago by George Kennan. Both approaches were extremely influential at the time Iriye was embarking upon serious work as a scholar. Where the present book shifts emphasis is (1) in now using the rubric "culture" in a specialized and idiosyncratic way to embrace mutual images, misperceptions, and especially Wilsonianism and 1920s-style ideals of international cooperation; (2) in stressing the significance of Wilsonian internationalism as an integral part of modern Japanese culture; and (3) most strikingly, in arguing that this remained an extremely important vision on both sides even during the war.

What does this mean insofar as rethinking the war in Asia is concerned? A great deal. The more specific implications of this general line of analysis are far-reaching, and at least four of them deserve special attention: the very meaning of "culture" in the war in Asia has been radically reconstrued; the war years are presented as an aberration in U.S.-Japanese relations; it is implied that the war should and could have ended earlier, without the atomic bombs and perhaps even without the saturation bombing of Japanese cities and the ferocious battles of 1945; and it is argued that basic postwar U.S. policy toward Japan was clear well before the war ended. Obviously, Iriye does not shun controversy, and since his position on some or all of these issues is likely to influence future work in the field, it seems desirable to spell out each point a little further and suggest alternative lines of interpretation.

A lengthy critique could be written on the basic thesis that Wilsonian internationalism remained a significant ideal on both sides of the Pacific even during the war, but I would offer here instead – somewhat in the Iriye manner – simply two vignettes. First, it is well to remember that Americans who took vague idealistic manifestoes such as the Atlantic Charter seriously usually fared poorly in wartime Washington, where they were dismissed, in Cordell Hull's contemptuous phrase, as the "hosanna boys." And second, when the proclamation of the Great East Asia Conference was issued in November 1943, the Japanese themselves immediately compared it publicly to the Atlantic Charter – but they did so to emphasize the *differences* rather than points of convergence in Allied and Japanese policy. This analysis, by a well-known professor of diplomatic history at Tokyo Imperial University, is not mentioned in *Power and Culture* (it was published in one of the Japanese government's wartime English-language journals, aimed at Asian as well as Anglo-American audiences), but its basic point was greatly at variance with Iriye's

interpretation of the declaration as a signal of shared internationalist ideals. It goes without saying that the Japanese never ceased to describe their ultimate goal as being world peace, but it was their expressed position on this and other occasions that global peace and stability could only be accomplished through "the promotion of sphere-living and sphere-understanding" — that is, through autarkic regional blocs. Thus, the 1943 declaration was presented to the public as being not a gesture of conciliation to the West, but on the contrary, "the firing of the first deadly hemispheric shot at the old world capitalist-imperialist structure favored by Britain and the United States." In the same philippic, the Atlantic Charter was characterized as a capitalistic, plutocratic, racist, and culturally imperialistic ruse to impose Anglo-American influence over the whole world by destroying the regional integration and security obtained through "sphere-politics" by the less powerful nations. "Universal understanding, peace and stability," in short, required the consolidation of a Pan-Asiatic sphere. Culturally, moreover, that sphere would be guided by a renaissance of Oriental values.<sup>4</sup>

This brief Japanese addenda to one of the major illustrations in *Power and Culture* suggests the vulnerability of the Wilsonian thesis in particular — and the danger, in general, of resting hard theories on soft propaganda. Yet Iriye is certainly correct in calling attention to the existence of shared ideals and aspirations, and in pointing out that both sides found it necessary to draw upon a common vocabulary of cooperation and reciprocity in defining their war aims. In this regard, the general thesis of converging objectives and interests can retain some validity even if one balks at the label "Wilsonian," and the four major implications of the convergence thesis that were mentioned above still warrant closer critical attention.

To begin with, Iriye deliberately and dramatically has turned the concept of "culture" inside-out where World War II in Asia is concerned. While participants on both sides during the war, and commentators ever since, have tended to dwell on the "clash of cultures," he has built an entire book around the theme of parallel perceptions and converging war and peace aims. Indeed, in a study which takes "culture" as part of its title and most of its focus, he has virtually ignored the ideological and psychosociological issues that everyone else — then and now, Anglo-American and Japanese — has commonly had in mind when speaking of the "cultural" dimensions of the war.

