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The Venezuelan people will not tolerate imperialist intervention!
The Supreme Commander, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frias

A mass rally in Caracas, capital of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, commemorating 20 years since the attempted coup against Hugo Rafael Chávez Frias, Commander-in-Chief, and the rescue of democracy by the Venezuelan people. President Maduro addresses the crowd on stage. April, 13 Photo: Hisao Tanuma

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What the Anti-War Movement Needs Today

“Our” Responsibilities in the Situation of Ukraine

OMURA Saiichi

On February 24, 2022, the Government of the Russian Federation announced a “special military operation” and launched military action against Ukraine. The purpose of modern international law is to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” as the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations puts it. Its fundamental principle is that no country has the right to send troops to another country without the consent of that government, and Russia’s recent military action violates this principle. First and foremost, war is evil in itself, it does not benefit the Ukrainian people or the Russian people, and it can cause catastrophic damage. We urge an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated settlement.

In the face of such a situation, there are three options that “outsiders” can take: (1) escalate the catastrophe, (2) do nothing, or (3) try to mitigate the catastrophe. Of course, we should choose (2) over (1), and the best is (3). To that end, as Socialist Cuba’s Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations Luis Pedroso stated at the United Nations General Assembly on March 1, “the factors that have led to the use of force and non-observance of legal principles and international norms” must be thoroughly examined. Without that verification, “our” actions will not only have no effect, but they

could also end up pouring “gasoline” where there is fire.

International Law Issues

In recent years, Russia has had a history of emphasizing the principles of international law, as was evident in its response to the Syrian situation in contrast to Western countries. Also, at the time of consultations between Cuban Foreign Ministry officials on February 18, it was announced that it was necessary to protect the United Nations Charter rather than what Western countries, including Japan, call a “rules-based international order.” For that reason alone, I could not help but be surprised by the actions of the Russian military this time. Perhaps it’s the same with Cuba and China, and neither country supports the Russian military action. However, they are only asking for a response after carefully examining the factors behind the situation, and have repeatedly stated that their position is to defend the UN Charter.

The Russian government’s pretext of “protecting the ethnic Russian population of eastern Ukraine” is akin to the pretext used by NATO in its 1999 airstrikes on Yugoslavia to protect the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo. In any case, in April 2000, at the first South Summit meeting held in Havana, Cuba, the G77 Declaration, Arti-

cle 54, said, “We reject the so-called “right” of humanitarian intervention, which has no legal basis in the United Nations Charter or in the general principles of international law.” The pretext has no basis on international law.

The Russian government has taken full advantage of Kosovo’s precedent, but it is precisely in this regard that the US and its allies must be held accountable. I don’t mean to point out the “double standards” of the West, which suddenly remembers long-forgotten international law. The problem is that the United States and its allies have long waged illegal wars that have weakened and subverted international law.

The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was the beginning. Since then, the political authority of the United Nations, based on the clear words of the UN Charter, has been replaced by the vague “moral” authority of the “international community,” and the international legal order (the multilateral order which was maintained within certain limits until the “collapse of the Soviet Union”) was completely dismantled. When Richard Perle, then-Chairman of the Pentagon’s Advisory Committee on Defense Policy at the start of the Iraq War, “thanked God” for the death of the United Nations (The Guardian,

March 21, 2003), the first precedent was Kosovo. It has paved the way for endless wars such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Russian military action took advantage of this jungle situation. Of course, the US and NATO's unfair operations against Yugoslavia do not justify Russia's right to do the same against Ukraine. However, we must see the relationship between the two, and that is one of the factors that led to the situation at this time.

Origins of the Ukraine Crisis – 2014

In the first place, the Ukraine crisis itself was a result of imperialist political actions in violation of international law. Article 2(1) of the Charter of the United Nations affirms the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. The details of this were confirmed in United Nations General Assembly resolutions such as the "Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" (October 24, 1970), declares the duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter, and says, "no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State."

The United States supported the political change in

Ukraine in 2014. This can be understood from the fact that at that time the official website of the NED (National Endowment for Democracy) published the expenditure for the 65 program in Ukraine. Carl Gershman, who was the president of the NED, called Ukraine "the biggest prize" (Washington Post, Sept. 26, 2013). In other words, Ukraine was targeted for a "regime change." The NED was established in 1983 during the Reagan administration to continue similar activities as a subcontractor of CIA when the CIA's activities to overthrow legitimate governments and interfere in internal affairs in Latin America and the Middle East came to light one after another. Allen Weinstein, co-founder of the NED, said, "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA" (Washington Post, Sep. 22, 1991).

After November 2013, when "anti-government demonstrations" actually started in Ukraine, American politicians such as Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, Senator John McCain, and Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt to Ukraine went to the scene and expressed their support for the "demonstrators." They openly interfered in domestic affairs. It is a clear violation of international law. They didn't mind that nationalists, including fascists, were acting very violently and radically ("CNN" dated March 6, 2014).

