

Nuclear Weapons Problem and Peace in Japan

Japanese Physicians Forum against Nuclear War
and for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

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This is to report recent development of situation in Japan concerning problems of nuclear weapons and peace, and our activities.

● NPT

In the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear, nuclear weapons states promised an "unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals." Assuming a position of eliminating nuclear weapons, the Japanese government, as the government of the world only atom-bombed country, proposed a resolution entitled "A Path to the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" in the United Nations 55th session, calling for a CTBT's early entry into force before 2003. To fulfill the 2000 agreement, nuclear weapons state in the next NPT Review Conference in 2005 must promise concrete process of elimination of nuclear weapons. To realize this, efforts of the state parties to the NPT are important and their activities should be watched.

What effort have the Japanese government made to implement the agreement in the NPT review conference in 2000. A Japanese NGO, Peace Depot (<http://www.peacedepot.org>) published "Japan's Report Card on Nuclear Disarmament – Evaluating Implementation of the NPT 13+2 Steps". This "report card" is an assessment of the Japanese government's efforts for implementation of the agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Its efforts are classified into five grades from A to E. (A: Japan has made a significant contribution to global nuclear disarmament; E: Japan carried out none of the important tasks.)

As for five tasks – "principle of irreversibility", "unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals", "preservation and strengthening of the ABM Treaty and the promotion of the START process", "diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies" and "general and complete disarmament as the ultimate objective" – the Japanese government's efforts are given grade E. Grade D on 13 tasks, including an "early entry into force of the CTBT"; grade C on 2 tasks, and grade B on one task. This is the realities of the Japanese government which often says that it will make every effort for the elimination of nuclear weapons, as the government of the world only atom-bombed country. The assessment will be issued every year till the next NPT Review Conference. Future efforts of the government is expected.

I also hope that the same assessment is also made in other countries and that combined efforts by NGOs will help the next NPT Review Conference inaugurate actual process of elimination of nuclear weapons.

The U.S. government totally ignores the "principle of irreversibility" and other agreements of the 2000 NPT Review Conference – it plans to pull out of the ABM Treaty, and to store reduced warheads of strategic weapons and possible re-load; neglects the CTBT, clings to first-use of nuclear weapons and resumption of nuclear explosion test, and develops smaller nuclear weapons. By jointly carrying out the subcritical nuclear test with the U.S., the

British government also disregarded the 2000 NPT Review Conference agreement. The Japanese government, however, has not at all protested at them, saying that it is not in a position of making any comment.

The government of Japan sticks to the U.S. nuclear umbrella, which is the essential part of its defense polity. To put the NPT Review Conference agreement into practice, Japan should rid itself of the umbrella of the U.S. nuclear deterrence.

● CTBT

As I have pointed out previously, at the United Nations General Assembly in October 2000, Japan proposed a draft resolution entitled "A Path to the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" containing such concrete measures towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, including the entry into force of the CTBT by 2003. The resolution was adopted. This may be one step forward for the Japanese government from its traditional position of "ultimate elimination".

In his speech at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony in 2001, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said:

"Japan has thus far endeavored to effect the entry into force of the Treaty on various occasions and will strive to make this conference a success, using it as a further opportunity to appeal more actively to other countries. It is through such means that Japan will make its utmost efforts to lead the international community in promoting measures for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons."

But what Tokyo actually did is sending letters to each country at best. It is far from "appealing more actively to other countries".

The U.S. Bush administration aims to make the CTBT a dead letter both in the U.S. Congress and international community. If the fruit which our world citizens' movements achieved at the end of the 20th Century is given up, the world will again face the threat of endless nuclear arms race and nuclear explosion. What is important now is the movement to bring the CTBT into effect as early as possible.

I hope you all will urge on each of your governments the necessity of taking initiative for an early entry into force of the CTBT.

● Missile Defense and NPR

Missile Defense is not at all a defensive weapons system which leads to the elimination of nuclear weapons. In Asia, its targets are China and North Korea. If it is implemented, tension in North Asia will run high. This project is incompatible with our immediate goal, or the nuclear-free zone in North Asia. The Chinese government has already said it would build up nuclear weapons if the U.S. goes ahead with MD. In spite of this situation, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi unhesitatingly expressed understanding of the plan to President Bush.