Readers will not find here, for example, any sustained analysis of the war-time polemics concerning such grand concepts as "West" versus "East" or individualism versus primary emphasis on the group. They will not find much discussion of "democracy" or the Western traditions of "humanism" and "liberalism" as the concepts were used (and misused) during the war, nor will they find an analysis of the Japanese "emperor system" and "national polity,"

those misty but incredibly evocative constructs which practically mesmerized both the Japanese ideologues and their enemies. Wartime propaganda in general is not examined systematically – or even cynically, for that matter – although we can now better appreciate what a multiedged “cultural” artifact this was on both sides. Battlefield behavior is scarcely mentioned – although the issues of atrocities and differing attitudes toward death and surrender usually have been regarded as reflecting fundamental differences in cultural values and socialization. The interpretive modes which cultural anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and her academic colleagues in the Office of War Information adopted in analyzing the Japanese “national character” – involving concepts of “shame” as opposed to “guilt,” for example, and “situational” as opposed to “universalistic” ethics – are also neglected, as are counterpart efforts by Japanese intellectuals to define the essential differences between Asian and Euro-American value systems and patterns of behavior. Presumably such analyses could have been useful not merely for what they call attention to in the culture and behavior of “the Other,” but even more for what they unwittingly reveal about the analysts themselves.

This is revisionism with a vengeance, and it can have a salutary influence on our rethinking of this tragic period to the extent that it challenges the hyperbolic “clash of cultures” historiography of the war and breaks down the simplistic compartmentalization of “us” and “them.” But it is also revisionism by omission, and revisionism without a clear context. At the present time, when historians who write in English seem uncommonly eager to shake hands with the anthropologists, the special appeal of a case study of the war in Asia titled *Power and Culture* is obvious; indeed, in his essay “Culture and Power,” Iriye indicated that he is sensitive to the broader considerations involved and the need to interweave theory and historical narrative with consummate care. Thus, it is puzzling as well as confusing to find no definitions, no methodological statement, and no general analytical summation to speak of in *Power and Culture*. Iriye’s approach to the cultural significance of the war between Japan and the United States is so highly selective that it can be argued he has bent the conventional sense of culture, vague as it may already be, almost beyond recognition. Clearly, the process of reinterpretation has just begun, and Iriye has indicated that he himself intends to pursue the cultural aspects of the war years further.

By disregarding the traditional clash-of-cultures issues and instead singling out parallel American and Japanese evocations of a more cooperative world order associated with ideals enunciated in the 1920s, Iriye paves the way for his second major argument: that the years of conflict beginning in the early 1930s and ending in 1945 should be seen as an aberration in the grander course of relations between the two countries. He has made his sympathy

with this interpretation clear in other writings also, and associated himself with similar conclusions drawn on the basis of recent research by such scholars as Joan Hoff Wilson.<sup>5</sup>

There is an earlier and more intriguing precedent for this argument, however, for this is the position Japanese conservatives have taken ever since the war ended, and it was vigorously promoted by some of the very same "moderates" who play an important role as the Japanese bearers of Wilsonianism in *Power and Culture*. Among the Japanese, it always has been the mainstream conservative argument that the "fifteen-year war" beginning in 1931 was an aberration; usually this is couched in terms of a military takeover beginning at the time of the Manchurian Incident. Shigeru Yoshida, who helped to write the Kono Memorial and went on to become prime minister and preside over the forging of the U.S.-Japan alliance after the war, succinctly captured this argument in his memoirs almost three decades ago when he spoke of Japan's war with the Anglo-American powers as a "historic stumble." Needless to say, there was a practical and personal side to the propagation of such an interpretation by the civilian old guard. If the post-1931 period was not perceived as an aberration, then their own earlier expansionist policies abroad, together with their privileged social positions at home, became vulnerable to attack.

