REPORT

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OGATA Taketora, President of the Liberal Party, stated the following views regarding the political situation on 26 July 1955:

- HATOYAMA Ichiro has reversed his decision to retire as Prime Minister this year and to back the conservative political merger; he is now attempting to retain control of the political situation. KISHI Nobusuke, Secretary General of the Democratic Party, and MIKI Bukichi, Chairman of the Democratic Party Executive Board, are sincere in their desire for the merger and are working to bring it about; but MIKI is becoming cool toward the merger because of the activities of Agriculture and Forestry Minister KONO Ichiro, who has risen to be de facto Deputy Prime Minister and is blocking the merger, which would threaten his power. KONO has split with MIKI and now controls HATOTAMA, whom he is advising to stay in power until the 1956 budget is passed. MIKI is losing incluence.
- b. The Democratic members of the four-man conference which is planning the merger cannot enforce the compliance of their party members with the decisions of the conference. Hence the Liberals are forced to return to an independent position. The result may well be a Diet dissolution, which would benefit only the Socialists. HATOYAMA thinks he is still popular, but OGATA thinks the people are tired of HATOYAMA's vaciliation. The Liberals will fight against dissolution of the Diet.
- c. HATOYAMA may announce publicly, in September of October, his decision not to retire. If he does so, the Liberals will split with the Demo-crats and an election will follow in January or February 1956.
- d. KONO argues that the Democrats should continue the London negotiations with the Soviets as long as possible, and he puts this ahead of the conservative merger since the possibility of success at London would keep the Democrats in power. KOMO's projected trip abroad is really to see MATSUMOTO Shunichi, chief delegate to the Japanese-Soviet

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negotiations, and instruct him to keep the negotiations going. 1 KONO is interested only in power, and not in the national interests.

e. The Soviet bloc seems to be working to keep a weak government in office in Japan. The Communists are making overtures to well-known conservatives such as KUHARA Fusanosuke, HIRATSUKA Tsunejiro, and KITAMURA in an attempt to split the Japanese conservatives. 2 Individuals such as NAMBARA Shigeru and OUCHI Hyoe help this effort; as writers, when they return from the USSR they will write what they think will sell.3

Washington Comments

- 1. In replying to a question in the Diet on 21 July, KONO stated that he was planning to visit Great Britain in order to study export markets for canned fish.
- 2. KUHARA, a famous prevar rightist, is now president of the National Council for the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations with China and the USSR; HIRATSUKA is president of the Japan Fisheries Association and a Democratic Diet member from the Third District, Hokkaido; KITAMURA is probably KITAMURA Tokutaro, former Progressive Party member and now a Democratic Diet member from the Second District, Nagasaki Prefecture.
- 3. NAMBARA, a former president of Tokyo University, was reported by Kyodo News Agency to have reached Peiping on 6 June 1955 from Moscow after completing a one-month tour of the USSR as a member of a 15-man scientific mission headed by Dr. KAYA Seiji, chairman of the Japan Council of Sciences. While in Peiping NAMBARA and CUCHI, who is President of Hosei University, had a meeting with CHOU En-lai.