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Japan Report

(FOUO 4/82)



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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

NEW POLITICAL LEADERS VIEWED

OW180955 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 17 Dec 81 p 12

[Minoru Shimizu's "Politics Today--and Tomorrow" column: "Competition Among New Leaders to the Fore"]

[Text] A senior Dietman of the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) and one-time foreign minister says the "one point of interest in future LDP developments is to what extent the so-called new leaders, whom Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki cleverly 'manipulated' in his recent reshuffle, will be able to boost their political strength in the months ahead." He predicted that there would appear differences in strength among the new leaders during the next year or so.

In the new setup created by Prime Minister Suzuki, the new leaders were given important posts in the cabinet and party executive.

Suzuki had long considered it one of his duties to "foster" the new leaders. And in his reshuffle of cabinet and party posts on 30 November, he put his plan into effect.

Though there are more than a dozen younger politicians who are called "new leaders," Suzuki had in mind only six of them--Kiichi Miyazawa and Rokusuke Tanaka of the Suzuki faction, Noboru Takeshita of the Tanaka faction, Shintaro Abe of the Fukuda faction, Ichiro Nakagawa of the Nakagawa faction, and Michio Watanabe who has no factional affiliation.

In the new Suzuki administration, Miyazawa was retained as chief cabinet secretary, Tanaka was made chairman of the LDP Policy Affairs Research Council, Takeshita was named senior deputy secretary-general and Abe was appointed international trade and industry minister, while Nakagawa and Watanabe were retained in their respective posts of director general of the Science and Technology Agency and finance minister.

Important Posts

All of these, except Takeshita, had held important posts ever since the Suzuki administration was inaugurated in July last year, Abe having been chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council and Tanaka international trade and industry minister and according to the prime minister, they had amply fulfilled his expectations.

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Suzuki says that in order to ensure the longevity and stability of the LDP administration, efforts must be made to cultivate men of talent capable of carrying on the administration in the next generation.

However, most observers think that his aim in giving key positions to these young leaders was to improve his chances of getting reelected as president of the LDP. Being relatively young and energetic, they might possibly move in a direction unfavorable to the Suzuki administration if they were not given important posts and were left to their own resources.

If appointed to important posts in the cabinet and party, however, they would not be free to act as they pleased and furthermore, there would be a definite plus factor in that their enterprise and industry would ultimately contribute to the achievements of the Suzuki administration.

Very Hard Work

In a talk with reporters, the prime minister said he planned to work these politicians very hard. He added with a smile that he expected there would be some competition among them as they had been given positions of equal importance in the recent reshuffle. "Who will be chosen from among them as a candidate for the LDP presidency will depend on the efforts of each individual," he said.

Fully aware of Suzuki's intentions, Finance Minister Watanabe, one of the new leaders, made the following amusing comments in a magazine interview: "We new leaders are like spirited racehorses. After being qualified to take part in the race, we line up at the starting line. And then with a carrot dangling in front of our noses, we are told to run. The horses run with all their might, but run as they may, they never catch up with the carrot. Some of them collapse from exhaustion and are thus conveniently weeded out by natural selection."

The new leaders first began to attract attention in August 1977 when a policy group called the group for studies on free society (jiyu shakai kenkyukai) was formed by some leading businessmen and 11 promising LDP politicians. One of the aims of this new group was to reform the political administration being conducted by the influential politicians of the day, in an attempt to check the decline of the LDP which had been in evidence for some time.

In addition to the six new leaders already mentioned, members of the group included Ganri Yamashita, former director general of the defense agency, former education minister Toshiki Kaifu and former labor minister Takao Fujinami. These politicians, together with present transport minister Tokusaburo Kosaka, who was invited to join the group but refused, became known from that time as the new leaders.

The six new leaders whom Suzuki has taken under his wing have already begun to compete with one another with a view to becoming candidates in next autumn's presidential election. Oddly enough, these six men fall into three sets of rival relationships--Abe vs Takeshita, Miyazawa vs Tanaka, and Watanabe vs Nakagawa.

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'Ichiroku War'

The fiercest of these rivalries is that between Miyazawa and Tanaka who both belong to the Suzuki faction. One of Suzuki's biggest headaches in his recent reshuffle was deciding how to treat these two politicians. Relations between them are so bad as to earn the name "Ichiroku war," taking one character each from their first names.

At first, Suzuki thought of appointing chief cabinet secretary Miyazawa to the post of chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council, in order to give him some experience in handling party affairs.

According to LDP custom, for a man to qualify as a candidate for the premiership, he should have had experience in the key cabinet posts of foreign affairs, finance or defense as well as in one of the three top party posts. Accordingly, Suzuki considered giving Miyazawa his first party post.

However, Rokusuke Tanaka got to work on Suzuki with the support of the younger Diet members of the Suzuki faction, requesting that if he could not keep his position of international trade and industry minister, he should be given that of chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council.

Rokusuke Tanaka, an active politician, also sought the cooperation of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka who wields a great deal of influence in the LDP. The latter was favorably disposed toward Rokusuke Tanaka on account of his friendship with the late Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira, but he was not on very good terms with Miyazawa.

Political Pressure

In the end Suzuki bowed to the political pressure applied by Rokusuke Tanaka and gave him the job of chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council. Miyazawa was naturally displeased with this appointment, and relations between the two men are reported to have grown even worse in recent days.

According to observers, Abe who became international trade and industry minister, Watanabe who was retained in the post of finance minister, and Tanaka, chairman of the LDP Policy Affairs Research Council, have the responsible task of tackling the difficult problems concerning national finance administration, trade friction and defense. Any mishandling of these issues would immediately prove prejudicial to their political position.

Although Abe's aides are hoping that his new post will give him a chance to increase his political strength, the situation does not warrant any such optimism. As Finance Minister Watanabe said in his remarks quoted above, a number of the new leaders may well fall by the wayside. Meanwhile, Yamashita, former director general of the defense agency, and transport minister Kosaka are aiming to take part in this competition among the new leaders. Thus the new-leader contest is likely to grow in intensity and attract a great deal of interest in the coming months.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

FISCAL 1982 BUDGET DRAFT

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 30 Dec 81 p 2

[Text] The government has adopted the fiscal 1982 budget draft which has given priority to defense expenditures. Defense appropriations were set at 2,586 billion yen, 31 billion yen more than the original Finance Ministry draft. The treatment of defense outlays was unusual when we take into account the government policy of tightening its belt.

The growth in defense expenditures surpassed that of educational expenditures in fiscal 1980 and that of social welfare expenditures by 0.01 percent in fiscal 1981. We expect the ratio of defense expenditures to the gross national product (GNP) to surpass the one percentage mark within a few more years. In short, we may see defense expenditures expanded beyond the 5 trillion mark in the early 1990s.

Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki has often repeated that Japan will not become a military power, he will not give priority to defense, and that he will use his own judgment (on defense outlays) from a comprehensive viewpoint. The budget draft reveals that he has failed to adhere to his pledges.

Suzuki seems to have given priority to defense expenditures by taking into account Japan's relations with the United States. In his talks in May with U.S. President Ronald Reagan, Suzuki promised that further efforts would be made by the Japanese government to increase its defense capability. Despite his pledge to "use his own judgment," Suzuki accepted the American request without a murmur.

We do not believe that the government can win public support for an expanded defense capability because we see no indication of an imminent military

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threat in the Far East. If there is no threat, we do not see the necessity of increased defense expenditures.

There was also an increase in economic cooperation expenditures. We believe that expanding aid to developing nations for humanitarian purposes and maintaining peace is the right idea. But, if this aid is extended in accordance with the East-West confrontation formula, such aid is likely to be used to suppress human rights or serve to increase tension.

On the other hand, outlays for social welfare and education were meager. We do not believe that the welfare of the people can be guaranteed if the social welfare system is tampered with so easily by fiscal policy. To make matters worse, the price of rice, Japanese National Railway fares and state university fees will be raised shortly. Salary earners cannot expect a tax cut but instead face a tax increase next year without it being official.

When we take a good look at these developments, we believe that the budget draft was compiled in an attempt by the government to faithfully follow the policy of the U.S. We wonder whether the government has abandoned its plan to establish a welfare state.

Another point is that little attention has been paid to remove the trade friction with other countries. The involvement of this friction can best be described as follows: low economic growth — inactive domestic demand and reliance on exports — an increased trade surplus — sharper friction.

To encourage domestic demand, the government merely resorted to lower interest rates and took no action in fiscal and tax policies which have prevented expanded domestic demand.

We expect low economic growth and expanded trade friction next year. Trade friction means an expanded "threat by the Japanese economy" from overseas viewpoints, which could result in the isolation of Japan if proper measures are not taken. The trade friction with the United States will rekindle the defense friction, which may prompt a further expansion of Japanese defense expenditures. In this respect, we believe that failure to pay due attention to the trade friction indicates that Japan is turning its back on peace.

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The budget draft was compiled behind closed doors by the government and the Liberal-Democratic Party. To remedy this procedure, we call for "civilian control" in forming the budget with the participation of tax payers. In this way, the general public would be able to check the handful of specialists who act irresponsibly.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

SUZUKI TOTTERS ON BUDGET COMPILATION

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 30 Dec 81 p 2

[Article by Takehiko Takahashi]

[Text]

After promising to "rehabilitate state finances without a tax increase," Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki has been driven into a painful position because of the unfavorable economic situation.

The definite aim of the "rehabilitation of state finances" is to put the issuance of deficit national bonds at zero in the fiscal 1984 budget. For that purpose, it was intended to reduce the national bonds by 1,830,000 million yen from the fiscal 1981 budget.

Notwithstanding, the need to supplement the fiscal 1981 budget arose. The main factors in this were 190,000 million yen for various compulsory expenses, 190,000 million yen to meet salary increases for government employees, 260,000 million yen for disaster rehabilitation, and 400,000 million yen to cover shortfalls in taxes (the amount not received because of stagnant business).

As against this, even if such measures are taken as 90,000 million yen economization in expenses, 10,000 million yen in revenue other than taxes, 180,000 million yen from the reserve fund (with 260,000 million yen in construction

bonds issued for disaster rehabilitation) there will still be a shortage of 375,000 million yen. The government has therefore decided to issue 375,000 million yen in deficit national bonds.

This policy was decided on the evening of Dec. 21. At that time, an emergency government-LDP liaison conference was held. The policy was explained to the Liberal-Democratic Party and its approval sought. Later a conference of cabinet ministers concerned with economic affairs was held and then a cabinet meeting to approve this policy.

On the following day, Dec. 22, the LDP called a meeting of its executives to discuss this government policy. Strong dissatisfaction with the government was expressed at this meeting. This was because such an important policy had been presented suddenly without any prior consultation with the LDP.

In particular, the Ministry of Finance seems to have decided this policy beforehand. It is said that among the Diet members who were formerly Finance Ministry officials, there were some who knew about this

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policy even before it was presented to the government-party liaison conference.

This led to dissatisfaction within the LDP ranks and voices were heard that "the Finance Ministry is impertinent and the Suzuki cabinet is being twisted around by the Finance Ministry."

At the joint meeting of the LDP's Executive Council and Political Affairs Research Council, which was held on Dec. 22, the Diet members affiliated with the LDP successively criticized this issuance of red-ink national bonds.

For example, the following opinions were voiced:

"It is said that the tax revenue forecast went wrong, but the ones who will suffer from this are the people. A growth target of 5.2 percent has been set for the next fiscal year but if this cannot be attained and if tax revenue estimates are wrong, who will assume the responsibility?"

"Prime Minister Suzuki said that he would stake his political life rehabilitating the state finances without a tax increase, and he made a public pledge to reduce red-ink national bonds by 2 trillion yen in the current fiscal year. On the contrary, he has increased the issuance of deficit national bonds. This is a very serious problem.

"The responsibility for any shortage of revenue will probably be shifted to the Diet which decided to enforce the National Personnel Authority's recommendations from April. But, who will take the real responsibility for the increased

issuance of red-ink national bonds?"

Ultimately, however, the issuance of 375,000 million yen in red-ink bonds was approved. Chairman Tatsuo Tanaka of the Executive Council made a strong representation to the government so that such a thing would not occur again. With this the problem ended — in a typical LDP manner.

The LDP's three key executives, including Secretary General Susumu Nikaido, called Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa to the headquarters on Dec. 23 and presented strong advice.

Earlier, Prime Minister Suzuki had sought an increase in revenue in the next fiscal year's budget by taxing the reserve funds for retirement allowances but this was vigorously opposed by the financial world. He therefore switched to finding revenue sources from "other than tax revenues."

This time, while promising to reduce the issuance of national bonds by 2 trillion yen, he has added 375,000 million yen.

Under these circumstances, conditions are steadily being built under which it will be impossible to compile the fiscal 1983 budget without a tax increase. The foundation of "rehabilitation of state finances without a tax increase" is likely to totter.

That this will be a big "minus" for the Suzuki administration itself cannot be avoided.

(The writer is an adviser to the Mainichi Newspapers and former chief editorial writer).

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REVIEW OF SUZUKI'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Tokyo THE JAPAN ECONOMIC JOURNAL in English 29 Dec 81 p 10

[Article by Teruo Tsutsumi]

[Text] On December 31, New Year's Eve, we Japanese purify ourselves by pounding out what Buddhists call the "108 carnal desires" as nearby temple bells ring and welcome the New Year totally afresh. This custom of starting afresh the New Year still prevails even among the Japanese young who have been exposed to totally different cultures and habits after the war. Thus, as if I were Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki, I would like to describe what Suzuki might have thought of his past days and the coming year:

"About the Japan-U.S. communique case, I should have known better. I really bungled it badly. That was when I visited Washington in May. When newsmen pressed me hard on the interpretation of a phrase 'alliance' in the Japan-U.S. communique, I showed off somewhat by saying 'there exists no military connotation involved in the alliance.' I am no hawk by nature and I wanted to emphasize that point.

Furthermore, I complained about the way that the gist of the communique was being drafted mainly by Foreign Ministry officials because Japanese newspapers have harangued day and day to the effect that Zenko Suzuki is moving to the road of militarism, and I just wanted to say to the press that 'Suzuki's stance is different' than what the papers report. Mr. Masayoshi Ito has resigned from the post of foreign minister, but I had no other means but to accept his resignation to protect the prime minister's inviolable position.

I heard that U.S. Government officials have inquired of former Prime Minister Fukuda about the viability of the Suzuki Administration. If this meant Mr. Reagan was mistruthful of my ability, maybe I have goofed it up after all.

About administrative and fiscal reforms, it is I who will carry them through. I have staked my political life on an objective that there will be no deficit-covering bonds in fiscal 1984. I will step down if that objective is not achieved. When we are forced to float additional deficit-covering bonds in the 1981 supplementary budget, newspapers say that the administration's original objective in the budget for fiscal 1982, the starting year for fiscal reconstruction, had already crumbled. But my reaction is that all I have to do is to issue no such bonds in 1984. Some members of the Liberal Democratic Party were outraged by the issuance of new deficit-covering bonds in the 1981 supplementary budget, but there is no other way but to do that because of plunged tax revenues.

The same misunderstanding also applies to administrative and fiscal reforms. The Second Ad Hoc Commission on Administrative Reform chaired by Mr. Toshiwo Doko will submit its serious report to me only next June. So only after Mr. Doko's report is submitted and the time needed for carrying out the reform, I could say that 'I, Zenko Suzuki, have executed the administrative reform.' Special laws related to administrative reform, passed by the Diet last fall, only legalized the curtailment of government outlays in the fiscal 1982 budget. Thus, many more days are needed before the serious implementation of administrative reform. I really think Japanese are too hasty and impetuous.

Newspapers demand that we should tackle the fundamental causes behind government deficits like snowballing deficits of the Japanese National Railways, but I just wonder when we can do that though it was also pointed out in Mr. Doko's report. To be honest, I

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don't have much confidence in carrying it out. To make things short, it all means that we have to negotiate with 400,000-to-500,000 union workers and this is not an easy task.

In conclusion, when I look back over my 365 days this year, I have a lot of things I feel regrettable. So next year, I will take more care of what I say and try not to show off. Since I appointed Mr. Susumu Nikaido to the post of LDP secretary general and won full-fledged support from the Tanaka faction, the LDP's most powerful faction, I am quite sure I can win a reelection bid for the LDP presidency scheduled next fall. So all I should do is to do things in an extra cautious manner."

(Teruo Tsutsumi is a Nihon Keizai deputy political editor.)

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

1982: CRUCIAL YEAR FOR SUZUKI

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 3 Jan 82 p 1

[Text] Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki will find 1982 to be a crucial year in his bid to hold on to the reins of government.

