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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Biographic Information

SHIGEMITSU Mamoru

JAPAN

Deputy Prime Minister and  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

SHIGEMITSU Mamoru is a well known diplomat who turned politician after the end of the Occupation. He served as Ambassador to the USSR (1936-38), Great Britain (1938-41) and the Nanking regime (1941-43) and was brought into the Tojo Cabinet as Foreign Minister in 1943. He continued in office in the succeeding Koiso Cabinet of 1944, and signed the surrender documents for Japan aboard the U.S.S. "Missouri" in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

Shigemitsu was tried as a "Class A" war criminal and convicted in 1948, although a considerable body of western opinion believed that he had been made a scapegoat at the behest of the Soviets, who apparently had an intense dislike for him. Sentenced to seven-and-a-half years' imprisonment, he was the first Class A prisoner to be paroled in 1950. Shortly after his debarment in March 1952 Shigemitsu was elected President of the Progressive Party, and in November 1954 joined the Hatoyama liberals in organizing the Japan Democratic Party. He was appointed Foreign Minister in the first Hatoyama Cabinet, in December 1954, and was reappointed on March 18, 1955.

Although Shigemitsu is highly respected by the Japanese, he is not a popular figure and as a politician proved himself something less than successful. He is reported to be making a determined effort to become the next Prime Minister. Despite his much publicized visit to the United States in late August 1955, his prestige has fallen, and it is rumored that he will be replaced as Foreign Minister in the near future.

Shigemitsu was born in Oita prefecture in 1887 and joined the Foreign Service in 1911 after finishing Tokyo Imperial University Law School. His first assignment was in Berlin, and later served in the United States, China, USSR and Great Britain. During the Japanese Emperor's birthday celebration in Shanghai in April 1932 he lost his right leg when a bomb thrown by a Korean revolutionist exploded in the midst of a group of Japanese officials celebrating the event. He served as Foreign Minister from 1943 until the end of World War II.

Shigemitsu is staunchly anti-Communist and a strong advocate of Japanese rearmament for self-defense purposes. He has publicly urged close cooperation with the United States and the West, and has expressed disapproval of Japanese trade with the iron curtain countries.

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