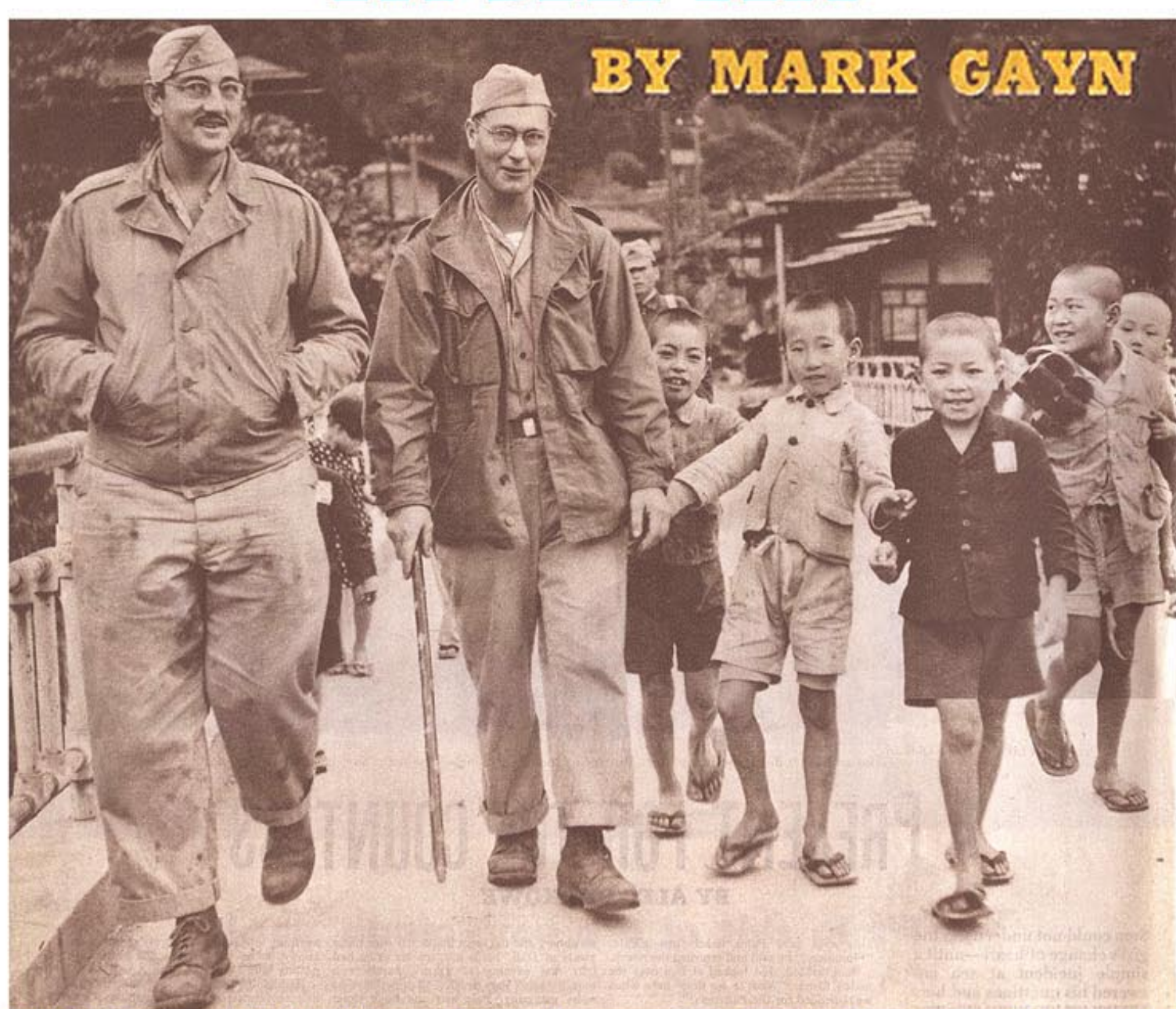


Collier's

March 23, 1946: p. 12

OUR BALANCE SHEET IN JAPAN



BY MARK GAYN

We have wisely pinned our hopes for the future on Nippon's children. In some schools, youngsters discuss problems of the day, but in others dummy hand grenades are still used for "exercise," posters still proclaim Japan's indestructibility, and arithmetic reads: "Two tanks plus two tanks."

We haven't purged all of the Nationalists yet.

Enter in black ink the struggle for a fine new democracy.

