

26. Memorandum for the Chief, Government Section,  
dated 25 February 1946, reporting the Narahashi  
picnic.

OSD REVIEWED 08-Feb-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

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**\_T\_O\_P\_ \_S\_E\_C\_R\_E\_T\_****GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS  
Government Section  
Public Administration Division**

25 February 1946

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF, GOVERNMENT SECTION.**

1. The undersigned attended a small private picnic on Sunday, 24 February, at the country place of Mr. Wataru Narahashi, Chief Secretary of the Cabinet, at Oiso.

2. During the course of the afternoon Mr. Narahashi took the undersigned aside and stated that during the past ten days there had been a furious struggle within the cabinet over the issue of constitutional reform. He stated that for the past several months a conflict had been developing between the bureaucrats, supported by remnants of the militarist and the Zaibatsu on one hand, and the democratic elements on the other. This conflict was concentrated on the issue of the powers of the Emperor.

3. The "Conservatives", as Mr. Narahashi termed the first group, were led by Dr. Matsumoto, Minister without Portfolio, who had submitted a draft of a revised constitution which left the powers of the Emperor substantially unaltered. The second group, which Mr. Narahashi said he led, favored stripping the Emperor of all "governmental power" but permitted him to remain as the symbol of the unity of the people. Mr. Narahashi said that his group felt that only through vesting sovereignty in the people could the Emperor be saved, and that the Tenno system must be abolished. He referred to the Emperor rescript in which the Emperor divested himself of all divinity as the first step in that direction.

4. According to Mr. Narahashi, at a meeting with the Emperor on Friday at which the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and Mr. Narahashi were present, the Emperor had given his unqualified approval to the plan proposed by the "Democratic group". However, Mr. Narahashi stated, the fight within the cabinet was still bitter because of the fear that the bureaucrats, supported by ex-militarists, would resort to terrorism. This fear, coupled with the unwillingness of the bureaucratic members of the cabinet to surrender their power, made them completely unwilling to accept the "Democratic Plan". He said that the issue would be resolved within three days and might result in resignations from the cabinet. In response to a question however he stated that the cabinet would not fall on this issue. In the meantime this cleavage within the cabinet is being reflected throughout the government and the feeling was so intense that there appeared real danger of attempts on the lives of the Prime Minister and other members of the cabinet. Narahashi stated that whenever Shidehara appeared in public he stood alongside him because he felt this danger and wished to share the risk with the Prime Minister.

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5. Narahashi said that Matsumoto was doing everything within his power to delay the decision and to interpose legalistic obstacles to the adoption of the "Democratic Plan", such as stating that the plan could not be submitted until after the new Diet was elected, or that the House of Peers would refuse to ratify the plan. Narahashi stated that he would force Dr. Matsumoto's resignation if necessary and that the House of Peers could be dissolved if it proved recalcitrant. At this point Narahashi said that although he had heretofore been unwilling to assume cabinet rank, he had found that his influence as Chief Secretary was insufficient to enable him to assist the Prime Minister in carrying on the fight; that he had decided to assume cabinet rank and that within the next ten days he would be appointed Demobilization Minister. In response to a direct question as to where Foreign Minister, Yoshida, stood on the constitutional issue, Narahashi said that Yoshida stood with the Prime Minister and himself.

6. Narahashi said that there was some risk involved in using the support of the Emperor because of the possibility that the people would say that the "democratic group" was merely another clique using the Emperor as a shield in exactly the same way that the bureaucrats and militarists had in the past. He clearly indicated that the support of SCAP was imperative. In this connection it is significant that, although Narahashi must have known that the "Democratic Plan" originated with SCAP, at no time did he give the slightest hint that it was anything other than a plan formulated by one group in the cabinet. It was apparent to us that he was implying that it was vitally necessary to maintain the fiction that this was a purely Japanese plan promulgated with the approval of (but not originated by) SCAP.

7. Turning to another topic, Mr. Narahashi stated that today the cabinet would postpone the elections from 31 March to 10 April in order to permit adequate screening pursuant to the directives of 4 January of the candidates for election to the Diet and the political parties supporting them.

/s/ Chas. L. Kades

CHAS L. KADES  
Colonel, INF

/s/ Alfred R. Hussey

A. R. HUSSEY  
Comdr., USNR**TOP SECRET**