With his two-year term as president of the ruling conservative Liberal-Democratic Party due to expire in November, Suzuki's leadership will be at stake over critical domestic and foreign policy matters.

Defense and trade issues will continue to be bones of contention in Japan's relations with the United States and Western European countries.

The U.S. and European Community are not likely to give up pressure on Japan to ease trade friction in the wake of reports that Japan is bound to register an \$18-billion trade surplus with America and more than \$10 billion with the EC nations.

On the domestic scene, the 70-year-old premier will be watched to see if he will actually live up to his earlier pledge that he will stake his political career on putting into force the controversial task of streamlining the burgeoning government structure.

A series of court rulings on the prolonged trials of the 1976 Lockheed payoff scandal will come out, starting in late January and probably

climaxing before the end of the year with a verdict delivered on former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka.

Trials

The outcome of the court trials will not spare Suzuki from criticism. At worst, calls for his ouster may come from within the government party.

Suzuki reorganized his 20-member cabinet on Nov. 30, bringing new men to key posts such as foreign minister and minister of international trade and industry to check trouble over the domestic economy and trade.

At the same time, in what was widely regarded as his determination to stay in power, he reshaped the makeup of top party posts, giving the important post of party secretary general to Susumu Nikaido, Tanaka's trusted aide, who has been called a "grey high ranking official" in connection with the Lockheed bribery case, the worst postwar scandal in the country.

Tanaka has been on trial for allegedly receiving 500 million yen from Lockheed via its Japanese agent. Nikaido was rumored to have received 5 million yen but the prosecution failed to establish a criminal case against him.

Suzuki's appointment of Nikaido as the No. 2 man in the conservative party raised the eyebrows of some people in the party, including former Premiers Takeo Miki and Takeo Fukuda.

Tanaka's men also got influential party and parliamentary committee posts, indicating that Suzuki counted on their help in his bid for reelection as party head.

As a result, a strong foundation existing within the ruling party consisting of the factions led by Suzuki, Tanaka and Fukuda was shaken slightly.

Depending on the outcome of the trial involving Tanaka, Fukuda and his faction may turn against the prime minister.

A difficult issue confronting Suzuki is the task of resolving the trade friction and trimming government spending while at the same time boosting the domestic economy. The aluminum, textile and basic material producing industries have been in a prolonged slump.

Tariffs

His conservative administration has decided to reduce tariffs on imports two years ahead of the schedule agreed originally in the Tokyo Round of multilateral trade talks.

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It also has decided to simplify import standard and inspection procedures.

However, government sources admitted that these measures were mere steps designed to stop other nations from criticizing Japan for having a closed market.

The United States, meanwhile, has been stepping up calls on Japan to make greater efforts to reinforce its defense capability.

However, the fact is that there seems to be a limit to the government in treating defense as sacrosanct, as it also has to rebuild the deficit-stricken national finances.

Before the year-end, the government worked out the budget for fiscal 1982 starting April 1, which called for it to spend 49,680.8 billion yen (\$228 billion) in general account outlays.

Defense expenditures amounted to 2,586.1 billion yen (\$11.8 billion), representing an increase of 7.754 percent from fiscal 1981, or 0.933 percent of the country's gross national

product.

Also on the domestic political scene, there is a resurgence of a nonmilitary neutralist policy with the reelection of Ichio Asukata as chairman of Japan's No. 1 opposition Socialist Party as a turning point.

That will be a headache for Prime Minister Suzuki.

The ad hoc committee on administrative reform is scheduled to issue its basic recommendation on streamlining the government structure in the summer.

The Suzuki administration generated the nation's distrust at the year-end by deciding to seek a tax increase totaling 350 billion yen and to issue national bonds worth 375 billion to make up for a tax revenue shortfall.

Suzuki appears to be inclined to steer the government with emphasis on administrative reform during the first half of the year and on boosting the economy in the second half.

There is no telling, however, whether he will have his way in leading the country in 1982.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

SUZUKI: DEFENSE BUDGET WILL HAVE POPULAR SUPPORT

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 30 Dec 81 p 1

[Text]

Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki, while pledging Japan will never be a military power again, said that the country is ready to play a national defense role matched with its economic power.

"Japan should play a role commensurate with its national strength for world peace and security now that it has a 10 percent share of the world total gross national product (GNP)," Suzuki said at a press conference Monday night.

He said the government proposal for a 7.75 percent defense spending increase in fiscal 1982 will be backed by the people.

But he quickly added: "My administration will stick to the 1976 policy of holding Japan's defense expenditure below 1 percent of the GNP.

"I don't think we have to change that policy for the time being," Suzuki said.

The 1982 defense budget draft of 2.6 trillion yen (about \$11.8 billion) is roughly equal to 0.93 percent of Japan's projected GNP, up from 0.91 percent in the current fiscal year.

The 7.75 percent defense budget boost compares with the 2.8 percent increase in social welfare spending and the 2.6 percent hike in educational outlays.

Meanwhile, the national defense council has approved the government's order for P-3C antisubmarine patrol planes and F-15 jet fighters for two consecutive years in fiscal 1983.

The fiscal 1983 request will involve 10 P-3Cs and 20 F-15s, government sources said.

They said it may also include an additional fleet of 10 P-3C Orions initially scheduled to be ordered in fiscal 1984.

Japan has been asked by the United States to increase its deployment of antisubmarine intelligence aircraft in accordance with the 1981 Japan-U.S. joint communique, which acknowledged the "desirability of an appropriate division of (defense) roles" between the two countries in the North-western Pacific — an area of growing Soviet naval strength.

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ADMINISTRATION DESTROYED BY ITS CREATOR

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 6 Jan 82 p 2

[Article by Takehiko Takahashi]

[Text]

In Japan of late, there has been no case of an administration collapsing because its policies have reached an impasse. Since the persons in charge of the administration have all come out of the Liberal-Democratic Party, for the policies to arrive at an impasse would be a big "minus" for the LDP as a whole.

Therefore, when policy problems come into the spotlight, a power struggle invariably takes place within the party and this begins to shake the administration. As the result, a change of the administration may be carried out.

In addition, there is a strange phenomenon. There are many cases of an administration being destroyed by the motive power which wielded the greatest influence in creating it. This means that power dominates the political world, and while that strength creates an administration, it also destroys an administration.

A recent example is that of the Tanaka administration. Its motive power was money but it was also forced to withdraw over a money problem. The succeeding Miki administration was created by the then LDP

Vice President Etsusaburo Shiina but when that Shiina became anti-Miki, the Miki cabinet collapsed. Next came the Fukuda administration which was created by the influences that toppled the Miki administration. This time the Fukuda administration was destroyed by a split within the foregoing influences, namely the Tanaka and Ohira influences.

The curtain dropped on the Ohira administration with the death of Masayoshi Ohira. The succeeding Suzuki cabinet was born with the support of the Tanaka and Fukuda influences. Accordingly, when the LDP election of the party president is held in November this year, whether Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki will be able to continue as the party president will be determined by the movements of the Tanaka and Fukuda influences.

Even if Prime Minister Suzuki and the Suzuki faction desire a continuation of the Suzuki administration, if this is opposed by the Tanaka and Fukuda factions, the Suzuki administration will be destroyed.

The present Suzuki cabinet is a whole party cabinet. There is

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no mainstream versus anti-mainstream confrontation. All the factions are represented among the cabinet ministers and party officials. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the confrontation between the Tanaka and Fukuda factions has ended.

The Tanaka faction, against the background of 108 Diet members affiliated with it, is grasping the leadership within the LDP. The Fukuda faction is greatly dissatisfied with this. Nevertheless, the present Fukuda faction does not have the strength to attack the Tanaka faction. It is patiently waiting an opportunity.

That opportunity may come with the verdict to be handed down in autumn this year against former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in the Lockheed trial. It is not known what kind of verdict the judges will render, but it is generally believed that the judgment will find Tanaka "guilty."

Fate Of Suzuki

If Tanaka is found "guilty," what will happen to the Tanaka faction? This will have a close connection with the fate of the Suzuki administration.

Two opinions are being held in regard to the Tanaka faction in case former Prime Minister Tanaka is found "guilty." They are as follows:

(1) The unity of the Tanaka faction will not be disturbed. If anyone seeks to secede from the faction, he will be labeled as a "traitor" and the Tanaka faction will threaten him by entering a new candidate in that person's electoral district. Consequently, even if there is a desire to withdraw from the

Tanaka faction, it will be difficult if not impossible to do so. The strength of the Tanaka faction will remain unchanged.

(2) For a Diet member, the most important thing is to win in the next election. If Tanaka is found "guilty," other candidates in an electoral district will concentrate their attacks on the Tanaka faction's candidate, branding him as "a henchman of a corrupt boss." The election campaign of that candidate will face a great disadvantage.

Because of this, even if called "a traitor," it might be preferable to secede from the Tanaka faction in order to assure one's own election. If such a move spreads, the influence of the Tanaka faction might quickly be reduced to one-half.

Both views seem logical but it is difficult to predict what will actually happen. The situation is likely to change greatly, depending on the movements of the mass media and public opinion at that time.

In any case, there is strong possibility of the Tanaka faction receiving a big shock from a "guilty" verdict for Tanaka. Nor will it be possible to avert the blow that the Suzuki administration will suffer.

The question will be how to cope with the people's criticism of a "Suzuki administration supported by a dirty group." Depending on the steps to be taken, the possibility looms of the Tanaka and Fukuda factions, which created the Suzuki administration, acting to destroy it.

(The writer is an adviser to the Mainichi Newspapers and former chief editorial writer)...

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

UPCOMING JAPAN-USSR TALKS VIEWED

OW151235 Tokyo TOKYO SHIMBUN in Japanese 12 Dec 81 Morning Edition p 4

[Editorial: "Good Opportunity To Make a Restart in Japan-USSR Relations"]

[Text] Japan and the Soviet Union are scheduled to resume working-level consultations in Moscow on 20 and 21 January next year for the first time in about 2 and 1/2 years. The previous talks were suspended in the wake of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. One may say that the coming talks are no big thing since they will be nothing more than a businesslike exchange of views on international and bilateral problems between officials of the vice ministerial level. Nevertheless, it is more necessary than anything else for the two countries to sit at the table to find ways to improve their frosty relations.

In this sense, we are glad that the date of the talks has been set, and we hope that the talks will be fruitful and pave the way for resuming regular consultations between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

To this end, it is essential for the Soviet Union to make some compromise on the issue of the northern territories, the most important cause of the impasse in Japan-USSR relations. With these relations about to enter a new phase with the scheduled resumption of the working-level consultations, we once again call upon the Soviet Union to make some compromise.

It is a coincidence that the Japanese ambassador to Moscow and the Soviet ambassador to Tokyo are both to be replaced. On the Japanese side, former Deputy Foreign Minister Takashima, who has always been concerned with the continuously deteriorating Japan-USSR relations, will become the new ambassador to the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side, present Ambassador Polyanskiy will be replaced. The outgoing ambassador has been in his post for 5 years and 8 months since April 1976. This is certainly a good opportunity to make a restart in Japan-USSR relations.

We do not mean to say that Mr Polyanskiy was a failure as ambassador. Despite the fact that since the Afghan incident relations between the two countries have been at their lowest ebb, he preserved his humor and smile under the difficult circumstances, striving hard to improve the relations between the two countries as best as he could. We value his efforts highly. During his tenure there was the MIG-25 incident and circumstances were very unfavorable for him.

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He deserves sympathy for this. But it is very regrettable that he merely played the role of conveyor of the home government's intentions. True, he was demoted when he arrived in Japan to assume his new post, but he was a prestigious ambassador because he once was a CPSU Politburo member and once served as agriculture minister. Moreover, he must have very deeply felt the strong desire of the Japanese people, both the government and the public, for the return of the northern territories. Accordingly, he should have been able to ask the Kremlin to reconsider its intransigent position that there is no unsettled territorial issue.

According to a public poll on foreign relations conducted last September by the Prime Minister's office, 84 percent of the 3,000 men and women of 20 years and older polled answered that they felt "no affinity" for the Soviet Union. As a reason, 56 percent said they felt so because of the rigid Soviet stance on the northern territories issue. In view of the Soviet intransigence, we wonder if the Soviet Union is not totally indifferent to such feelings of the other side.

Nevertheless, as indicated by the Soviet consent to resumption of [word indistinct] fishing near Kaigarajima [Signalny Island] by Japanese fishermen, the Soviet Union is concerned about improving its relations with Japan. Economic cooperation in the development of Siberia will be greatly beneficial to Japan as well as to the Soviet Union. Although the territorial issue remains unsettled, Japan for its part should maintain a constant dialogue with the Soviet Union and cooperate with it wherever it should.

It is feared that talk about a Soviet threat will only exacerbate tension and mutual distrust between the two countries and make the rigid Soviet stance on the territorial issue still more rigid.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

POPULARITY OF SUZUKI CABINET INCREASES

OW141213 Tokyo ASAHI EVENING NEWS in English 12 Dec 81 p 1

[Text] The Suzuki cabinet has regained a popular support rate of 40 percent in the latest ASAHI SHIMBUN public opinion poll.

It is the first time in eight months that the support rate has swung up to that level. The public seems to have been favorably impressed by the events since the previous ASAHI survey in October, such as the government's push about administrative reform legislation and the reshuffle of the cabinet and officers of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party.

Among the previous LDP administrations, only the cabinet of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda enjoyed popular support in the [word indistinct]-percent range a year and five months after its inauguration.

The latest nationwide ASAHI poll, conducted on Dec. 9 and 10, showed that popular support for the Suzuki cabinet has risen to 40 percent from 36 percent in October, and that the non-support rate remains the same at 36 percent.

The LDP commanded 54 percent support, marginally down from the all-time high of 55 percent recorded in December last year.

A notable phenomenon is that support for the clean government party (Komeito) has dropped to the lowest level in 15 years. The ASAHI survey revealed that the No. 2 opposition party, which has steadily polled 4-6 percent support in the past, now has only 3 percent support.

Support for the Suzuki cabinet among LDP supporters has recovered to 58 percent from 51 percent in October, the lowest figure for the administration. This is a major factor behind the improvement in the overall support rate.

Among the respondents supporting the Suzuki cabinet, the proportion of those professing support on the grounds that it is an LDP cabinet increased from 22 percent in October to 25 percent. The ratio of those who explained that they support it because it is headed by Zenko Suzuki rose from 5 percent to [figure indistinct] percent.

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The cabinet has gained more support in all the age brackets over 30. The rate is 34 percent among people between 30 and 35, 44 percent among people in their 40s, and 48 percent among people in their 50s. All the figures are about 7 percent higher than in the previous poll in October.

There has also been an improvement of similar magnitude in vocationally categorized support figures--43 percent among the self-employed, merchants and factory operators, 38 percent among commercial workers, and 34 percent among clerical workers.

Policies were cited by 16 percent of the pollees against the Suzuki cabinet as the reason for their non-support, followed by 9 percent who said they are against it because it is an LDP administration.

The non-support rate tended to be high among people in their 20s and 30s, clerical, industrial and commercial workers.

The 54 percent support for the LDP compared with 17 percent for the Japan Socialist Party, 6 percent for the Democratic Socialist Party, 4 percent for the Japan Communist Party, 2 percent for the New Liberal Club, and 1 percent for the United Social Democratic Party. The rate for the JSP is 1 percent higher than in October.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

CURRENT STATUS OF RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES DISCUSSED

Response to U.S. Criticism

Tokyo NIHON KEIZAI SHIMBUN in Japanese 11 Dec 81 p 1

[Article by Fuji Kamiya, Professor of Keio University]

[Text] Japan-U.S. relations have clearly worsened during the past year. Visitors from the United States whom I have met recently have almost unanimously told me that discontent and frustration with Japan is getting more and more serious at the grassroots level in the United States, and that it is characterized by a profound psychological link between discontent over the trade issue and frustration concerning the defense issue. Since this is one of the difficult problems that concern me constantly, I shall frankly write some of my thoughts here.

First, suppose we accept at face value the American criticism of Japan. Then our strategy must be, first of all, to sever the linkage between the economic and defense issues. Many Americans seem to think that a primary reason for Japan's economic advancement over many years has been excessively small defense spending. Although it may be a secondary factor, it cannot be the primary factor. Persuading the United States on this point and moving the friction between the two countries from the level of emotion to that of reason is more important than anything else.

Second, the economic issue that draws particular bilateral attention is the U.S. trade deficit vis-a-vis Japan, which already exceeds \$15 billion this year. Concerning defense, the issue is the rate of increase of defense spending in next year's Japanese budget, which is an indicator of the positiveness of the Japanese attitude toward defense. In particular, it is whether or not the widely advertised 7.5-percent increase includes a 2.4-percent increase for personnel costs. Frankly speaking, for Japan the stakes are overwhelmingly larger in the economic issue and relatively smaller in the defense issue. The aforementioned 2.4-percent increase is approximately \$260 million in absolute terms. If we could expect a good effect regarding the separation of the economic and the defense issues by spending this much, it would be nothing but nearsighted for the Japanese Government to reject the 2.4-percent increase because of financial difficulties.

