

PREFACE

Since their foundation in 1975, the seven-power summits have been institutionalized as an indispensable annual event for the major industrial democracies' political leaders. Although the Japanese role in this crucial conclave has assumed greater importance over the years, few analyses of Japanese summit diplomacy have ever been published.

This study is intended to make up for the lack of empirical studies of Japan's role in seven-power economic summitry. Therefore, the main thrust of the approach taken here is more descriptive than theoretical. As such, it addresses the two major questions concerning Japanese activities in this diplomatic setting: what have the summits meant to Japan? and what has Japan meant to the summits?

The unavailability of confidential government documents as well as limited amounts of time have given the author the sole option of relying mainly on news sources reported in the Japanese dailies. Any factual information quoted here is largely drawn from the two most authoritative Japanese newspapers. The Asahi Shimbun and the Mainichi Shimbun are the central references for this report, along with the Japan Times (which the author depended on for the translated terms used as well as additional fact-finding).

Supplementary sources consist of some of the Japanese quality magazines like Ekonomisuto, Bungei Shinju and Chuo Koron. These journals, though not necessarily academic, run a number of articles, written by Japanese observers of the summit, that contribute to putting "Japanese" perspectives into this predominantly "Western" international organization. Also, the memoirs written by the actual participants of the summits are available and useful for re-creating what happened.

To properly answer the two central themes of this country study, the analysis of each summit is divided into three parts. The first describes the environment which Japanese summitters faced. Then, the actual negotiation taking place at the meeting are delineated with the help of Japanese secondary sources. The consequences and impact of each summit, with special focus on the Japanese domestic scene, follow. The concluding section of this study attempts to summarize Japanese involvement in summit diplomacy through to the 1987 Venice Summit.

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