

On the Passage of Three Military-Emergency Bills through the Diet - Let's Raise Voices for Peace in Various Parts of the World. Osamu Nakanishi

The Diet passed three bills related to military emergencies on June 6, 2003. The Liberal Democratic Party finally gained its end about a quarter of a century after the LDP Cabinet lead by Takeo Fukuda started research on military-emergency legislation, in line with discussions of the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation subcommittee, in August 1977. The ultimate goal of the military-emergency legislation is to dispatch Self-Defense Forces personnel abroad and to make them fight together with U.S. troops. These bills did not happen to be realized by the Cabinet with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda; Koizumi looks up to former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda as his political mentor, and Y. Fukuda is the very son of Takeo Fukuda. That is to say, they administered their mentor's and father's political will.

The Japanese people, who suffered heavily from World War II, pledged not to allow Japanese soldiers to be sent abroad and to kill and injure local people there. Japan decided to renounce the use of force and to solve any conflict through peaceful dialogue. This is the essence of the Japanese Constitution and its Article 9.

Japan can only survive in peace because we Japanese depend on foreign countries for most of food, oil, natural gas, etc. Japan cannot survive in war. Most Japanese know it very well and have long rejected the military-emergency legislation based on the assumption that a foreign nation attacks Japan.

Things began to rapidly change in the 1990's. After the first Gulf War in January 1991, SDF minesweepers were sent out to the Persian Gulf. In June 1992, the Law concerning Cooperation for United Nations Peace Keeping Operations and Other Operations was enacted. Following that, the Law on a Situation in the Areas Surrounding Japan and the Special Anti-terrorism Law were passed in May 1999 and October 2001, respectively. In December 2002, an Aegis destroyer was sent to the Indian Ocean. Finally in June 2003, the three military-emergency laws were approved.

What factors have caused these occurrences? First of all, many Japanese have come to catch a scent of danger of war, as wars have frequently occurred since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. They include the first Gulf War in January 1991, the second Gulf War in December 1998, the Kosovo War in March 1999, the Afghanistan War against the Taliban regime in October 2001, which followed the September 11 incident, and the Iraq War against the Saddam Hussein regime in March 2003.

Secondly, the Japanese view of war has changed. War used to be disastrous with long ground battles, as seen in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the

Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War, and so forth. Since the first Gulf War, however, wars have been short-lived waged with high technology. They are like war video games, in which we cannot see many innocent people killed cruelly.

In 2002, however, the Japanese did not allow the enactment of the military-emergency bills submitted to the Diet in April. But just one year later, both the Lower and Upper Houses passed these bills. An overwhelming majority, including the ruling coalition and opposition parties, voted in favor of the bills. What is against the background of this change is the hideous abduction issue, which has come to light since the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration in September 2002.

There has been a close relationship between Japan and the Korean Peninsula since ancient times. This relationship has had a great influence on daily lives, peace and safety of the two regions. Friendly exchanges continued even while Japan had taken the national isolation policy under the Tokugawa Shogunate. An unhappy relationship began to be formed when Japan colonized Korea in August 1910 under the treaty annexing Korea to Japan and came to call this region "Chosen." In July 1939, when Japan's aggressive war against China was expanding, the Kiichiro Hiranuma Cabinet gave notice concerning the migration of Korean labors to Japan, which paved the way to forcibly transporting Koreans to Japan. Their number is said to have reached about 1.5 million by August 1945, when Japan's colonial rule came to an end.

Recent incidents show again that we have not yet put a period to this regrettable history. The Japanese have to sincerely reflect on the past deeds done in colonized Korea. However, if you do something bad because the counterpart is bad, you are also to be blamed. North Korea should also deeply reflect on the fact that they abducted some Japanese. They ought not to arm themselves with nuclear weapons. Atomic armament would simply heighten tensions in this region. It can be said that the Koizumi Cabinet fulfilled a desire cherished for 25 years, taking advantage of suspicions, antipathy and charges against North Korea growing among Japanese people.

Japan has shifted from a country that will never carry out war to one that can do so. The quality of the state has changed. The next specific political agenda will be to revise the constitution. War is just around the corner when people assume and prepare for it. War will break out when both parties begin providing against it. Even a discussion about the possibility of a preemptive attack has been started.

Current conditions recall the promulgation of the National Mobilization Law in April 1938. It is only three years and eight months later that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. If we follow the same path again, we will see a terrible tragedy again: Many people would be killed and Japan might fall to ruin. Policymakers who approved the three military-emergency laws have grave responsibility.

What attitude should we take? We must not get involved in war logic. We should

consider not how to respond to the outbreak of war, but how to eliminate the causes of war. Our institute has already started to make efforts to establish peace on the Earth, especially to achieve peace and prosperity in East Asia. To this end, we will cooperate with people in China, South Korea, North Korea, Russia, the U.S. and other countries, who share the same goal.

Our institute has effective tools - a mailing list and a website (<http://www.igcpeace.org/>). Let's make full use of them to make our voice of peace reach hundreds, thousands, ten thousands and even billions of people. Let's raise voices for peace in various parts of the world. Justice stands up for peace, not war. If people who love peace cooperate and unite with each other, justice can never fail to be realized. Peace will certainly be secured. That is the purpose our institute was established for.

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