Japan had already started joint study of TMD with the United States. Although Mr. Bush's MD plan is integrated with NMD, altering the plan from defense of limited region to attacking everywhere in the world, the Japanese government says that it will continue joint study.

If a missile development of which Japan is deeply involved will launch to intercept a nuclear missile at boost phase and its destination is unknown, it is not defensive but offensive act of violation of Japan's Constitution which renounces war. Therefore, Japanese politician and scholars of militarist inclination are now advocating revision of the Constitution. The U.S. side is also putting strong pressure on Japan. They know well that deployment of MD in Asia is difficult lest Japan abandons Article 9 of the Constitution. We must understand and stress the importance of defending our splendid peace Constitution and spreading it throughout the world. I hope you, too, support and stress Article 9 of Japan's Constitution. NPR also runs counter to the agreement of the NPT Review Conference. But Japan's government does never protest at it.

● Nuclear Free North Asia

It is an urgent and feasible task to make North Asia nuclear free zone. Japan's government has supported in general term an establishment of nuclear free zone. It has taken relatively positive attitude also toward nuclear free Central Asia. Since military situation in Afghanistan has strikingly changed, whether the Japanese government maintain active attitude must be observed.

The Japanese government under the U.S. nuclear umbrella is reluctant to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), but it is significant for Japan to normalize diplomatic relations with North Korea and promote dialogue to establish nuclear-free North Asia, for its security.

In addition, it is also an important task to enact a law of three non-nuclear principles (not to produce, not to possess and not to allow bringing in of nuclear weapons) and to verify the principle. But the government has been totally turning its back on this task.

● Hibakushas Overseas

In 1994, the Hibakusha Relief Law was enacted and allowances and medical treatment fees are granted to those who were atom-bombed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the law is applied only to those who live or stay in the country. If one leaves Japan, allowances are discontinued unreasonably. About 5,000 Hibakusha abroad, mainly in the Korean Peninsula, are discriminated. They filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government. The Osaka District Court in July 2001 gave a judgment that the law is not applied to Hibakusha abroad is against the spirit of the law to provide relief to A-bomb victims from a humanitarian stand point. But the Japanese government, ignoring voices of Kwak Kwin Hoon, plaintiff, and other citizens, appealed against the district court ruling.

The task of aiding about 5,000 hibakushas abroad is an important and pressing task since they are all aged. I propose that the IPPNW should also tackle the problem of hibakusha living outside Japan. For us, medical doctors of Japan, to learn more the living conditions of hibakushas in the Korean Peninsula is one of our essential tasks. We will seek what we can do for them.

- **U.S. Nuclear-Powered Submarine Sank “Ehimemaru”,**

- Japanese High School’s Training Vessel**

In February 2001, the “Ehimemaru”, the training vessel of a Japanese fisheries high school, was sunk off the coast of Hawaii, this February after colliding with a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine, killing four students and other 5 crew-members. They are victims of the U.S. submarine’s demonstration of emergency surfacing with guest civilians aboard, carried out without adequately checking the safety in the waters with heavy traffic. The anger and grief of bereaved families are the same of those who were deprived of their families on September 11, 2001, in the sense that they are all victims of the folly of denying humanity. The armed forces neglect human life and enjoy an unnecessary and dangerous game on the pretext of security of citizens.

- **September 11, Afghanistan, Palestine**

Our position is that any terrorist attack must not be allowed. But we are also opposed to and protested at the air-raid and other war actions of retaliation “to counter terrorist attack.” The Japanese government supported the U.S. retaliation war and sent its unconstitutional Self-Defense Forces. Many members of our forum supported and cooperated with Japan’s NGOs which have been engaged in the humanitarian medical aid.

We are also opposed to Israeli military operations in the name of crushing terrorists. We must not condone the aggression by Israeli with its overwhelming military force. Governments of countries in the world which have tolerated the Israel’s military action should urge the Israeli government to withdraw immediately from occupying territory and make sincere negotiations for peace based on the United Nations resolutions. NGOs all over the world should now unite and demand this.

