

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC

Press Release:

Immediate Release
21 June 1946

The full text of the message:

General MacArthur today commented as follows on the submission of the draft constitution to the National Diet:

"With the submission to the Diet of a proposed revision of the constitution, the Japanese people face one of the vital moments in the life of Japan. The fundamental charter of their existence will be determined by the action taken on this monumental question. In its solution, it has been and continues to be imperative (a) that adequate time and opportunity be allowed for the full discussion and consideration of the terms of such a charter; (b) that the procedure followed assures complete legal continuity with the constitution of 1889 now existing; and (c) that the manner of adoption of such a charter demonstrates that it affirmatively expresses the free will of the Japanese people.

"These criteria governing the mechanics involved in constitutional revision thus far have been scrupulously followed, and they must continue to guide now that the issue is before the National Diet. For over eight months the revision of the constitution has been the paramount political consideration under discussion by all parties and all classes of the Japanese people. Numerous drafts have been prepared by the various political parties, educational groups, publicists, and individuals of all shades of thought and opinion. The press and radio and every other medium of discussion have been employed to an extent seldom witnessed in any national forum. Rarely has a fundamental charter, regulative of national life, been more thoroughly discussed and analyzed.

"The Government Draft now before the Diet is a Japanese document and it is for the people of Japan, acting through their duly elected representatives, to determine its form and content -- whether it be adopted, modified or rejected. It therefore behooves members of the Diet to act upon this vital matter with the solemnity, with the wisdom and with the patriotism which they owe their country and the people they represent -- scrupulously avoiding the influence of political creed, undue ambition, or selfish intrigue.

"The present Japanese constitution provides in Article LXXIII: 'When it has become necessary in future to amend the provisions of the present constitution, a project to the effect shall be submitted to the Imperial Diet by Imperial Order. In the above case, neither House can open the debate, unless not less than two-thirds of the whole number of Members are present, and no amendment can be passed, unless a majority of not less than two-thirds of the Members present is obtained.' It was in view of this constitutional requirement that the Government took measures to the end that the last election, which qualified the members of this Diet, was held with the Government Draft Constitution squarely before the people and under the

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- 2 -

paramount consideration that those elected would be charged with their duty of acting thereon. Few elections in modern times could be regarded as more truly democratic, reliable and expressive of the free will of the people. As a consequence the Diet which emerged therefrom is fully representative and qualified to express the will of the people on this issue.

"In the course of legislative action upon this matter, it is incumbent upon the Diet that it assure to all members the free, fair and untrammelled right of discussion and debate, and that it give thoughtful consideration to every suggestion offered by its membership, regardless of strength or party affiliation. If it approach its task with that high sense of duty, it will serve the nation well, as on the issue of a democratic constitution rests the future well-being of the Japanese people."

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