A decisive document that showed the involvement of the United States in political change in Ukraine is the recording of Nuland's and Pyatt's phone calls leaked by an

anonymous person on February 6, 2014, when "anti-government demonstrations" were intensifying. On the same day, it was reported by several major media outlets, and the next day, the BBC published an article about the content of the call on February 7. The mass media only took issue with Nuland's remarks about this call record, "Fuck the EU." They agreed that the new government's prime minister would be Arseniy Yatsenyuk and discussed which opposition party leaders would be chosen as staff in the new government.

A few weeks later, President Yanukovich was "removed" and on February 27 Yatsenyuk was appointed Prime Minister along with the Provisional President as agreed. And despite the Ukrainian unconstitutional coup d'état, the United States quickly recognized the new government as "legitimate." However, while its injustice represents only a small portion of the Ukrainian electorate, it has an unnaturally high number of far-right affiliates such as Zvoboda and Pravyj Sektor in key government posts (deputy prime minister, head of national security, Deputy Director General of Security, Prosecutor General, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of the Environment). A coup d'état government with such a structure therefore carried out a repression to communists. Ukrainian Communist Party offices were raided and Communist Party members were barred from parliament. Lenin statues and other Soviet and anti-fascist monuments were

also destroyed. On the other hand, in present-day Ukraine, the birthday of Stepan Bandera, the leader of the “Union of Ukrainian Nationalists” (OUN-B), an organization that cooperated against the Nazis and took part in the massacre of Jews, is being celebrated.

In the background of US interference, we need to see the fact that Yanukovich rejected the IMF (International Monetary Fund) economic reform plan. A 96-page report on Ukraine produced by the IMF in 2012 called for, first and foremost, the elimination of domestic gas subsidies, which had been a barrier to capital investment. It was a matter of life and death for the people of Ukraine, where temperatures can drop to minus 20 degC, and the refusal was a natural decision. The IMF lends money to financially distressed countries, but on the condition that their governments adopt policies favorable to the capital. In other words, financing is candy. What is required is the abolition of regulations that impede the accumulation of profits, the reduction of social security programs, etc., and the whip will fall on people’s lives. At that time, Nuland said at the US-Ukraine Foundation Conference in December 2013 that the Ukrainian government needed to implement the economic reforms advocated by the IMF to ensure the long-term economic health of the country. Yanukovich also announced the resumption of negotiations with the IMF just before “dismissal” and was trying to calm down the situation. In this way, whether or not to accept the reforms advocated

by the IMF was openly a point of contention. After that, on March 27, the coup government immediately reduced household gas subsidies by 50% and promised to abolish them completely by 2016, and the IMF decided to provide \$27 billion in loans.

The people of Crimea and Donbass could not accept this coup. The Russian population of Crimea and Donbass, Yanukovich’s political base, resisted, believing that their democratically elected president had been overthrown unlawfully. Both regions declared independence and held referendums to join the Russian Federation, supported by the majority of the population, but Russia accepted Crimea’s but rejected Donbass’. As a result, the U.S.-backed coup regime in Kyiv announced a “counter-terrorist operation” against the isolated Donbass, and the Bandera-worshipping, Hakenkreuz-bearing fascist (neo-Nazi) militia “Azov Battalion” formed during the coup. They sent troops, including a battalion, and launched an attack using heavy weapons. This was the beginning of the post-2014 Ukraine crisis, the “Donbass War.” This Donbass war has resulted in over 14,000 dead (Al Jazeera, February 21, 2022) and the war in Ukraine never started only today.

The presence of the Mariupol-based fascists in the Donbass war was reported early on by independent journalists, but a few months after the coup, many major media outlets also began reporting on it. Starting with a brief mention in The New York Times dated August 9, 2014, it began to be men-

tioned in NBC and The Washington Post in September. The New York Times dated July 7, 2015 also reports that Islamic extremists are joining the Donbass war in alliance with the Azov Battalion. Fascists in Ukraine did not just appear in the Russian media. Although the Ukrainian fascist forces are only a minority, they exist as an “efficient” minority that plays the role of a storm trooper, and birthday celebrations for Nazi collaborators are held in the thousands. Thus, the influence of fascism in Ukraine cannot be underestimated.

In any case, what is important is the fact that the US-backed Ukrainian coup resulted in the Donbass War. The post-2014 Ukraine crisis is a direct result of US “regime change” activities that violated the basic principles of international law, and which have continued in the decades since World War II. It is part of what America has been trying to do around the world over the years. The origin of the fire is here, and we must understand that the current situation began in 2014.

Failure of the Minsk Agreement

In addition, it is necessary to see that the continued sabotage of the Ukrainian government’s implementation of the Minsk Agreement is also a factor in this escalation.

