

The role of International Solidarity for a Nuclear-free Peaceful Asia

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In order to achieve peace in Asia, we first need a detailed understanding of the changes in the United States and China's policy, and in the US-China relationship. American hegemony is in crisis, but China's economic model has hardly formed a new hegemony to replace it. The Communist Party of China's "Chinese Dream" is not a new democratic order, but rather a coercive one based on military and economic power. China's military modernization and offensive military strategy are also triggering economic and military responses from neighboring countries.

President Xi Jinping's speech during the celebration of the CCP's 100th anniversary on July 1 shows this reality. In it, President Xi warned that "Any (foreign force which) dares to try (to oppress China) will find their heads bashed bloody against a great wall of steel." He emphasized "Socialism with Chinese characteristics," although it is questionable whether China's state capitalism and nationalism should be called "socialism. His promises to build "a world-class army" and achieve "complete reunification with Taiwan" have heightened concerns that China, which is experiencing slowing economic growth and widening economic inequality, could take military action against neighboring countries, including Taiwan, similar to the way in which Russia, whose economy has been stagnant since the 2007-09 financial crisis, invaded and annexed Crimea and intervened in civil wars in Ukraine and Syria.

The US' view of China's policy direction is well illustrated in the White House's "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance", released in March. The report defines competition with China, the US' "only competitor, as competition against authoritarianism and autocracy. As part of its efforts to contain China's growing military power, the US continues to expand its THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) installation in Soseong-ri, South Korea against the will of local residents, contributing to tensions in the region.

Bloc confrontations like those that occurred during the Cold War cannot be the answer to this situation. At the same time, we cannot ignore the "strategic competition" which is already happening between the US and China. A movement for peace in Asia must place value on non-nuclear peace, true social, economic, and political democracy, a concept of human rights grounded in equality and respect for difference and social and environmental sustainability. They should seek progressive alternatives based on these principles at the national and international levels.

On the Korean Peninsula, for example, both attempts to talk with North Korea and "pressure tactics" have hit a dead end as North Korea blocks its borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. North Korea is believed to be developing tactical nuclear weapons and considering scrapping its "No-First-Use Nuclear Policy". In South Korea, which is heading into a presidential election in March of next year, right-wing candidates are calling for a "NATO-style nuclear sharing system" with the US. Since the Moon Jae-in administration's North Korea policy has failed to achieve tangible results, North Korea policy will be one of the main topics during the presidential election. At this point, it is our urgent task to prevent South Korea moving in a direction that strengthens military tensions in East Asia. The solidarity of people across Asia will be of great help.

On the international level, social movements in Asia should lead the way to a nuclear weapons-free world, democracy, human rights, and climate justice together. The entry into force of the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (TPNW) may be the best example of a successful effort in this direction. The Treaty will expose the reality that the US and China share nuclear hegemony amid "competition" and be a means of pressuring them to disarm. International solidarity will be the key to creating more answers in the future.