- **Problem of Japanese school textbooks**

Prime Minister Koizumi committed two serious errors which betray peace and increase tension in Asia. It is school textbook and visit of Yasukuni Shrine. In Japan, each local board of education adopts school textbooks from those which passed government screening.

In the last year’s screening, a textbook on history which twists historical facts and glorifies Japan’s war of aggression against other Asian countries passed the examination. Foreign countries, especially China and Korea strongly protested. In addition to the beautification of the past war of aggression, I must also point out another serious problem. It is the description of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This textbook hardly introduces realities of atomic bomb, and, on the contrary, gives a favor to nuclear weapons and the argument for nuclear deterrence, alleging that there is a view that “when the elimination of nuclear weapons is agreed on, it is the most dangerous moment for the world.

What children should study is not obsession with necessity of nuclear weapons but what the human kind will be if a nuclear bomb explodes. Not simply because neighboring countries are opposed to but in view of learning the lesson of history and not repeating the error, we were opposed to the adoption of such a textbook that interprets

past acts to suit one's own purpose and affirm the war of aggression. As a result, fortunately, there are few schools that adopted this textbook. But the problem has not yet ended. Some hawkish politicians and scholars who are possessed by militarism and narrow nationalism are waiting for next occasion.

● Peace Constitution Is in Critical Situation

In the name of peace keeping, or to support the war against terrorist attacks, Japan which renounced war has dispatched the Self-Defense Forces abroad one after another. It is clear that sending its warships to the Indian Ocean has nothing to do with Japan's self-defense. What is now important for Japan is to make diplomatic efforts and dialogue to settle disputes, not to justify by various reasons the act of violating the Constitution.

Japan's Constitution declares that "the Japanese people, ... resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government" (Preamble), and "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes" (Article 9). This ideal must not turn out to be a pie in the sky. This splendid Constitution of Japan is now in critical situation, under the pressure by the U.S. and Japanese hawks. They aim to change Japan into an ordinary country to repeat the folly of war, by erasing the historical lesson which Japanese people learnt from World War II.

In the current session of the Diet, Japan's national parliament, the government plans to enact laws to provide against an attack or possible attack by an improbable enemy.

● Non-Nuclear Kobe Formula Becoming Dead Letter

The Non-nuclear Kobe formula – the system in which warships which do not present certificate of carrying no nuclear weapons must not be allowed to enter – is the right of nuclear-free local governments. The effectiveness of this formula has proved by the fact that no U.S. nuclear vessels have entered the Port of Kobe. To overthrow the existing system and to ensure enforcement of the new Guidelines for military cooperation under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the U.S. government is now put pressures directly and indirectly on Kobe City. To preserve and spread the Kobe Formula inside and outside the country is indispensable. We are convinced that the Non-nuclear Kobe Formula is a significant and effective way, next to the establishing nuclear-free zones.

● Other Issues

The problem of U.S. military bases in Okinawa must also be important. Please read separate paper and understand the actual situation. Of course there are countries in which U.S. bases are located, which caused similar problems. But the situation in Okinawa may be classified as the gravest one.

As the Japan proper issue, we make utmost efforts for medical treatment of hibakusha.

Our organizations textbook on peace will be soon published.

- **Message from the Japanese Physicians Forum against Nuclear War and for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

Just before entering the 21st Century, we saw that mid power nations and NGOs had gained strength and increased influence, and we could feel that the early elimination of nuclear weapons is possible. But in the new century, regrettably, pretty atrocious and disappointing incidents occurred one after another, bringing desperation to us sometimes.

But it is in such difficult situation that we should carry out enduring grass-roots efforts. We have called for a peace world without nuclear weapons, respecting fully human rights, collected signatures, and repeatedly sent letters to the Japanese government and the U.S. President. We have held various lecture meetings. In the fall of 2000, we invited IPPNW co-chair Ashford from whom we learned much.

Recently younger activists are increasing step by step. There are also fellow physicians who have newly joined the anti-nuclear movement. We, members of the Japanese Physicians Forum against Nuclear War and for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, with firm belief and hope, will make utmost efforts, together with the members of the IPPNW, to eliminate nuclear weapons and realize a world in which human rights of every people are respected.

Let's hand-in-hand make the 21st Century not a century of war but a century of peace and without nuclear weapons!

The more difficult the situation is, the more important our movement. (end)