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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Biographic Information

TSUJI Masanobu

JA 41

Member of house of Representatives

Tsuji Masanobu is a member of Japan's leading conservative political organization of the Liberal-Democratic Party, and a three-time member of the House of Representatives. A former army colonel during World War II, he was regarded as one of Japan's most brilliant military strategists. Tsuji was a close associate of the late General ISHIHARA Kanji, prewar leader of the ultra-rightist Toa Renmei (East Asia League), an organization which advocated "Asia for Asians." After the war, Tsuji revived the League under the name of Toa Renmei Doshi-kai (East Asia League Comrades Society) and advocated the revival of the "Emperor System" and "remilitarization" of Japan free of United States and Soviet influences. He is opposed to the United States-Japan Mutual Security Pact and advocates neutrality similar to that of Nehru's "peace principles."

During the war Tsuji was known as the "God of Military Strategy," and was considered the chief planner of the successful conquest of Malaya and Singapore, which was carried out by General YAMASHITA Tomoyuki, popularly known as the "Tiger of Malaya." Tsuji's name was well known among the British, Australian, and United States forces in Southeast Asia, and after Japan's defeat the British listed him as a "Class A" war criminal. He went "underground" at Bangkok disguised as a mendicant friar and in May 1948 secretly returned to Japan via Indochina and China. He was the only major war criminal suspect to escape detention. His name was taken off the war criminals list in December 1950 and Tsuji assumed his real identity.

In 1952 Tsuji's book, Senko Sansen-ri (Underground Escape 30,000 Mi), narrating his post-war experiences, became a best-seller. The book's revelation of his sensational escape from Allied seizure at the war's end put him in the political limelight. Taking advantage of the considerable publicity, he ran for the house of Representatives from Ishikawa Prefecture and was elected by the highest vote, 65,000. Although he fell to second place in the April 1953 election, he again led other candidates in February 1955.

Born October 11, 1902 in the village of Higashi Tanoku, Emma county, Ishikawa prefecture, Tsuji is the second son of a poor farm family of central Japan. He graduated with top honors from the Japanese Military Academy (1924) and the Military Staff College (1931). In 1932, Tsuji was in Shanghai when the "Shanghai Incident" occurred. In 1933 he was assigned to the Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo, and later was appointed instructor at the Japanese Military Academy. From 1935 to 1940 he served as staff officer with the Kwantung Army (Hankow), and the China Expeditionary Forces Headquarters. In 1941 as Chief of Staff of the 25th Army Headquarters under the command of General YAMASHITA Tomoyuki, Tsuji was considered responsible for planning the invasion of

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Malaya and Singapore. In 1943 he led the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Guadalcanal; he was wounded and contracted malaria during this operation. Tsuji returned to Japan, and after his recovery was assigned to lecturing on military strategy at the Military College. He was also promoted to the rank of colonel. In 1944 he was assigned to the Army Expeditionary Forces Headquarters in China. Shortly thereafter, as the end of the Pacific War approached, he criticized Premier TOJO Hideki's incompetence in handling the war with China, denounced the misconduct of certain high military officers in China, and opposed the activities of the Army's intelligence agencies. Probably as a result of these criticisms, Tojo transferred Tsuji to Burma. When Japan surrendered he was listed by the British as a ranking war criminal. Tsuji went into hiding at Bangkok, and for the next three years travelled incognito throughout Indochina and China.

Tsuji returned to Japan in 1948 under the assumed name of KIUCHI Katsuji, professor of Archeology. Several years later, in an interview with an American reporter of the Nippon Times, Tsuji detailed the highlights of his escape. He stated that he owed his life to his "great Chinese friend," the notorious Chinese General TAI Li, one-time head of a large Chinese Nationalist intelligence network. Tsuji's connection with Tai Li began when he was in Shanghai. Reportedly, Tsuji's intervention had prevented the Japanese gendarmerie from punishing the families of Chinese intelligence agents operating underground during the Japanese occupation. In return, Tai Li assisted Tsuji's escape from Bangkok through French Indochina, Kuming and Chungking to Hanking. During his two-year stay Tsuji stated that he helped write military tactical manuals for General CHIANG Kai-shek.

Thirty months after his return to Japan Tsuji's name was taken off the list of war criminals. On March 3, 1951, Tsuji delivered a speech before the Jiyu-in (Free People's) Club, in which he compared the military strength of the Communist bloc with that of the United States and the other democracies. He concluded that a major war between the two ideological blocs is unavoidable, that the Communist world will inevitably triumph in such a conflict, and that, accordingly, Japan has no choice but to maintain a strict neutrality if she hopes to survive. As Japan was still under Allied occupation at the time, his remarks created a sensation.

