

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1763
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONGEN HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HIWAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 9770

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJ: "HISTORIC" JCP/SOKA GAKKAI MEETING CAUSES STIR

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: TWO LONGTIME ENEMIES, SOKA GAKKAI PRESIDENT IKEDA DN JCP CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO, MET JULY 12 FOR "HISTORIC" FOUR HOUR MEETING. ALTHOUGH CONVERSATION WAS APPARENTLY NON-POLITICAL THROUGHOUT, FACT OF MEETING CAUSED CONSIDERABLE SURPRISE AND SHOCK IN TOKYO POLITICAL WORLD. IT HAS ALSO CALLED INTO QUESTION SEVERAL WIDELY ACCEPTED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT COMPLETE UNITY BETWEEN SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEITO AND STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST ORIENTATION OF BOTH. GIGGEST LOSER THUS FAR APPEARS TO BE KOMEITO WHOSE LOWER ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS ARE REPORTEDLY "ADRIFT." JCP SEEMS TO BE USING MEETING TO BOOST ITS CLAIM TO LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION PARTY FRONT. CONSERVATIVES AND SOCIALISTS, MEANWHILE, ARE WONDERING UNHAPPILY ABOUT WHAT SITUATION MAY MEAN FOR THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. SOKA GAKKAI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA AND JCP CHAIRMAN KENJI MIYAMOTO MET FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED, FREE-WHEELING FOUR-HOUR CONVERSATION JULY 12 DURING WHICH THEY AGREED THAT THEIR TWO ORGANIZATIONS
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SHOULD MOVE FROM PRESENT HOSTILE RELATIONSHIP TOWARD MUTUAL RESPECT AND COEXISTENCE. ACCORDING TO MAINICHI NEWSPAPER WHICH ARRANGED "HISTORIC" MEETING FOR SERIES ENTITLED "DIALOGUE ON LIFE," IKEDA AND MIYAMOTO AGREED BEFOREHAND TO STEER CLEAR OF DIRECT POLITICAL

DISCUSSION IN FAVOR ON BROAD HUMANISTIC DISCOURSE ON WORLD PEACE, HISTORY, LITERATURE AND PROBLEMS OF MASS ORGANIZATIONS.

2. IN SEVERAL HASTILY ARRANGED PRESS INTERVIEWS ON HEELS OF MEETING, IKEDA SAID THAT TIME HAS COME TO MOVE SOKA GAKKAI AWAY FROM HOSTILE ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE TO POSITION OF COEXISTENCE WITH JCP. IKEDA EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CONVERSATION WITH MIYAMOTO MAY HELP ALLEVIATE USELESS ELECTORAL CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN SOKA GAKKAI AND JCP SUPPORTERS. AT SAME TIME, AND DISCLAIMING INTENT TO INFLUENCE KOMEITO

IKEDA SAID HE PERSONALLY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT KOMEITO'S PRESENT "MIDDLE-OF ROAD REFORMIST" PROGRAM AND THINKS KOMEITO-JCP POLITICAL DEBATE AND STRUGGLE IS NATURAL.

3. JCP CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO, ON OTHER HAND, HAS TAKEN DETENTE A STEP FURTHER. JULY 15 HE PUBLICLY BACKED FORMER SOHYO PRESIDENT KAORU OTA'S CALL FOR "PEOPLE'S UNIFIED OPPOSITION FRONT," SUPPOSEDLY A SUPRA-PARTY RALLY OF ALL REFORM-MINDED CITIZENS.

4. KOMEITO REACTION WAS INITIALLY GUARDED, WITH KOMEITO CHAIRMAN YOSHIKATSU TAKEIRI SHOWING APPARENT SURPRISE AT MEETING AND SAYING HE WISHED TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH GAKKAI PRESIDENT IKEDA. TAKEIRI TALKED WITH HIM JULY 15 AND REPORTEDLY RECEIVED IKEDA PROMISE THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN GAKKAI SUPPORT OF KOMEITO. WITH THIS TAKEIRI JULY 16 MADE A FORMAL STATEMENT IN NAME OF KOMEITO TO EFFECT THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN PARTY POLICY LINE, THERE IS NO INTENTION TO JOIN POLITICAL FORCES WITH COMMUNISTS, AND IKEDA'S STATEMENTS WERE MADE PURELY AS RELIGIOUS FIGURE. A JULY 16-18 EMERGENCY MEETING OF KOMEITO'S CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS EXPECTED TO ENDORSE THIS POSITION.

