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 SUBJECT: (Prince) HIGASHIKUNI's Views on Rearmament  
 FROM: GARYA Japan  
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**SUMMARY OR SID REPORT:**

This report gives the views on Japanese rearmament expressed by (Prince) Naruhiko HIGASHIKUNI, ex-General and Prime Minister, during a personal interview. HIGASHIKUNI stated that he believed in a "gradual" approach to rearmament; that the attitudes of countries neighboring Japan and the antipathy of Japanese women and young men to the military, mitigated against any immediate open government action in this direction. He advocated that U.S. leaders at home and Japan refrain from open pressures on the Japanese to rearm and in Japan "work through" the older Japanese to bring about the proper atmosphere for self defense. The report also contains personal observations of HIGASHIKUNI.

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4. The interview closed with reassurances on the part of both members that all statements made reflected purely personal views, and HIGASHIKUNI stated that he would be glad to hold another discussion a few weeks after a new government had been formed.

5. HIGASHIKUNI's physical appearance belies his age of 65. He is of slight stature and build (about 5 ft. 2 inches — 160 lbs), dapper appearance, conservative dress, and a quick but precise manner of speaking. Although affable in behavior and conversation, he creates the definite feeling that he feels socially and intellectually superior to those about him. He spoke in a patronizing way of Messrs. Shigemitsu and Ogata, who formerly were members of his cabinet and are now head of the Progressive Party and Secretary of the Liberal Party respectively. He implies that he is still a power within political circles and can arrange meetings with his former subordinates as desired. He gives the impression of being a very forceful character who is used to having people obey his direction. It appears that he would command the respect and deference of his colleagues and subordinates by virtue of his intellectual capacity, acquired honors and recognitions, and aloof manners. While he does not appear to be a brusque, aggressive individual given to table pounding and shouting to achieve his ends, he probably attains effective results by inspiring a cold fear in those under him. He is dogged and persistent in his ideas and repetitions, though valuable in expressing them. Certainly he is not a gregarious or highly social individual who would be at home in many parties. He professes to speak French fluently and understands and speaks English a little. Though he did not use English in his conversation, he did indicate the proper English expressions when he wanted to be certain that the interviewer conveyed an exact meaning and also he appeared to understand most of what the Reporting Officer said in English. In general, his physical condition may be classed as excellent, his character as forceful and determined, and his personality as aloof and intellectual.

**COMMENTS:**

1. As can be seen from his biography, HIGASHIKUNI had extensive experience and acquaintance in military, political, and nobility circles. He is alleged to have opposed the power built-up on the part of the military establishment, the assumption of the Prime Ministership by Imperial order at war's end, and the precedent set by the Prince of the blood assumed the responsibility for the government. He retained the high confidence in which he was held by the military and those surrounding same. His cabinet included the ex-commander-in-chief of the military forces and organizations and a former member of the Ministry of the Affairs YAMAZAKI was dismissed because of the unwilling discharge of all officials connected with the general police. HIGASHIKUNI is alleged to have been in retirement since that time and is reported to have been visited by the Japanese Emperor to be a confidential adviser to the government. Apparently he has facile relations with certain political leaders in the conservative camp and from time to time acts for various private Japanese business or organizations which undoubtedly contribute to his wealth.

2. HIGASHIKUNI is supposed to be close to YOSHIDA and he certainly echoes the YOSHIDA "line" on rearmament, viz., gradual approach. It is believed that like YOSHIDA he has an inherent distrust of the military per se and is especially cautious than YOSHIDA about speeding up rearmament efforts. His major concern with this problem seems to be the attitudes of Japan's neighbors. He repeatedly stressed the harmful effects that could befall Japan, particularly in trade, should she exacerbate post war feelings in neighboring countries by an open return to a strong military position.

3. He was very definite in expressing the view that U.S. leaders should not speak openly or forcefully about the need for Japanese defense, but rather let the older and middle-aged Japanese handle the problem in their own fashion. In this connection the Reporting Officer does NOT subscribe to such view; on the contrary, this Reporter believes that it is propitious for U.S. leaders to take cognizance openly and frankly of Japan's need to recognize her obligations for self defense. While the obvious challenges of American interference in Japanese affairs can be

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expected from dissident elements whenever there is responsible U.S. public comment on Japanese rearmament, it is my conviction that until some basis for urgency to "act" is inculcated into the heads of Japan's government, they will procrastinate in instituting a constructive defense program with attendant costs because of political expediency and leave the U.S. to struggle with the realistic aspects of defending Japan. This Reporter DOES subscribe to HIGASHIYAMA's idea that local U.S. representatives should personally and informally encourage local leaders in government and private circles in their efforts to resolve rearmament, but believes such efforts should supplement open U.S. policy and not serve as the sole means of propounding such policy. Endeavors to cooperate with the Japanese in achieving a sound moral and practical objective by devious devices peculiar to Oriental psychology stand little chance of success. An approach of this nature is more properly a matter for Japanese handling after basic issues have been clearly defined.

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