Third, for the Japanese Government not to reject it, however, the United States must also cool off a bit. The issue of the trade deficit with Japan somehow resembles a student who got a "C" or "F" accusing another student who got an "A" of cheating. The student who got the bad grade should study two or three times as hard before criticizing the other student. That is common sense, isn't it?

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As for a man of the secretary of commerce's standing to declare publicly that the cause of the trade imbalance between the United States and Japan lies in Japan's cultural traditions and social constitution, it is impolite to say that "poverty dulls the wit," but I cannot help but be sorry to find that the United States has gone this far.

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Differences in Decisionmaking

Tokyo SEIRON in Japanese Dec 81 pp 228-229

[Article by Fuji Kamiya, Professor of Keio University]

[Text] Since the newspapers have widely reported on the Fifth Shimoda Conference held recently in Oiso, Kanagawa Prefecture, there is little more for me to write. The conference adopted the following procedure: Except for the plenary session, all participants were divided into two groups, A and B. Each group discussed the same topics separately. I was a cochairman of Group A, along with Professor Hugh Patrick of Yale University, and here I would like to introduce the following exchange of opinions in Group A.

It concerned the decisionmaking methods in the United States and Japan--a comparison of the merits and demerits of the Japanese consensus method and the American decision-by-majority method. One American legislator started the discussion.

"At present the Republicans are in the majority by only 51 seats in the House [as published] and 7 seats in the Senate. Nevertheless, the Republican Reagan administration has been making new changes one after another. In comparison, although in the Diet, it has been holding to an ambiguous attitude even on a decision that could justifiably be made--a more positive defense policy. The Japanese consensus method and its merits have recently been publicized in the United States, but we cannot deny that it has the serious demerit of inefficiency. Japan has lost 'leadership' in favor of 'consensus,'" he asserted.

Ten years ago, in this kind of situation the Japanese side would not have held its own; it would have offered a few excuses and would have tried to evade the point of the discussion. But nowadays the situation has changed completely. Sensing a good fight, so many hands were raised on the Japanese side to make counterarguments or explanations that the chairmen were perplexed about how to control the speakers.

The Japanese participants responded to the Americans by arguing the following points, in particular.

The American way of pushing through with strong leadership and decision-by-majority may indeed be very efficient in some respects. But because various decisions made in these ways often lack the base of a sufficiently strong consensus, they tend to lose staying power quickly and invite setbacks and turnabouts whenever they come up against a wall.

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In other words, under the American method, big policy changes occur often and the consistency of policy is easily damaged. Americans seem to be sure about the difference between Carter and Reagan. However, Japanese are not so sure how long the so-called new Reagan line will last. Japanese always wonder if it will change again in 2 or 3 years.

Even within the Carter era, policy swung widely from big reductions to increases in military spending and from withdrawal to a freezing of U.S. ground forces in Korea. Under such conditions allied countries cannot follow the United States. Under the Japanese consensus method, the process of making decisions is certainly inefficient. However, once a decision is made, it cannot easily collapse and tends to retain continuity and consistency.

In summary, the opinion of the Japanese side was as follows: While American policy lacks credibility, Japanese policy possesses it. This factor is especially important in the case of diplomatic policy.

One Japanese professor wittily made a cynical remark, saying: "American friends seem to change spouses one after another in the same way. However, I have never thought of changing my wife at all."

I must point out that these arguments were never presented in a confrontational manner; instead, they were exchanged in a friendly atmosphere. At any rate, it was a good opportunity for both Americans and Japanese to reflect on themselves. During the sessions of the Shimoda Conference the newspapers reported that the U.S. Government had decided to cut \$30 billion over 3 years from President Reagan's original plan for strengthening the armed forces. Recently, the number has changed to \$13 billion. There is no guarantee that this number will not be changed further in the future. Doesn't the United States ever think that, in asking its allies for a specific increase in military forces while the United States itself is this unsettled, it cannot be taken at face value?

From the discussion, I also think Japan should reexamine its attitude more seriously than the United States. Hereafter, we shall also consider important the attitude of agreeing to disagree, that is to, not be blindly thankful for what the Americans say as we were a decade ago and to make clear the differences of opinion. Frankly speaking, however, even when Japanese diplomatic policy has sought activism and clearness in various senses in the eighties, it has still avoided making definite the particulars of its goals, even though the method of explaining general policy has changed. And this causes unnecessary frustration on the American side.

At the Shimoda Conference the strong U.S. discontent with Japan became clear in regard not to only the defense issue but also to the economic issue, in particular the issue of an open market. There are some among the Americans who want to make extreme demands on Japan.

However, the majority of them are frustrated; they are asking not that Japan accept one number or another, but that Japan decide a little sooner what, by when, and how.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

ASUKATA REELECTED AS JSP CHAIRMAN

OW271013 Tokyo ASAHI EVENING NEWS in English 25 Dec 81 p 5

[ASAHI SHIMBUN 24 December editorial: "Socialist Party Election"]

[Text] In its first chairmanship election open to all party members, the Japan Socialist Party re-elected Ichio Asukata to his third term. Asukata won an overwhelming victory that exceeded most expectations. One wonders if this will lead to a JSP recovery.

Asukata's victory, in which he received nearly 70 percent of the votes cast by the party's 60,000 registered members, was brought about by a coalition of nearly all of the party's centrist groups, which form the nucleus of the party, and its left-wing factions. These two groups together were able to give Asukata a third term without the help of the anti-Asukata right-wing factions of the party. So it seems that the JSP has decided to take a stand against the trend toward the right which has been evident in the Liberal-Democratic Party for the last year or two.

It is only on grounds such as these that one can understand the radical statements made by Asukata throughout the election campaign, which included calls for the abrogation of the security treaty with the United States and dissolution of the self-defense forces. And the two other candidates, the party vice chairman, Shoichi Shimodaira, and the chairman of the policy board, Sanji Muto, who both belong to right-wing factions, asserted during the campaign that they supported the JSP's policy of a unarmed and neutral Japan. It seems that the shift to the right in the LDP has caused a shift to the left in the JSP.

But it goes without saying that the advocacy of unarmed neutrality cannot by itself have much influence on the defense buildup that is now under way. In the long-term, one wonders what alternative plans can be prepared to counter the government's budgetary proposals for fiscal 1982. And what should be the JSP's response to the government's policy of increasing the defense budget? Because there was not enough discussion of concrete matters, the campaign for the party chairmanship revolved around abstractions.

The severe criticism from outside the party concerning this should be noted by the JSP's leadership and, above all, by Asukata. Confronting the party in power

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and slowing down its drift to the right is the duty of the leading opposition party. But its responsibility goes beyond this. The party should also get other opposition parties on its side with respect to both domestic and foreign policy issues and, furthermore, it should propose alternative plans that the government and party in power will have to discuss. The JSP should be aware of its duties as an opposition party.

Nevertheless, the election of the party chairman by a vote of all the party members is not insignificant. Hitherto, these elections have been closed-door bargaining sessions between cliques, with at most a few hundred convention delegates participating in the final voting. This was the first time that the selection was made in accordance with the will of all the party members. One can assume that Asukata really does have the backing of the party members as a whole.

Nevertheless, the campaign speeches of the three candidates raised some questions that are difficult to answer. Although each man developed his own arguments, as chairman of the policy board and vice chairman, Muto and Shimodaira have been dealing with Asukata on a daily basis, and it is hard to believe that their opinions have been influenced by this. One wonders how Asukata has been treating the differences within the party, which are represented by Muto and Shimodaira who sit next to him. Along with a lack of grass-roots activities, the lack of debate within the party in ordinary circumstances should be discussed.

Though he won the election overwhelmingly, Asukata should consider the reasons for which Muto and Shimodaira ran. The serious doubts within the party concerning Asukata's accomplishments in the last four years were expressed in the form of these two men running for election. During these four years, factional rivalry has subsided, but this is only a function of the general decrease of activity within the party.

But Asukata has now attained the support of nearly 40,000 party members, and having beaten his rivals so soundly, he is finally in a position to demonstrate his leadership.

What will he try to do? And what kind of party structure will he create so that his plans can be brought to fruition? How will he proceed with the idea of a party that is open to the people? The time has come for these questions to be answered.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

LDP'S DIPLOMACY FEUD

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 18 Dec 81 p 2

[Article by Raisuke Honda]

[Text] The new Suzuki cabinet has begun to tackle in earnest the task of ending trade friction with the US and Western Europe but there is disturbing competition on who will have the biggest say on foreign policy.

Disputes over hegemony in this field have erupted between the government and the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) and among leaders as well.

Before reshuffling his cabinet, Prime Minister Suzuki made several pledges. He said he would exert all-out efforts to carry out administrative reform and to promote a business recovery. He promised also to eliminate trade friction and therefore would give importance to his selection of foreign minister and international trade and industry minister.

However, he apparently took into account primarily intraparty factional balance in selecting Yoshio Sakurachi as foreign minister and Shintaro Abe as international trade and industry minister.

The two posts are now occupied by the "big names" of the party who once served as party secretary-general and chairman of the Policy Board respectively.

But it cannot be said with confidence that they are fully competent in their jobs since neither of them served in these posts before.

In this situation the premier, after consulting with new Secretary-General Susumu Nikaido, has set up the Special Council for International Economic Affairs and has appointed Masumi Esaki of the Tanaka faction as chairman.

Suzuki has a rationale for his selection of Esaki.

He at first intended to appoint Esaki, who is close to him, foreign minister. Suzuki reluctantly had to replace Sunao So-

noda who had become an unpopular foreign minister both at home and abroad. Sonoda was close to the premier and so would have been Esaki.

But the situation in the Tanaka faction did not allow Suzuki to make Esaki his foreign minister. Therefore, he appointed him chairman of the special council where he could act as a middleman both for the party and cabinet.

Although Nikaido went along with Suzuki's appointments, he does not share the premier's views on how these cabinet ministers will assert themselves.

With the center of power of the LDP in its hands, the Tanaka faction has no intention of allowing Sakurachi of the Nakasone faction or Abe of the Fukuda faction to assert their leadership in the field of foreign policy.

Therefore, the Tanaka faction has great hopes for the special council with their own faction member as chairman.

Nikaido says that in the present age foreign policy cannot be fully entrusted to the Foreign Ministry or trade policy to the International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI). He urges that the ruling party actively take a leading role by contacting US congressmen or parliamentarians from other countries and government leaders to solve international issues.

Esaki is eager to fulfill this task. He says he has been asked by Suzuki to work to coordinate views of the party and cabinet.

It is only natural that the Nakasone and Fukuda factions behind Sakurachi and Abe are displeased with these developments. In fact, serious dissatisfaction with the behavior of the premier and the Tanaka faction is smoldering in the Fukuda faction.

There is also the element of personal prestige which complicates the feuding among the factions.

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When he was chairman of the Executive Board, Nikaïdo showed a great interest in foreign policy as it applied to relations with the US and Western Europe. His interest remains strong and he is expected to visit the US next January at the "request" of the foreign minister.

Esaki is also in high spirits, saying he will visit the US and Western Europe in order to hear fresh opinions from those countries.

Rokusuke Tanaka, new chairman of the Policy Board and former international trade and industry minister, is also eager with the confidence that he is the best expert on the trade friction issue.

In this situation, there is the concern that the Japanese Government may be thrown into disarray and find it difficult to unify its position in negotiating with other countries.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

STORM OVER LDP VEEP CHOICE

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 11 Dec 81 p 2

[Article by Raisuke Honda]

[Text] The ruling Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) is now embroiled in a power struggle over who should fill the long-vacant post of party vice-president, if it is revived.

Prime Minister Suzuki himself turned the matter into an issue. In answering a question at a news conference after the cabinet reshuffle on how he would deal with the vacant post, he said he would like to think about the problem until the party convention scheduled for next January.

No one had even brought up the matter of filling the post of vice-president when the reshuffle process was in progress.

Under the circumstances, reporters expected the premier to reply that he had no intention to select a vice-president.

Suzuki's statement made some members of the LDP believe that the premier wanted to choose a vice-president who would advance his own campaign to be reelected party president in the election scheduled for next autumn.

The late Eisaku Sato, who served as premier for a long time, used vice-president Shojiro Kawashima as a middleman in his political dealings.

The Fukuda faction welcomed the premier's statement.

The Fukuda faction complains strongly that the party has been "taken over" by the Tanaka faction through the recent cabinet and LDP reshuffle.

Such important posts as secretary-general, deputy secretary-general, chairman of the Diet Policy Board and director of the Treasury Bureau are now held by the Tanaka faction.

In an effort to curb the power of the Tanaka faction, the Fukuda faction wants to capture the post of vice-president for

a member of its own faction or an LDP man friendly to the faction.

To this end, former premier Fukuda is promoting two candidates. One is Tadao Kuraishi, a senior member of the Fukuda faction, and the other is Hirokichi Nadao, former speaker of the House of Representatives who is intimate with Fukuda as the second candidate.

However, Secretary-General Susumu Ni-kaido and other leaders of the Tanaka faction, which has virtually seized control of the LDP, feel unhappy with Fukuda's moves to fill the vice-president post with his own man.

They are ready to reject the demand when the Fukuda faction files a request to select a vice-president. They will instantly reply that there is no need of reviving such a post.

Nevertheless, if the premier strongly desires to choose a vice-president, the Tanaka faction, the strongest within the LDP, will recommend nonfactional Ryutaro Nemoto who is friendly to the Tanaka faction.

Another pressure on Suzuki comes from House of Councilors' members who constantly complain that they are discriminated against in comparison to lower house members in getting choice jobs.

The upper house members are complicating the problem.

Last year they succeeded in revising party regulations to enable them to have a vice-president as their representative. They are demanding that two vice-presidents be selected, if the vice-presidency is restored, and one of them should be selected from among them.

They have chosen Ken Yasui of the Fukuda faction, former president of the upper house, as their candidate. But this only creates a dilemma for the Fukuda faction.

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However, Suzuki remains calm in the small storm caused by his statement. This is consistent with his political attitude that time will settle all problems.

Suzuki, who is supported by a careful balance of the Suzuki, Tanaka and Fukuda factions, most certainly wants to choose a man for the post that will promote his own political ambitions.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

VOTING SYSTEM IS IN NEED OF CHANGE

Tokyo THE JAPAN ECONOMIC JOURNAL in English 22 Dec 81 p 10

[Article by Yuji Koido]

[Text] Individual voter's rights to elect parliamentarians should be of equal importance in post-World War II democratic Japan. When those rights are found to be unequal in practice, the Diet is supposed to act to correct the situation. The fact is that even though the weights of votes have been found unequal, the Diet has done nothing to correct the inequality. Consequently voters living in big cities have long voiced dissatisfaction with the gap.

According to a recent report by the Ministry of Home Affairs, constituents in Japan totaled 82,349,760 as of September 2, 1981, up 1.01 per cent or 825,034 over the previous year. Chiba Prefecture recorded the biggest increase — 77,585 voters or 2.43 per cent over the previous year. The constituency with the most voters per one Lower House parliamentarian is No. 4 District of Chiba Prefecture (338,386 voters for 3 Dietmen) and the smallest, No. 5 District of Hyogo Prefecture (81,903 voters for 3 Dietmen). The gap between those two electoral districts in terms of the weight of one vote is 1 to 4.13. About 4 votes of Chiba's No. 4 District have the same weight as one vote of Hyogo's No. 5 District. Such a gap was biggest in 1975 — 5.52 times to one, but since election districts and seats increased in 1976, it narrowed to 3.48 times that year and then expanded to 3.59 times in 1977, 3.84 times in 1978, 3.88 times in 1979 and 4.01 times in 1980. Chiba's No. 4 District is the bedroom suburbs of metropolitan Tokyo and its population is certain to increase in the future. Thus, unless the number of elective seats is changed, there is no doubt that the gap in the gravity of one vote will be expanded in the coming years.

On the other hand, in the local constituencies of the House of Councillors, Kanagawa Prefecture has most voters per one Dietman, with total voters reaching 1,202,685 (for four Dietmen) and Tottori Prefecture least voters. The gap in the gravity of one vote between the two districts is 5.45 to one, compared with 5.40 to one in 1980.

As the gap in the gravity of one vote is expanding yearly, legal suits seeking the invalidity of elections and compensations were filed in the courts each time national elections were held in the past. For example, there have been suits filed against the simultaneous elections for both houses of the Diet last year, 15 cases of which were deliberated in the Supreme Court and two cases in the Osaka High Court.