“Minsk-1” was signed in September 2014, and “Minsk-2” was signed in February 2015. Today, when we generally refer to the “Minsk Agreement,” we mean “Minsk-2.” The Minsk

Agreement to amicably end the Donbass war included a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, OSCE ceasefire monitoring, prisoner exchanges and amnesty for all parties to the conflict, and a high degree of autonomy for Donbass. It was an agreement on guarantees (diplomatic, educational system, judicial and military independence) to be implemented through direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict in Kyiv and Donbass through enactment and constitutional amendments. Only after its implementation will Ukraine regain control of the Donbass border with Russia. However, the Donbass War continued for eight years because the Ukrainian government continued to refuse to negotiate directly with Donbass and continued to attack it, while Germany and France, who had signed the agreement with Russia, acquiesced in this.

NATO's Eastward Expansion

The US intervention in Ukraine was part of the process of NATO's eastern expansion.

In 1990-1991, the NATO countries repeatedly made verbal promises to Mikhail Gorbachev that they would not pursue NATO's eastern expansion. A collection of documents (conversation notes and telegrams) declassified on December 12, 2017 and made public at the George Washington University National Security Archive attests to the existence of a series of promises.

On February 9, 1990, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker promised in a meeting

with Gorbachev that even if West Germany annexed East Germany, "NATO's jurisdiction will not expand eastward by an inch." This promise echoes the words of German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who declared in his grand speech on German reunification in Bavaria on January 31, "We will not allow NATO territory to move to the east, i.e., to the Soviet Union." On the following day, February 10, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced at a meeting with Gorbachev, "I believe that NATO should not expand its scope of activities." The released documents also prove that French President François Mitterrand and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher made similar promises. On July 1, 1991, NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner emphasized to the members of the Security Committee of the Russian-Soviet Supreme Council, who were visiting NATO headquarters in Brussels, himself and the NATO Council were against expansion. The status of the former Soviet Union under international law has been inherited by the Russian Federation, and this is now meaningful as a promise to Russia.

However, NATO expanded eastward. In 1999, 2004, 2009, 2017, and 2020, NATO expanded its membership in Eastern Europe five times, with a total of member countries swelled from 16 countries to 30 countries.

The purpose of NATO was to bring together the imperial powers of Europe to promote the expansion of the political and economic order in favor of

trade agreements, transnational corporations and financial institutions of common interest. It used the "threat of the Soviet Union" as an excuse, but even after the "collapse" of the Soviet Union, it was not dismantled. The United States and its junior partner NATO major powers have effectively claimed control over Eastern Europe after the "collapse" of the Soviet Union, and have taken advantage of the post-Soviet situation to create favorable conditions for private investment using institutions such as the IMF. In this way, they intervened in the governments of various countries and wiped out socialist "remnants" such as social security programs. Most of the process took the method of overthrow by political and economic intervention, but in Yugoslavia the method of air strikes was taken. The role of military organization NATO is to function as a "fist" that supports the expansion of the capital. Seventy-eight days of airstrikes on the Serbs encouraged countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, which at the time were not yet members of NATO and whose populations did not support NATO's actions, to submit to the demands of major NATO powers and invade NATO. As a guarantee that the United States would not be forced to join NATO, it was decided to proceed with negotiations for joining NATO. In other words, it functioned as a threat, and since then, the integration of Eastern European countries into NATO has progressed. It is the capitalist and imperialist interests of the NATO major powers that have brought about NATO's east-

ern expansion.

It is clear that NATO's eastern expansion violates the promises it made to Mikhail Gorbachev. It is true that the promises made by the NATO countries are verbal promises, and the newly declassified documents only indicate the existence of verbal promises. However, if it is said that "this is a verbal promise, so there is no need to keep it," anything will happen, even deception, amid already unstable international relations. Such an understanding of verbal promises is also inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations Charter, which is to "live together in peace with one another as good neighbors."

In recent years, the United States and NATO have been moving their armed forces and military bases closer to the Russian border one after another, and have formed a military encirclement network against Russia, conducting large-scale military exercises such as "Sea Breeze 2021," that included Ukrainian forces. It is not surprising that the Russian side recognized this as a threat. Such expansion of alliances also runs counter to the "principle of indivisible security" included in the 1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration and the 2010 Astana Summit Declaration. Since 2015, the activities of the "NATO Ukraine Committee" have become more active, and the United States has continued to suggest the next expansion of Ukraine's membership in NATO, and rejected the diplomatic and rational suggestions by Russia to demand suspension of the eastward

NATO expansion. It cannot be denied that these provocative words and deeds of the United States and major NATO countries led to the current escalation, in other words, Russia's backlash.

Summary by German Communist Melina Deymann

Of course, the above does not justify the actions of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. Different ruling class interests may also be at work in the national choice of capitalist Russia. Today's Russia is not the USSR.

More important, however, is where 'our' responsibility lies. In an essay published in the March 4 issue of the German Communist Party newspaper *Unsere Zeit*, Party member Melina Deymann, born in 1979, wrote: "The war in Ukraine is a defeat. Above all, it is a defeat for the peace movement in the West, in Germany." For Deymann, this is the result of their inability to stop NATO's expansion and their own defeat in the fight against imperialism in her own country. On top of that, she once again called for a fight against the imperialism in her own country that caused the situation. As Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht once said, the enemy is your own government.

