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CRISIS IN JAPAN

The relentless succession of military disasters suffered by Japanese forces throughout the Far East has precipitated the second major political crisis in Japan within nine months. On 5 April, unable to survive the immediate blows of American landings on Okinawa and the Soviet denunciation of the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact, Premier Koiso's coalition Government resigned. The composition of Japan's third war-time Cabinet, formed two days later by Admiral Kantaro Suzuki, demonstrates the submergence of the extremist military clique which committed the nation to an all-out war policy in 1941. Nevertheless, the new Cabinet does not appear to have the strong political leadership required to abandon that policy and take Japan out of the war.

Since the Japanese defeats in the Marianas and the fall of Tojo's Cabinet in July 1944, the radical militarist faction (*Kodo-ha*) which was responsible for Pearl Harbor has been gradually moving toward eclipse. The Koiso Cabinet, a strong coalition of all political elements in Japan (military, industrialists and bureaucrats), was largely dominated by the less radical Army group (*Tosei-ha*). The new Suzuki Cabinet, while still a coalition of important Japanese political groups, is weaker in composition and apparently is not dominated by either Army faction. None of its members appears to overshadow Suzuki himself, who is widely known in Japan as a "moderate." The continued decline of the radicals in the new Cabinet may mean that they have been completely discredited or that they prefer to withdraw and leave to others the ignominious task of leading the nation to its defeat.

The collapse of two Japanese cabinets within so short a period of time is symptomatic of the failure of Japan's fundamental war policy. Suzuki can scarcely be expected to offer unconditional Japanese surrender to the Allies, but he may launch peace feelers immediately following the end of the war in Europe in an attempt to salvage the Home Empire from imminent ruin.

Ascendancy of the Extreme Militarists Under Tojo

Two factions within the Japanese Army, the *Kodo-ha* and the *Tosei-ha*, have long been rivals for control of both the Army and the Government. They differ primarily on the methods of achieving their common imperialist aims, on the internal structure of the state, and on the role various other political elements, such as big business, the bureaucrats, and officials close to the Throne, should be allowed to play in the

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Government. The radical clique, the *Kodo-ha*, has steadily supported a policy of belligerent and anti-Western imperialism involving decisive military action. Between 1931 and 1944 the *Kodo-ha* was able to enlist the cooperation of the more conservative *Tosei-ha*.

Internally the *Kodo-ha* advocated army rule of a corporative state with nationalization of the major industries. Its members believed that the accumulation of private capital can be useful only when applied directly to the aggrandisement of Japanese military strength. When in 1941 the group came into dominant power with General Tojo's appointment to the premiership, it attempted to enforce virtual state control of industry, and it eliminated bureaucrats and more conservative elements from the Government. Tojo attempted to strengthen the one-party system by establishing the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society (IRAPS). If Tojo allied himself with any group outside the Army it was with the "new bureaucrats" and "modern" industrialists who also favored a corporative reorganization of Japan's governmental and economic structure.

The zenith of *Kodo-ha* power was reached in February 1944 when influential but moderate General Sugiyama lost the important post of Army Chief of Staff. Tojo personally assumed the job. Sugiyama had served under both Army factions in the past, but had never espoused the ideas of the young officers and had often been under attack by *Kodo-ha* sympathizers. Nevertheless Sugiyama had powerful connections within the Army, and he reappeared in the new Koiso Government as Minister of War.

The Koiso Coalition Regime

In July 1944, almost immediately after the Allied conquest of Saipan, Premier Tojo was replaced by General Kuniaki Koiso, who apparently belonged to neither Army clique. Under the new Premier the most uncompromising militarists were supplanted by members of the less extreme Army clique. A strong coalition Cabinet was formed, ably representing the chief political elements within Japan and including nonmilitary political careerists and industrialists. Admiral Yonai and General Sugiyama, both political moderates, were given the key portfolios of Navy and War, with Yonai serving as Deputy Premier as well.

Koiso came into office on a wave of adverse public opinion concerning the ineffectual internal policies and the deterioration of Japan's military situation under Tojo. In no sense did the Cabinet change imply a weakening of Japan's support for the war. A military careerist of considerable distinction, Koiso had been Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army at the time of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Later, while Governor-General of Korea, he gained a reputation for efficiency in applying Japanese repressive techniques.

The *Tosei-ha* is as strong an advocate of Japanese territorial expansion abroad as the *Kodo-ha*, but it is more willing to work through

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and with other political forces like the finance-capitalists and influential statesmen to achieve its ends. The *Kodo-ha*, at the peak of its power, was not strong enough to effect the nationalization of the great industrial houses (collectively termed the *Zaibatsu*). With the advent of the Koiso regime, powerful moneyed interests were reinstated in the Government.