The counterargument to the stumble or aberration thesis conventionally falls into the vocabulary of the "roots of war" — giving rise, incidentally, to an irresistible metaphor: to wit, the stumble and the root. This counterargument postulates a more relentless logic in the course of events that culminated in Pearl Harbor, and does so on the basis of considerations of power and culture of a different order than those addressed in Iriye's study — considerations concerning both the nature of the modern Japanese state and society that developed following the overthrow of the feudal regime in 1868, and the nature of the global capitalist economy in which Japan was forced to participate from an early date as an expansionist power. Such considerations are by no means latterday products of the ivory tower. On the contrary, much of the basic reformist agenda introduced in Occupied Japan immediately after the surrender was based on the assumption that Japanese aggression was *not* an aberration, but rather was rooted in the failure of the modern Japanese state to experience a genuine bourgeois revolution. Most scholars would argue that Marxist categories, New Deal liberalism, and whatever one chooses to label General Douglas MacArthur's brand of messianic conservatism played a far greater role than Wilsonianism in shaping such perceptions of Japan in the 1940s.

The stumble and the root are not simple either/or propositions, however, for scholars who find more explanatory rigor in the type of structural analysis

implied by the "root" thesis would never deny the existence in presurrender Japan of values, attitudes, aspirations, and trends that ran counter to the harsh confrontational rhetoric and policies which dominated the years of all-out war. The question-within-the-question that arises here is whether Iriye has accurately identified the major strain of countervailing attitudes on the Japanese side; most Japan specialists, I believe, would answer that he has only scratched the surface. Several of the so-called moderates did indeed attain positions of influence after August 1945, but it is misleading to equate their pro-Anglo-American sentiments with Wilsonianism. A stronger case can be made that many and probably most of this group were more attracted to British than American models – to the efficiency and élan of the *Pax Britannica* in its glory days – and looked upon old-style imperialist alliances, spheres of influence, and balance-of-power politics involving close cooperation with the dominant Western power as the ideal way of preserving peace and serving Japan's best interests. From this perspective, the bilateral Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902–1922, rather than Wilsonian multilateralism, was the real "cultural symbol" of a sound international policy – and the real model for the postwar U.S.-Japan alliance.<sup>6</sup>

While these moderates exemplified an important traditional strain of pro-Western sentiment, moreover, they did not really labor strenuously for peace between 1941 and 1945, nor were they the only dreamers of peace among the Japanese. Their wartime attempts to alter the course of events were desultory, fluctuating between the farcical and the hysterical, and most historians of this period, certainly in Japan itself, would ascribe greater influence on postwar developments to the role and ideals of certain left-wing groups, to deep-seated aspirations for peace and even democracy among the middle and lower classes, and to the effects upon popular consciousness of the devastating war experience itself. Iriye performs an essential service in reminding readers that the post-1945 rapprochement of the United States and Japan did not occur out of the blue, but he could have gone much further, for the social fabric of prewar and wartime Japan was more complex than is conveyed here. On the one hand, the hopes for postwar peace and cooperation existed within a broader social base than the elite coterie of moderates; postwar democratization, demilitarization, internationalism, and pacifism in Japan simply cannot be comprehended if this mass base is ignored. On the other hand, the existence of such aspirations does not necessarily mean that the war itself was an aberration.

The third revisionist implication of Iriye's convergence thesis is that by the end of 1943, when the declaration of the Great East Asia Conference was issued, the Japanese government was attempting to pave the way for rationalizing surrender and claiming a moral victory by redefining war aims in

terms of Wilsonian-style "universalistic principles"; and that, beginning possibly as early as mid-1944, the Japanese leadership missed several good opportunities to surrender. In advancing such speculations, Iriye reveals an optimism that often surfaces in his handling of international relations in general: in recurrent references to lost opportunities, and a pervasive sense of hopefulness that terrible things need not happen among nations if only their leaders would define their mutual interests a little more clearly, compromise a little more readily, and in general conduct affairs of state a little more rationally. Yet it is also characteristic of Iriye's eclectic and open-minded approach that his own text at the same time provides ample evidence that the rhetoric on the basis of which a *modus vivendi* presumably could have been worked out never really amounted to much more than just words; it was like a code that even its users hesitated to transcribe and interpret openly. The Japanese government was internally riven and almost totally incapable of formulating a rational surrender policy. Even the key Japanese figures in Iriye's own peace-seeker scenarios usually opted, when pressed, to continue fighting.

