

## Japan Approves National Intelligence Committee Amid Public Privacy Concerns



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TOKYO, March 13 — The Japanese government has approved a bill to establish a national intelligence committee, a move that has sparked public questions and concern.

The cabinet of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi plans to push for the bill's passage during the

current parliamentary session, aiming to formally set up the new national intelligence mechanism within the year.

Under the bill, the committee—chaired by the prime minister and composed of the chief cabinet secretary and relevant ministers—would oversee investigations into foreign intelligence activities related to national security and counter-terrorism.

A secretariat would serve as the committee's operational arm, empowered to “comprehensively coordinate” intelligence work across government ministries and agencies.

The plan has drawn scrutiny from Japanese media and political figures. A commentary in Kyodo News warned that expanding intelligence powers and social surveillance could risk violating personal privacy and constitutional freedoms, including freedom of expression.

Opposition leader Junya Ogawa of the Centrist Reform Alliance also raised concerns in the House of Representatives, cautioning that intelligence collected by the secretariat could be misused for political purposes.

Similarly, an editorial in Mainichi Shimbun noted that government policies, even if approved by elections, do not automatically gain public trust, highlighting fears that citizens' private information could be collected without sufficient safeguards.

As Japan moves forward, public debate over the balance between national security and personal

privacy is expected to intensify, reflecting broader concerns over civil liberties amid heightened intelligence operations.