In 1952, Tsuji published his books Senko Sansenri, Guadalcanal, and Juro Tai Ichi (Fifteen Against One), which he wrote while in hiding. The books became the nation's best-sellers and Tsuji gained considerable publicity. He revived the prewar nationalist and jingoist society, Toa Rommei, and named it Toa Rommei Doshi-kai. However, because of differences of opinion on policy matters, Tsuji and his followers later seceded from the Toa Rommei Doshi-kai and organized the neutralist Jiei Domei (Self Defense League). The League's major policies apparently are to work for rearmament and fight Communism and Socialism. Tsuji is a very close friend of former Colonel MATTORI Takushiro, a prominent nationalist and a leading advocate of the remilitarization of Japan. It was rumored that Mattori was primarily responsible in getting Tsuji's name withdrawn from the war criminal

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list in December 1950. The two men reportedly exercise wide influence over former military personnel.

Taking advantage of the publicity he received from his books, Tsuji, a vigorous personality with a gift for speech-making, campaigned successfully for the House of Representatives, and was elected on October 1, 1952 as an independent. He was reelected in April 1953 and again in February 1955. He joined the Japan Democratic Party in 1954 and served as its "military adviser" and policy research committee vice chairman. Democrats and Liberals merged in late 1955, and Tsuji became a member of the new Liberal-Democratic Party. He visited Communist China and the U.S.S.R. in August 1955 as member of a Diet delegation. Upon his return Tsuji remarked that he was on friendly terms with the top Chinese Communist officials, especially CHOU En-lai. After all, he explained, "they're Asians." Tsuji displayed less enthusiasm for Chiang Kai-shek's regime, and predicted its downfall in one or two years.

Tsuji has long been a leading exponent of the "Asia for the Asians" doctrine, as propounded by the late General ISHIMURA Kanji. He considers the ties that bind Asians together to be stronger than the ideological bonds that exist between Communist China and the USSR. Following his visit to Communist China and Soviet Russia, Tsuji stated he did not believe that the U.S.S.R. constituted a war menace at the present time, since its food supplies and industrial power still lag behind those of the United States and Great Britain. While in Moscow, Tsuji is reported to have had several meetings with Marshal Georgiy K. ZHUKOV and his chief of staff.

Tsuji has cleverly exploited issues which have aroused the Japanese national sensitivity, such as the U. S. military bases issues and the Korean-Japanese fishery disputes, to keep himself before the public. Recently, he told a group of former Japanese army officers that Japan should work with India to achieve neutrality and with Communist China to maintain peace. Numerous reports indicate that he is both anti-American and anti-Soviet. He advocates withdrawal of all "foreign" (i.e., American), troops from Japan stating that the "United States garrison forces are in Japan because Japan is an important base from which to attack the Soviet Union," and added that neither Russia nor Red China will attack Japan provided "foreign" troops are removed from Japan. In June 1953, at Kochi city, Tsuji warned the U. S. that if it continues to fortify Japan into an "Asian outpost of the United States, the friendship of the Japanese people will be lost."

In August 1952, speaking before a large crowd in Kanazawa City, Tsuji stated that "Truman is the number one war criminal and Stalin the number two war criminal." He also stated that "Truman, Churchill and Stalin do not like me, but I am satisfied so long as I am loved by my fellow Japanese". Also, in one of his pre-election campaign speeches, Tsuji stated, "Although America may find it difficult to forget Pearl Harbor, Japan finds it more difficult to forget Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Tsuji also criticized the U.S.-trained Japanese National Safety Forces (now renamed Ground Safety Forces) as being neither an army nor a police force but a "pollywog headed in the direction of a frog."

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TSUJI Masachika

Tsuji is reported to be a fanatical and intrepid man with a leadership complex. Self-confident, energetic, and highly exorbitant, he is quite popular with the young and women voters for his opposition to Japan's participation in any future wars. However, he has no standing among the more conservative, reliable, and competent former military leaders, who view him as an extreme opportunist who may have hidden leftist tendencies.

Tsuji is married; he and his wife, Chitose, have three daughters and a son. He is the author of several other books, including Singapore, Asia no Kyokan (Fellowship Between Asian Nations), Komonkan, Kono Kikou (This is Japan), and Tsuzi-no Sakai Taigen (The Next World War).

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