

Lawmakers Support the Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NEANWFZ)

Cross-party Parliamentarians' Forum

Sponsored by Peace Depot, Japan

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Peace Depot held a symposium “The Possibility of a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone” under the auspices of the Peace Studies Association of Japan (PSAJ) on February 23, 2008. The second part of the symposium titled the “Parliamentarians' Forum” was attended by lawmakers affiliated to Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) Japan, which is comprised of 52 cross-party members. The lawmakers who participated are Masao Akamatsu (New Komeito), Kuniko Inoguchi (Liberal Democratic Party), Tomoko Abe (Social Democratic Party), Satoshi Inoue (Japanese Communist Party), and Hideo Hiraoka (Democratic Party of Japan). Following is the gist of the lawmakers' addresses.

(This is a provisional translation of the report originally written in Japanese --- see the following pages)

Masao Akamatsu (New Komeito): How to realize the “ideal”

I think the New Komeito has played a significant role in shaping the international security policy in Japan since the Gulf War. Especially, nobody would deny my party has made a great effort to have Japanese citizens support the U.N. peacekeeping operations. Currently, my party also puts emphasis on the training of those who specialize in peace building in war-torn areas.

In establishing a NEANWFZ, we must make the “ideal” come closer to the current “reality” in the Japanese and world politics. Though not recognized so much, New Komeito has proposed the “New Non-Nuclear Three Principles” (not to allow others to make, possess nor use nuclear weapons). The intention is not only to show a self-imposed restraint but also to urge other countries to look for a nuke-free world. I have heard the City of Hiroshima has adopted this principle. But I regret this idea has not gathered much attention so far. I also support the “three-plus-three” Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone initiative proposed by the Peace Depot.

Kuniko Inoguchi (Liberal Democratic Party): The DPRK must come back to the NPT as the first step to realize the “three-plus-three” initiative

I strongly uphold the “three-plus-three” initiative. It is a realistic idea and worth pursuing. But I think the assumed conditions in the initiative reflect the discriminatory structure of the NPT where the ROK, the DPRK and Japan are prohibited to possess nuclear weapons while the possession by China, Russia and the U.S. is condoned. The existing proposal needs to be revised so that the nuclear weapon states' obligation to dismantle their nuclear arsenals is emphasized.

If the DPRK comes back to the NPT as a non-nuclear state by destroying its nuclear weapons and facilities completely and irreversibly, it would constitute the first step towards the realization of the “three-plus-three” initiative.

Japan has to keep on championing the cause of nuclear abolition as the A-bombed nation. Our strength comes from

the fact that we can let our sufferings known. But it is not effective that we call only for nuclear abolition. For victims of anti-personal landmines and small arms to raise their voices is more effective in helping survivors to be heard respectfully. I have devoted my energy to this through my career as an ambassador to the CD and a lawmaker.

Now I'm glad to tell you that G8 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit hosted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan Yohei Kono will be held in Hiroshima. The Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi is also hoping to visit the city. I think it will be an opportunity for survivors to let their voices heard.

Regarding nuclear disarmament, it is important to press international society to begin negotiations towards a FMCT. We need to conclude a non-discriminatory treaty for nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Tomoko Abe (Social Democratic Party): Peace strategy for the post-U.S. unilateralism

Japan's diplomacy is invisible. I visited India in January with DPJ's MP Okada and Hiraoka. Parliamentary debate is not so lively despite the fear that the U.S.-India nuclear deal is ongoing and the NPT might collapse by itself. What kind of world order are we looking for when the U.S. dominance is close to end? What will become of common security including the issue of nuclear weapons? The issue is an agenda for all human beings. The political affiliation or difference of opinion has nothing to do with the s¹ we should take on the problem. I feel really sad to see that Japan as the A-bombed nation has failed to take the lead.