In the past, various courts have handed down rulings on the unconstitutionality of the gap in specific Lower House elections. For example, the Supreme Court ruled in 1976 that a gap of more than 5 times is unconstitutional, the Tokyo High Court in 1978 that the gap of 3.5 times is unconstitutional and the Sapporo District Court in 1981 that the gap of about 3 times is unconstitutional. Furthermore, the Tokyo High Court ruled in 1980 that the gap of more than 2 times is unconstitutional, thereby indicating for the first time the clear demarcation between the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of one vote's gravity.

As mentioned earlier, the gravity of one vote is supposed to be equal in Japan. Thus the Public Office Election Act stipulates that the quorum of the House of Representatives "will be corrected on the basis of census." But the fact is that the correction of election

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districts and the quorum is very hard to come by because it involves complicated conflicts of interests of various parties and individual Dietmen. That is, various court rulings on the unconstitutionality of the gap keenly pointed out the negligence of the legislative branch in correcting the situation.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party came up with a plan to correct the quorum, keeping in mind the number of voters and the balloting ratios, but the plan has never materialized. Opposition parties are unanimous in principle over the need for the quorum correction, but always say "No" when asked if they have any specific measures to correct the situation. The Ministry of Home Affairs is also reluctant to do anything about it, saying "it should be done after getting agreement from various parties." Consequently, the fact is that it is very hard to correct the quorum in Japan. Though the gap in the gravity of votes is likely to persist in the years to come, the Diet should seriously tackle the question of eliminating the gap.

(Yuji Koido is a Nihon Keizai deputy political editor.)

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IMPACT OF LOCKHEED TRIAL

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 27 Dec 81 p 2

[Article by Takuo Hayashi]

[Text] It was in January 1977 that the trial involving the Lockheed payoff scandal, said to be the largest political scandal in postwar years, got under way at the Tokyo District Court. The 16 defendants including former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka were divided into three groups according to the routes through which funds were funneled. Hence the trial proceeded in a tripod.

Verdicts have already been handed down on two of the defendants in the so-called "Kodama route" in early November this year. The sentence imposed on Kenji Osano, a business magnate and a bosom friend of ex-Prime Minister Tanaka, was an unexpectedly severe one-year imprisonment without a stay of execution. He was found guilty of perjury in his testimony when he had been summoned to the Diet as a witness.

Of the remaining two routes, judgment on the defendants in the so-called "All Nippon Airways (ANA) route" will be handed down on two occasions, first on Jan. 26 next year, and then sometime in February or March. The last to come is the judgment on the defendants including ex-Prime Minister Tanaka in the so-called

"Marubeni Corporation route."

With regard to the Marubeni route, the prosecution will formally demand a sentence around March next year. Speculation is rife among informed sources that "in the case of ex-Prime Minister Tanaka," the prosecution may demand the highest sentence of five years' imprisonment for receiving a bribe.

Final Decision

In an important case like this, it usually takes about half a year after the end of trial to render final decisions. It is speculated that judgment will be given to ex-Prime Minister Tanaka et al between October and December next year. A prevailing view among informed sources is that Tanaka will be found guilty.

How will Japanese politics in 1982 be affected by the series of judgments on the Lockheed payoff scandal case climaxing in the judgment on Tanaka? Forecasts of the domestic political situation next year may vary according to whether or not we believe that the forthcoming judgments will have a big impact.

Among the defendants in the "ANA route" are an ex-transport minister and ex-

parliamentary vice transport minister. Judgment will be given to them in February or in March next year. If the court rules that they have received bribes from ANA, it will be very embarrassing for Susumu Nikaido, secretary-general of the Liberal-Democratic Party.

Secretary-General Nikaido, a right-hand man of ex-Prime Minister Tanaka, assumed this important post of the party at the end of November and has been talked about as one of the "suspicious, gray high-ranking officials." This is because the prosecution maintains that "although he was not indicted, he is one of the politicians who had received dirty money from ANA."

If the court finds the two mentioned above not guilty, rejecting the demand of the prosecution, Secretary General Nikaido will be found clean automatically, although indirectly.

Dirty Money

Thus if the two are found guilty, it may indirectly acknowledge that Nikaido had received the dirty money. Even if they are not, people will have such an impression about him, to say the least.

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What will be the political implications in that case?

An opinion has it that Nakaido will be forced to resign from his post in the face of strong criticism by the opposition parties and public opinion as well. Others say that "although he may accept such criticism, he will manage to stay in office."

With regard to the influence on politics of a "ruling finding Tanaka guilty," some speculate that there will be an extremely serious impact, while others believe there will not be that much impact. The former believe that "those anti-Tanaka influences centering on former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, made up of such sections as the Fukuda faction, the Toshiro Komoto faction and the Ichiro

Nakagawa group, in concert with the anti-Tanaka criticism of the opposition parties and public opinion, will rise up again and stage a serious intra-party struggle with various pro-Tanaka factions."

The latter are of the opinion that "such will not happen. Even after Tanaka is found guilty, the Tanaka faction will continue having a powerful say within the party and most of the other factions may not desire to confront the Tanaka faction directly."

Which view is correct after all? I, for one, feel that it may be wrong to maintain that the impact on politics of the Lockheed judgments will be exceedingly great.

(The writer is a journalist-lecturer at Musashi University in Tokyo).

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

SUZUKI PRODS POLYANSKII ON NORTHERN ISLES ISSUE

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 7 Jan 82 p 1

[Text] Prime Minister Suzuki in a meeting Wednesday with outgoing Soviet Ambassador Dmitrii Polyanskii expressed "strong hopes" that the Japanese claim to the Soviet-held islands off Hokkaido will be taken up in the forthcoming Japanese-Soviet working-level talks January 20-21.

Suzuki talked with Polyanskii, who is to be transferred shortly from his Tokyo post, at the premier's official residence.

The Suzuki - Polyanskii talks centered on two major questions—the Polish crisis and relations between Japan and the Soviet Union—according to a government spokesman.

This was the first time in nearly four years that a Japanese premier had a private talk with the Soviet ambassador since the meeting on February 22 between then prime minister Takeo Fukuda and Polyanskii.

During the 50-minute talk, Suzuki reiterated Japan's basic stand on the territorial issue between the two countries, demanding that bilateral negotiations be resumed on the basis of the 1973 joint communique following the summit between then Japanese premier Kakuei Tanaka and President Leonid Brezhnev.

The 1973 communique confirmed that there existed "problems unsettled yet" between Japan and the Soviet Union, which the Japanese Government interprets as including the Japanese

territorial claim to the islands off Hokkaido.

Premier Suzuki also said the territorial issue should be placed on the agenda for the coming January 20-21 Japanese-Soviet working-level talks in Moscow.

Polyanskii, however, expressed objections to bringing up the territorial issue for discussion in the working-level talks, saying no preconditions should be attached to resumption of the Japanese-Soviet dialog.

The Soviet ambassador told Suzuki that the Soviet Union has "already clarified" its position on the northern island issue, thus indicating that the Moscow government still insists there is no territorial issue between the two countries.

The Japanese premier and Polyanskii, however, shared hopes that the working-level talks will pave the way for a meeting between Japanese and Soviet foreign ministers in the near future, the government spokesman said.

After the Suzuki-Polyanskii talks, a high-ranking Foreign Ministry official said the premier's remarks on Japan's "sharing of views"

with other Western democracies should be separated from the issue of whether to impose economic sanctions on the Soviet Union over the Polish problem.

Soviet Ties First

Prior to his talks with Polyanskii, Suzuki indicated at a press conference that the Japanese Government was giving precedence to issues pending between Japan and the Soviet Union over the US call for solidarity of the Western camp as regards the Poland crisis.

The premier's remarks were interpreted as suggesting that the Japanese Government attaches greater importance to improvement of Japanese-Soviet relations than to concerted action by Western democracies in possible anti-Soviet sanctions over the Poland problem.

During the press conference Suzuki said: "The situation in Poland is fluid. Watching moves by the US and the West European countries, we will think about what we should do. The bilateral problems (between Japan and the Soviet Union) are more important."

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

POLITICS OF 'HARMONY'

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 4 Jan 82 p 2

[Text] Rough sailing is anticipated for the nation's 1982 political calendar and we doubt whether Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki can ride through what may be a turbulent year with his political slogan "Politics of Harmony."

The advantage of "harmony" lies in settling things by majority consent, avoiding trouble and meeting each other half way through dialogue. There is nothing wrong about the idea itself, but the essential thing is the method used in seeking it.

Looking over the past one year and a half of the Suzuki administration, we are under the impression that the "politics of harmony" advocated by the prime minister has more often than not tended to be that of convenient reconciliation. His posture has lacked consistency. At times he has chimed "in harmony" with pressure groups. While pretending to give consideration to "harmony" with public opinion, he has done the opposite. What the prime minister means by "harmony" is not a firmly established ideal for political management, but a mere technique to settle things without causing trouble.

A recent case in point was his handling of defense spending in the fiscal 1982 budget draft. At first he posed as though he were not willing to increase the defense budget, but in the final phase he harmonized with the request of the United States and the pressure of "defense-minded" members of the Liberal-Democratic Party. Thus he went back on the wishes of the majority of the nation. The same thing can be said of the way he promoted administrative and fiscal reform. He covered the great gap between rousing publicity and its end results with a cloak of "harmony" designed to please everybody.

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The prime minister picked Susumu Nikaido, a highly dubious figure involved in the Lockheed payoff scandal, as LDP secretary general. This was another case in which he harmonized with the political power of the mighty LDP faction led by ex-Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka while totally ignoring public criticism. Many other problems, defense, administrative reform, trade friction and the Tanaka ssue, were carried over to the new year.

A year loaded with heavy tasks begins for Prime Minister Suzuki whose posture has become highly ambiguous. With a noncommittant prime minister in charge, the nation greets a year full of political uncertainty. If the prime minister is not qualified, we should replace him with someone who is. There is a good chance for a change with the presidential election of the LDP scheduled for this year.

Our anxiety, on the other hand, is not necessarily concerned with the leadership of the prime minister alone. We fear that the negative aspect of "harmony" might have permeated the political world as a whole.

The Liberal-Democratic Party is known as a conglomerate made up of many political factions. One advantage of this party is its capacity to embrace many factions and maintain a balance with politics, but the LDP nowadays seems to have lost its energy demonstrated by faction-ridden political behavior. The leading Tanaka faction has taken over the hegemony of the party while other factions have become weak-kneed. Since court verdicts are expected to be handed down to ex-Prime Minister Tanaka and others this fall, the need for "harmony" has been emphasized within the party and all members seem to have bowed to that call. This is degrading of the LDP.

The opposition parties, too, have softpedaled their posture instead of confronting the LDP and the government. The sense of tension that once prevailed between the opposition parties and the government has eased off to a great extent, and opposition policies have tended to take on a conservative nature. We cannot call it party politics without an anti-LDP spirit on the part of the opposition.

It is regrettable to note that little is being done by the opposition for the promotion of political morals. We know that not all opposition parties are pure and lily-white, but at least they could raise hell about the Tanaka issue. Should they hesitate on this score, they are bound to lose their raison d'etre as opposition parties.

We demand that the dried-up slogan of "Politics of Harmony" be discarded once and for all.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

JAPAN TO DEFEND ITSELF, SUZUKI SAYS

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 1 Jan 82 p 1

[Text] Prime Minister Suzuki said Japan has to possess minimum self-defense capability and not rely on others for its defense under an ever-changing, severe international situation.

Suzuki told a New Year press conference the Japanese people should have spirit to protect the peace of their own country by themselves.

Japan will stick to its purely defensive policy and will not possess a military capability posing a threat to other countries, the prime minister said.

Japan will also maintain its nonnuclear principles of not producing, not possessing and not introducing nuclear arms, he added.

The prime minister said 1982 might be an eventful and tumultuous year, noting the continued military stalemate in Afghanistan, the strained Polish crisis and major problems in the Mideast.

Economically, many countries have run into difficulties, such as inflation, high unemployment and balance of payment deficits, he said.

International expectations are emerging for Japan to play a role commensurate with its national strength, Suzuki said.

Trade Disputes

Japan would accelerate the tempo of economic recovery domestically and make utmost efforts to solve trade disputes with foreign countries.

The prime minister said he was sure Japan could achieve a 5.2 percent economic growth for fiscal 1982 (April 1982-March 1983) in real terms as projected by the government.

The government will take active monetary and financial actions to realize the target, he added.

Japan, whose gross national product (GNP) accounts for 10 percent of the global total, is being criticized for failing to make sufficient defense efforts, he pointed out. But instead, the government has proposed a greater economic assistance to developing countries to contribute to the stability and peace of the world, he added.

Japan's fiscal 1982 national budget calls for spending ¥49,880.8 billion (about \$225.8 billion), up 6.2 percent from fiscal 1981.

Of the total, defense spending is put at ¥2,586.1 billion (about \$11.75 billion), up 7.75 percent, and official development assistance (ODA) at ¥441.7 billion (about \$2 billion), up 11.4 percent.

On trade problems, Suzuki said trade imbalances could not be solved only by Japan.

Foreign countries should streamline production, improve productivity and de-

velop low-priced products of fine quality to meet Japanese demand, he said.

The government will make efforts to help promote overseas investment, set up joint ventures abroad and jointly develop advanced technology with foreign countries in order to expand trade in a balanced form, he said.

Japan-US Ties

Referring to Japan-US relations, Suzuki said the two countries have taken close contacts to deepen mutual understanding.

At present, there are no plans for US President Reagan to visit Japan, the prime minister said.

On relations with the Soviet Union, Suzuki said the two countries are scheduled to hold a high-level meeting in Moscow on January 20-21 to exchange views on international situations and matters of common concern.

To build up the basis for real friendly relations between Tokyo and Moscow, a Japan-Soviet peace treaty is required to be concluded, he said.

But Japan will insist on taking up pending issues like the Soviet-occupied Japanese territories in the northern Pacific, Suzuki added.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL

GOVERNMENT DEFENSE PLANS: A LEAP IN THE DARK

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 30 Dec 81 p 1

[Text] The government budget plan for fiscal 1982, which was finalized Monday, is unpopular partly because the government increased defense spending by 7.75 percent without examining ways to strengthen national defense forces effectively.

The government is also under fire for across-the-board reduction in almost all other sectors except housing.

Appropriations for housing starts were substantially increased, but it is doubtful if as many as 1.3 million houses, as hoped by the government, will be built during fiscal 1982 because houses have become too costly while the average worker's income has not substantially increased.

The sharp increase in defense appropriations was apparently the result of excessive consideration of the US demand for greater defense spending.

Moreover, the government failed to basically reexamine the role of the ground, maritime and air self-defense forces in authorizing the uniform defense spending increase.

Admittedly, Japan is bound to steadily increase its defense capability under the Japan-US security set-up, and this is confirmed by the current government outline for defense force build-up programs.

However, there has been a growing opinion in Japan,

which seeks to carry out Japan's own "comprehensive" defense policy.

It calls for promoting the country's diplomatic policy and those for energy conservation and economic aid, without relying only on defense forces in trying to defend the country.

A limited increase in defense spending was of course unavoidable in view of the strengthening of Japan's economic capability in the past decade, which was accompanied by a corresponding weakening of the US position in international politics.

Japan had apparently evaded its responsibility in terms of defense spending, half purposefully and half unconsciously, but this became no longer permissible. Then came US demands for a substantial increase in Japan's defense appropriations.

The pressure from the US was particularly strong as there was no prospect for decreasing the huge US deficits in its trade with this country.

Under the circumstances, leaders of the government and the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party concentrated on increasing the defense budget.

They in fact neglected to work out a policy which would guide the nation's defense plan and also to reexamine what strategies

Japan should follow to build up the defense forces.

This was reflected in an equal increase in the appropriations to the three forces, by which an increase in efficiency in the defense capability is hardly expected to result.

The government is expected to face tough questioning in the Diet, to be resumed next January, because the random appropriations were tantamount to wasting taxpayers' money.

It has been argued that the defense budget is not a "holy precinct" that lies outside the current attempts at administrative reform and fiscal rehabilitation.

The government's budget plan was also marked by across-the-board reductions in spending which were apparently made in line with Prime Minister Suzuki's appeal that the nation should equally share the cost arising from efforts to realize a small government.

This was effective in appeasing numerous profit organizations, but the government's original plan to carry out a "priority principle" in compiling the 1982 budget plan was totally ignored.

In the eyes of many taxpayers, the budget plan appears to be a negative one in which the government has again failed to eliminate wasteful spending and irrationality.