They are claimed to be "supporting Putin" and even have their office graffitied "Russian shit." However, the voices demonizing and accusing Putin and the Russians in their own country, Germany, under the "peace in the own city," are merely encouraging further military expansion to exonerate their imperialism,

as well as arms exports to Ukraine. There is far from being the power to stop the war, it is only the fuel to escalate it. They, like the proletarian internationalists who were once said to be "supporting the Tsar," are clearly aware of this.

"We" in Japan

So how should "we" in Japan deal with this situation?

What must not forget is the fact that "we" in Japan are members of the Western imperialist countries. It can be said that this explains everything, but in the first place there exists a "Japan-US Alliance" (Japan-US Security Treaty). Then, in January 2007, Abe Shinzo attended the NATO Council and gave a speech for the first time as a Japanese prime minister. Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program was signed in 2014. The report "NATO 2030" was announced in December 2020 after interviews with relevant parties in partner countries, including Japan. Thus, NATO and the Japanese government have strengthened their relationship. Since 2021, military exercises with major NATO countries other than the United States have become more active in the waters near East Asia, and Japan has participated in "Sea Breeze 2021" as an observer.

Prior to Abe's visit, on May 4, 2006, as Japan's Foreign Minister, ASO Taro attended the NATO Council meeting and gave a speech, citing NATO's participation in the 2001 NATO invasion of Afghanistan, "Operation Enduring Freedom," as an ex-

ample, stating, “Cooperation between Japan and NATO has already begun.” This was true. Aso Taro, by the way, is the person who said, “Why don’t we learn from the NAZI procedure in 2013.” Such Japanese military actions and overseas dispatch of troops violate Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. However, the Japanese government has promoted the hollowing out of Article 9, while promoting cooperation with NATO. What must be considered is that the military actions that promote the hollowing out of Article 9 of the Constitution have also contributed to the weakening and hollowing out of the international legal order, which is one of the factors behind this situation. On the other hand, if the Japanese government and “we” in Japan are to be held accountable, it is exactly there the first and the foremost. In Iraq, which followed Afghanistan, and in Libya and Syria, where no troops were dispatched, the Japanese government has continued to express its support for US military actions, and the Japanese people hardly opposed it.

The consistent US and NATO policies and actions that violate international law and the basic principles of the UN Charter are the biggest factor behind the current situation in Ukraine, and “we” have continued to be complicit in this.

Looking at it this way, it is clear that the defense of Article 9 of the Constitution should be appealed again in the face of the situation in Ukraine, but above all, what should be questioned first and foremost is the various mili-

tary and diplomatic activities carried out by our own country and its allies.

Without looking at the context of such issues, we must be careful about blindly shouting “anti-Putin” or “anti-Russia” in Japan today. In the first place, what “we” say and write is basically heard and read on “our” side, and we must not forget what kind of effect is produced by it. Even if the demonization of the “enemy” is based on correct information rarely obtained during the war, it will only act in the direction of arousing belligerent hatred for further military escalation while at the same time losing sight of the context of the situation. It could also contribute to strengthening the relationship between Japan and NATO and to Japan’s transition to militarism, including its nuclear armament. In the current situation, where China’s position on the situation is exposed to misunderstandings and false analogies between Taiwan and Ukraine are frequently made, it could lead to agitation for military escalation in East Asia.

During the Ukrainian coup d’état in 2014, the Japanese government continued to issue statements as a member of the “G7” together with NATO countries, providing de facto support for US intervention. In addition, in an attempt to take advantage of it, on February 24, KISHIDA Fumio, then Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Abe administration, spoke of Ukraine’s “transfer to market economy.” On March 24, the administration announced the provision of yen loans “under an international support

framework centered on the IMF.” And on July 17, he agreed with the coup government on an “economic reform and development policy loan.” In the following year, February 5, 2015, the Japan-Ukraine investment agreement was signed, taking advantage of the series of processes. This time, the Japanese government imposed very strong economic sanctions as a member of the “G7”, 38 tons of Self-Defense Force equipment to Ukraine based on the Japan-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement was provided with the U.S. Air Force C17 transport aircraft, further exacerbating the situation. Nothing tells us more about where we stand than the fact that “we” are complicit in the escalation.

The now ubiquitous voices of the government and “public opinion” of “solidarity with Ukraine” also underpin such massive military exports to Ukraine by NATO countries and their de facto allies, including Japan. However, this will only escalate the situation further. The solution is negotiation, not war, and we must demand that diplomacy be given a chance.

The most important thing is to remember who “we” are, what “we” are responsible for, and who “our” words reach. “We” are never in a vacuum. Anti-war appeals and movements that do not forget this will truly contribute to peace.

The current escalation risks escalating into World War III. The fuse of the dynamite has already been lit, and the lit fuse must be severed before it explodes. And only the strug-

gle of the peoples of the nations against their own impe-

rialism can cut it off.

