

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 MCE-00 NRC-05
EB-08 OMB-01 /103 W
-----023835 040337Z /70

R 030600Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4935
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 1811

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA, KS
SUBJECT: KOMEITO VIEWS ON SECURITY TREATY AND US-KOREA RELATIONS

REF: TOKYO 1037

1. KOMEITO DIET MEMBER WATANABE, WHO ACCOMPANIED SECGEN YANO TO US, SAID VISIT'S SUCCESS RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT KOMEITO TACIT ENDORSEMENT OF SECURITY TREATY, AND THOUGHT KOMEITO WOULD WELCOME GREATER GOJ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO USFJ FACILITIES AND LABOR COSTS. WATANABE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, AGAINST BUILD-UP OF GOJ ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY AND EXPRESSED FEAR THAT US CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES ON KOREA WOULD CAUSE ROK LEADERSHIP TO REACT IN DANGEROUS MILITARISTIC MANNER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATIONS THIS WEEK WITH EMBOFFS, CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (KOMEITO) LOWER HOUSE MEMBER ICHIRO WATANABE, WHO ACCOMPANIED KOMEITO SECGEN YANO TO US LAST FALL, SAID THAT KOMEITO REGARDED VISIT NOT
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ONLY AS EXTRAORDINARILY SUCCESSFUL, BUT AS TURNING POINT IN ITS VIEW OF US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP. WATANABE SAID THAT DURING TRIP YANO WAS "CONVERTED" TO NECESSITY FOR JAPAN OF MAINTAINING EXTREMELY CLOSE TIES WITH US AND THAT THIS WAS KEY TO RECENT FAVORABLE SHIFT IN KOMEITO ATTITUDE ON SECURITY TREATY (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO WATANABE, WHAT IMPRESSED YANO MOST WAS FRANKNESS OF

TOP US LEADERS IN DISCUSSING US CONCERNS ABOUT STABILITY IN NORTHERN PACIFIC AND THEIR ASSURANCES THAT US WOULD NOT SUDDENLY ABANDON ROK AND JAPAN. WATANABE CONTRASTED RECEPTION GIVEN YANO AND VERY FRANK AND FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN WASHINGTON THIS TIME WITH "INTERROGATION" ON WHAT KOMEITO REALLY STOOD FOR WHICH CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI UNDERWENT IN MEETING WITH FORMER SECSTATE KISSINGER A FEW YEARS AGO. WATANABE SAID KOMEITO NOW SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING ANOTHER TRIP TO US THIS FALL BY CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI AND HOPED THAT HE WOULD MEET SAME TOP-LEVEL OF US OFFICIALDOM AS DID YANO.

3. WATANABE SAID KOMEITO NOW RECOGNIZED NEED FOR JAPAN TO COOPERATE MORE WITH US IN CONTEXT OF MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY AND, AS EXAMPLE, HE THOUGHT IN FUTURE KOMEITO WOULD FAVOR GREATER GOJ SPENDING ON FACILITIES FOR US FORCES IN JAPAN AS FURTHER EXPRESSION OF COOPERATION. HOWEVER, HE FEARED THAT AS RESULT OF CURRENT BILATERAL TRADE DIFFICULTIES, USG OFFICIALS MIGHT RENEW CHARGES THAT JAPAN GETTING "FREE RIDE" MILITARILY. HE SAID THIS WOULD PLAY INTO HANDS OF CERTAIN EXTREME RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS AND THEIR BUSINESS SUPPORTERS WHO WANTED TO BUILD UP JAPANESE ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY AS WAY OUT OF CURRENT DIFFICULTIES BEING FACED BY SO-CALLED STRUCTURALLY-DEPRESSED INDUSTRIES SUCH AS SHIPBUILDING AND STEEL. IF JAPAN WENT INTO ARMAMENTS BUSINESS IN BIG WAY, BUSINESSMEN CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD PUSH TO EXPORT ON LARGE SCALE, THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO ARMAMENTS RACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND STIRRING UP NOW DORMANT FEAR OVERSEAS THAT JAPAN MIGHT ONCE AGAIN ENGAGE IN MILITARISTIC ADVENTURES.

4. AS DID DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR OF ASAHI IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION THIS WEEK, WATANABE ALSO RAISED WITH EMBOFFS CONCERN THAT US RELATIONS WITH ROK DETERIORATING TO POINT WHERE PARK REGIME MIGHT MAKE SOME EMOTIONAL ANTI-US INITIATIVE THAT COULD SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE POLITICAL SITUATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA. WATANABE FOUND US CONGRESSMEN'S PURSUIT OF KOREAGATE APPROACHING INADMISSIBLE INTERVENTION IN ROK'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US LEADERS WOULD REALIZE THAT, IN SPITE OF SOME TRANSGRESSIONS ON PART OF ROK GOVERNMENT, SOUTH KOREA WAS AN INCOMPARABLY MORE OPEN AND SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY THAN NORTH KOREA. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE EXPRESSED WNDERMENT THAT US MEDIA IGNORED NORTH KOREA WHEN WRITING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. MEMCON FOLLOWS DETAILING OTHER POINTS MADE BY WATANABE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECURITY, TREATY SIGNATURE, FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TOKYO01811
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780053-0215
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780293/aaaadbap.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fccfe4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TOKYO 1037
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3669487
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOMIITO VIEWS ON SECURITY TREATY AND US-KOREA RELATIONS
TAGS: PINT, JA, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fccfe4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014