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MILITARY

MASSIVE DEFENSE BUILDUP PLANNED

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 31 Dec 81 p 1

[Text] The Defense Agency has drawn up a plan for a massive buildup of the defense forces to be effected in fiscal 1983, which would cost more than Y10 trillion--over one percent of the projected gross national product for 1983, it was learned Wednesday.

Called a "1983 mid-term estimate," the plan is based on defense force buildup programs planned by the ground, maritime and air staff offices.

Under the draft plan, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) would procure an additional 49 P3C antisubmarine reconnaissance planes, 18 destroyers and seven submarines, while the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) is seeking 85 more F15 Eagle jet interceptors.

Besides ¥10 trillion needed to procure these mainstay weapons the defense forces would need an additional ¥1.75 trillion in years after fiscal 1983 to pay for arms which will have been ordered before 1983.

If the cost of food and pay for defense force personnel is included, the ¥10 trillion estimate will have to be doubled to ¥20 trillion,

informed sources said.

Such a large outlay would be an enormous burden on the government, which, plagued by increasing deficits, has pledged to try to rehabilitate its finances, the sources said.

Details of the 1983 mid-term estimate include:

- The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) hopes to increase its number of tanks from the present 1,100 to 1,500 and to substantially increase the mobility and firepower of troops stationed in Hokkaido. If this plan is realized, three of the four divisions stationed in Japan's northernmost island will be provided with a sufficient number of armored trucks. There is no need to providing such vehicles to the fourth division because it is an armored division comprising mainly tanks.

- The procurement of the 49 P3C antisubmarine reconnaissance planes would

bring to 94 the total number of P3Cs to be operated by the MSDF. The MSDF plans to inaugurate nine squadrons with the 94 P3Cs and to replace P2Js which would stay in service in the next five-year plan. The increase of 18 destroyers would bring to 60 to the total number of destroyers to be operated by the MSDF.

- The procurement of 85 F15 jet interceptors would give the ASDF 185 F15s. Seven of the ASDF's 10 jet fighter squadrons would comprise F15s with the remaining three comprising F4 Phantom jets. Two of the seven F15 squadrons stationed in Hokkaido would comprise 25 F15s each while the remaining five squadrons would comprise 18 F15s each.

Besides, the ASDF planned to procure additional ground-to-air missile and computer-controlled air defense systems under the five-year plan.

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MILITARY

'ASAHI' EDITOR ON DEFENSE BUDGET INCREASE

Tokyo ASAHI EVENING NEWS in English 30 Dec 81 p 3

[Text] "The defense budget should be increased to a certain extent. But we must not let it appear that the increase was made under pressure from the United States. In the long run, it will work against our relations with that country." This is what former Foreign Minister Toshio Kimura said some time ago.

Defense appropriations were increased by 7.75 percent in the fiscal 1982 national budget, which was formally adopted earlier this week. The rate of increase was conspicuous in comparison with the severe retrenchment imposed on social welfare, education and other items of expenditure.

The proponents of a substantial defense buildup within the Government and the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party used "American wishes" as an excuse to secure ample appropriations. Many people are unhappy, wondering why the United States should meddle in the compilation of another country's budget. As Kimura says, this will certainly have an adverse effect on Japan-U.S. relations.

It is safe to say that the policy guiding the compilation of the fiscal 1982 national budget was set by the Extraordinary Administrative Research Council's first report, which was presented on July 10. The report called for spending cuts in welfare and education, which, it said, "could not be helped."

The report exempted defense and external economic aid from the retrenchment it recommended. With the exemption, the defense buildup proponents cleared the first hurdle. It was Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki who helped them clear the hurdle.

When the council, the Government's advisory body on administrative reform, was inaugurated in March, Suzuki already had this general idea about the fiscal 1982 budget: (1) The budget will not involve a tax increase; (2) This will make it necessary not to allow any increase in general expenditure in principle; (3) But appropriations for defense and external economic aid should be increased.

Suzuki has never emphasized the "Soviet threat" as his own belief. When he talks of the need to bolster defense power and international aid, the reason he cites is invariably "to promote cooperation with the other Free World countries." In plain language, the reason is that the United States and Western Europe make a fuss. He came under strong criticism in Washington when he held the growth of fiscal 1981 defense spending to 7.61 percent. He apparently resolved not to have the same experience again.

The Premier acted promptly for this purpose, promising greater defense efforts when he visited the United States in May for talks with President Ronald Reagan. During the

Extraordinary Administrative Research Council's deliberations, his staff persuaded the body to exempt defense and international aid from spending cuts on the grounds that increases in them had already been promised to the United States.

The Finance Ministry's fiscal 1982 draft budget called for a 6.5 percent increase in defense appropriations. Two things attracted attention in the process that led to the final figure of 7.75 percent, which was decided on in political talks a few days later. One was the care taken to demonstrate the Japanese efforts to Washington.

The amount of about ¥31 billion, which was added to what Finance had proposed, will be used to order 23 F-15 fighter interceptors and seven P-3C anti-submarine patrol planes from the United States. The money could have been included in Finance's draft as the acquisition of these aircraft had long been approved by Suzuki and other Government leaders. The last-minute addition was apparently a calculated ploy to impress Washington.

The other notable thing was that it turned out that the defense buildup proponents do not necessarily have a strong base of support. The drive for more was led by Soichiro Ito, director-general of the Defense Agency, Foreign Minister Yoshio Sakurachi, and three former defense chiefs—

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Asao Mihara, chairman of the LDP security panel, Shin Kanemaru, and Justice Minister Michita Sakata. They campaigned as individuals, as it were, without a large number of Diet members behind them. This is not the case with the road, education and farm lobbies.

When Suzuki, in a television interview after Finance's draft was presented, said fiscal 1982 defense spending should be increased by about the same margin as the fiscal 1981 figure of 7.61 percent, the statement was interpreted in two ways. Some people thought that since the rate of rise was likely to go up to about eight percent if left alone, Suzuki was trying to prevent this. Others took it as an expression of dissatisfaction with the draft.

In my view, the statement was probably a signal of encouragement to Mihara and the other buildup proponents. Like Suzuki, they emphasized that a low rate of increase would impair relations with Washington.

Since the defense industry here is modest in size and its electoral influence is negligible, it seems that those who seek a substantial increase in defense spending necessarily have to cite Washington's wishes.

It goes without saying that the correct option for Japan is not to overtax itself to spend more on defense. Better ties with the United States should be sought through the correction of the trade imbalance with that country.

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SECURITY OF SEA-LANES NEEDED FOR SURVIVAL OF JAPAN

Safe Sea-Lanes Vital

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 16 Dec 81 p 5

[Article by Finn Sollie: "Safe Sea-Lanes Vital for Japan's Survival"]

[Text] The following is an abridged version of a paper presented by Finn Sollie, director of Fridtjof Nansen Foundation of Norway, at a recent international symposium on "Security, Peace and Survival: East Asia and the International Order in the 1980s" held in Tokyo. The paper was titled "Maritime Transport and the Security of Supplies."—Editor.

* * *
Maritime transport is the life-line of international trade. Without it, industries would stop for lack of fuel and raw materials, trade would come to a halt, people would starve for lack of food and the material base of modern civilization would crumble.

Theoretical nondependence upon the free flow of maritime transport is possible only for nations big enough and varied enough to have all required resources and all necessary markets within their own borders, yet even the Soviet Union, which is in a sense more a complete continent than a nation and which has an abundance of natural resources of all kinds, cannot feed its own people without buying millions of tons of grain from overseas.

Degree Of Dependence

The degree to which individual nations depend upon maritime transport for its economic development is not easily gauged,

but it is obviously true that some nations are more dependent than others upon maritime transport and hence, upon the security of its sea lines of supply. Island nations such as the United Kingdom and Japan fall clearly into the category of near-total dependence upon maritime transport for their very existence.

Japan gives the double example of an island nation that could long live in isolation, and subsequently become the probably most dependent nation of all upon overseas transport.

Japan is more dependent upon stable and secure maritime transport than a country like Norway and that Japan is more vulnerable to the effects of disruptions of seaborne trade. This is so because Japan has developed its industrial economy in spite of the country's barrenness of some of the most important natural resources for industrial development. Hence, continued and continuous supply from overseas of raw

materials and fuel is the one inescapable requirement for the economic health of Japan and, indeed, for the very existence of its industrial economy. To this extent, maintenance of

secure maritime transport must be a matter of utmost importance for national security.

Supply Risk

In terms of sheer volume and also in terms of its role in the economy of nations, oil is the most important strategic commodity in international trade. Furthermore, more than half the seaborne oil trade in the world (869 of 1,588 million tons in 1980) originates from the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf in current nomenclature). Thus the world oil market is heavily dependent upon a single region for supplies and, consequently, upon the sea lines from that region. In view of the lack of political stability in the area and the constant danger of upheaval and turmoil, the security of maritime transport from the Persian Gulf has become a matter of vital concern.

Japan more than any other country demonstrates this single-source and single-route dependence upon the Persian Gulf. In 1980, Japan took more than 70 percent of its oil imports from the Persian Gulf (176 out of 245 million tons of imports). Another 21 percent (52 million tons) came from Southeast Asia. Consequently, Japan is in a position of extreme dependence

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upon the Gulf region for most of its supplies of oil and upon the Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean-Southeast Asia Archipelago-route for transportation of its supplies. This leaves the country exposed to the risk of supply shortages that may occur either as a result of production cutdowns in the Gulf region or because of disruption of the transport route.

It must be pointed out that in any crisis in or around the Middle East, the sea line from the Gulf will be extremely vulnerable and easily blocked for shorter or longer periods. Oil shipments from the Gulf must pass through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which forms a natural "choke-point" in the world's single

most important energy lifeline. Here, passage may be disrupted by fairly simple means, either in consequence of military action or as a result of determined guerilla or terrorist action to block the sound, for instance by sinking ships in the passage. Disruption of traffic of course may occur further out, in the Indian Ocean in the event of any crisis in which the major powers become involved.

The general strategic importance of the region is most clearly demonstrated by the concentration of military power in and around the Indian Ocean. For non-Soviet block countries the appearance and continuous presence of the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean must be a matter of grave concern.

For Japan, Soviet naval presence with an average of 10 ships in the South China Sea and air and naval facilities in Vietnam, present an additional threat against a vital and highly vulnerable route for its supplies. The specific importance of the Hormuz Strait for Japan is further illustrated by the fact that in 1980 280 Japanese registry ships, 190 of them tankers, passed through the strait.

European Position

With more than 50 percent of total inter-area seaborne oil trade coming from the Persian Gulf, any major reduction in shipments from that region would cause a general international oil crisis. No country would be more seriously hurt than Japan, who may lose up to three-fourths of current supplies. Europe too is highly dependent upon oil from the Middle East and would suffer badly from a cut-off

of supplies from the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless, Europe probably would be in a better position to cope with the situation.

Moreover, European countries appear to be making a more determined effort than Japan to further spread the risk by increasing supplies from other sources. The great natural gas deal between West Germany (and France) and the Soviet Union should also be seen as an effort at energy diversification.

Finally, in contrast to Japan, Europe has the advantage of having fairly large coal reserves within its own borders. Thus coal may be developed to further reduce dependence upon oil deliveries from the critical Persian Gulf area.

Diversification of supplies serves to avoid overdependence upon any one source of supply and upon any one transport route. Europe has an advantage over Japan in this respect by having access to many sources of supply from many directions. Japan has the double disadvantage of scarce resources of its own and an island position with sailing distances that have favored concentration on the Persian Gulf.

For an outside observer it would seem that Japan could gain much from development of petroleum resources in other regions than the areas which now dominate its supply of oil.

Arctic Development

One possibility for future energies supply for Japan lies in the Arctic, where exploration for hydrocarbons has proven to be one of the most exciting developments in the energy field in recent years. Northern resources open new vistas for energy supply in the northern hemisphere, but they also present new challenges for technological development, particularly in regard to offshore operations in ice-covered waters and transportation over long distances under extreme climatic conditions.

So far, the main development has been in the Soviet West Siberian Basin and in the Alaska North Slope.

Some other areas, notably the Beaufort offshore region and the Yakutsk could hold opportunities for participation by Japan in their development. Offshore development in the Sakhalin-Okhotsk region too might envisaged, also with a possibility for Japanese participation in development and financing to be paid with future deliveries. Japanese companies — the government — have shown interest in these developments and to some extent Japanese participation has been secured, eg, in the Beaufort Sea. The question that may be asked, is if a sufficient effort is being made and if the question of security of supply has been given adequate consideration in these matters.

New Challenge

Arctic resources may offer new opportunities and to some extent may alleviate dependence upon supplies that are concentrated in one area and have to be transported along one main route. In addition to this supply value, the need to develop a shipping capability for optimum development and benefit from Arctic resources presents the shipping industry and

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the governments concerned with a rather unique challenge. The manner in which this challenge is met over the next decade or two may be decisive for a long-term development in international shipping that will have consequences far beyond the transportation of Arctic resources.

Clearly, there is now a need to meet the challenge. Demand for maritime transport is mounting also in the non-Soviet half of the Arctic. Clearly also, there would seem to be a need for a coordinated effort between shipping interests and governments to for-

mulate and pursue a determined policy to meet that demand.

The immediate requirement is for coastal shipping in Canadian and US northern waters, but the need for trans-Arctic maritime transport should also be considered. Unless steps are taken to develop an adequate Arctic shipping capability the Soviet Union may soon be in a position to establish an actual monopoly on direct shipment between the North Pacific and the North Atlantic region.

Safety of Sea-Lanes

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 18 Dec 81 p 5

[Article by Yoshiya Ariyoshi: "Safety of Sea-Lanes Needed for Survival"]

[Text]

The following is an abridged version of a paper presented by Yoshiya Ariyoshi, board counselor of Nippon Yusen Kaisha, at a recent international symposium on "Security, Peace and Survival: East Asia and International Order in the 1980s" held in Tokyo. The paper was titled "Security of Sea-lanes and Survival of Japan."—Editor.

* * *
Japan is a small island country with a total land area of 143,000 square miles. Japan has no natural resources to rely upon. Japan has to import from abroad, 100 percent of bauxite, nickel ore, phosphate rock and animal feed, 99 percent of petroleum and iron ore and 96 percent of grain, except rice.

The largest energy source, oil, is imported annually in the order of 234,000,000 tons, out of which 56 percent is from the Persian Gulf countries, and the distance from their representative port of Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia, to Japan is 6,390 miles. And 12 percent is imported from Indonesia, the average distance being 2,820 miles.

World Peace

Because of Japan's geographical position, the distances over which all the vital commodities are hauled are longer than those for most other industrialized countries.

As of 1981, there are 8,835 vessels flying the Japanese flag, totalling 39,016,000 gross tons, and about the same number of foreign ships amounting to 29,877,000 gross tons are under charter for account of the Japanese shipping companies, and these carry about 40 percent of Japan's total imports and 35 percent of its exports.

It is obvious that the survival of Japan is entirely dependent upon the security and the safety of those sea-lanes.

The main reason for Japan's rapid economic growth in the past decades could be attributed to the fact that the world was in peace in the first place, and Japan's advent in the world market as traders

coincided with the time when the principle of the freedom of the trade was prevailing worldwide.

The Japanese economy has been getting prosperous under these conditions, and as long as world peace is maintained and the principle of free trade is kept effective, Japan's economy is destined to continue on its prosperity course.

However, conversely if and when world peace is disturbed even partly, those who suffer most severely would be the Japanese.

Hence it is imperative for Japan that world peace should be maintained at all costs and Japan should exert every effort within its power for the sake of world peace.

Free Trade

Even when the world in general is in peace, if the principle of the freedom of the trade is broken, then again those who suffer the most damage would be the Japanese.

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However, though it may sound ironical, this principle is endangered because of the Japanese behavior in world economics.

The industrial countries in the West are compelled to discard the principle of free trade because of the social upheavals within their domains caused by increasing unemployment.

The root cause of the recession which cause unemployment is traceable to the series of oil price hikes effected by the OPEC countries since 1973.

Japan is the only country which could weather successfully the stagflation caused by the oil crises, and the fact that Japan achieved this by concentrating on its export effort makes Japan a villain responsible for all the predicaments of Western countries.

Japan contends that it is a scapegoat, that the so-called trade friction is not the only reason for unemployment, and that Japan is faithfully following the principle of free trade, working hard, producing high quality goods and marketing them at reasonable prices which appeal to the consumers.

However, we have to recognize the fact that since the unemployment plague of the nations of the West is reaching to such a magnitude as to endanger their whole society, Japan should cooperate in their efforts to alleviate their hardship.

Military Alliance

As long as the situation of the world today is as it is, no one country is capable of defending its independence by its military power alone. Even such military superpowers as the US and the USSR are no exceptions.

