

Forum IV: Nuclear-free and peaceful Asia and the role of people's movements
2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs

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Listening to the presentation of Mr. Takakusaki, I felt it important for us to understand correctly the current situation: namely, that while we are faced with the critical danger of nuclear weapons threatening the survival of humanity, we have a chance and hope to overcome it.

When it comes to nuclear weapons crises, the US-China military confrontation intensifying in front of Japan is very serious. Claiming sovereignty over the South China Sea and the East China Sea, China is strengthening its effective control of the region in violation of international law, as seen in the building of military bases. In response to these hegemonic maneuvers, the US has strengthened its global containment against China, mobilizing its allies of Japan, South Korea, Australia and India as well as NATO member states such as UK and France. If a military conflict occurs accidentally, there is a danger of it escalating into a large-scale war between big powers and even the use of nuclear weapons.

Prioritizing their own interests, nuclear-armed states, in particular the P5, have been modernizing nuclear weapons and intensifying the arms race, turning their backs on the TPNW and sticking to nuclear deterrence. This attitude not only threatens peace and security in Asia but also puts humanity and the planet on the brink of annihilation. The P5 are permanent members of the UN Security Council. The Security Council's mission is to have primary responsibility for international peace and security under the UN Charter. We urge these countries to stop hegemonic rivalries and wargames, settle disputes by peaceful means, shift to abolishing nuclear weapons based on the UN Charter, and fulfill their responsibility to protect world peace and security.

Japan's complicity in possible wars and nuclear calamity

What is more serious is that the Japan-US summit meeting held on April 16 defined the Japan-US alliance as "the foundation of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and the world as a whole," and the Japanese government agreed to promote military integration between the two countries.

In the Japan-US joint statement, the US stated its "unwavering support for Japan's defense under the Japan-US Security Treaty using all kinds of US capabilities, including nuclear"; and, being under the US nuclear umbrella, Japan promised to strengthen its defense capabilities.

"The importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" was also confirmed. It was agreed that the Self-Defense Forces would "commit" to the "Taiwan emergency." It is clear that if the Self-Defense Forces participate in the US military operations in the case of a "Taiwan emergency", Okinawa and the Nansei Islands will be involved in war and turned into battlefields.

It is a shame that in spite of being the only atomic-bombed country and having the peace Constitution, the government of Japan is collaborating with the US in endangering peace and security of Asia and the rest of the world

While saying that it shares the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons as a country that suffered the A-bombing, the Japanese government has opposed the TPNW and committed to maintaining nuclear deterrence, entrusting Japan's security to the US's nuclear weapons. I cannot suppress my anger when I see the abnormal subordination of the government to the US and see it forging ahead on the path of dragging its people into war and nuclear disaster.

Disregarding people's sufferings from the coronavirus pandemic, the government has promoted such outrages as a record-high defense budget, bulk-buying of US arms, the strengthening of deployment to the U.S. military bases stationed in Japan, the participation of the Self-Defense Forces in joint military exercises, and attempts to revise Article 9 of the Constitution. We must urge the Japanese government to abandon its military-first policies, break away from the US nuclear umbrella and take the lead in the abolition of nuclear weapons. Reflecting on the past war of aggression, which inflicted enormous damage on Asian people, Japan should carry out diplomacy based on the UN Charter and the Constitution as a nation of Asia.

TPNW defeats nuclear deterrence theory

In this regard, the TPNW, which came into effect in January this year, has given a chance and power to us. The Treaty calls on the world to shift from "peace and security by nuclear deterrence" to "peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons." Therefore, it head-on confronts the nuclear deterrence theory that nuclear-weapon states and Japan have advocated. The current crisis facing us is nothing less than the culmination of competition and arms races based on nuclear deterrence by nuclear-weapon states and "nuclear umbrella" states. If the Japanese government joins the Treaty, this will bring about a major shift in its nuclear umbrella and security policy, and will also make a significant contribution to the peace and security of Japan and Asia. To this end, we must increase public awareness that peace and security cannot be protected by nuclear weapons, and that the US, China, and Japan should stop military-first policies. The signature campaign that we have been conducting since October last year to urge the Japanese government to sign and ratify the TPNW plays that role.

The speeches of the International Meeting made clear that more than 70% of the public in nuclear armed and umbrella states support the TPNW. In Japan, too, 72% of the population said the government should join the Treaty. The entry into force of the Treaty has raised the interest and awareness of a wide range of people in Japan. Our signature campaign was launched with 137 prominent people from all walks of life as joint proposers, including world-famous musician Ryuichi Sakamoto and former Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka. On July 7 we posted an opinion advertisement in the Asahi Shimbun, which has 5 million readers. In response, we received a lot of signatures and donations from a wide range of people saying, "I feel the same way!" As of July 20, 593 local governments have adopted resolutions to urge the government to join the treaty.

Let's develop the movement with the TPNW as leverage

It was announced that the 10th NPT Review Conference, which had been postponed due to the Corona virus pandemic, will be held in January next year. We are determined to put pressure on nuclear-weapon states and umbrella states, including Japan, to not only fulfill their obligations under Article 6 of the NPT and their agreements to eliminate nuclear weapons, but also to seriously face the international law of the TPNW and achieve the total prohibition of nuclear weapons.

In the Hiroshima Day Rally held yesterday, Ambassador Kmentt of Austria, who will be a chair of the First Meeting of States Parties to TPNW scheduled next year, said that he was counting on us to make the Japanese government join it. Let's develop our signature campaign drastically so that we can meet his expectation.

In Japan, a general election to determine the future of this country will be held in autumn. By generating more public support for the TPNW and encouraging political parties and parliamentarians to strengthen pressure on the government on this issue, we must create changes to Japan's politics leading the government to shift from its stance of subordination to the US and dependence on nuclear deterrence towards joining the TPNW. I am convinced that developing public opinion and the movement, with the TPNW as leverage, is the way to contribute to these decisively important political battles and achieve a nuclear weapon-free peaceful Asia. Let's do our best together.