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JCP Takes the High-Road as a Political Party

Speech commemorating the 84th anniversary of the founding of the JCP

Shii Kazuo

JCP Executive Committee Chair

July 19, 2006, Tokyo

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Good evening to the audience filling the hall and to viewers nationwide watching via satellite communication. I want to express thanks to you for coming here, braving the bad weather to attend this meeting commemorating the 84th founding anniversary of the JCP.

North Korea's missile launch -- International community must unite to call for diplomatic settlement

First I want to explain the JCP position on a recent major issue, the missile launch by North Korea.

Since the news conference we held immediately after the incident, we have been criticizing North Korea's missile launches without prior notification for violating international regulations and also going against international arrangements such as the Japan-Pyongyang Declaration. The JCP called on North Korea to stop its missile launch, abide by international regulations and arrangements, and immediately return to the six-party talks in order to seek a diplomatic settlement of issues in dispute. The JCP stressed that it is indispensable for North Korea to establish a position of abiding by international regulations and arrangements in order for it to become a responsible member of the international community.

The JCP has been maintaining that a united response of the international community is most important, that is, the United Nations Security Council should not be divided but seek a settlement unanimously. In this context, we welcome the July 15 unanimous adoption of the UNSC resolution condemning North Korea for its missile launches, demanding that North Korea suspend all activities related to its missile program and re-establish its pre-existing commitments to a moratorium on missile launching, and strongly urging North Korea to return immediately and unconditionally to the six-party talks and to

abandon all nuclear weapons programs.

The JCP demands that North Korea abide by the consensus of the international community expressed in the UNSC resolution. I want to stress again that it is essential for the UNSC to firmly maintain a position of united response and to make efforts for a diplomatic resolution of the issue.

Some people in the Japanese political world are using this issue to call for a military response. This is extremely harmful. In particular, the argument calling for “attacks against enemy bases” will induce a vicious circle of military responses and will endorse illegal preemptive attacks. Foreign Minister Aso Taro was quoted as saying that Japan should express thanks to Kim Jong-il. Reportedly the foreign minister promptly added that it was a joke. However, more often than not such casual remarks show one’s true color. Partisan attitudes of trying to use this issue as a pretext to promote militarism and constitutional revision are totally unacceptable.

The JCP will continue in its effort to seek a reasoned diplomatic resolution of the North Korea question.

Changes taking place in politics are measure of for political parties’ worth

Recently, the JCP held its second plenary meeting of the Central Committee and made an in-depth analysis of the changes taking place in the political context.

In the general election of the House of Representatives in 2005, the Liberal Democratic Party led by Koizumi Jun’ichiro won the overwhelming majority of Lower House seats. At first, it appeared that anything was possible for the LDP with such a numerical force, but things did not turn out as expected. A diplomatic deadlock over the Yasukuni Shrine issue has been continuing. Although the LDP is pushing for an adverse revision of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education, as well as the U.S. military realignment plan, the public has started a massive counter-attack. As for economic issues, the widening social gap and increasing poverty rate, and scandals involving Livedoor and the Murakami Fund have drawn nation-wide criticism of the argument for deregulation as a cure-all.

A piece of good news arrived on July 2. In the mayoral election for Higashi-Osaka City with a population of 510,000 in Osaka Prefecture, Nagao Junzo who is a JCP member was returned to reestablish a democratic city

administration.

In this election, citizens' anger erupted at national politics as well as the distorted municipal administration that ignored citizens' interests, including the restoration of an unjust administration that takes advantage of the historical remnants of discrimination against residents of Buraku (literally meaning "hamlets"). The election campaign was carried out in the midst of elderly people's anger at notices informing them that they will have to pay a large amount more in residential taxes. Citizens rushed to the city office to express their protest. People exclaimed: "This is just like a second conscription order to me. The first one was about to kill me with guns. The second one is for slow killing"; "Plant trees in front of the city office and let's hang ourselves on them." The LDP-Komei government under Prime Minister Koizumi is responsible for making the decision on the major tax increase. The harsh words show how great elderly people's anger was. Anger at the city administration and at national politics joined together, and citizens demanded a new city administration. This is a brilliant achievement that reveals changes taking place in the political current nationwide.

