

**Protest Statement Regarding the Illegal
Surveillance of Citizens by Japan's Army
June, 2007**

On June 7, 2007 media revealed that the intelligence unit of Japan's Ground Self Defense Force had conducted surveillance and made a detailed report about the activities of a large number of groups and individuals who worked on the issues related to the dispatch of Self Defense Force troupes to Iraqi.

According to media reports, the leader of the intelligence unit admitted that he knew that such surveillance activities were being conducted. It has since become clear that it was not only done by one group that went too far, but systematically conducted and by the entire Self Defense Force through the Defense Department.

Article 19 of Japan's constitution guarantees the freedom of thought and conscience; Article 21 guarantees the freedom of speech, press and all other forms of expression; Article 13 guarantees privacy, that all the people shall be respected as individuals. There is no doubt that the citizens' activities have been violated by such surveillance conducted by the military.

It is obvious that there is no legal basis for the Self Defense Force or the Defense Ministry to conduct surveillance. Collecting private information is a violation of the law for the protection of personal information. We should never underestimate such violation of many laws by a government body, especially an armed group, the Self Defense Force.

If we neglect this fact, Japan cannot be called a constitutionally ruled country. Recently, in the debate about educational reform, it was often said that "citizens should follow the laws", but what we want to emphasize is that "the government is the one that should follow the laws."

In addition, this is not the first case of illegal surveillance by the Self Defense Force. In May, 2002 it was revealed that the Self Defense Agency of that time conducted illegal checks and made a list of individuals who had made requests for disclosure of information.

As far as illegal government surveillance is concerned, there was another case in January, 2000, when over 100 organizations were watched by Japan's Public Security Investigation Agency, according to internal documents.

In other words, it has become clear that in the past seven years, illegal, large-scale surveillance

against citizens' activities have been conducted three times by the government.

We express our utmost anger and cannot be patient about it anymore. We protest against the surveillance and data collection, and demand disclosure of all the facts concerning this matter. We also demand strict punishment of the responsible persons in each particular case. We demand that Fumio Kyuma, the responsible Minister of Defense as well as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the highest commander of Japan's military should both resign.

Contact Consumers Union of Japan

(Statement issued by 12 organizations including Consumers Union of Japan)