But enter in red the names of a few of the Japs we've chosen to do the job. They're black sheep in white clothing

R A D I O E D F R O M T O K Y O

SIX months and more have passed since we landed in Japan. The hour has arrived to balance the books—to match achievement against failure. This isn't an easy task. It calls for weighing a thousand intangibles—men's faith and anger, a nation's mood and altered thought patterns.

As always in political bookkeeping, the margin of error is wide. Consider, for instance, for the credit side of the ledger, the story of Washimi, a peppery little farmer I met at a country inn in the "Japanese Alps."

Washimi liked to sing and argue, and his heart was filled to overflowing with pity for his fellow man. This was odd, because if there was pity to spare, none deserved it more than Washimi.

Back in 1929 he tried to organize a farm union in his village. When the landlords complained, police put Washimi and his wife behind bars. The wife was let out a year later. Washimi stayed in his cell till 1935.

When he came out, he tried again. Once again he was put in jail. On his release the warden told Washimi: "All we want of you, man, is that you be a fool."

Washimi returned to his village, minded his rice paddy, and tried to be a fool. But when the news of Japan's surrender came, he couldn't stay home. He traveled to Nagoya, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka, and other cities, and he talked to men of his joy and his hopes.

Then Washimi went back to his village and started a farm union. When 400 out of 500 farmers in the area joined up, he began to branch out. Now he was a day's journey from home and he was arguing other farmers into organizing. He had a word for me, too. "Please tell General MacArthur"—he called him Macassar—"that we are grateful. Now the farmers can dream again."

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And on the debit side of the ledger, enter in red ink the story of a school raid I witnessed in a small port on the sea of Japan. The sun was bright that day, and little girls in gay kimonos looked like china dolls. We smiled at them and for a moment it seemed silly to search for traces of militarism in a school for tots.

We walked into the playroom and looked at toys you would find in any nursery back home. But right in the center of the toys, we saw a crate filled with life-size dummy hand grenades made of painted steel, each with a label showing it had been approved by the Higher Board of Education.

The principal looked like a cat caught stealing into a chicken coop. Yes, he had seen the directive on militarism in the schools. But he said, "After all, we *need* these things. Our girls exercise with them."

Multiply these two bookkeeping entries by a thousand, and then attempt to strike a balance. Have we failed? Have we succeeded? Have we changed the nature of our enemy enough to feel sure he won't fight us again?

Ask that last question of Japan's die-hards. They are unhappy. They had gotten out of the war to escape bombs. But they're beginning to suspect there's been more wrecking since Japan's surrender than in all the years of war.

Not all of it has been of our doing. Defeat has played its part, and the exhaustion of economy and of human spirit which comes in war's wake. But whatever the cause, the fact remains: Japan has changed. The pattern of this change, and of changes yet to come, is laid out in General MacArthur's directives. Put together, they form much more than a merciless indictment of the feudal system. They are a political blueprint with a warm heart and a keen sense of social welfare.

Little in Japan has escaped these directives. They cover classroom and shrine, worker and robber baron, the right of man to speak and



Fusae Ichikawa is the leader of the suffrage movement in Tokyo. We have given women the vote, but few will use it this year. Custom is too strong

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write freely, and the farmer's right to own the land he tills. The directives look beyond today, toward the future. They set no rigid course for the Japanese to follow. They're merely the framework within which the Japanese themselves might set up the kind of society in which the concept of justice is supreme, and in which the man with the samurai sword is no better than his unarmed neighbor.

The directives were the casings into which we packed our mightiest explosive since the atomic bomb—ideals. We tossed them at the Japanese and said, "Go ahead. Argue. Discuss. Figure out your problems and your future." Sometimes, in some places, subtle devices of repression held ideas in check. But in most places, men used their freedom.

A Lesson in Self-Expression

Up in Nagano Prefecture, a snowbound world to the northwest of Tokyo, a wise man named Hirokichi Hayashi took me on a four-day tour to many villages in the region. Hayashi is a writer, a thinker, and a man of vast compassion. In an all-day session in a large, cold farmhouse, I watched Hayashi pass on ideas to a crowd of landless farmers, village teachers, men with dreams but no jobs. They handled his ideas awkwardly, as if these were unfamiliar and fragile objects. But when the day came to a close, these men had become articulate. They had searched their minds and put into flowing words a coherent statement of their hopes and anxieties.

And when we emerged into the snow-filled dusk, one of them said, half in wonder, "This is good. Very good. I haven't talked like this in fifteen years."

In the big gray Tokyo building where General MacArthur has his headquarters, much stock is placed in the untrammelled flow of ideas. When, for instance, an overzealous United States Army lieutenant colonel up in Fukushima tried to break up a strikers' meeting which had turned its ire on the Emperor, a long hand reached out of Tokyo and yanked him out of his post.