I went to the U.S. two years ago to meet high officials of the Defense and State Department regarding the homeporting of a nuclear-powered carrier at Yokosuka. We tried to make a contact with members of the Armed Services Committees of the U.S. Congress. There is almost no parliamentarians' exchange between Japan and the U.S. Most U.S. lawmakers don't know the reality of nuclear war nor Japan's "host-nation support" to the U.S. Diplomacy between parliamentarians will become more significant in the future. Whether we can construct a peace strategy with global affairs (including our relations with China and India) in sight is a key. Finally, let me add that the SDP published a report on a NEANWFZ in 2001.

Satoshi Inoue (Japanese Communist Party): Japan should deny nuclear deterrence and take new initiative

Two op-eds by Kissinger and others have caused a great sensation. The fact is significant that former U.S. Defense and State Secretaries including Albright, Cohen and McNamara have supported it. Taking into account such a big change in the U.S., we need to figure out what to do as lawmakers and what to make the Japanese government to do. First, Japan has to make every effort to keep the momentum of the Six-Party Talks. Second, we must withdraw from nuclear umbrella. The Japanese government even protested against an U.S. attempt to give the DPRK negative security assurance. Kissinger and others concluded that the theory of nuclear deterrence was wrong and the abolition of nuclear weapons was more realistic although they had believed otherwise. Japan should take the initiative only it can take in order to cease to stick to the notion of nuclear deterrence. Prime Minister Fukuda's position on the nuclear issue has not been revealed so far. We would like to press the government to take the lead as the A-bombed nation in a new international trend.

Hideo Hiraoka (Democratic Party of Japan): DPJ is preparing a NEANWFZ draft

I think we have to move towards a Northeast Asia regional collective security as in the European Union.

In August 2006, DPJ's Nuclear Disarmament Caucus (Chairperson: Katsuya Okada, Secretary: Hideo Hiraoka) was launched. There are about 50 lawmakers now. I boast it is an active group.

Currently, the DPJ is preparing a draft NEANWFZ treaty. We had a briefing by Mr. Umebayashi last June, and had

since then collected various resources. We are planning to propose the draft at a formal decision-making body within our party at a right time. A protocol of the draft, designed on the basis of “three-plus-three” initiative, will be also open to Britain and France.

A conundrum to be solved is the treaty's relation to the Six-Party Talks. For the DPRK to participate the treaty, it must dismantle its nuclear facility as is aimed at through the Six-Party Talks. Also, U.S. military facilities must be within the purview of the treaty, and Japan's “Non-Nuclear Three Principles” needs to be applied in Northeast Asia as a whole. Unlike other treaties, our draft treaty will also aim to pass nuclear survivors' experience to next generations and to carry out disarmament education.

<Discussion>

Peace Depot (PD): What do you think of our “three-plus-three” initiative?

Inoue: I think it is a realistic proposal. But our short-term problem is how to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

Abe: Mongol is included in the plan that the then party leader Takako Doi proposed in 2001. I think it is more realistic to create a NWFZ with the four non-nuclear states.

PD: What do you think of the peaceful use of nuclear energy? Do we need to create a “Nuclear Weapon Free Zone” or “Nuclear Free Zone”?

Hiraoka: It's not easy to iron out the difference. Like the Peace Depot's proposal, our draft plan stipulates that the right to peaceful use will not be alienated.

Inoue: The need to abolish nuclear weapons is universally accepted. It is better to concentrate on it.

Abe: The SDP includes the peaceful use in the concept of “non-nuclear.” But, from the realistic point of view, the right to nonmilitary use might be accepted in the treaty. On the contrary, even peaceful use is so dangerous and destined to disappear as you can see from the case of a nuclear incident in Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear reactors.

PD: Can a NEANWFZ be compatible with the U.S.-Japan Security Pact?

Abe: I'd like to refrain from saying something about it. This problem is related to a longstanding debate within our party.

Inoue: It's compatible in theory, but in reality it's not, I think.

Hiraoka: It is about under what kind of constraint we want to make the U.S. play a role in Asian security. I think a NEANWFZ is compatible with the U.S.-Japan Pact if Japan demands the U.S. properly.

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