The countries in the West protect themselves by the military alliances of NATO

in Europe, and the Security Pact between the US and Japan in the Far East.

Considering that it is vital for Japan to maintain its long extended sea-lanes,

and it is not possible for Japan to protect them by its own power, the obvious conclusion is that Japan has to entirely depend upon the assistance of the members of the military alliance.

Whenever requested by the members of this alliance, Japan has to comply as best it can, as it is the duty of a member of the alliance.

The maintenance of the Japanese sea-lanes is not only dependent upon the Western allies but also on the goodwill of the nations which belong to the category of the Third World.

As to the aid program for the developing nations, Japan often insists on "quid pro quo."

It is natural for the Japanese to expect a return as the Japanese social ethics put a great importance on gratefulness.

However, as the goodwill of all those people is essential in maintaining our sea-lanes, Japan ought to be more generous and sympathetic to their ways of thinking.

To recapitulate, Japan, recognizing its heavy dependence, for its survival, on access to overseas resources and markets should:

- Exert every effort to maintain world peace;
- Contribute to the defense efforts of its allies;
- Understand the serious situations the West is facing because of their social problems of unemployment, and cooperate in the efforts to alleviate their predicaments,
- Appreciate the new trend in the Third World, understand their mentality and be more generous in giving out aid.

In spite of these efforts, if world peace is broken even partly, Japan's defense plan should be clearly defined and orientated so that the protection of its sea-lanes is given the foremost priority above all else.

The reason is simple enough. Even if the mainland of Japan is intact, Japan would wither if its sea-lanes are cut even partially.

In both World War I and World War II, the side which managed to maintain its supply lines won.

Defense Policy

It is therefore earnestly hoped that the planners of the defense of Japan would act upon the clearcut guideline that the first priority of defense is the maintenance of the sea-lanes above everything.

As the next "emergency" is expected to be a severe war of attrition, every effort should be exerted in peacetime to increase the number of merchant ships under Japanese control.

From that point of view, the current interest rate subsidy of the Japanese Government is a very efficient way to encourage shipowners to build more ships of high quality.

This system is more cost-effective compared with direct subsidies for construction and operation in some countries. In future this system should be carefully studied from the defense angle rather than from the shipowners financial positions or economic security of the country.

Advanced System

In the age of sophisticated armaments such as guided missiles of short and medium ranges, the idea of maintaining an absolute supremacy over sea and air is obsolete. Under Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, the Self-Defense Force ships are not allowed to go far afield over the ocean to protect the Japanese merchant marine.

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The only practical method conceivable for the protection of the merchant marine is the self-defense system of an advanced type.

With today's advanced technology in electronics, it would not be too difficult to innovate a light weight, fool-proof and inexpensive self-defense system.

The system envisaged should:—

- (a) Detect dangers ahead well in time,
- (b) Effectively jam the beams guiding attacking missiles,
- (c) Launch counterattack missiles by computerized discharger by a push button.

The Japanese defense is presently guided by the principle of "defensive stance." The self-defense system on board merchant ships will comply nicely with this principle.

Central Agency

Another important item is communication. Today already a considerable number of ships are equipped with the telecommunication apparatus by which direct communication with their owners is possible via the "marinesat" from all corners of the globe.

This apparatus should be installed on all the Japanese ships as soon as possible.

The establishment of a central agency is necessary in case of "emergency" or when an "emergency" is considered imminent.

The function of this center should be to receive from all the Japanese ships such vital information as the noon position of each ship every day in order to grasp the whereabouts of all the ships at a glance. The necessary information

as to the global military and political situations will be sent out frequently so as to enable all of them to be prepared for all sorts of contingencies.

This shipping intelligence center should coordinate closely together with the centers of the same nature of the US and the NATO countries so as to ensure the maximum safety and most efficient employment of the total merchant marine of the West.

Protection Discussed

Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 19 Dec 81 p 5

[Article by Osamu Kaihara: "Can a Country Protect Its Sea-Lanes?"]

[Text] The following is an abridged version of a paper presented by Osamu Kaihara, former director, Secretariat of the National Defense Council, at a recent international symposium on "Security, Peace and Survival: East Asia and International Order in the 1980s" held in Tokyo. The paper was titled "What Is Involved in Securing Sea-Lanes? What Can Be Achieved?"—Editor.

* * *
Japan is a maritime nation. It has been persistently propounded, mainly by officers of the old Imperial Navy, that for such a nation the "securing of sea-lanes" is absolutely indispensable.

In the 1969 Defense White Paper, the Defense Agency, too, stated: "Surrounded on all sides by the sea, having a large population on limited land, depending on overseas sources for

most resources, and being a trading country, Japan needs for her survival and development to maintain friendly relations with all countries as well as to check on the sea any attempts to invade our country and to continue making efforts to secure sea-lanes which can be called our life line. These efforts will serve as a means to enhance the credibility of the Japan-US security system which lies at the base of our country's defense.

As if to harmonize with this viewpoint within Japan, many people in the US have made statements saying in effect "It is an innately self-evident truth" that Japan must make efforts to secure the safety

of maritime traffic. These statements were made by defense officials, scholars and politicians in relation to countering the "Soviet threat."

Massive Chorus

Securing the safety of sea traffic has swelled into a massive chorus in Japan today.

However, there is absolutely no concrete explanation of such questions as "What are the conceivable cases in which the sea-lanes to Japan would be obstructed or severed?" and "What countermeasures could be taken and how would such measures improve the situation?"

All that the advocates are doing is only to shout, "In order to ensure the security of the sea-lanes, we

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must bolster our antislubmarine warfare (ASW) capability and greatly increase the number of patrol aircraft and destroyer escorts."

Let me take up the points involved one by one and put them in their proper perspective.

(1) People say, "Secure the safety of the sea-lanes."

However, "lanes" called "sea-lanes" do not exist. There are no "lanes," like a highway, built on the sea for the traffic of vessels.

The so-called "sea-lanes" are the vast expanse of the ocean itself. They are the Seven Seas.

Japan imports raw materials from all over the world, manufactures finished products with them by enlisting the brains of people all over the world, and exports the finished products to all parts of the world. It is exactly as stated in the book "The Future of Japan," editorially supervised by former Prime Minister Fukuda.

On the basis of this reality, it should be clear to anyone that our country's survival cannot be ensured merely by taking measures to protect the maritime transportation of only specific commodities only in a specific part of the oceans.

The distance between Yokohama and Singapore in a straight line is 5,311 kilometers. If the sea up to 1,800 kilometers from Japan is secure but the sea beyond that is "insecure," what is the result? Who is going to provide protection? No one.

(2) Who or what will obstruct sea traffic and destroy its safety? When and how is it envisaged that sea-lanes would be destroyed?

To answer this question, it is necessary to study the problem by separating times of peace from times of war or disputes.

Times Of Peace

Today, the ships of all nations are able freely and peacefully to enter and leave the ports of all countries. This is because the world as a whole is peaceful at present. The only things that threaten the safety of sea-lanes are typhoons and reefs.

It is not because any particular country has positioned warships at strategic points along sea-lanes and are flying patrols over them that the sea-lanes have been made secure and safe.

The 1969 Defense White Paper said that Japan needs "to continue making efforts to secure sea-lanes which can be called our life line." Because of this statement not a few people

believe that various kinds of efforts of this nature are being made at present. The White Paper's statement, however, is not correct because such efforts are not actually being made.

Japanese vessels are able to ply safely between Japan and other countries, including those in the Communist sphere, only because there is peace in the world at present.

Wartime Situation

In discussing a wartime situation, we would, first of all, have to postulate the country against which Japan would be fighting.

At present, people are expressing their views by postulating the "Soviet threat."

It is unthinkable that Japan would initiate a war against the Soviet Union. If there is to be a war between the two countries, the opening military attack would come from the Soviet side without any doubt.

The nature of the armed attack will be determined by the will of the Soviet Union. The attack will not necessarily take the form

imagined or anticipated by Japan.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me add that I do not think that the extermination of Japan's naval and air power would mean the end for Japan. The extinction of "Free Japan" will not come until resistance on the ground in the Japanese mainland is decimated.

Not a few people believe that it is the end for all of us when control of the air and of the sea is lost. This is completely mistaken. In Korea and in Vietnam, the US forces had complete control of the air and the sea, but were unable to attain their objectives.

How do people in the US assess this point?

In an interview in the US News and World Report of October 10, 1975, Admiral James L. Holloway, then US chief of naval operations, was asked about the need to protect oil routes from the Persian Gulf. His answer was as follows:

"The way we protect the oil sea-lanes of communication from the Persian Gulf to Europe and to the US is by winning the battle of the Atlantic and having a US Navy which is capable of defeating the Soviet Navy. We cannot insure the safety of every oiler coming out of the Persian Gulf by providing escorts for it."

What follows from the above is that it is not tenable to consider "protection of the safety of sea-lanes" is a narrow and limited context. The subject has to be examined as one phase of the hostilities between Japan and the Soviet Union.

However, what we are witnessing in Japan today is a discussion of "protection of the safety of sea-lanes" which ignores an overall, objective examination and concentrates only on a small goal in front of the eye.

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Dangerous Illusion

People think that the safety of sea-lanes can be "secured" only by increasing the number of anti-submarine patrol planes and of destroyer escorts—although they are not clear about how many are needed to accomplish it.

A more dangerous illusion does not exist.

A concrete example of this type of thinking is the so-called "Sea-Lane Belt Concept."

In 1972, the Defense Agency explained to the Federation of Economic Organizations (Kaidanren) the agency's draft of the Fourth Defense Build-Up Program. On this occasion, the then director-general of the Defense Agency, Yasuhiro Nakasone, explained the "Sea-Lane Belt Concept" of the "helicopter carrier."

Under this concept, two sea-lane belts were to be created extending from Japan to up to about 20 degrees north latitude. The east belt was to be 240 nautical miles wide and 1,000 nautical miles long. The west belt was to be 150 nautical miles wide and 840 nautical miles long. Nakasone confidently declared that with an 8,000-ton helicopter carrier, carrying six helicopters, cruising in this belt "hostile submarines will be prevented from infesting these waters."

However, an examination of this concept by the secretariat of the National Defense Council revealed that it contained many questionable points and that it was a self-complacent idea. Thus, the government did not adopt this concept.

In May this year, speaking at the National Press Club after his talks with

President Reagan, Prime Minister Suzuki declared that Japan will make efforts to insure the safety of a sea-lane belt within a radius of 1,000 miles from Japan.

Then what must Japan do to "insure the safety of the sea-lane belt?" Concrete measures and methods have not been explained.

Can a sea-lane belt be created merely by drawing lines on a marine chart and declaring that all ships should sail within this defined boundary?

Even in Diet committees, there has been no debate on this point. The people are dealing with matters only by bandying about words.

This is a typical example showing that the defense debate in Japan is revolving around abstractions and ideals.

Only A Gesture

Thus, I cannot understand at all what the advocates of protecting the sea-lanes think should be done and what they think can be achieved by so doing.

These people should clarify concretely what measures they think are needed, what is to be done under which situation, and what kind of effect could be achieved.

To put things in the correct framework I must add that it is entirely another matter if the advocates are talking about protection of sea-lanes not as a practical measure but merely as a gesture or an expression of willingness to cooperate with the US, our great ally.

If the US could be satisfied with a few destroyer escorts of the Maritime Safety Agency

floating in one section of the Western Pacific Ocean as a sign that Japan is sharing its international responsibility, there can be no "cheaper" sharing of the burden than this.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

R&D STRATEGY OF INTELLIGENT ROBOT MAKERS DISCUSSED

Tokyo NIKKEI SANGYO SHIMBUN in Japanese 10-14, 17-19 Nov 81

[10 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Goal Set at Machine Assembly Robot; Cooperation With U.S. Unimation Company"]

[Text] Industrial robots are becoming more and more intelligent. Intelligent robots with the senses of sight and touch, which are capable of doing work by adapting themselves to changes in work conditions, have appeared. Although they are only at the stage of toddling today, they are growing at an enormous rate. Soon it will no longer be just a wishful dream that human beings may be freed from monotonous work or heavy labor by robots, which are entering in force into the production site and engaging in such operations as welding, painting, inspection and assembly. The business strategies of the big manufacturers, which are putting a great deal of emphasis on R&D of intelligent robots, have been investigated.

Post-PUMA--that is the biggest development theme for the robot technology team of Kawasaki Heavy Industries. It has undertaken domestic sales of the "PUMA" assembly robot, a product of U.S. Unimation Co, starting this fall, and by next spring three types of machines will be manufactured domestically. However, its technical camp has already begun polishing post-PUMA plans with a view to accomplishing these plans by 1985. These plans will undoubtedly involve development of intelligent robots which, like human beings, will be able to see and feel. Their cooperative development system with the U.S. Unimation Co across the ocean will soon get under way.

Robots With Sensors Revealed for the First Time

The industrial robot fair opened on 8 October in Tokyo-Haruumi: The exhibition corner of Kawasaki Heavy Industries, which was situated at the front facing the entrance to the exhibition hall, was always thick with people. No wonder, because an arc-welding robot with a visual sensor, developed jointly with the Unimation Co, was on display for the first time. This product, which may be the forerunner of intelligent robots, attracted the attention of the technical personnel of rival firms.

The robot, shaped like a bird, watched the work with a thin beam of light. The light reflected from the work reached a solid element camera via an optic fiber. This information was subjected to image-processing, and the location of the welding line was discerned. After that, the arm of robot swung, and welding was carried out with a facility comparable to that of a skilled worker. The range of detection was 10 mm in both horizontal and vertical directions.

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To control the movement of the robot at high speed, a bipolar, 16-bit microcomputer was developed for this express purpose and used as its brain. It is said to be five times faster than the conventional microcomputers using MOS (metal oxide semiconductors). The spectators uttered "ohs" of admiration when they saw the robot begin to work as soon as it recognized the welding line.

At about the same time, President Engelburger of Unimation, who is the father of the industrial robot, visited Japan in order to be present at the "International Symposium on the Industrial Robot" held in Tokyo. Taking advantage of this opportunity, he had a heart-to-heart talk with Kawasaki Heavy Industries Vice President Kenzo Nikei and consultant Tsuneo Ando. The main theme of their conversation was centered around how the cooperation between the two companies may be further strengthened in the future and how the robot strategy may be unfolded on the world market. The two companies agreed to engage jointly in the development of post-PUMA robots. Their intelligent robots are to be unveiled in 4 years.

Technical Exchange Pact on an Equal Footing

It was 13 years ago that Kawasaki Heavy Industries first entered into technical cooperation with Unimation in the field of industrial robots. In the following year, the first domestic playback robot was manufactured. At first, these robots did not sell very well and bitter battles were fought. By 1971, they were able to sell approximately 20 spot-welding robots to Nissan Automobile. Successfully riding out the "ups and downs" of the period before and after the first oil shock, the robot business went into the black completely 3 years ago. At about that time, the contract with Unimation to import technology was rewritten as a contract to exchange technologies on an equal footing. And this Japanese enterprise rapidly gained true strength in the field of robot manufacturing.

It produced 470 robots last year. The number is expected to be more than 650 this year. Nearly 90 percent of the domestic market in spot-welding robots is owned by Kawasaki; no other competitor can even come close.

"We cannot afford to be complacent"--a sense of crisis was expressed by consultant Ando, who helped the growth of the robot department from its inception. The demand for spot-welding robots appears to be tapering off. Moreover, many other big electrical and mechanical manufacturers have also surged into the robot market.

This fall there is difficulty in selling the new series of arc-welding and painting robots. Therefore, much is expected of the "PUMA" assembly robot. According to consultant Ando, "the favorite among the industrial robots is the assembly robot."

Electronics Technologists in Short Supply

Even an industrial giant like Kawasaki Heavy Industries has its Achilles' heel. Kawasaki is inferior, after all, in the number of electronics technologists it has compared with other big electronics and electric machinery manufacturers. In developing intelligent robots, the amount of electronics technological power one has makes the difference. The robot R&D team of Kawasaki Heavy Industries consists of approximately 60 technologists, more than half of whom engage in the development of electronic equipment. Since the field in which robots are utilized can only grow bigger, many times the number of electronics technologists they have today will be needed 5 years from now.

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Unimation is a powerful ally which can make up for this weakness, because Unimation has been quite successful in developing microcomputers and sensors by skillfully organizing and tapping the resources of the venture enterprises in and around the state of California. A new product developed recently by Unimation, "UNIVISION," which is capable of recognizing patterns, will be sold by Kawasaki soon. Furthermore, Kawasaki is trying to gain an advantageous position in the sales of assembly robots by utilizing the robot language, "VAL," developed by Unimation.