(Shiso-Undo No. 1075, April 1, 2022)

No Wars! Let's fight against Japan's constitutional amendment and nuclear armament!

Immediate ceasefire! Workers all over the world, Unite!

Call for the 5.1 Anti-War May Day Actions of the Tokyo Tobu (Eastern) Labor Union of the National General Labor Union

The following is a call for the 5.1 anti-war May Day action issued by the Tokyo Tobu (Eastern) Labor Union. In the midst of confusion and confrontation over the situation analysis and how to proceed with the anti-war movement over the Ukrainian war, the

Tokyo Tobu Union said that the essence of the war is "a battle for the interests of capitalists" and "the enemies of the workers who should fight together are the capitalists and their governments." It is an excellent analysis of the situation and a proposal for

action based on class consciousness. Let's respond to the call and fight with the maneuvers by the Japanese government, together.

[Editorial Office]

On February 24 Russia invaded Ukraine. Many lives have already been lost, and people's living has been completely destroyed.

The ravages of war are never equal. It is the working people who suffer the most. The soldiers of both countries who are forced to kill each other on the front lines are workers in military uniforms. It is the workers who suffer from hunger and are displaced from their homes and become refugees.

What about the capitalists on the other side? While staying in a safe place where the fire of war does not reach, they mobilize the working people to the war and order them to sacrifice their lives for the "motherland". Behind the scenes, they are selling weapons and making the windfall profit.

Why does a war occur? It is a

scramble for the interests of capitalists in order to plunder other countries' markets and resources to establish their own sphere of influence. This war is no exception.

On the other hand, workers, though their countries are different, have no reason to confront each other. Workers' interests are common across borders. There is no need to kill each other at all. The opponents we should fight together are the capitalists and their governments, who exploit and oppress the workers in each country and even cause war.

What should Japanese workers do? It is to stand in solidarity with the workers fighting anti-war movement all over the world and raise the voice of "Stop the war immediately!" It is to fight against the capitalists around the world who drive workers to war and incite hostility

towards workers in other countries. Above all, it is to oppose their government's participation in the war and any policy of war.

The Japanese government has sent the bulletproof vests of the Self-Defense Forces and other items to Ukraine, making it a de facto participating country. It is trying to use this war to amend the constitution for the worse, saying, "We cannot protect the country with Article 9 of the Constitution." Former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and others have publicly stated that Japan should arm itself with nuclear weapons in the form of "nuclear sharing" between Japan and the US. It is clear that such a movement will not lead to peace, but to complicity in and expansion of wars, and to start new wars. They must be firmly opposed.

Our Tokyo Tobu Union is now fighting many labor disputes.

Workers who lost their jobs due to sudden dismissals struggle to regain their livelihood and dignity, and a struggle to protest against serious occupational hazards in which workers were nearly killed due to capitalists' prioritization of making money and ignoring safety. They are all to protect workers' lives.

For about two years of the COVID-19 disasters, many workers have been driven into poverty due to unemployment and wage cuts, and even to suicides. Even if no missiles are actually fired, the survival

of the working people is being threatened. We are in the same fear and deprivation as that war. That is why we workers must rise to the fight for life and livelihood, both at work and in the streets.

May Day of May 1st is a day to celebrate the strength of the unity of workers, inheriting the history of workers from all over the world fighting with capitalists with blood and sweat. On this May Day, we call on all fighting unions, labor organizations and workers to take action in front of the prime minister's

official residence in Tokyo to appeal against wars and Japan's war policies.

Stop the war now!

"We will not allow Japan's constitutional amendment or nuclear armament!"

Save workers' lives!

Workers, don't kill each other in war!

Workers of the world, unite!

Let's rally in front of the prime minister's official residence on May 1 anti-war May Day!

(Shiso-Undo No. 1076, May 1, 2022)

Ukraine's Situation Caused the Collapse of the Anti-War Peace Movement

The spirit of the Peace Constitution is being abandoned.

Let's face the facts, not give in to peer pressure

TAKANASHI, Akiyoshi (Kanagawa 2nd district Citizen Liaison Conference)

On the eve of the 77th anniversary of the end of World War II, the anti-war peace movement in Japan is now facing a serious split and disintegration crisis. Within the movement, unprecedented differences of opinions and fissures have emerged over historical perceptions of the Russia-Ukraine war and Article 9 of the Constitution. Not only do they not consider the question of why the war broke out between Russia and Ukraine, but when they discuss the background of the war, they are asked if they support Russia, and the exchange of opinions is unilaterally terminated. When asked why he thinks so, he refuses to answer, saying only that Russia is to blame for the

invasion and that the only issue is denouncing Russia and demanding its withdrawal from Ukraine. Furthermore, when we suggested that he would confront his own government with demands such as "stop arms transfers" and "stop economic sanctions," he replied, "If I say such things, people will back down. If you say such a thing, people will be turned off, and you shouldn't say such a thing," and the exchange of opinions is unilaterally terminated. Such a situation is now occurring at a meeting of a local citizens' coalition to which I belong.

