Security Inform

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Military, Political, Economic, Social Situation,
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Selected Items for the Information of Commanders and Staffs
of the United Nations and Far East Command

POLITICAL REPORT

1. National and Foreign Affairs:

a. SHIGEMITSU Installed as PRP President: The Progressive Reform Party (Kaishinto), without a president since its formation on 8 February 1952, formally installed SHIGEMITSU Mamoru as its first president on 13 June, at an extraordinary convention held at Hibiya Public Hall, in Tokyo. The selection of the former diplomat, and paroled war criminal, for the party's top post was announced earlier last month, and although the convention was scheduled for the end of the current Diet session, the extension of the Diet compelled the party to go ahead with the convention. In his inaugural address, SHIGEMITSU warned against the dangers of Communism, especially the "efforts of certain forces, which are planning the overthrow of Japan as the initial step in the over-all plan for conquest of Asia." Citing the need for controlling extreme rightists and leftists in this connection, he pointed out that the whole world is watching Japan take her first few steps after her rebirth as an independent nation. He called for rearmament as necessary for Japan to defend herself. (a)

SHIGEMITSU, born on 29 July 1887, in Oita prefecture, entered the Japanese foreign service immediately upon graduation from Tokyo (Imperial) University in 1911. His rise up the diplomatic ladder was rapid, and by the time that he lost a leg in the so-called Shanghai Incident of 1932, when a bomb was thrown by a Korean revolutionary during Emperor's Day celebration, he had attained the rank of Minister. He became Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs the following year, and after serving as Ambassador to the USSR, Great Britain, and China, he was recalled to Japan in 1943 to become Foreign Minister in TOJO's Cabinet. He headed Japan's surrender delegation to the USS Missouri, and although there was considerable doubt as to the propriety of bringing him to trial, he was indicted and tried as a war criminal at the insistence of the USSR. He was finally sentenced to seven years imprisonment, the lightest sentence meted out by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. In November of 1950, he was paroled, and in March 1952 he was depurged, becoming eligible for public office once again. (a)

Comment: The prevalent feeling that SHIGEMITSU was a scapegoat, unjustly convicted of war crimes (responsibility for maltreatment of prisoners of war), in addition to voluminous publicity accorded him in recent months, makes him a figure with tremendous public appeal. An example of this publicity is the release of the "Keenan Letter" wherein the former chief prosecutor of the Military Tribunal expresses his deep regret that SHIGEMITSU had even been tried. It is obvious that leaders of the Progressive Party hope to capitalize on his appeal to the public, but at the time when he was first prevailed upon to accept the post, some opposition was voiced from the party's left-wing elements. It is well known that the former diplomat's strongest supporters in the new party are ASHIDA Hitoshi, former Prime Minister and one who probably would have become the party president if he had been cleared of charges in the "Showa Denko" scandal in time, and OASA Tadao, a former State Minister in the TOJO Cabinet. Thus, he is associated with the party's right-wing, but the amount of control which these leaders will be able to exert on the new president, who is a complete novice in politics, remains to be seen.

b. Numerical Strength of Diet Political Parties and Groups: As of 15 June, political parties and groups held the following number of seats in each House of Diet: (a)

FOR COORDINATION WITH ___U S Army___

(a) Scty Div Japan Branch Files and Japanese Press