Even more scrupulously do we strive to lean neither to the left nor to the right. In Tokyo's Hibiya Park, I saw 10,000 people listen to Sanzo Nozaka, Communist leader just back home after fifteen years of exile. But the same week, in a rubble-littered lot, I heard a university instructor denounce the traitorous and ungodly Communists before a crowd of 200 students.

Japan's sharpest hunger is for leadership, and we have tried to create a climate in which new leaders could grow. Up to now the Communists have produced the best-known talent. But in the villages and towns of Japan, local leadership is coming up. It's the peer's daughter who was put in jail in 1944 for launching a discussion group on social problems. It's the teacher who started a village forum. It's the silk grower who organized a co-operative to slash costs so that Japanese silk could survive competition against our nylon. All this is young and untested leadership, but it is learning fast. And all of it belongs on the credit side of our occupation ledger.

Not unexpectedly, we have discovered that the Japanese people—confused and frightened little men—are our best hope. These are the men who write letters to "Honorable Supreme Commander General MacArthur"—exposing a thieving police chief, reporting a hoard of food, or simply patting him on the back for a job well done.

They are the men who rose up in arms against the Yomiuri, long the army's journalistic mouthpiece, and forced its editors to retire. They are the men on Shochiku Films, giant of moviedom, who stayed on strike until their wages were raised—and until the company's ultranationalist directors turned in their resignations.

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For these purges, engineered by little men, we can also take credit. The urge has always been there; but the people were denied the opportunity of expressing it. We have chipped big pieces off the clay feet of Shinto, the decayed and primitive religion used by the army to build up national hysteria. This move has given other cults, including the Buddhists, an equal chance at seekers of faith and comfort. We have made a start toward solving the country's two biggest problems: land and education. The Japanese Diet, hand-picked by Tojo in 1942, distorted MacArthur's fine directive on land reform into a shabby legal fraud. But the politicians fooled no one. MacArthur's experts have thrown the land bill back at the Japanese cabinet, to revise and revise again.

Slowly, very slowly, we are also evolving a technique for educational reform. Girls of the Kitano School may still travel three hours by train on the day of Tokyo's worst blizzard to line up on the palace plaza and make a deep and humble bow. Girls of a Saitama prefecture may still come to Tokyo to clean up imperial rubble on the palace grounds. But in a village up north I ran into a school where boys discussed the problems of the day, and helped the co-operatives with their work.

Women Are Reluctant to Vote

Finally, for our major black-ink entry, we have given women their franchise. For the first time in Japan's history, women can vote, run for the Diet and argue politics. Only one woman in five will use this privilege this year, and even these few will obediently vote the way their husbands do. But interest is increasing, and up in Akita City, when half a dozen Japanese newspapermen reversed the tables and interviewed me, the first question they asked was about the women's vote back in the United States.

This, then, is the record of our achievement up to this day. But we wouldn't be fair to it—nor to ourselves—if we pretended that we have made no errors or that all things are following their predestined course.

It is plain by now that our directives are being sabotaged. It is also clear that the fabric of Old Japan has been much sturdier than we ever assumed. It has survived defeat and physical destruction. It is now trying to smother our program for reform.

Some of this vitality comes of the habit of obedience ingrained in every Japanese. Some comes of the fact that most of Japan has gone unhurt through our strategic bombing. But it is also known by now that the fabric survived by design, by a plot well considered and well executed.

Early last August when the rulers of Old Japan decided to give up, they began to plan for life in defeat. Their objective was simple. Old Japan would sweat out years of occupation and of alien reform. Then, when the Americans pulled out, Japan would revert to her old ways.

Officials throughout Japan went on a rampage of destruction. Documents which would indict the guilty or betray to us the pattern of a police state went up in smoke. Records disappeared. A few political prisoners who could be troublesome died conveniently.

When the government began its great reshuffle, two thirds of all the police chiefs and most of the governors and school principals shifted to new posts. It was as if the web of repression which covered Japan was raised momentarily, turned 90 degrees, and then dropped again.

The result was obvious. When our units marched into a Japanese town and found injustice, no local official could be held responsible. And certainly none could give any aid. After all, they were all new at their jobs!

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When our first planes landed at Atsugi airfield last September, the new web was already working smoothly. Much less efficient was the top layer in Tokyo itself. MacArthur's directives produced fear and confusion. Ranking war criminals sought safety. Lesser criminals intrigued for better jobs in the new democracy. Little work was done. One week in December, the Diet actually stopped functioning while its members awaited a new list of war criminals.