The issue of whether Japan might have been persuaded to surrender earlier is once again an old controversy, usually raised in discussions of whether or not the atomic bombs were necessary to end the war. And here too, as in the discussion of culture and the suggestion that the war years are best regarded as an aberration in U.S.-Japanese relations, Iriye has approached the problem from a relatively unique angle by circumnavigating the landscape of more conventional approaches. Thus, he offers no systematic analysis of Japanese and American positions on the future of the Japanese emperor and imperial institution, or on the related and equally emotional issue of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender, although these were certainly among the most potent "cultural symbols" of the war.

Furthermore, he underplays—and this may be the greatest flaw—the psychology of men at war. Japanese pride, fear, fanaticism, and sheer momentum dictated a fight to the bitter end (this was one of the best-known Japanese wartime slogans), and the Allies themselves never really bothered to take the prospect of an early surrender into account. Churchill, as has long been known, began talking within two weeks of Pearl Harbor of the necessity of ravaging Japan's cities with incendiary bombs, and in mid-1943 he roused the U.S. Congress with a stirring declaration of "the process, so necessary and desirable, of laying the cities and other munitions centres of Japan into ashes, for in ashes they must surely lie before peace comes back to the world." Recently we have learned that in hypothetical planning even before Pearl Harbor, General George Marshall was already contemplating "general incendiary attacks to burn up the wood and paper structures of the densely populated Japanese cities." J. Robert Oppenheimer later acknowledged that

scientists working on the atomic bomb redoubled their efforts after Germany surrendered, alarmed that the war might end before they had a chance to complete their project. It was also the position of American liberals and leftists, with few exceptions, that Japan's "thoroughgoing defeat" (or the Allies' "total victory") was essential for *pedagogic* purposes: to eradicate the seeds of future revanchism by bringing the war unforgettably home to the Japanese people themselves.<sup>7</sup> There is much to muse upon here in rethinking the war in Asia, but the suggestion that there may have been serious lost opportunities for a peace settlement in 1944 or early 1945 remains almost unbelievable, and the small murmurs about peace which Iriye seizes upon seem as candles set against an inferno of hate.

Iriye's final substantial revisionist point is that the wartime proposals regarding postsurrender Japan that were originally drafted in the State Department were clearer and more prescient than the presurrender planning for any other country in the world. They were quintessentially Wilsonian in predicting Japan's eventual return as a sovereign power in the family of nations, and they were put into practice with little major alteration in the post-1945 period. In a controversial article that complements *Power and Culture* and was originally presented at an international conference on the cold war held in Kyoto in 1975, Iriye actually used the same general State Department materials to argue that there was an important line of continuity in U.S. policy toward Japan starting in 1941 and extending at least to 1949.<sup>8</sup>

The presurrender planning for postsurrender Japan to which Iriye is referring here culminated in an impressive series of SWNCC (State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee) documents well known to students of Occupied Japan although not to general readers. His suggestion that this constituted the clearest single set of country-policy guidelines for the postwar years is original and ingenious, although upon reflection the reason this came about seems obvious: Japan was the only trouble spot in which the United States could be reasonably assured of effective, unilateral control immediately after the war; and the policy to be adopted there, being by its very nature devoted to control and reform (what became known at an early date as "demilitarization and democratization") was ideally suited to being couched in general and relatively idealistic terms. The essential points of continuity in U.S. policy toward Japan which Iriye emphasizes as extending from the war years into the postwar era included U.S. domination of the occupation, retention of the Japanese imperial institution, and (again the core theme) "liberal reintegrationism" into a cooperative world order.

