

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 6, 1968

SUBJECT: NPT

PARTICIPANTS: Nobuhiko Ushiba, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Takeso Shimoda, Ambassador of Japan

The Secretary  
U. Alexis Johnson, Ambassador to Japan  
Richard L. Sneider, Country Director for Japan

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The Secretary noted that there are now more than forty co-sponsors for the UNGA resolution on NPT and asked whether Japan would also co-sponsor. The Japanese said that they would vote for the resolution but were unlikely to co-sponsor.

Ambassador Shimoda explained that while 80-90% of the Japanese desires were obtained in the treaty, including provisions on withdrawal and periodic review, there were still concerns in Japan that it may be imprudent for Japan to sign the treaty in view of the threat of Communist China. With Communist China outside the treaty, it was essential for Japan to be prudent, although under the present security arrangements with the U.S., it was not necessary for Japan to have nuclear weapons. The Secretary suggested the Japanese, if this is a matter of major concern, might consider including in the Diet resolution on ratification, preservation of their right to invoke the supreme national interest under the treaty if there was an alteration in U.S.-Japan security relations.

Ushiba explained that the principal problem about co-sponsorship was political. Foreign Minister Miki is seeking to assure a national consensus with the opposition on the NPT. If the Japanese Government co-sponsored the resolution, the opposition will claim that the Japanese Government did not fight to the last minute to secure further changes in the treaty,

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particularly on the question of equality of inspection -- even though the Japanese Government recognized that this was impossible. The Secretary said that co-sponsorship was not crucial although a vote for the treaty is and that he understood the problems faced by India and Japan as a result of the Chinese Communist threat.

The Secretary pointed to the irony of the fact that for six years there had been a unanimous vote for non-proliferation but when a treaty is before the Assembly, there is no longer unanimity. If we do not agree to a NPT now, we would in the future curse the day of this failure. The major question before the world remains to prevent nuclear war and one of the great tragedies of the post-war period was the Soviet failure to accept the Baruch plan in 1946.

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