

April 14, 1967
**Intelligence Note 292 from Secret Allan Evans to the
Acting Secretary, 'Japanese Expert Considers Nuclear
Defense'**

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Summary:

INR assessed several recent newspaper articles by Kiichi Saeki, a defense expert close to the government, whose thinking was "noteworthy for [its] frank consideration of Japan's need for nuclear-defense planning to cope with Communist China's growing potential."

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

April 14, 1967

To : The Acting Secretary
 Through: S/S
 From : INR - Allan Evans *AE*

Subject: Japanese Expert Considers Nuclear Defense

In the heavy volume of Japanese comment stimulated by the draft Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, two articles in the Sankei newspaper March 10-11 by Kiichi Saeki, a leading defense expert, are particularly noteworthy for their frank consideration of Japan's need for nuclear-defense planning to cope with Communist China's growing potential. The articles bear a marked similarity to a draft position paper on nuclear policy, prepared for Prime Minister Sato by Saeki and others for use in Diet discussions of the NPT. This paper recommended that, while Japan should favor an NPT, it should also reserve the right to produce nuclear weapons in the future, maintain close liaison with the United States on defense planning, and continue research and development on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Both the position paper and Saeki's articles emphasize that Japanese nuclear policy must be flexible enough to protect Japan and yet not contribute to a nuclear arms race in Asia.

Supports Non-Discriminatory NPT. Saeki, who is Director of the Nomura General Research Institute (an industry-backed organization devoted to defense and security research) and a former head of the Japanese Defense Academy, is a recognized authority on security matters. The first of his two articles rehearsed widely-held Japanese contentions that an NPT should not discriminate against non-nuclear weapons powers either politically or in peaceful uses of

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- 2 -

nuclear energy, should not interfere with collective security arrangements designed to thwart nuclear attacks or threats from other countries, and should be flexible enough to permit adjustment to future international developments.*

But Advocates Continued Nuclear Planning. Saeki then pointed out that the NPT could theoretically afford the opportunity for Communist China's nuclear potential to reach that of the United States and Soviet Union, although he recognized that MRBM's or IRBM's would be of little military use to Peking until it could deploy large numbers of effective ICBM's to counter-balance the US deterrent. Saeki advocated that, in the meantime, Japan should:

- 1) gradually strengthen nuclear-defense countermeasures and study how Japan should contribute to a power balance against China;
- 2) build up Japanese national power (not merely military power) so as to deal with Peking on equal terms without provoking it;
- 3) maintain the US-Japan Security Treaty and strengthen the US nuclear umbrella through closer contacts between Japanese and US leaders, joint US-Japanese nuclear-force planning, and consideration of a Japanese-US ABM system and early detection network;
- 4) attempt to remove the Japanese taboo regarding nuclear devices;
- 5) avoid developing nuclear weapons independently, as this could invite Chinese retaliation; but rather
- 6) develop Japanese technical and industrial capabilities, especially in the space and peaceful atomic-energy fields, to maintain Japan's prestige and to keep open the option to develop nuclear

* See IN-192, "Japanese Reservations Toward NPT," March 9, 1967
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- 3 -

weapons should that become necessary. In a subsequent article in another paper, Saeki argued that the Defense Agency should take industry into its confidence and concentrate its R and D efforts on such defensive areas as non-nuclear, missile-intercept systems.

Japanese Defense Thinking Well Advanced. These published views indicate the sophistication of current Japanese military thinking, in the government itself as well as among publicists, all of which stands in contrast to the pervasive simplistic pacifist attitudes of a few years ago. After studying the position paper on nuclear policy, Prime Minister Sato reportedly requested further studies on how long it would take Japan to produce an atomic bomb following a decision to do so and how the reversion of Okinawa could be reconciled with present Japanese policy against the deployment of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil. This is not to suggest that the government is about to "go nuclear," for domestic resistance is still strong and Sato apparently sincerely favors the principle of non-discriminatory non-proliferation. However, the government and its security advisors are well aware of the need for careful defense planning that is subject to continued review, close cooperation and coordination with the United States, and a flexible attitude toward nuclear defenses. Even if the Japanese sign an NPT, future decisions in this field will probably depend largely on how the Japanese believe they will be best protected against Chinese Communist nuclear capabilities.

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