Why is this thesis revisionist? Because it gives more weight to the State Department than most other historians of the war do; downplays factionalism within the Department (especially hard-line criticism of the "Japan

Crowd" by the so-called "China Crowd"); downplays the punitive aspects of early U.S. policy toward postsurrender Japan, including proposals for decades of international control; ignores the fact that almost all Western policymakers and commentators at this time assumed Japan was destined to remain a third- or fourth-rate power in the postwar world, as well as the fact that for several years after the war no one really had much vision at all of the future economic order in Asia; neglects also the fact that some of the most consequential reforms in Occupied Japan (such as land reform and the "no-war" constitution) were initiated by the Occupation staff in Tokyo rather than in Washington, and reflected a veritable kaleidoscope of ideological influences; and simply denies by implication one of the main themes in most American (and virtually all Japanese) scholarship on the Occupation – that beginning in late 1947 or early 1948 there occurred a "reverse course" in which U.S. policy toward Occupied Japan, strongly influenced by cold war considerations, shifted from promoting democratic reforms and demilitarization to encouraging economic reconstruction and, soon thereafter, remilitarization.

Such considerations cannot really be so lightly dismissed. When they are weighed seriously, the Wilsonianism Iriye has discovered in a corner of the State Department again diminishes in importance, and the continuities he discerns between wartime and post-1945 U.S. policy toward Japan seem exaggerated. Once again, however, the case study does serve effectively as a concrete corrective to the "clash of cultures" approach to the war years. It calls attention to knowledgeable individuals who resisted the simplistic stereotyping of the Japanese enemy, devoted themselves to practical plans for peace and reconciliation rather than war, and did much of the hard, basic thinking and writing on which initial policies toward defeated Japan rested. The government planners on whom Iriye focuses, moreover, did not work in isolation. It was argued above that we must look beyond the old-guard moderates on the Japanese side for the presurrender basis of postwar internationalism, and a similar point should be emphasized for the Anglo-American side. An impressively wide range of individuals, publications, church organizations, political groups, and academic associations advanced plans for peace with Japan while the war was underway – and still await scholarly analysis.

One of the liabilities of being extremely prolific is that information and interpretations often end up scattered in diverse places, and readers are unable to see easily the broader picture the author actually has in mind. Thus, despite its title, *Power and Culture* does not really analyze issues of power systematically or in depth, although space inevitably is given to Roosevelt's

“power political” approach, and to such obvious wartime manifestations of hard power politics as the Yalta system and Allied division of the world into de facto spheres of influence, including the restoration of colonial rule in Southeast Asia. One would not know from this book, however, that elsewhere Iriye has argued that the war between Japan and the United States came about primarily because of irreconcilable definitions of national interest in the Southwest Pacific. Indeed, I strongly doubt if many readers of *Power and Culture* would expect him to agree without qualification with the statement that “the war was a struggle for control of the resources and markets of Southeast Asia, and not a philosophical debate about the region’s future freedom.” Yet not only did he himself write this, but he wrote it the same year the book was published.<sup>9</sup>

What this suggests is that the thesis of “convergence” – in the sense of comparability and not just compatibility – can be pursued in many more directions than Wilsonianism, not least among them power politics, imperialistic cooperation, and imperialistic conflict. This perception can already be seen in other recent writings on World War II in Asia. Thus, the title of a recent excellent study by H. P. Willmott of the origins and first phase of the war is *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (1982). The imperialistic nature of the conflict – and of the long-range visions of the antagonists – emerges vividly in the documents of the time and has begun to receive emphasis in other recent studies by scholars such as Christopher Thorne and Wm. Roger Louis. What is especially interesting here is that the charge is not merely exchanged between the combatants, but also appears in U.S. and British diplomatic papers concerning each other.<sup>10</sup> Professor Thorne in particular is also extremely sensitive to racial and racist aspects of the war on the Anglo-American side, a subject Iriye himself has addressed in passing in his scholarship on other periods. This too offers a fruitful area for comparative analysis, for racism also influenced Japanese attitudes not only toward the Anglo-Americans, but also toward other Asians. Other aspects of World War II in Asia that invite comparative study include colonial policies and practices, ideology (I would wager that “holy war” rhetoric was far more prevalent on both sides than Wilsonian phrasing), propaganda, censorship, atrocities, factionalism and decision-making, the relationship between the war and technological growth (Japan’s postwar economic “miracle” actually has strong roots in the mobilization for war that was begun in the 1930s), and the relationship between the war and domestic conflict.