In the JCP 24th Congress Resolution in January, we pointed out that the overwhelming majority of seats given for Koizumi and the LDP in the 2005 general election was the result of their using "a tactic to deceive the public" and that "if their lies and tricks are exposed, a major political cataclysm will inevitably follow." This is not just a bluff on the part of the JCP. Now is the time when their "lies and tricks" are about to be exposed and a "major political cataclysm is going to take place.

Now, political parties' intrinsic worth is put to a test. In today's commemorative speech under the title "The JCP takes the high-road as a political party", I want to talk about what kind of political party the Japanese Communist Party is.

1. The party that has the program to fundamentally change LDP politics

First, although every party is speaking of a reform, the JCP is the only party that has a concrete program to fundamentally reform the distorted politics by the LDP.

JCP criticism of aberrant society is being accepted as common sense

In the 23rd Party Congress in 2004, we made an overall revision of the Party Program with an outlook far into the 21st century. I now feel that the criticism in the JCP Program of the aberrant Japanese society is becoming commonsensical to many people.

Local paper editorials point out subordination to U.S.

The first example is the call for redressing Japanese politics subservient to the United States. Japan's extremely abnormal state of subordination to the United States is now being questioned by the public.

Movements of the Article 9 Association have been spreading throughout Japan, opposing moves to revise the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution so as to enable Japan to fight wars abroad together with the United States. The number of associations nationwide totals over 5,000, a solid national movement.

Movements against Japan-U.S. military integration and strengthening of U.S. base functions in the name of the realignment of U.S. forces have also been developing in various places of the country, involving local governments that include conservative politicians, together with their residents. On July 9, a huge rally with 30,000 people from the Tokyo metropolitan area took place at Yokosuka. People shouted, "Stop deployment of the U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Yokosuka! Withdraw the agreement on U.S. military realignment!" A U.S. Navy Aegis ship was anchored in front of the rally site. The Aegis crew members must have been surprised to see 30,000 people in the rally. This is a sign that people's movements are emerging from the grassroots.

In line with developments of popular struggles, a major change in public opinion is taking place. Having studied local press coverage, I noticed that some local newspapers have carried remarkable editorials. I want to quote three newspapers:

Kanagawa Shimbun on June 14 carried an editorial entitled "Stick to NO to nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carrier." It said, "Unpredictable accidents of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier may arise, and citizens' anxiety about subsequent serious disasters will not be wiped out. ... Should Japan follow the U.S. military strategy just because there is the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty?"

Hokkaido Shimbun of May 3 carried an editorial entitled "Arguments on U.S. military realignment and Japan-U.S. Security Treaty should be based on public opinion and the Constitution of Japan." The editorial sounded a warning

to the “Japan-U.S. agreement” on the U.S. military realignment plan, saying, “Hasn’t the agreement ignored public opinion and the Constitution on which it should be based? There is the danger that Japan will be involved in U.S. wars. The Japan-U.S. alliance is entering the dangerous waters.”

Okinawa’s Ryukyu Shimpo of April 28 carried an editorial entitled “Review Japan’s excessive subordination to the United States.” It said, “Priority is given to U.S. intentions rather than the opinion of the people of the prefecture. We want the government to rethink the framework of foreign policy and security policy which is marked by an excessive dependence on and subordination to the United States.”

The government has the illusion that it can get away with anything just by uttering the mantra, the “Japan-U.S. alliance.” With this mantra, the government aims at imposing on the people an adverse revision of the Constitution and the U.S. military realignment plan. The fact is that this spell no longer works. Many people now think that they are not obliged to endure hardships just because there is the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. They ask if such a way of doing things in disregard of local opinion can be allowed and if such abnormal subordination to the United States can continue to be accepted. Such public sentiment has grown to the extent to find its reflection in the editorials of local newspapers.