It took the men of Old Japan six months to recover from the shock of our directives and to develop what one American general described to me as the "intelligent opposition." They still live in fear of new arrests. But they have found our measure. They know where they must give ground and how they can circumvent our orders.

Perhaps unavoidably we played into the hands of Old Japan by choosing to work through Japanese machinery. Long before the end of the war we assumed we might have to fight our way into Germany and Japan and then rule devastated areas through our military government. It worked that way in Germany. It did not in Japan, where the devastation was less and where the native government was the functioning organ. It seemed much simpler to work through what we found than to rely on our own military government teams, trained mainly for emergency tasks.

But once we decided to rely on the Japanese, we had to play ball with those Japanese who could maintain order—and supply our forces with everything they needed, from trains and billets to hill slopes fit for skiing. The only people who could meet our needs were men of the web. They knew how to give orders, and how to secure compliance. They knew where to get what we required. The old police system was now doubly secure, for it had our backing as well.

Just how well this arrangement worked—for the Japanese—I discovered at Sakata, which is a lively little port in Yamagata Prefecture. The chief of police, a servile man with a haircut that was almost Prussian, was a leftover from presurrender days. The man formerly in charge of Sakata's Thought Control, a legal arrangement for jailing people who thought too much or too dangerously, was now the chief liaison officer, or middleman, between the populace and the Americans. The man who headed Thought Control for the entire prefecture was now chief of police in the prefectural capital.

I found this pattern true wherever I traveled. Officially, Thought Control has been erased from the books. Actually its agents have become liaison officers, or police chiefs, or officials of farm associations. To the man in the street, the old setup has remained intact, and the Americans are now backing it.

Bitter indeed was the chance remark of a man I met in the far north of the main island. He had a grievance against the police and I suggested he see the local American commander. "What's the use?" he said sullenly. "You can't get by the liaison officer at the front gate."

We haven't been blind to Japanese machinations. Our pitifully undermanned counter-intelligence corps has on the whole kept a wary eye on the old gang. Some of our officers in the field have been aware of the black past—and of the present function—of the Japanese officials on whom they leaned.

Time and again we have tried to devise a formula which would separate the black sheep from the white. But it's difficult to find enough competent white sheep in a country which for 15 years has been under the army's domination. Nor is it easy to remove the black sheep and still have a smoothly functioning government.

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The Wrong Men for the Jobs

We ended by procrastinating. We cut off the top—500 generals, admirals, war profiteers and rabble rousers who took Japan into war. But once the worst were out of the way we allowed the second worst to remain in power. And thus it has come to pass that at the hour of this writing, a colonial old-timer is revising textbooks for the new Japanese democracy, a notorious reactionary runs the police, the head of a small family supertrust is supposedly breaking up *zaibatsu*, or big business, and a big-time stockbroker is reforming agriculture.

Still worse, the “intelligent opposition” has now developed into a campaign of sabotage. The weapons used range from wine and women to nasty rumor. Money is poured into “entertainment” for G.I.s and officers alike. Japanese officials play on American dislike for Russia and on British distrust of the United States. Tales are spread assiduously of wholesale starvation, or of Red unrest, or of impending food riots—all of which naturally call for expansion of the Japanese police force.

It is a subtle and concerted drive the goal of which is to exact from us a full measure of help and forgiveness, and to exploit our dread of civil unrest to the point where we will allow the return of the old police state.

But while Japanese opposition has been growing stronger, our resolution and our capacity to enforce it has been growing weaker. There's much talk now of “ending the punitive stage” and of letting Japan rebuild herself. There is a readiness to allow old-timers to do the rebuilding. There is even some talk of—“You work with whatever instruments are at hand.”

War weariness back home has also done little good. Some G.I.s did get home a little sooner but only at the cost of disrupting our work in Japan. I've been at Army outposts where the garrison had been cut from 30 and 40 men down to a dozen, and where the absence of four men on a skiing trip presented a formidable problem. In one town I ran into a counterintelligence unit shrunk from fifteen men to four. I've gone on raids with a single man where ten were needed to do a thorough job.

It is against this background that the balance sheet of occupation must be drawn. Much of what appears to be failure is merely delayed reaction. For much that has gone wrong, Washington is to blame. Much that is taken for long-range, fundamental reform is only a palliative, intended to carry Japan through the hang-over of a long war and final defeat. But whatever the cause, much more than the police state survived the shock of surrender, and of our directives.

Take education. In the course of two long trips into the hinterland I went along on raids on 17 schools. Only in four did we find compliance with our directives. In the others the booty ranged from war posters, still proudly displayed, to cases of airplane equipment. American patrols now jokingly describe the schools as “Japan's little arsenals.”