It is a testimony to Professor Iriye’s accomplishments and exceptional skills that in one place or another he has already touched on many of these topics. No one else in the field appears more capable of drawing so many related

strands together. It can only be hoped that before too long he will step back and plan an opus that will carry the themes of power and culture further in this broader context.

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1. A more traditional approach to the cultural aspects of the war on the Japanese side was published the same year by Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (1981). For the Japanese side, there are several other basic books available in English: Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics* (1963); Kazuko Tsurumi, *Social Change and the Individual: Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II* (1970); Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945: A Critical Perspective on Japan's Role in World War II* (1978); and Thomas R. H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (1978).

2. "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *Diplomatic History* 3 (Spring 1979): 115-28.

3. In English, cf. *ibid.*, p. 127, and Iriye's "Continuities in U.S.-Japan Relations, 1941-1949," in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (1977), pp. 378-407. In Japanese, Iriye developed this thesis in *Nichi-Bei Sensō* (The Japanese-American War), published in 1978, and briefly recapitulated it in an insert dated July 1979 that accompanied the Hokuyōsha reissue of a famous Foreign Ministry publication of 1952, *Shūsen Shiroku* (Historical Record of the End of the War). Comparison of the Atlantic Charter and Great East Asia Conference declaration is not new, although Iriye has given it unprecedented prominence. Mamoru Shigemitsu, the former foreign minister who was found guilty of war crimes at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, called attention to the similarity of the two statements in his postwar memoirs, which were published in an English translation in 1958; see *Japan and Her Destiny: My Struggle for Peace*, pp. 285, 293-94. The similarity is also discussed in L. D. Meo, *Japan's Radio War on Australia, 1941-1945* (1968), pp. 184-86.

4. For Hull's "hosanna boys," see *Time*, September 6, 1943, p. 21. The Japanese position at the time is presented in Hikomatsu Kamikawa, "Asia Declaration and Atlantic Charter," *Contemporary Japan* 12 (December 1943): 1554-62. The November as well as December issues of this useful journal contain extensive coverage of these matters.

5. "Culture and Power," *op. cit.*

6. Some of these points are developed in my own study of the pre- and post-1945 periods, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (1979).

7. Churchill's early remarks appear in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943*, pp. 34-35. His speech to Congress, delivered on May 19, 1943 is reprinted in *Vital Speeches*, June 1, 1943, p. 484. For Marshall, see John Costello, *The Pacific War, 1941-1945* (1982), p. 105. Oppenheimer's comments are recounted in Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (1977), p. 145. For a sample of the general U.S. belief that "total victory" over Japan was essential, see the opinions printed in *U.S. News*, April 13, 1945, pp. 37-38 and April 20, 1945, pp. 40-42. The best account of the Japanese surrender decision remains Robert J. C. Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, originally published in 1954.

8. Nagai and Iriye, see fn. 3 *supra*.

9. Akira Iriye, "From War to Alliance with Japan," *Newsday*, December 6, 1981. Iriye adopts a much more power-oriented approach to the 1940s, focusing on the emergence and decline of the "Yalta System," in his *The Cold War in Asia: A Historical Introduction* (1974).

10. Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War Against Japan* (1978); Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941–1945: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (1977). For scattered pithy and sour remarks about U.S. imperialism by British officials during the war, see H. G. Nicholas, ed., *Washington Despatches, 1941–1945: Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy* (1981).