

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

June 7. 1972

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Dear Henry:

During your visit to Japan next week, it would be extremely useful if you reconfirm to the Japanese that the United States Government has a continuing interest in Japanese ratification of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. We would then find an opportunity also to apprise the Soviets that this approach had been made.

There have been recurring indications of uncertainty on the part of the Japanese Government and general public with respect to how firmly the U.S. Government is committed to the concept that Japan should not acquire nuclear weapons. The senior Soviet official in the IAEA also raised this matter in Vienna with the senior U.S. member of the Agency staff. This subject did not arise in the course of the Vice President's recent discussions with Japanese Government leaders in Tokyo.

Assurances of continued U.S. support for Japanese ratification of the NPT have already been given, both to the Japanese and to the Soviets. I feel strongly, however, that it is important to put these fears to rest once and for all at a high level. Japanese participation in the NPT would in our view be greatly welcomed both in Moscow and in Peking, and could also have highly beneficial effects on progress toward wider acceptance of the NPT by other "threshold" countries.

The suggested approach would be particularly timely, coming on the heels of SALT, since agreement on strategic weapons limitations will tend to undercut criticism in Japan and elsewhere that the NPT places far greater obligations on the non-nuclear states than on the nuclear states.

The Honorable  
Henry A. Kissinger,  
Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs,  
The White House.

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While an eventual Japanese decision concerning NPT ratification will obviously depend on many factors, an important element will be their leaders' continuing confidence in the US nuclear umbrella. It would therefore be helpful if in connection with reconfirming the US desire to have Japan ratify the NPT, you could assure the Japanese that the US-Japan Security Treaty remains the key to regional stability in Asia and continues to be an essential element in the relationship between Japan and the US.

In connection with the suggested approach, the following background information may be helpful. When the NPT came into force on May 5, 1970, 97 countries including Japan had signed the treaty. Some 70 countries have now become parties to the treaty, although the rate of accession has diminished substantially during the past year. Anticipated ratifications by the EURATOM countries during the coming year should, however, restore some of the earlier momentum.

We hope that the Japanese will now promptly begin their talks with the IAEA, since their safeguards arrangements will have to be settled before they will be ready to propose NPT ratification to the Diet. The Japanese Government has consistently maintained that the NPT safeguards should not disadvantage Japan, especially with respect to its competitive position vis-a-vis the West Europeans. The IAEA is currently in the final stages of working out a safeguard agreement with EURATOM on the basis of guidelines which Japan helped to shape.

The US has begun preliminary discussions with the IAEA on implementation of the US voluntary offer to place its non-military nuclear facilities under international safeguards. This fact should help reassure Japanese industry that it will not be disadvantaged in some fashion by safeguards.

Sincerely,

  
U. Alexis Johnson

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