After assuming office in July, Koiso made a number of administrative changes in an attempt to coordinate military strategy and war production. Unlike Tojo, who had concentrated increasing power and responsibility in the hands of a few individuals, Koiso tried to divide responsibility for the conduct of the war among a number of groups and individuals, and also restored the traditional separation of the Army and Navy commands from the War and Navy Departments.

While all groups emphasized the pressing need for the reorganization of war production controls to meet Japan's critical war situation, sharp disagreement existed over the method. Some of Japan's leading industrialists ascribed the unsatisfactory progress of the war to lack of speed in munitions manufacture resulting from undue Government interference. This group, including the present Munitions Minister Toyoda, demanded that the responsibility and initiative for production be left to the industrialists themselves. Other factions advocated the placing of such industries under much closer Government supervision, if not directly under the Army.

Koiso's policy reflected the influence of those who demanded control by the industrialists rather than by the Government or the military. His Munitions Minister Yoshida pointed out that private enterprise should be given full play and that Government operation of civilian factories was no simple task. In merchant shipping, the one sphere where Koiso's regime effected a major reorganization, the result was to increase the powers of the Shipping Management Association dominated by the big Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo firms. The appointment on 7 March of seven leading representatives of the *Zaibatsu* as advisors to the Munitions Ministry bore out other indications that Government supervision of industry under Koiso amounted to supervision by industrialists in Government positions.

During his last two months in office, when his regime was already seriously weakened by unallayed military adversity, Koiso made several attempts to consolidate the Empire behind the war effort. Notable among these were the 10 February Cabinet shift designed to meet persistent criticism of the manpower program, the formation of a new political party in March, and the granting of Diet representation to Korea and Formosa on 3 April.

Since the pattern of Japanese war mobilization had already been set, the Cabinet changes had little opportunity to alter it decisively. The new political party (Greater Japan Political Society), which is designed to assure "certain victory" and enlist "spontaneous popular

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support for the Government's war measures," is not likely to be more effective than its predecessor, the IRAA. Furthermore, Japanese efforts to integrate outlying regions into the political structure of Japan proper entail no genuine political concessions, and certainly in the case of Korea will have little effect on local aspirations for independence.

The Suzuki Cabinet

The composition of the new Suzuki Cabinet belies Tokyo insistence that Koiso has made way for a stronger Government. Although almost all political elements in Japan (the military, the industrialists, the bureaucrats, the old political parties, and the Imperial court) are represented, only six have held Cabinet posts in the past as compared with eleven in the case of the original Koiso Government. Most of the new Cabinet members are older, semiretired public servants resurrected to serve in positions which they failed to achieve in their earlier careers. Suzuki himself is 77 years old and was serving as President of the Imperial Privy Council until his appointment to the premiership. He has never been identified with the extreme military cliques and, in fact, was a target for assassination in the radical young officers uprising of February 1936. His close association since 1929 with the usually conservative circle of Imperial advisors undoubtedly lends prestige to his premiership at this critical time.

The new Government contains only two members of the Army, the most important of which is War Minister General Anami. Anami apparently has never been associated with either the radical or the conservative Army cliques. General Yasui, the second Army man, is said to have been selected by Anami to maintain "liaison between the Army and the cabinet."

Although the Navy is represented in the new Cabinet by four admirals, two of these, Premier Suzuki and Munitions Minister Toyoda, were undoubtedly selected primarily for special administrative and political competence. Toyoda, like Suzuki, is not a fighting admiral. He is a specialist in ordnance production, president of the Japan Steel Works, and married into the powerful Mitsui industrial family. Together with the new Transportation and Communications Minister Kohiyama, President of the South Manchuria Railway, Toyoda now represents in the Government those Japanese interests which strongly oppose military control of industry.

Justice Minister Matsuzaka, Agriculture and Commerce Minister Ishiguro, Finance Minister Hirose, and Home Affairs Minister Abe are all career bureaucrats, the first two having served in previous cabinets. Welfare Minister Okada and Minister Without Portfolio Sakurai were leaders of the two most important prewar political parties.

The new Foreign Minister Togo has probably been chosen for his experience in foreign relations, particularly with the USSR. However, as Foreign Minister in the opening months of the Tojo Cabinet, Togo

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was responsible for the sustaining of diplomatic negotiations in Washington until the Japanese were ready to strike at Pearl Harbor.

Upon assuming office, Premier Suzuki warned Japan that an Allied invasion of the homeland was imminent and pledged his Government to "achieve final victory over the Anglo-Americans." But the relatively weak composition of the new Cabinet appears to reflect the present indecision of the Japanese power groups as to whether to continue the war on an all-out basis, or attempt to save what is left of the Empire through a negotiated peace. Although the *Kodo-ha* has been temporarily submerged, it can be expected to disapprove any limitation on an all-out war policy. Whatever course it follows, Suzuki's government must operate under the threat that the bitter clique rivalry within the Army may result in a critical lack of internal unity.

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