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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1. Public opinion is swinging toward a Liberal Party (LP) - Japan Democratic Party (JDP) merger, which will probably take place in the autumn of 1955. Due to the intricacies of social, business, and family ties among Japanese politicians, the situation may remain confused; and little apparent progress may be made for some time prior to the merger.
2. Former LP Secretary-general SATO Eisaku is one of several political figures who must steer a delicate course in the present situation in order to save face. A former YOSHIDA Shigeru faction mainstay, SATO is overtly opposed to Prime Minister HATOYAMA Ichiro and also at odds with LP President OGATA Taketora because of OGATA's support of YOSHIDA's resignation. However, SATO must go along with the trend toward a conservative merger or face political death, and is actually in close touch with and on excellent terms with OGATA. Eventually SATO will "appear" to be forced to go along with OGATA on the trend toward a merger.
3. The main obstacle to a merger at present is the fact that the merger proposal was made by JDP Secretary-general MIKI Bukichi, who is disliked by most Liberals; and the Liberals will therefore publicly shy away from a merger for some time. The merger talks are actually fairly well advanced; and OGATA, HATOYAMA, and other interested parties met at social functions on 24 and 25 April and arranged for talks to continue.
4. The important question now is how to remove HATOYAMA from the government without causing him undue embarrassment. MIKI Bukichi wished to make the merger talks public to give HATOYAMA a chance to get out, but present Liberal antipathy to MIKI requires that someone else raise the merger proposal again before further progress can be made.

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EXEMPTIONS Section 8(b)

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- (2)(A) Privacy
- (2)(B) Methods/Sources
- (2)(G) Foreign Relations