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## **Japan Navy Officer Convicted in Data Leak Scandal**

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TOKYO (AP) -- A Japanese court on Tuesday convicted a naval officer of leaking classified U.S.-developed missile technology data, sentencing him to a suspended prison term.

The Yokohama District Court sentenced Sumitaka Matsuuchi, a 35-year-old lieutenant commander in the Maritime Self-Defense Force, to 2 1/2 years in prison, court spokeswoman Yoshie Ueki said. The sentence was suspended, and Matsuuchi was placed on four years of probation.

Matsuuchi was found guilty of leaking the data to an instructor at a Japanese naval academy in western Japan in 2002, in violation of a Japan-U.S. security pact.

The data involved technology for the Aegis radar systems used on Japanese and U.S. warships carrying missile interceptors.

Matsuuchi was arrested last year in a scandal that embarrassed Japanese defense officials at a time when Tokyo and Washington have been accelerating their joint missile defense system to counter North Korea's missile and atomic tests.

"We admit that our handling of the classified information was inappropriate, and that there was a lack of awareness about confidentiality among navy officials," [Navy](#) chief Adm. Keiji Akahoshi said Tuesday as he offered an apology over the case.

He said the case, among a recent spate of military scandals in Japan, had possibly cast a shadow on the Japan-U.S. alliance.

The Defense Ministry most recently came under fire this month over the death of a sailor in an unofficial farewell ritual after he decided to drop out of an elite navy training program. The 25-year-old petty officer died of internal injuries in September after being knocked unconscious in a 15-round kick boxing-style fight.

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