At the same time, within the company, two groups, consisting of the R&D department of the technical headquarters and the hydraulic machinery business department in charge of robots, are each putting their best efforts into the development of intelligent robots. They are trying to speed up the pace of development by instilling a sense of competition among the technical personnel. "Our goal is to develop robots which are capable of assembling machine parts. We do not wish to develop robots for assembling electronic parts," (Vice President Nibin); the goal for the development of intelligent robots is well defined.

[11 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Leading in Sensor Technology; Companywide Organization To Achieve Practical Application by 1983"]

[Text] In a corner of a laboratory whose floor is stained with machine oil, three robots are repeating simple movements over and over. These robots, with exposed structural material consisting of reddish brown steel and dull silver aluminum, have the air of sturdy workmen. In 2 years, they will appear on the market as intelligent robots.

Goal Set for Assembly Robot

The 69,000-square-meter research center of Komatsu Ltd, located in an industrial park at Hirazuka city, Kanagawa Prefecture, consists of three technical units: a technology research laboratory, an electrical research laboratory, and an electronic machinery center. A project team, organized companywide for the express purpose of research and development of intelligent robots, will soon begin its activities there. Its strategy consists in part of concentrating all the technical personnel engaged in robot-related work in one room in order to achieve practical application of the robots by 1983.

What are the new robots that are to be manufactured? There are three types of robots-- large, medium and small, capable of transporting 120 kg, 50 kg and 10 kg of weight, respectively. They are shaped like a human arm and are multiple-jointed. The movements on some six axes are controlled simultaneously by a 16-bit microcomputer. Some of the robots are further equipped with "legs," capable of moving a maximum distance of 16 meters on rails. Some are equipped with feelers and with sensors for the solid element camera so that they are capable of making judgments to some extent for themselves. Introduction of an advanced technology recognition of the position and shape of objects by means of a laser is being investigated. The goal is intelligent robots for doing assembly work rather than for arc-welding.

"We would like to try them and master them in the production lines of our own company before selling them," said Executive Director Takashi Yanagizawa, who is in charge of the R&D, revealing a corner of their robot strategy.

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In July this year, President Ryoichi Kawai announced that the company is going to phase out its construction machinery department. The idea is to develop a new market, because the demand for construction machinery is on the wane. The sales ratio of all departments other than the construction machinery department is to be raised from 10 percent today to 50 percent or more in the future. One of the pillars of the diversified operation is to be the industrial robot department. This fall, the company introduced itself to the world in the field of robots for the first time by putting on the market arc-sensor type welding robots and robots for transporting heavy objects.

The director of the technology research laboratory, Kazuo Tanaka, showed this reporter a document entitled "Progress of Robot R&D." According to this document, Kamatsu launched robot development in 1976. The objective was to automate the welding operation of the company itself. At the same time, collection and evaluation of information concerning sensor technology was initiated.

Arc Welding in Operation

An arc-welding robot with three-axis control was trial manufactured in the following year. Although it was not much better than the special automatic welding machine already in use, considerable good results were obtained from the introduction of this arc-welding robot to the factory manufacturing parts for large power shovels. However, this robot was incapable of doing complicated work. The objects it could work on were also limited in scope. So, the development of a robot with sensors and five-axis control was tackled 3 years ago.

This is a large-scale robot of a rectangular coordinate type. With its feeler it searches out the starting position of the welding line. As soon as this is done, the welding operation commences with a flash of light. The wrist of the robot holding the welding gun vibrates slightly. Swinging the arc left and right, the robot is capable of detecting changes in the arc current and thus finding the welding line as it carries out the welding operation. This robot has some form of sensory function. A patent application has been filed for this robot and its arc-sensor format.

Robots equipped with industrial TV as an eye have been brought to a stage of practical application for the welding of large objects. As the welding operation is under way, the robot is constantly searching for the correct welding position by the image-processing of the arc light with its own microcomputer. "The sensor technology used in this arc-welding robot is leading other companies by 2-3 years," proudly declared Nashiko Yokojima, the chief of the third research laboratory, Production Technology Research Center (Maikata city, Osaka Prefecture), who is in charge of the development.

A large amount of welding work is required in the process of manufacturing construction machinery. More than 300 tons of welding wire are consumed every month--"probably the largest volume of consumption in all Japan" (President Taguchi). For a bulldozer weighing 1 ton, approximately 40 kg of welding wire are used. That is why this company is more enthusiastic than anybody else about the automation of the welding operation. This was the motivation which helped them to produce the best welding robot. More than 20 intelligent robots are in operation centered around their Osaka plant, where bulldozers and power shovels are manufactured.

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Spurring Electronification of Machinery

Komatsu's technological camp is burning with the desire to "build the world's best research center." A consolidated research center with an investment totaling 15 billion yen is to be built on a 230,000-square-meter plateau outside Hirazuka city from where Mt Fuji can be seen on a clear day. The center is expected to be completed in 3 years. The technology research laboratory and the electric research laboratory will move into this new facility, while the electronic machinery center will remain at the site of the present center. The total number of research personnel is expected to exceed 700, double the present number. The electrical technological personnel in particular will increase from 130 to 350. They are spurring the electronification of machinery. Commanding the service of the computers, semiconductors, lasers and other electronics technologies, they are trying aggressively to turn up new markets for their major product--construction machinery--as well as robots.

[12 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Winning Move for the Introduction of FMS; Making Good Use of Household Electric Knowhow"]

[Text] "You have a strong grip"--the SF (science fiction) robot developed by the Matsushita Electric Industrial Co Ltd was very popular at the "Industrial Robot Fair" held in October at Tokyo-Haruumi.

When a person approaches, the robot detects the human body temperature by its infrared sensor and swings around slowly. When a lighter flame is moved closer to it, it reports a gas leakage. If you shake hands with it, it will acknowledge your grasping power digitally and speak. It was the great delight of children at the fair. "That is worthy of Mr Matsushita. The display is excellent"--those in charge of robots from other machinery manufacturers were highly impressed.

Row After Row of Automation Machinery

In the production technology headquarters located at Kadoma city, Osaka Prefecture, is a precision business department, and a machinery factory which was completed only in July belonging to this department. On the floor, as big as a baseball diamond, are row after row of automation machines which are used mainly internally. There are a number of types of machines, including "PANASERT," which automatically inserts various types of electronic parts into the printed baseboard used in household electric appliances, and "PANABISSETTER," which tightens bolts and nuts automatically. Almost all machines contain an 8-bit microcomputer as a control device. These robots are all a kind of assembly robot. Workers in blue suits are busily engaged in the making robots.

"More than 3,000 of these robots are being used in operations companywide," revealed the executive director of the production technology headquarters, Morita.

As of October, the number of robots manufactured for inserting parts exceeded 2,400. Without doubt, Matsushita is the largest domestic manufacturer. The number of robots manufactured for tightening bolts and nuts is also among the top. In addition to internal use, approximately 30 percent of these robots are sold to other companies. This machinery factory, equipped with the newest manufacturing facilities is about to be transformed into a factory specializing in robots.

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A "robot committee," a companywide organization, has recently been organized. The goal is to introduce a large number of robots to every plant of the Matsushita group over the next 10 years. Completely unmanned plants are the ultimate goal. "More than 100,000 robots will be in operation companywide in 10 years," says Executive Director Morita nonchalantly. More than half of these robots are to be manufactured by the precision business department.

Development in Five Groups

The committee consists of three groups: a planning group which drafts plans for the introduction of robots, a development group which engages in the actual development of the robots, and a technology group which develops the application technology. These three groups work in cooperation to advance the goal of the project. More than 40 business departments companywide offered their experts to participate in the project. They have already sorted out what type of robot is required by what plant. What is left to be done is to reduce these to a few types of standard machines and develop them.

First of all, the robots used internally are grouped into five groups, A to E. Group A represents advanced intelligent robots with human-like capability; group B represents intelligent robots having a certain degree of judgmental capability; group C consists of ordinary playback robots; and group D and group E consist of sequence robots.

The present project is to concentrate efforts on the development of the group B intelligent robots. By the next fall, an ultra-automated model plant employing a large number of intelligent robots is to be completed. The targets for ultraautomation include the VTR (video tape recorder) plant and various other plants manufacturing mature products such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

"Establish an all-weather production system"--A directive was dispatched to the people in charge of production technology by President Toshihiko Yamashita, who has occupied the chair for 5 years now. The operating environment is becoming more and more tense. The objective is to build up an enterprise framework so strong that the operation can remain in the black even if production drops to the 60 percent level. As the taste of consumers becomes more and more diversified, every product must necessarily follow the trend of small volume production and large variety.

The only solution to this difficult problem is the introduction of FMS (flexible manufacturing system). "Intelligent robots are indispensable," according to Executive Director Morita. It has been decided to use 16-bit microcomputers in these robots. These are all robots with high IQ's, with sight and a sense of touch in their fingers.

Emphasis To Be on Sensor Development

A technical report of nearly 150 pages contains minute descriptions of various sensor technologies developed by Matsushita over the years. Household appliances such as the electric range, refrigerator, air conditioner and VTR contain a large number of sensors already. They include a large variety of sensors for sensing temperature, pressure, gas, humidity, light and magnetism. Therefore, Matsushita's determination in engaging in the development of sensors is enormous. This technology is directly applicable to the sensory functions of the robots. This is the strength of Matsushita.

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The Matsushita group entered the field of selling arc-welding robots in earnest only last fall. The sales are being undertaken by the Matsushita Electric Industrial Co, while the production is being undertaken by the subsidiary, Matsushita Business Machines (headquarters at Toyonaka city, Osaka Prefecture; President, Setsuo Aoki; capital, 3 billion yen). Matsushita Business Machines entered a seeing robot capable of discriminating the type and location of the work object for exhibition at the robot fair previously mentioned. With assistance from its parent company, this subsidiary company is attempting to commercialize assembly robots with sensors.

When Japan's robot industry has grown to a market scale comparable with that of household electric appliances today, the Matsushita group will be expected to concentrate its forces on this market. By that time, the use of robots may have already spread from factories to offices and even homes.

[13 Nov 81 p 8]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Cooperative Development with Siemens; Aiming First at Application to Mechanical Work"]

[Text] "You are fired!"--Thunder was heard in the office of the president in the main plant of Fujitsu Fanac located in Hino city, Tokyo. President Inaba is a dictator also known as "emperor." Frequently, his subordinates are given a good scolding by him. He himself flies all around the globe and concludes deals for top sales. In less than 10 years since the company was established, he has sold more than 800,000 units of NC (numerically controlled) equipment.

The First Machine Expected in November Next Year

No doubt they are the greatest in the world. The strong personality and confidence of the president are tapping the potential of this young enterprise.

Question: This spring, a Fuji plant in which robots are manufactured by robots was built in Yamanashi Prefecture; what is its monthly production?

President Inaba: 50 robots. By next spring, it will be increased to 100. Although our production is still small today, we believe the robot industry will grow significantly. Our goal, centered around robots for mechanical work, is to become tops in this field.

Question: Intelligent robots with senses of sight and touch are being actively developed today but are there demands for these robots?

Answer: Not so much at the moment. If the robots are compared to working bees, then intelligent robots are the queen bees. Without the queen bees, other bees will not work. Intelligent robots are indispensable for the successful operation of FMS (flexible manufacturing system). Our plan originally was to develop this by 1983. We have advanced our schedule so as to be able to display our first machine in the International Machine Tool Sample Exhibition to be held in Osaka in November next year. [end of answer]

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A contract for mutual cooperation in both areas of R&D and sales was signed 6 years ago with Siemens (West Germany), the largest electric machinery manufacturer in all of Europe. President Inaba and the vice president in charge of machinery, Ziegfield W. Siemens, maintain such a close relationship that a hotline is kept between them. Both companies are exerting every effort for the joint development of their intelligent robot "I series" and their future NC equipment "X series." In April next year, technical camps from both sides will meet and discuss the technical details.

Robots for Handling Electronic Parts Are Not To Be Considered

The first of the I series will be revealed 1 year later. This series consists of two types of machines: The first type is capable of handling complicated operations, and the second type is the cylindrical coordinate type capable of doing high-precision work. A CCD (charge combination diode) type semiconductor camera is to be used as the eye. Of course, sensors for touch are also included. For the time being, the first unit is expected to have only the touch sensors. The field of application is aimed at the assembling of mechanical parts. "Robots for the assembling of electronics parts are not being considered," says President Inaba flatly.

The NC equipment used in machine tools will be used as is for the brain of robot. The first intelligent robot is to be controlled by a 16-bit microcomputer contained inside. The NC equipment "X series," which is being developed jointly with Siemens now and is expected to be put into operation in 3 years, will contain a 32-bit microcomputer, which is comparable with the advanced minicomputer in capability. This will be linked with the intelligent robot in the future so that the robot itself will be able to make judgments and carry out complicated operations.

A team of 30 technologists is participating in the joint development project today. By next spring, 20 more new graduates are expected to join the team on the Japanese side alone. There is an expression, "Fanac's hell," in machine tool manufacturers' circles, because the work is hard there. The members of Fanac work so hard that its main plant at Hino, Tokyo, is brightly lit past midnight every day. Even the members of the parent company, Fujitsu, which is famous for its aggressiveness, say facetiously among themselves: "We wouldn't want to have to compete against Fanac." "The 50 who participate in our project are equal in strength to 150 in other companies," boasts President Inaba.

In Cooperation With Fujitsu Research Group Also

At the same time, joint research on CCD and optic fibers is being undertaken in cooperation with the R&D department of its parent company, Fujitsu Research Center (headquarters, Kawasaki city; president, Bunichi Koguchi, capital, 2 billion yen). CCD is a powerful component that may be used as the eye of the intelligent robot, while optic fibers are most suitable for interplant communications and for linking the robot with the computer. At the dawn of the age of the intelligent robot, the family tie appears to grow ever stronger.

During the month of September, the number of visitors to the Fuji plant exceeded 10,000. Day after day, the tour buses brought in visitors. Plant manager Hirokichi Scichida and the leading members of the plant are kept busy receiving the visitors. The plant, which is the first honest-to-goodness FMS plant in Japan, has fast become the center of international interest. This plant will sooner or later become a robot specialty plant. The plant, which is large enough to contain two Korakuen play-grounds, "is capable of producing 3,000 robots a month if necessary," says President Inaba.

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The total sales of Fujitsu Fanac in the first quarter this year was 82 billion yen, only 12 percent of which is due to the robot system today. This ratio is expected to rise to 40 percent by 1985, when the intelligent robots may have entered the mature stage.

[14 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Matsumoto, northern Kyushu branch office: "Pursuing 'Arc Sensor,' Hastening the Development of Thin Plate Welding Robot"]

[Text] A welding robot with arc sensor was the newest product of Yasukawa Electric Manufacturing Company Ltd on display at the Industrial Robot Fair held 8 October at Haruumi, Tokyo. This new product, consisting of an arc-welding robot, "MOTOMAN," which has been a hit product, with an arc sensor attached to it, was very popular at the fair.

Sales Will Begin Next April

At any rate, this robot was developed over approximately a year by the automation research laboratory of the R&D center, consisting of 20 technologists and occupying a secluded corner of the Yahata plant (Kitakyushu city) of Yasukawa Electric Co. The company is quite confident about the production of "MOTOMAN," but it is not so sure whether the sensors will function properly. It was able to accomplish this only after repeatedly carrying out the basic experiments. The director of the automation research laboratory, Itsuro Matsumoto, who was in charge of its development, is temporarily relieved: "We are glad to be able to make public a product which is 2-3 years ahead of our competitors in the field of arc-welding robots."

This robot with arc sensor is capable of finding the location to be welded by itself by detecting the arc current used in the welding operation. The welding gun which is attached to the end of the robot's arm swings left and right as the welding progresses along the welding line marked on the work. The location of welding is determined by comparing the amount of electric current that flows between the welding gun and the work as the welding gun swings left and right.

Gaining confidence from a favorable appraisal received at the fair, Yasukawa Electric is considering commercialization of this welding robot with arc sensor beginning next April. This will be the first intelligent robot put on the market by Yasukawa Electric. The robot strategy of Yasukawa Electric is to "pursue the goal in the field centered around arc welding" (Executive Director Masayasu Nishizawa).

Of course, the development of an intelligent robot will be confined to the field of arc welding and its applications, but the company is determined to achieve "a technical development no other companies can match" in this narrow field (same).

That is why the next item on the agenda for development after the robot made public this time is a robot with arc sensor capable of welding thin plate. The robot with arc sensor put on display at the robot fair has a weak spot; namely, it is applicable only to the welding of plate of medium thickness, or more than 4.5 mm thickness; because for a stable operation of the sensor used, the arc current must be greater than the 200 amperes employed in the arc-welding of medium thick plates.