Leaving the conflict of opinions among people joining mass movements, such as

citizens' liaison conferences, could lead to the fragmentation, division, and downsizing of the movement, which is exactly what the capitalist ruling class wants. Therefore, my challenge is how to continue exchanging opinions and learning before joint action in the mass movement, and how to create a shared awareness of problems and issues.

The provision of arms to Ukraine (the Zelensky administration) is nothing but a message to "continue the war" and "defeat Russia," and the war will not end as long as the provision of arms continues. Sympathy for the Ukrainians killed by Russia's invasion does not make any allowance

for the fact that the number of Russian soldiers killed as “enemies” is overwhelmingly higher. Can a movement that does not address these issues really be called an anti-war movement? My answer is “No!”

Do Not Hollow out the Peace Constitution and Constitutionalism!

Furthermore, I believe that the nature of this movement has led to the abandonment of the spirit of the Peace Constitution. Within the anti-war peace movement, as well as within the regime itself, the argument that Volodymyr Zelensky’s warfare was justified by invoking the right of individual self-defense, exclusively defense-oriented policy, and even the defense of national sovereignty is becoming more prominent than ever. Such arguments, in my view, not only hollow out the Peace Constitution and its constitutional principles, but also set the country on the path to declining them.

Article 9 of the Constitution, which renounces war and the renunciation (non-retention) of armed forces, is an integral part of the Preamble of the Constitution, and in particular the phrase “we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world” is linked to Article 9. I understand that the right of individual self-defense and exclusively defense-oriented policy are denied, and that even the policy of “ensuring

security and survival through military alliances” supported by many countries is also denied.

Japan’s International Position

The anti-war movement is a concrete effort to create peace. Today, Japan, in concert with the U.S., is forcing the deployment of Self-Defense Forces and missiles to Okinawa and the Southwest Islands on the pretext of a “Taiwan contingency,” with China as the “enemy.” This situation in Japan seems to be exactly the same as the current situation in Ukraine. We cannot underestimate the fact that from the Maidan movement of 2014 to the day of the Russian invasion on February 24 (and even now), Ukraine has been receiving massive arms and other military assistance from the U.S. and has been preparing for war with Russia as its “enemy.” In his March 1st State of the Union address, Biden stated, “In order to confront Putin, we spent several months forming a coalition with countries in Europe, the Organization of American States, Asia, and Africa. We have been carefully preparing.” These facts show that the Russo - Ukrainian war is a war launched by the United States. And we can see that this Russian - Ukrainian war is linked to the danger that it will be replicated in East Asia as a war between Japan and China, with the US behind it.

What should we appeal?

We must now recognize the fact that the Japanese government is deeply involved in the war between Russia and Ukraine. So, we should appeal to our people to “stop arms support to Ukraine,” “stop economic sanctions against Russia,” “stop military exercises with the U.S. and NATO,” and “conduct peaceful diplomacy, not military force.” We should appeal to the Japanese government to “stop arms support to Ukraine,” “stop economic sanctions against Russia,” “stop the military exercises of Japan Self-Defense Forces with the U.S. and NATO,” and “engage in peaceful diplomacy, not military force.” In addition, we must recognize the fact that constitutional reform and military expansion are being promoted under the pretext of a “Taiwan contingency.” So, we should strongly urge the Japanese government and the autocratic regime to “stop war with China,” “withdraw the Japan-US joint operation plan to make Okinawa a battlefield,” and “stop possessing enemy base attack capabilities and military expansion.” At the same time, we should also strongly urge the opposition parties to take this position.

I will not be swayed by phenomena, emotions, or peer pressure, but will face the facts and continue to make these demands and voice them to my own government. I will fight to rebuild the anti-war peace movement in Japan with this recognition.

(Shiso-Undo No. 1076, May 1, 2022)

Don't Simplify the Complex Situation.

Severe Oppression to the Anti-War Movements in Ukraine

KONDO, Kazuki, Chairperson, Japan Socialist Youth League

As a child, I had fun and peaceful summer vacations in Pioneer Camps in the USSR. The Soviet Union, which in Japan was said to be a “bad country”, a “dark country”, and a “scary country”, was actually the complete opposite. At a Pioneer Camp, I also learned the phrase “Нет Войне” (no to war), which is used in the movement for peace in Ukraine. From that experience, I thought that friendship between children and young people would contribute to peace, so I majored in Russian at university (although the Soviet Union had already been dismantled at that time...).

Memories of the summer vacation at the Pioneer Camp are not connected with the situation in the former Soviet Union after the dissolution of the socialist system, where conflicts are repeated. For years before the war in Ukraine, I was concerned about the rise of nationalist forces in various countries. And not only the war in Ukraine, but also the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the ethnic independence conflict in Georgia, and other situations in which the countries that formed the former Soviet Union and the people who lived there turned their guns on each other, continue to hurt my heart. At the end of February, I sent an e-mail to a friend from my school days in Moscow and a friend in Kyiv, but I haven't heard back yet. I just pray

that they and their families are safe.

