

# Lockheed Agent Had Contacts Among Top Japanese

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TOKYO, May 10—After years of obscurity, the name of Yoshio Kodama has become a household word in Japan.

Until the Lockheed scandal erupted three months ago, Mr. Kodama, the most influential of Japan's power brokers, deliberately stayed out of the public eye. But then he was widely identified as the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's secret agent in promoting the sale of planes here.

For Mr. Kodama, however, Lockheed has been only one of many clients. During the 18 years he acted for the Los Angeles-based corporation, he was also involved in numerous other ventures unconnected with Lockheed.

Moreover, his range of contacts was far more widespread than that through which he worked for Lockheed. His influence reached into Japan's political, journalistic and business worlds. He also had extensive contacts among the ultrarightists and the underworld here.

Some of Mr. Kodama's contacts and activities were considered proper by Japanese standards, but other actions, while legal, were controversial in the rare instances when they became known. In the latter instances Mr. Kodama seemed to have violated the tradition of the Japanese mediator who arranges the compromises on which this nation thrives. He appears to have turned troubled situations to his own benefit rather than to have helped the disputing parties.

## Tax Evasion Charges

In still other cases, Mr. Kodama's activities have been questioned by law enforcement authorities. Most recently, he has been charged with tax evasion and is being investigated for the possible violation of foreign exchange controls in the Lockheed affair.

## Charges Brought

In other cases, Mr. Kodama's activities have been questioned by legal authorities. Today he was indicted on charges of violating Japan's foreign currency control law by receiving secret payments totaling almost \$1.5 million from Lockheed. Earlier he was charged with tax evasion.

Because so much about Mr. Kodama remains a mystery, gauging the degree of his power is impossible. Even so, he has helped in naming Prime Ministers, forming public opinion and settling business disputes.

Moreover, the United States Central Intelligence Agency reportedly thought enough of his power to maintain a longstanding relationship with him starting sometime in the 1950's. How long that lasted is not publicly known.

What has become known of Mr. Kodama's role in other spheres came from the transcript of a long interview two years ago, from his memoirs and other occasional writing, from published materials here and from interviews with people associated with him.

Some persons said to have been associated with Mr. Kodama declined to be interviewed. Mr. Kodama himself has remained in seclusion at his home here since the Lockheed scandal became known in February. His doctors have not permitted him to see visitors except for police and tax officials.

## Contacts With Politicians

Mr. Kodama's major contacts included leading political figures. Currently the most prominent of those he named is Yasuhiro Nakasone, now the secretary general of the govern-

ment, four times a Cabinet minister and a potential Prime Minister.

Mr. Kodama also seems to have had connection through a mutual contact with former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, whom he reportedly helped to elect in 1972. Mr. Kodama's long association with former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi has been well documented.

Further, Mr. Kodama has asserted that his allies included many members of Seirankai, an association of nationalistic politicians within the governing party.

Among journalists, Mr. Kodama's writings single out Tsuneo Watanabe, an assistant managing editor and political editor of Yomiuri Shimbun, the daily newspaper with the second largest national circulation here.

Mr. Kodama has also had contacts with Asahi Shimbun, the largest paper, and Mainichi Shimbun, the third largest. He has sought control of a book publishing company and influence within the nation's second largest advertising agency.

## Other Associates

Among businessmen, Mr. Kodama has indicated in interviews and writing that his closest associates have been Kichitaro Hagiwara, chairman of the Hokkaido Colliery and Steamship Company, part of the great Mitsui conglomerate, and Masaichi Nagata, former president of the Daiel Motion Picture Company.

Mr. Kodama has also been associated with Minoru Segawa, chairman of the Nomura Securities Company, Japan's largest brokerage, and former chairman of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, and with Kenji Osano, a prominent figure in the tourist business and confidant of former Prime Minister Tanaka.

In addition Kodama has said that he had support from many of Japan's "yakuza," or organized gangsters, and "uyoku," or ultrarightists.

A short, chunky man with close-cropped hair, Mr. Kodama has been regarded by the relatively few who were previously aware of his activities as the nation's most powerful "kuro-maku," or wire-puller behind the scenes.

The term, which means "black curtain" and comes from the stylized kabuki theater, derives from traditional Japanese feelings about power. The Japanese generally feel that power should not be brandished openly but applied with finesse from behind a screen.

## His Fortunes Fluctuated

Mr. Kodama, who ran an intelligence and matériel procurement agency in China during World War II, and was accused but not convicted as a war criminal, has waxed and waned in power during the postwar era. He appeared to have been on the rise after Mr. Tanaka became Prime Minister in July 1972.

Mr. Tanaka's election was controversial. Political sources within the Liberal-Democratic Party said he had assured his election by promising Mr. Nakasone a Cabinet appointment and a large amount of money in return for Mr. Nakasone's support in the voting at a party conference and in the maneuvering that preceded it. Money in Japanese politics is often considered a weapon, rather than a bribe, with which political factions do favors and campaign for election.

According to this version, Mr. Tanaka sent his offer in typically circuitous Japanese fashion through his friend, Mr. Osano, to Mr. Kodama, who was asked to persuade Mr. Nakasone.

Mr. Tanaka, who was forced to resign in December 1974 because of alleged financial irregularities, and Mr. Nakasone, who was investigated but absolved by the party for his role in the 1972 election, denied that account.

Mr. Kodama's association with Mr. Nakasone and with Mr. Watanabe of the Yomiuri newspaper began about 1960. During the 1960's and into the 1970's they sometimes worked together on Mr. Kodama's projects. At other times Mr. Kodama worked alone.

## Dispute Over a Dam

All three were involved in the affair of the Kuzuryu Dam, a case that illustrated how Mr. Kodama tried to exert influence legally but without publicity.

In 1961, a dispute arose between a copper mining company and a governmental electric power company over compensation for mines to be flooded when a dam was built.

Because the president of the mining company, Katsuyuki Ogata, was unable to get what he considered proper compensation, he turned to Mr. Kodama to mediate rather than going to court promptly.

According to Mr. Ogata, Mr. Kodama said: "I will try to mediate between you and the power company. I have already decided who will participate in this work. With Mr. Nakasone as central figure, I will have Tsuneo Watanabe of Yomiuri Shimbun's political desk and Saichiro Ujiie of the newspaper's economic desk work on this matter."

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