Imperialism Taints the Schools

Up to this day no purge has cleared the militant Nationalists out of the schools. Up to this day books on arithmetic teach addition: “Two tanks plus two tanks . . .” Up to now classroom posters shout to children, “We should pledge ourselves to uphold Imperial teachings through belief in the indestructibility of our divine land . . .”

We have committed ourselves to the destruction of *zaibatsu*, which started by lending money to feudal lords and filling army rations with sand, and ended by holding most

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of Japan's economy in its tight grip. We haven't achieved much. Just about all we've done thus far has been to put the question on ice. But the *zaibatsu* men are shrewd. They are playing for huge stakes—including a large number of invested billions and the chance to control the new Japanese democracy. They have been hurt badly by the loss of Japan's looted empire. But at home they have managed to collect 20,000,000,000 yen from the government for damages to their plants in air raids. It was a treasury raid on a magnificent scale which was only halted by some overzealous professors.

Zaibatsu made sure it would have friends in the government. It literally packed the Shidehara cabinet with bankers, corporation lawyers and stockbrokers. Baron Shidehara himself married into the Mitsubishi clan.

After two tries which we rejected, the finance minister finally came up with a plan which we accepted. It froze accounts and it proposed to sell *zaibatsu* stock to the public. But it has put the fate of *zaibatsu* in the loving hands of a committee of Japanese bankers. And it has not prevented *zaibatsu* from muscling in on the new financial organization or from sabotaging reconversion to gain the lusher profits of speculation.

We have undertaken to wipe out patriotic strong-arm bands. We put a few hoodlums into Sugamo Prison and we blacklisted a huge number of secret societies. But once again our formula has been defective. We put an Osaka boss named Sasakawa into jail, but we let his henchmen carry on with such delicious projects as "a united front of Imperial subjects." And up in Ibaraki, an oldster named Tachibana, one of the few men who predigested the philosophy of conquest for the army, is still carrying on with his "Love Your Country Institute."

It is true that these are merely splinters of the shattered Nationalist front. But a recent survey showed 155 new societies, of which 151 were rightist. Eventually these will get together. Then there will be a pool of strong-arm henchmen.

We have set out to wreck the feudal land system, in which four out of five men don't own the land they till. When the Japanese reform bill proved indecently bare of reform, we rejected it. But the delay was costly. Throughout Japan today, landlords are evicting their tenants, and "selling" land to their brothers, uncles, and clerks. Tenants who built their hopes for owning a patch of land on the basis of advance ballyhoo, have lost what shreds of confidence they still retained in government good faith. The result is an expanding rural sit-down strike. Instead of selling their rice to the government, farmers hoard it and cities go hungry.

A hot argument could be fought out on the question of whether we were wise to work through the Japanese government. It is likely that we would have been in a far worse mess working through the American Military Government. But the fact remains that the Japanese government has been less our tool than our enemy, which General MacArthur has been repeatedly compelled to call down.

Can it be that there has been a basic flaw in our reasoning? We appear to be proceeding on the assumption that the men who fired at us were our only enemies, and that since they are out of the picture we needn't worry any more. Actually, however, the man with the gun was only one member of a team which included the robber barons of *zaibatsu*, bureaucrats, political hoodlums, and a tight and wise little clique at the Imperial Palace.

None of these is interested in democratic reform. Their goal is to preserve as much of the old order as they can without getting whacked down. But we have done little whacking. On the contrary we have encouraged most of these men to assume leadership in the democratic Japan we want to create.

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Our balance sheet for Japan is drawn neither in red ink alone nor in black. It would be a perversion of the truth to deny the changes wrought in Japan. It would be rank pessimism to think that Japan could fight us again in a decade or a generation.

Errors have been made and some of them have been corrected. Even as these lines are being written, MacArthur's experts are working on a plan to end the insidious and concerted violation of our directives. Other experts are adding new, ultrapatriotic bands to our blacklist. Steps are being urgently considered to brake the sliding yen. Day and night, able men in many branches of MacArthur's headquarters check, study, and plan.

The shape of tomorrow is uncertain, for none can tell all the factors that enter the picture. Will the temper of the American people stand for long occupation? How long must we remain here before we can say the job is done? Will the web of the police state endure the pressure of the rebellious new spirit we are trying to kindle? Will we be able to transfer the painless local job in Japan from military hands to civilian?

The answers to these questions do not lie in Japan alone. Some of them are in Washington. Some—in your own home.

THE END

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