All those who remain involved in the former Soviet territories, including myself, are deeply hurt by the situation of the large-scale war between Russia and Ukraine. Even if I raise my voice against the information that is mixed with truth and falsehood that is leaked in the commercial media and SNS, “That is not true”, it is offended by words such as, “Are you on the side of Russia?” or “That kind of knowledge doesn't help stopping the war”. I can't help but bite my own powerlessness.

However, in order to properly criticize the Putin administration and achieve an early ceasefire and withdrawal of Russian troops, it is essential to take into account the history of the former Soviet Union and the developments surrounding Russia and Ukraine during this period. Moreover, calling President Putin a “madman” or insisting on sanctions against Russia are the prey of the powers that use the situation in Ukraine as an opportunity to strengthen their military capabilities.

Also, while many people recognize the Putin administration's claims as mere propaganda, I feel that they are unable to distinguish which parts are propaganda and how they are dramatized. For example, there are complex circumstances that are diffi-

cult for those of us living in Japan to understand, such as the perception of “pro-Russian factions” in the Donbass region, the use of Russian and Ukrainian languages in Ukraine, and the relationship between NATO and Russia. Trying to simplify and understand them is itself entangled in information warfare.

For example, having Russian as one's first language in Ukraine does not necessarily mean being ethnically Russian or “pro-Russian.” President Zelensky himself speaks Russian as his first language. The reason why Russian is spoken in the Donbass region is that it has become the ‘common language’ of workers from different ethnic groups who have gathered in this old industrial area. A similar situation can be found in urban areas in the Baltic countries of Latvia and Estonia.

It is a one-sided view that the sense of crisis over NATO's expansion to the east led the Putin administration to decide to invade Ukraine. In the first place, after the end of the Cold War, Russia joined NATO's “Partnership for Peace”, and until the coup d'état in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia worked closely with imperialist countries, including the United States, as a member of the G8. They worked together to wage a “war on terrorism.” Russia itself was “European-oriented,” such as consid-

ering joining NATO.

It is also a mistake to equate present-day Russia with the former Soviet Union. Russian society is impoverished as new capitalists called oligarchs, who seized the real power of the economy and society in the process of dismantling the socialist system, monopolized wealth. In particular, the outflow of young people abroad was serious, and the population of the Russian Federation has decreased by about 5 million in the last 20 years. The same is true for Ukraine, where the population, which was 53 million in the early 1990s, has decreased to 42 million in 2021. This social and economic deadlock and sense of

stagnation are the conditions that allow the rise of the far right. And this war will accelerate the exodus of young people from Ukraine and Russia.

In Japan, there are reports about the suppression of anti-war movements in Russia, but there is no mention of the severe suppression of anti-war movements in Ukraine. The Union of Communist Youth of Ukraine, affiliated to the World Federation of Youth for Democracy, has been banned since the 2014 coup. Furthermore, since the military offensive by Russian forces began in February, several members of the leadership have been violently beaten and taken away in the

city of Kyiv, and their whereabouts are unknown.

Interest in the war in Ukraine is growing among Japanese youth. Members of the Japan Socialist Youth League and young people in the vicinity often distrust the reports of the commercial media. And we have received quite a few requests to know what is happening, why it happened, the background and essence. We need to see the repeated military clashes in the regions of the former Soviet Union as a failure of capitalism after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and a failure of imperialist rule and intervention.

(Shiso-Undo No. 1075, April 1, 2022)

Exporting Article 9, Not Importing the War System

Focus is on the Issue of Self-Defense Forces' Military Expansion in the Nansei Islands.

TOYOSHIMA, Koichi (Professor Emeritus, Saga University)

A war of unpredictable proportions has broken out between European countries that were seen as "advanced." Before and after the Russian invasion to Ukraine on February 24, I had a hard time checking and keeping up with information released from peace activists, researchers, and others whom I trust. Some days I thought I had to relearn postwar history to recognize this incident. This has allowed me to recognize some of the background to this incident, such as the expansion of NATO and the "Maidan Revolution" in Ukraine. But whatever the background, it is all too obvious that Russia is at fault for

provoking a major war with a preemptive strike.

We need a ceasefire as soon as possible.

Before and after this war started, I was attending zoom meetings of peace activists in the U.S., not knowing half of English, and checking emails and social networking sites for information, but I found it odd that there was not a word of alarm about Russia and PUTIN, and after the invasion started, I found it odd that there was not a word of condemnation of Russia and Putin at all. When I asked an American peace activist about this in an e-mail, I was sur-

prised to hear him say, "Russia was forced into the war by the U.S., so they dare not condemn it." I imagine that for him, this is an expression of resistance to and criticism of his own country, the U.S., which is "the world's biggest rogue state on a scale that no one else can match," but without fairness, it is unlikely to be convincing.

