

KOIKE Akira

First, thank you for giving me an opportunity to make a speech here at the World Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

My name is Akira Koike. I am a member of the Japanese Upper House, and also a member of the Japanese Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

To prevent nuclear wars from breaking out and eliminate nuclear weapons are the urgent task for the existence of human being in the 21st century. I will report on an emerging backward-flow in our country and our activities in Japan.

An obstacle is standing in our way to get rid of nuclear weapons. What I mean the "obstacle" here is the recent revealed Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of the U.S. Pentagon.

NPR puts emphasis on enhancing weapons' power to destroy things together with conventional and nuclear weapons. It also stresses the need to develop small nuclear weapons, and plans to resume nuclear test explosions. NPR indicates that the U.S. nuclear strategy has been changing to a new one in which the U.S. government sees the use of nuclear weapons as a realistic choice.

Furthermore, this NPR refers to the use of nuclear weapons targeting at seven countries, including non-nuclear weapon possessing nations. The scenario includes not only an attack against unbreakable targets, like underground facilities, by conventional weapons or a retaliatory attack against a country that uses weapons of mass destruction, but also includes the use of nuclear weapons in the event of unexpected military move. Virtually, there is no restriction for the U.S. on the use of nuclear weapons.

Fight against the act of terror is the biggest excuse for the U.S. government to push forward such an outrageous policy. But, the U.S. regards specific nations as "axis of evil" on the suspicion of possessing weapons of mass destructions and declares to launch a military action against them by threatening the use of nuclear weapons. This unreasonable argument of the U.S. will only help aggravate world's stability and peace. The retaliatory attack against terrorists not only kills non-combatants but also creates another vicious circle of terrorism. We have seen it in back-to-back attacks in Afghanistan and morass conflicts in Palestine.

However, the recent trend towards the question of nuclear weapons has clearly shown that world's call for reason and justice cannot be ignored, no matter how strong the U.S. economy or military power is.

Non-aligned nations and NGOs had become influential in international politics to some extent. Their persistent efforts had finally made the U.S. government to sign an equivocal commitment of nuclear weapons abolition in the 2000 NPT Conference. The U.N. General Assembly last year unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Malaysia, calling for negotiations for a nuclear weapons abolition treaty to be started. Anti-nuclear movements and world's opinion are now building a confirmed position.

Running counter to such a world trend, the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro is still trying to subordinate to the U.S.

In the Japan-U.S summit meeting held in February in Tokyo, Prime Minister Koizumi expressed his unconditional support to the U.S. expanding attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. What's more, the Japanese ruling coalition submitted bills to make a war nation regime and discussion on the wartime bills has already begun in the Diet. The wartime legislation, if enacted, will mobilize Japan's Self-defense Forces, civilians, doctors, and nurses to a U.S. military operation in areas surrounding Japan, specifically in Korean Peninsula and Taiwan Strait. The Japanese government has kept abstaining from voting for U.N. resolutions on nuclear disarmament, and kept putting the nuclear matter on the shelf.

Anti-nuclear movements in Japan are calling on the people to see into the dangerous nature of the Koizumi Cabinet that blindly follows the U.S. At the same time, we demand that Japan play an appropriate role to remove all nuclear weapons from the world as the only A-bombed country and the country that holds the war-renouncing Constitution. In April, about 5,000 people massed in a rally in Tokyo to protest against the wartime legislation. I'm very much convinced that our movements will further develop between the people.

Let me conclude my speech by calling for a stronger solidarity and progress of the worldwide movement.

Thank you.