

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

R 212051Z
FM CINCPACFLT

CORRECTED ROUTING

TO CNO

R 192053Z
FM CINCPACINFO CINCUSARPAC
CINCPACFLT
CINCPACAF
CG FMFPACR 100056Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC
STATE CRNC

S E C R E T ACTION DEPT 1986 INFO CINCPAC 373 FROM TOKYO

DEC 18 6PM
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
SATO VISIT.

INDICATIONS ARE THAT SATO WILL TAKE UP WITH PRESIDENT QUESTION OF GRAVES VISITS TO BONIN ISLANDS. IT WILL BE RECALLED THIS MATTER HAS BEEN BROUGHT UP BY HIGH LEVEL JAPANESE VISITORS ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS OVER PAST SEVEN YEARS. MOST RECENTLY, DEFENSE AGENCY DIRECTOR FUKUDA DURING VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN JUNE THIS YEAR REQUESTED SECRETARY McNAMARA TO APPROVE VISITS. SECY McNAMARA UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE REPLIED HE WOULD REFER MATTER TO STATE DEPARTMENT. DURING RECENT VISIT FOMIIN SHIINA TO NEW YORK SHIINA BROUGHT UP MATTER WITH SECY RUSK, AND HE UNDERSTAND SECY ANSWERED THAT MATTER WOULD BE TAKEN UP WITH DEFENSE. DURING PAST WEEK FUKUDA, NO LONGER DEFENSE AGENCY DIRECTOR BUT TRAVELLING AS SPECIAL ENVOY TO INAUGURATION MEXICAN PRESIDENT TOOK UP MATTER WITH CINCPACFLT. ALTHOUGH CINCPACFLT GAVE FUKUDA

61.....ACF

33..60..92..AP..FLAGPLOT BFR

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NO GROUNDS TO EXPECT APPROVAL; FUKUDA INTERPRETED TALK AS OFFERING MORE FAVORABLE PROSPECTS THAN HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN THE CASE. AND RESULT HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY IN JAPAN ALONG LINES OF PERMISSION FOR GRAVE VISITS TO BONINS MAY SOON BE GRANTED. ALTHOUGH PENTAGON DENIAL ANY SUCH INTENTION ON PART CINCPACFLT HAS ALSO BEEN PUBLISHED IN JAPAN, THIS HAS NOT ERASED HOPES WHICH WERE RAISED BY FUKUDA. ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS THAT SOVIETS PERMITTED GRAVE VISITS TO HADOMAI AND SHIKOTAN THIS PAST SUMMER AFTER LONG-STANDING REFUSALS. BONIN ISLANDS ARE ADMINISTERED BY U.S. ARTICLE THREE OF PEACE TREATY. RESIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY OF JAPAN AND EVENTUAL REVERSION HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY U.S. DESIRE OF PERSONS TO VISIT GRAVES OF PARENTS AND ANCESTORS IS A NORMAL SENTIMENT FOUND IN ALL COUNTRIES. THIS IS ACCENTUATED IN JAPAN WHERE RESPECT FOR ANCESTORS AND OBLIGATION TO TEND AND VISIT GRAVES IS PERHAPS MOST OBSERVED PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST RELIGION. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES EMBASSY BELIEVES GRAVE VISITS TO BONINS SHOULD BE AGREED TO BY U.S. AS GESTURE OF UNDERSTANDING AND FRIENDSHIP, LIMITED ONLY BY CONSIDERATIONS OF MILITARY SECURITY AND TO EXTENT SUCH SECURITY MIGHT BE ENDANGERED BY VISITS. IT IS EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL RESIDENTS OF BININS, INCLUDING AMERICAN NAVY AND JAPANESE NATIONALS OF PARTLY FOREIGN ANCESTRY WHO WERE ALLOWED RETURN SHORTLY AFTER WAR, ARE LOCATED ON CHICHI JIMA AND THAT OTHER ISLANDS ARE UNINHABITED. EMBASSY HAS NO KNOWLEDGE ANY SPECIFIC SENSITIVE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE COMPROMISED BY GRAVE VISIT ITSELF. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT SECURITY OBJECTIONS TO GRAVE VISITS ARE BASED ON MILITARY NECESSITY TO RETAIN ISLANDS ON CONTINGENCY. POSSIBLE FUTURE USE AND BELIEF THAT ANY CHANGE IN POLICY OF REFUSING PERMISSION FOR ALL VISITS TO ISLANDS WOULD INCREASE PRESSURES IN JAPAN FOR FURTHER CONCESSIONS RESULTING, IN LONG RUN, IN WEAKENING OF OUR ABILITY RETAIN ADMINISTRATION OVER ISLANDS. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT LATTER POINT SHOULD NECESSARILY BE CONTROLLING FACTOR. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PERMISSION FOR GRAVE VISIT WILL REKINDLE DESIRES OF SOME FORMER RESIDENTS TO RETURN TO ISLANDS. U.S. EX GRATIA PAYMENT OF SIX MILLION DOLLARS IN 1961, HOWEVER, WAS MEANT TO PROVIDE RATIONALE FOR CONTINUED LONG TERM REFUSAL OF FURTHER REPATRIATION AND WE THINK WE ARE ON FIRM GROUND IN HOLDING TO THAT POSITION. PRESSURE FOR GRAVE VISITS HAS PERSISTED FOR YEARS, AND IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT PERMISSION FOR VISITS OF SMALL GROUPS AT LONG INTERVALS WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF LESSENING OR REMOVING THIS IRRITANT IN U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS WITHOUT ENDANGERING OUR HOLD ON ISLANDS. WHILE PARALLEL IS BY NO MEANS EXACT, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT VISITS TO GRAVES AND MEMORIAL SERVICES IN RYUFEUS, WHICH ARE ALSO ADMINISTERED UNDER ARTICLE THREE OF PEACE TREATY, ARE APPROVED ON A ROUTINE BASIS. IN SUM, EMBASSY BELIEVES WE ARE ON WEAK GROUND IN CONTINUING REFUSE PERMISSION FOR GRAVE VISITS TO BONIN ISLANDS UNLESS

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THERE ARE SPECIFIC SENSITIVE SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN TO US. RECOMMEND THAT THIS MATTER BE STUDIED ON AN URGENT BASIS IN WASHINGTON WITH A VIEW TOWARD GIVING AN AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO SATO IF, AS EXPECTED, HE BRINGS THIS MATTER UP WITH THE PRESIDENT.

GP-3. REISCHAUER

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