What is required of the peace movement is, above all, an effort for a ceasefire as soon as possible. To this end, the priority is to speak out to stop the aggressor, Russia. At the same time, the Zelensky administration and the U.S. side, far from being above reproach,

are also said to have committed various misdeeds, including oppression, and killing of Russian residents and violations of the ceasefire (Minsk Accord), and analysis and criticism of these actions will be indispensable. This in no way has anything to do with exonerating or defending Russia. Furthermore, it is important to demand that the West encourage both sides to resolve the issue through negotiations, rather than by providing arms aid to the Zelensky administration (MAKOTO, Konishi's warning that the May 9 passage of the U.S. "Arms Lending Act" is leading to an "inter-imperialist war" between the United States and Russia should be taken seriously). If a nuclear war broke out, it is truly an apocalyptic scenario, but what is more serious than the Cuban crisis is the existence of many nuclear power plants and their spent fuel pools. In other words, there are several huge "radioactive mines" that, if hit by a missile, would render an area of land the size of a small European country uninhabitable for a hundred years or more. Avoiding these is the top priority.

Construction of Bases in the Ryukyu Arc

The greatest challenge for those of us who live in Japan is to prevent, at all costs, the undesirable amendment maneuvers of the Constitution that take advantage of the war fever. Not only the explicit revision of the Constitution, but also the so-called "constitutional amendment by fiat," – that is, the longstanding attempt to effectively violate Article 9 of

the Constitution by making unconstitutional acts a *fait accompli* – must be stopped before it becomes definitive. The focus of this effort is to stop the construction of a new Self-Defense Forces base in the Nansei Islands (Ryukyu Arc). While the construction of the new U.S. military base at Henoko is not expected to be completed in a few years, construction of bases is steadily underway on islands from Amami Oshima to Miyakojima and Yonaguni Island, Japan's westernmost island, only 100 km from Taiwan. According to media reports, the plan is to establish a surface-to-ship and surface-to-air missile unit on Ishigaki Island at the end of this fiscal year, and a surface-to-ship missile unit in the Katsuren town sub-camp of the Ground Self-Defense Force in central Okinawa next fiscal year. In fact, the Ryukyu Arc is being turned into a "missile fortress" against China. I feel that the reaction of the movement for the defense of the Constitution and the peace movement to this situation is too weak. For example, the "All Okinawa Coalition Against Bases Action Executive Committee's" May-June action proposal, "Stop the Great Military Expansion! Monday Serial Rallies in front of Prime Minister's Official Residence" contained the opposition to enemy base attacks and nuclear sharing but did not contain the action against this most imminent expansion of Self-Defense Forces to the Nansei Islands. It is strange.

It is said that one of the reasons behind Putin's upcoming war was NATO's eastward expansion and Ukraine's military buildup, which many

would probably agree, but a similar situation is being created in East Asia. We should be aware of this. In other words, the expansion of NATO is a response to the globalization of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and to the launch of AUKUS. The expansion of Ukraine's military will correspond to the deployment and expansion of the Self-Defense Forces in the Ryukyu Arc.

One Proposal

In the remaining word count, I would like to propose one way of discussing Article 9 and peace. A "sequential" discussion on this issue that begins with the question, "What would we do if we were attacked militarily by a foreign nation?" tends to lead to lengthy exchanges. Therefore, I would like to make a table of two columns (arms buildup/elimination) and four rows (gains/losses in peacetime and in wartime), dividing the arguments of the arms maintenance/strengthening camp and the arms abolition/reduction camp and their respective advantages and disadvantages into peacetime and wartime. For example, in the column for the advantages of the abolitionist/peacetime camp, it should say, "It does not pose a threat to other countries and gives a sense of security." If we fill in all the possible arguments of the two factions in this table and look over it, we can confirm that there is no such thing as a "perfect" method and that it is a matter of comparison. Next, consider the "time evolution" of this table, i.e., which parts of the table will expand or contract in the case of disarmament/elimination and in

the case of military expansion. This will show that the case of disarmament and disarmament leads to a favorable future.

Notes:

- (1) Noam Chomsky and Jeremy Scahill on the Russia-Ukraine War, The Media, Propaganda, And Accountability, April 15, 2022.
<https://theintercept.com/2022/04/14/russia-ukraine->

no-am-chomsky-jeremy-scahill/

- (2) Please refer to Mr. Konishi, Makoto's posting to Facebook "Military Research for Anti-War," May 14, 2022.
- (3) Mainichi Newspaper, May 2, 2002.
- (4) "Stop the Great Military Expansion! Monday Serial Rallies in front of Prime Minister's Official Residence," May 7, 2022.

<http://sogakari.com/?p=5996>

- (5) AUKUS is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This pact was announced on September 15, 2021.
- (6) Please refer to this author's blog, "pegasus1.blog.ss-blog.jp/2022-04-05#framework".

(Shiso-Undo No. 1077, June 1, 2022)

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