5. COMMENT: "HISTORIC" MEETING OF LONGTIME ENEMIES HAS SURPRISED AND SHOCKED TOKYO POLITICAL WORLD. WE WERE TOLD THAT MEETING WAS A BRAIN-CHILD OF A MAINICHI NEWSPAPER REPORTER WHO KNOWS BOTH MEN. PREPARATIONS BEGAN WITH SECRET MIYAMOTO/IKEDA MEETING LAST DECEMBER TO MAP OUT DETAILS. BOTH FINALLY AGREED TO "NON-POLITICAL" MEETING IN JUNE OF JULY. FORMER DATE WAS RULED OUT BY TENSE DIET CONFIDENTIAL

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SITUATION AT TIME AND WEEKLY MAGAZINE EXPOSE OF SECRET DECEMBER MEETING. MEETING WAS THUS POSTPONED UNTIL JULY 12. INTERESTINGLY, NEITHER JCP NOR SOKA GAKKAI NEWSPAPERS ARE CARRYING TEXT OF CONVERSATION. BOTH SIMPLY REFER TO MAINICHI NEWSPAPER SERIALIZATION WHICH BEGAN JULY 15 AND PROMISES TO CONTINUE FOR MANY WEEKS. AS BILLED, TALK RECORDED THUS FAR SEEMS MAINLY PHILOSOPHICAL. TO DATE, THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF CONVERSATION IN KOMEITO NEWSPAPER.

6. ALTHOUGH NEWS OF MEETING HAS CAUSED CONCERN IN MANY JAPANESE PARTIES, SOKA GAKKAI'S OWN CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (KOMEITO) IS CLEARLY HARDLY HIT. PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND PARTICULARLY CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI, HAS BEEN ACTING AS IF IT DID NOT KNOW OF MEETING. (MAINICHI REPORTER AWARE OF MEETING ARRANGEMENTS HAS TOLD US THIS IS NOT

SO, BUT TAKEIRI WAS IN NO POSITION TO TELL IKEDA TO CALL IDEA OFF.) REASON IS CLEAR, PARTY'S ORGANIZATION HAS CARRIED ON YEARS LONG WAR WITH JCP ORGANIZERS AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL AND FULLY 90 PERCENT OF KOMEITO SUPPORTERS ARE SOKA GAKKAI MEMBERS. THUS PARTY ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY AT LOWER LEVELS, IS CONFUSED AND ADRIFT ABOUT APPARENT CHANGE IN CONSISTENT AND STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST POSITION OF GAKKAI/KOMEITO. MATTER IS MADE MORE SERIOUS BY FACT THAT JCP AND KOMEITO COMPETE DIRECTLY FOR SUPPORT AMONG JAPAN'S LESS PRIVILEGED.

7. IDEDA'S MOTIVATION IS DIFFICULT TO FATHOM. HASTILY CALLED SOKA GAKKAI PRESS CONFERENCES AND RELEASES--EVEN IN ENGLISH-- INDICATE HE MAY HAVE MISJUDGED POLITICAL IMPACT OF HIS "NON-POLITICAL" MEETING. THERE IS ALSO COMMENT HERE THAT HIS OWN VIEW OF HIS IMAGE AND ROLE AS WORLD STATESMAN LED HIM TO CONCLUSION THAT HE MUST ALSO MEET WITH JCP CHAIRMAN IF HE IS TO MEET WITH PROMINENT COMMUNISTS ABROAD.