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Arc-Welding Robot for Thin Plate To Be Developed Within a Year

However, the electric current used in the welding of thin plate by the arc-welding robot is usually in the range of 120-130 amperes. This electric current is too weak for the sensor to properly detect the location of the welding line. For this reason, Yasukawa Electric has taken up the development of a robot with sensor capable of welding thin plate as its next subject. According to the plan, Yasukawa Electric is expected to be able to manufacture it within a year. If so, Yasukawa Electric will have intelligent robots capable of welding plates of gauges from medium to thin.

According to Yasukawa Electric, "it will be 4-5 years before highly intelligent robots having a sense of sight can become very popular in the field of arc-welding." Until that day, it considers that the robot with arc sensor, which is a form of intelligent robot, should occupy the mainstream.

However, the users' demands for intelligent robots are becoming more and more advanced. Therefore, at the same time the present "MOTOMAN" is being upgraded, Yasukawa Electric is also aggressively carrying out research on welding robots with a sense of sight.

Development of Sense of Sight Also Under Way

This company has successfully trial manufactured a welding robot capable of grasping the welding line through the use of a TV camera and carrying out the welding operation automatically. The direction of the present development is also on the extension of this robot with a TV camera as its eye. It is undertaking the research and development of a robot equipped with a combination of industrial TV camera and minicomputer.

The basic technological development necessary for this type of robot has already been completed by Yasukawa Electric. It says "it is ready to put a welding robot with a sense of sight on the market as soon as there is demand."

There are two problems. The first problem concerns the automobile parts industry, where the Yasukawa robots are most widely being used. The shape of parts tends to be very complicated with a crooked welding line which reaches where the TV camera cannot see. How to solve this is the problem.

The other problem concerns the cost. According to an estimate made by Yasukawa Electric, the minicomputer used on the robot alone costs most than 10 million yen at the present stage. That price is too high to be marketable. How can the price be lowered? It says "it may take 5 years before a practical product can be manufactured." If these two problems can be solved, Yasukawa Electric should be able to maintain its leading position.

[17 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Assembly Robot by Next Fall; Advancing Schedule To Take the Initiative"]

[Text] A Hitachi whirlwind was stirred up in industrial robot circles. The date was 3 August. The largest general electric machinery manufacturer in the United States, the General Electric Company, announced at its robot business headquarters in Bridgeport,

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Connecticut, that it is going to enter into business cooperation with Hitachi Ltd on matters related to robots. At the same time the manufacturing technology for the minicomputer robot is introduced from Hitachi, a large number of robots will also be imported by G.E., until such time as it will be able to manufacture them in earnest. Robot manufacturers all over the world caught their breath when they learned of this pact between the giants of Japan and the United States.

Cooperative Operation Also a Possibility

Cooperative pacts consummated with European and American enterprises one after another, sales offensives here and abroad, a high-pitched increase in production, and a plan to introduce robots to all plants companywide--activities in the field of robots have picked up suddenly since the beginning of this year. What will be Hitachi's next punch?

"We would like to achieve practical application of an assembly robot by next fall by advancing the schedule"--Executive Director Hiroshi Sonoyama, who is directing the robot team, revealed the next move. The plan to commercialize intelligent robots with senses of sight and touch in 1983 has been significantly moved up. The campaign plan is to take the initiative away from rival companies.

At its Production Technology Research Center located near Tozuka station on the Tokaido line, with a staff of 450, the production technologies are being researched broadly under five specific themes: the production system, fabrication, processing, automation, and reliability. The breakdown of the research subjects is as follows: electronics and related subjects, 40 percent; heavy electric equipment, 30 percent; household electric appliances, 20 percent; and others, the balance. The existence of a powerful robot research team there became known recently, and its moves are being carefully watched by rival companies. A large number of robots are being used as experimental material here and there inside the research center. Young technologists absorbed in their work near the robots attract people's attention.

One of their achievements is the intelligent assembly robot. Its eye, consisting of a TV camera, stares at an object. Complicated assembly work is carried out by recognition of the shape and position of the object. As it has carried out the same operation repeatedly, the speed of assembly has picked up. It gains mastery of the operation like a human being because the robot is in possession of a learning capability. Moreover, two robots can even work in cooperation with one another. It is truly the world's most advanced assembly robot.

These Robots Will Be Introduced to the Internal Plants First

This robot, shaped like a bird with a large bottom, has arms with a 6-degree freedom of movement and is capable of lifting a maximum weight of 3 kg. It can transport an object at a maximum speed of 1.2 meters per second and can assemble machine parts with an accuracy of 0.1 mm. The robot's body weight is 80 kg, which is light indeed. "By disengaging various joints of the robot, it can be transformed into a simpler robot having only a 2- or 3-degree freedom of movement," explained the director of the production technology research center, Akiguchi Okumura. This is the so-called module type robot.

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A 16-bit microcomputer is used as its control device. A multiple number of robots can also be engaged in group operation through control of the microcomputer of each robot by a superior microcomputer. Moreover, the robot is designed to respond to robot language "ARL-1" such as the voice command "move to the right" or "rotate the wrist," or to the programmed command. By next fall, this robot may drop its mask and appear in public on the market as a full-fledged intelligent robot.

"Next year, industrial circles will experience a climax on matters related to the development of the intelligent robot," (Director Okumura), so its technical team is spurring the development of a robot with a towel around its head.

The history of Hitachi's research into an intelligent robot is quite long. In 1970, a pattern-recognizing robot capable of assembling blocks was successfully trial manufactured by its central research center. This was followed by the development of a machine parts-fitting robot and a vacuum cleaner assembly robot by its production technology research center. Development of an assembly robot with a sense of sight began in earnest in 1978. And the research achievements are realized step by step.

A "500 person project" has been under way in earnest since the beginning of this year to introduce these intelligent robots into the internal plants first. With the production technology department as the flagship, the assembly robots are to be introduced to the various plants companywide, including the five research centers and 17 plants. Within 5 years, 60 percent of all assembly processes companywide will employ robots and the number of operators will be reduced by nearly 30 percent. By this undertaking, they wish to learn all there is to be learned about the assembly robot and the knowhow about its introduction. After that, the robots will be standardized and commercialized. It is truly a strategy to "kill two birds with one stone."

The merchandise business headquarters is in charge of the production and sales of robots. Its key production base, Shushino plant (Chiba Prefecture), is engaged in the production of motors. Inside a site large enough to easily contain eight Korakuen baseball fields stand four factory buildings, each approximately 120 square meters in size. One of them is making a quick changeover from motor plant to robot plant. The monthly production will increase from 25 units at the beginning of the year to slightly less than 90 by the end of the year. The motors are already mature merchandise. The plant and the technical personnel working there can be assigned to the robot department. This is an excellent opportunity to revitalize the talents and the facilities.

Rivalry Between Parent and Child

Shinmeiwa Industries and Tokiko of the Hitachi group are also moving into the field of robots today. A tense market war has unfolded between them and their parent company, Hitachi, in the fields of arc-welding and painting robots. Though they may have a family tie, they are rivals as businessmen on the front line. In spite of all this, Tokiko is often appointed by Hitachi to do the scouting for electronic technical personnel. A difficult relationship indeed. "For the time being, the three companies will be allowed to compete freely"--the leaders, headed by President Hirokichi Yoshiyama, are surprisingly clear-cut. A violent fight may be unfolded between the parent and the children on matters related to intelligent robots again.

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[18 Nov 81 p 6]

[Article by reporter Hirano: "Pursuing Basic Technology Broadly To Meet the Needs of System Merchandise"]

[Text] This is the age of industrial robot wars, with more than 150 large and small companies competing for the market in a disorderly manner. And there is no end to the new manufacturers which may introduce themselves and join in the game.

The Latest Participant Which Entered This Summer

Mitsubishi Electric Corporation began sales of its arc-welding robots only this summer. This company is the latest participant. It launched a concentrated sales offensive targeting the Nagoya area where subcontractors associated with Toyota are concentrated. Their sales engineers are to learn all about robot sales knowhow and more there. Nationwide sales will begin next spring.

"Today's robots are nothing more than cheap toys. Intelligent robots will make remarkable progress in the future," predicts Executive Director Tsuneo Ushio, the head of the heavy electric machinery business headquarters in charge of the robot department.

An "FMS development team" organized companywide has born this spring at its Nagoya Machinery Plant (Nagoya city) which produces motors and business machines. This is the team which is responsible for the research, development, and merchandising of various CAD/CAM (computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing) systems, new industrial robots related to the FMS (flexible manufacturing system) and related mechatronics machinery. There are 40 fulltime technologists and nearly 300 more technologists from related department who participate in this activity.

The research activities related to the control devices which constitute the brain of the intelligent robots, the actuators which constitute the limbs, and various sensors for the senses of sight and touch, are being undertaken here. The assembly robots are also under the control of the Nagoya Machinery Plant, while the handling robots are under the control of the Inazawa plant (Aichi Prefecture). According to the plan, the Nagasaki plant (Nagasaki Prefecture) and the Fukuyama plant will join the ranks in the future and will be in charge of the development of large-scale robot and a small-scale assembly robot, respectively.

"The present status of intelligent robot development is like a game of golf in which the green is not yet in sight. The specific technologies that are needed are still unclear, so that skirts of R&D will be spread wide," explained Executive Director Ushio, who is the commander-in-chief of the entire robot team, regarding their present strategy.

There are two other organizations in the company which are closely related to the robot team. One of them is the "FMS promotion project" started last summer. The idea is to aggressively promote automation and labor conservation measures in their internal plants. Intelligent robots are indispensable for removing humans from the production process in which a small number of a large variety of goods are to be manufactured. A large variety of electronic and electric products, from electronics parts of household electric appliances to large-scale electric generators, are being manufactured at 36 plants scattered all over the country. The intelligent robots introduced in these plants will eventually be standardized and then commercialized. This is Mitsubishi's strategy.

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The other is the "robot committee" organized internally 2 years ago. The technical personnel representing various business offices meet regularly to exchange experience in research achievements concerning robots. For a house as big as Mitsubishi, an organization such as this for the exchange of technical information is indispensable. In preparation for the age of intelligent robots, "this organization will be drastically reformed," (Executive Director Ushio).

Short Courses Offered Regularly

The Nagoya plant, where the order of battle is shaping up today, is to be the key robot production base. A "Production Machine Work Technology Center" is located on the left, just inside the south gate of the plant. It is where the industrial machinery revealed this spring is on display. In a spacious hall resembling a gymnasium are rows of the newest mechatronics machines, including arc-welding robots, laser work machines, and electron-beam welding machines. This is a technical salon where, in addition to the display and demonstration of various machines, the customers may also have technical consultations. A training school is in session regularly. More than 3,000 persons use this facility every month.

In 1980, the total sales of these mechatronics machines related to FMS was 30 billion yen. A plan is under way to push the sales up to 50 billion yen in 3 years. "Concentrating all the industrial machinery in one room in order to sell it as system merchandise" was the motivation behind the establishment of the center (director of industrial machine business department, Koichi Kitaura), and intelligent robots will be the pivot point of them all.

Exchanging Technologists With Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

An interesting experiment is under way at the production technology research center of Mitsubishi Electric. Small nails, the size of a match stick, pop up and then withdraw. The robot's arm flashes and the nailheads are hit by a hammer over and over. The action is as accurate as that of Musashi Miyamoto in picking up a fly with chopsticks. The robot's arm is made entirely of plastic so that it can move very rapidly. The robots of today are all blocks of aluminum and steel. The robots of the future may all be made of lightweight plastics. This is only a very small part of the advanced robot research being undertaken by Mitsubishi. Each research center is pursuing broadly the basic technologies that are necessary for intelligent robots.

The Mitsubishi group is a tight-knit group. Its brother company, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, entered the field of robots quite early, but its domestic share has never been very high. As the robots have become more and more intelligent, the specific weight of electronics technology has become heavier and heavier. Technical exchange, has already begun with the Heavy Industries. There is a great possibility that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries will join hands with Mitsubishi Electric on matters related to the development of intelligent robots.

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[Article by reporter Hirano: "Full Force on the Intelligent Sensors; the Senses of Smell and Taste in Addition to the Senses of Sight, Hearing and Touch"]

[Text] Japan Electric Company Ltd has begun exerting all its efforts for the development of intelligent sensors, because these have become indispensable for intelligent robots which, like human beings, are to be able to make judgments on the basis of sight and touch.

Practical Applications in 5 Years

What is an intelligent sensor? It is an electronic component consisting of a micro-computer and a sensor. Utilizing semiconductor technology, which is progressing by leaps and bounds, a sensor and a processor which will process the information obtained by the sensor are integrated into a small chip. It will undoubtedly become a super LSI (large-scale integrated circuit) containing several hundred thousand transistors inside a chip 5 mm square. "We wish to achieve its practical application in 5 years" revealed Executive Director Michiyuki Hara, who is in charge of R&D. The robot's IQ will jump when such sensors are perfected, because even a feeble signal can be information-processed and amplified and then sent to the brain. Then, even sensors with not such high sensitivity can be utilized. Moreover, the unit price can be brought down significantly by the mass-production process, because it will be basically an LSI. For example, the human skin transforms an analog signal such as the sensation of heat or cold into a digital signal which is then transmitted to the brain by a pulse signal consisting of a pulsating wave. Approximately the same thing is to be done by the semiconductors.

About 10 minutes' walk from the Miyazaki station on the Tokyo-Denen city line in a quiet residential town is a "white hall." A sensor research division was born at this chip research center this summer. Sensor technology is indispensable for the realization of C&C (computer and communication) advocated by the director, Koji Kobayashi. A force of 20 technologists is engaged wholly on sensor research.

Semiconductor Technology--Its Pride

"We will develop sensors which are easy to use by making the most of our specialty--semiconductor technology," explains the director of the chip technology research center, Shizuo Asagama, Doctor of Science, about the company's ambition. At this research center, problems related to the development of artificial intelligence are being attacked from three sides: CCD (charge combination diode), a newly developed semiconductor; three-dimensional IC with solid structure; and the biosensor. The project is to last 7 years. Practical application of the intelligent sensors is listed among the most important themes.

CCD which is to be the eye of the robot first: The semiconductor element developed by the U.S. Bell Research Laboratory is considered to be the favorite candidate for the solid state TV camera. It can be made much more compact and lightweight than a TV camera using vidicon. "CCD cameras with a million picture elements will soon become practical" observes the director of the sensor research division, Hironitsu Shiraki. As the first to engage in CCD research in Japan, it has sufficient technical power for the task. It has already made practical a color CCD camera with 200,000 picture elements.

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It has also developed a touch sensor using semiconductors. A silicon chip is loaded, in addition to the sensor, with an amplifier circuit and a temperature compensation circuit. This is the forerunner of the intelligent sensor. Already, some automobile manufacturers are investigating the feasibility of adapting this sensor for their cars. Of course, this sensor can also be used on the robot as its sense of touch. Among its recent research achievements are the infrared ray sensor for the detection of temperature, the semiconductor gas sensor and the magnetic resistance element sensor for the detection of rotational direction.

"Cola." "Juice." The little ones shout at the microphone. A robot which is shaped like a human arm responds to the order, pulls a bottle of beverage from the box, removes the cap from the bottle and gently pours it into a cup. "Oh's" of admiration can be heard even from the adults among the spectators. This is a scene at the "Industrial Robot Fair" held in October at Haruumi-Tokyo. This voice-recognition robot was very popular and the stand was packed with people day after day.

There are many applications for voice-recognition robots. For example, people tend to utter a cry when there is an accident. A robot can catch this voice and quickly stop the operation. In this way, not only can a physical accident be prevented, but the production of bad products can also be prevented. Moreover, in a factory, a human operator engaged in one task may be able to command a robot to perform other operations. Manager Shigenobu Sato, who is in command of the robot business team, says "many more applications in offices can probably be discovered." Research into the development of sensors for smell and taste are also under way. "A fire-prevention robot capable of smelling smoke can appear," and the dream continues to expand endlessly (Manager Sate).

Robots With Sensor To Be Unveiled Next Spring

Japan Electric has only recently entered the field of robots by putting on the market three types of assembly robots toward the end of September. One of them is an ultra-precision assembly robot capable of assembling IC and computer terminals with a position accuracy within 1 micron. Development of this type of precision robot is the staple of electronics manufacturers, which machinery manufacturers cannot imitate very easily. According to its plan, assembly robots with sensors will be commercialized next spring.

This is an age of microelectronics, with semiconductors at the pivot point. Optoelectronics will be the next to bloom, and "the middle of the 21st century will be the heyday of bioelectronics," predicts Executive Director Uenohara. One wonders how close to human beings the intelligent robots will be then?

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