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ACTION EA-10

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8. A SENIOR IKEDA ADVISOR, CALLING ON DCM JULY 15 IN ADVANCE OF IKEDA'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO HAWAII, EAGERLY PRODUCED PRESS MATERIALS ON THE IKEDA-MIYAMOTO MEETING AND ANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT IKEDA'S THINKING. HIS RATIONALE BOILED DOWN TO THREE POINTS:
(A) GAKKAI AND JCP ARE NOT JOINING HANDS;
(B) IKEDA DID NOT "RECOGNIZE" JCP; AND
(C) IKEDA'S PURPOSE STEMMED FROM BUDDHIST TENETS REQUIRING UNIVERSAL FREE INTERCHANGE AND OPENNESS, AND WAS DIRECTED TOWARD "PROTECTION OF HUMAN FREEDOM."
GAKKAI MAN EMPHASIZED THAT "NOTHING HAS CHANGED," NO POLI-

TICAL PURPOSE IN MEETING, AND "AMERICANS SHOULD NOT WORRY." BE THAT AS IT MAY, CLEARLY THERE ARE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS BETWEEN IKEDA AND KOMEITO CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI IF NOT ANTI-PATHY. (WE HAD HEARD EARLIER FROM GAKKAI SOURCES THAT IKEDA WAS NOT HAPPY WITH CURRENT PATH OF KOMEITO.) IT COULD CONCEIVABLY ALSO MEAN THAT TAKEIRI'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED, IF NOT BY IKEDA'S CHOICE THEN BY HIS OWN. A MORE CYNICAL VIEW WOULD SUGGEST THAT IKEDA MAY HAVE SACRIFICED FORTUNES OF KOMEITO TO PERCEIVED PERSONAL ADVANTAGE.

9. JCP, ON OTHER HAND, SEEMS PLEASED WITH MEETING AND IS USING WHAT CONFIDENTIAL

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APPEARS TO US AS STRICTLY TACTICAL DIET COOPERATION BETWEEN KOMEITO AND JCP, ALONG WITH IKEDA/MIYAMOTO MEETING, TO ADVANCE ITS CLAIM TO BEING LEADER OF OPPOSITION FRONT--AND PERHAPS INCIDENTALLY IMPROVE ITS SLACKENING ELECTORAL FORTUNES. DECISION TO MAKE MEETING PUBLIC ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTS CONFIDENCE IN GREATER DISCIPLINE OF JCP ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY AT LOWER LEVELS.

10. LDP POLITICIANS HAVE ALSO BEEN GREATLY DISTURBED BY MEETING. IT HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION COMMON ASSUMPTION AMONG THEM THAT KOMEITO (AND IKEDA) ARE CONSERVATIVE AT HEART AND, ALONG WITH DSP, WOULD PROVE TO BE RELIABLE--AND PLIABLE--COALITION PARTNERS IF THINGS CAME TO THAT SORRY PASS. WITH THIS IN MIND, MANY LDP FACTION LEADERS HAVE BEEN LAVISHING MONEY AND ATTENTION ON SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEITO FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN HOPES OF IMPROVING THEIR CHANCES OF BECOMING PRIME MINISTER OR NAMING ONE. DIET STRATEGY WOULD ALSO BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IF RECENT APPARENT JCP-KOMEITO ALLIANCE OF CONVENIENCE TAKES ON GREATER PERMANENCE. JSP LEADERS HAVE ALSO BEEN TROUBLED. MEETING CALLED INTO QUESTION APPROACH OF BOTH JSP RIGHTWING WHICH ADVOCATES JSP-DSP-KOMEITO COOPERATION AND LEFTWING WHICH PREFERS JSP-JCP ALLIANCE.

11. IN SHORT, MEETING HAS CHALLENGED A NUMBER OF LONG STANDING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEITO WITH BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPANESE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. AMONG ASSUMPTIONS ARE MONOLITHIC UNITY OF SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEITO, BASIC CONSERVATIVE AND ANTI-COMMUNIST ORIENTATION OF BOTH AND LIKELIHOOD THAT THEY WOULD LINE UP WITH LDP IF CHIPS WERE DOWN. THESE CHERISHED NOTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A BAD SHAKE. KOMEITO IS SCRAMBLING TO PUT OLD PUZZLE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN AND MANY OTHERS WANT DESPERATELY TO BELIEVE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO. BUT, IN ANY EVENT, "HISTORIC MEETING" WILL PROMPT ANALYSIS FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

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