Capitalism without rules faces signs of change in media comments

The JCP Program proposes overcoming the present state of “capitalism without rules.” Against the backdrop of the increasing social gap and poverty on the one hand and the widespread hunt for easy money on the other hand as typified in the scandals involving the Livedoor and the Murakami Fund, criticism of “capitalism without rules” seems to be increasing among the general public.

Recently, a certain change has appeared in the comments of newspapers with a national circulation. Yomiuri Shimbun carried a running story from June 22, entitled “Who fathered Horie and Murakami?” Headlines of installments are: “Reform’s dark side -- Promoting money worship”; “Business circle is excited at giving up ethics”; and “No legal check at easy-money making.”

Asahi Shimbun on June 28 started a serial entitled “Structural reform in retrospect.” The first installment had the headline “Shadow over calls for deregulation as panacea -- Support turning into criticism of gap.” In criticizing the economic policy for the evils it has caused, the first installment ended by saying, “It is time to think rationally about the role the government should play, by distancing ourselves from calls for deregulation as a cure-all as well as the one-time craze for the Koizumi government.” I wish the mass media had begun to think rationally earlier, but at least a change is finally taking place in the press coverage of political issues.

The mass media abroad have also expressed criticism. A British weekly "The Economist" had two feature articles on Japan. In the first one on October 8, 2005 dealing with the Livedoor scandal, it commented that Japanese capitalism "is strikingly unregulated." The second on June 17 this year dealt with the widening "inequality in Japan," under the headline "The rising sun leaves some Japanese in the shade."

Let people know of JCP programmatic policy of perspectives for drastically changing politics

The aberrations for which the JCP Program criticizes Japan's extraordinary subordination to the United States and "capitalism without rules" have come to be shared by many people. People can no longer close their eyes to these aberrations.

This is why arguments questioning the social gap and relations with the United States are arising even from within the Liberal Democratic, Komei, and Democratic parties. In the LDP presidential election scheduled for autumn, it is said that the social gap between rich and poor will be a major issue. The Democratic Party of Japan, as if it had forgotten that it competed with the LDP in relaxing regulations, has begun to say that the increasing gap is a social problem. These parties, however, are just making superficial comments without proposing any correction of the underlying structure of bad government, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and extreme benefits for large corporations. It is because they are staying within the old political framework. They cannot adopt any perspective that might overcome the contradictions now erupting.

The JCP Program not only blames the government policy for its abnormal subordination to the United States and for the evils of "capitalism without rules" but also reveals the underlying political mechanism and shows perspectives for a major change. The Program calls for abrogating the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in order to turn Japan into a truly independent country, make a new peaceful Japan firmly based on the Constitution, and create an economy abiding by rules by controlling arbitrary actions of large corporations and defending the living standards and rights of the people. No other party other than the JCP has a program to achieve a major reform of Japan's politics as this.

I think that now is the time for the JCP Program to show its true worth. The people have begun to accept the Program's criticism of the social aberrations in Japan as common sense. Let us proceed further by doing our utmost to win a consensus regarding the need for the democratic reform of Japan as called for by the Program, abrogating the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and redressing the extreme policies favoring large corporations.

JCP has grand perspectives for future of humanity

As expectations for Japan beyond democratic reforms, the JCP Program outlines a possibility for a socialist/communist society in the future. Among the political parties in Japan, only the JCP shows a perspective for a future of humanity on a historical scale that looks beyond capitalism.

In the past, other parties also upheld “socialism” as a perspective for the future.

The Socialist Party of Japan [present Social Democratic Party of Japan] upheld a policy calling for immediate socialist revolution. When the Japanese Communist Party 45 years ago established the Party Program which was a prototype of the present Program, with proposals for achieving a democratic revolution first and then for proceeding with socialism, the SPJ published a leaflet in criticism of the JCP. They alleged that the JCP is opportunistic in that it avoids aiming at socialism immediately, although conditions for socialism were thought to have matured. They made such an extremely “brave” criticism of democratic reform.

Even the Komei Party at the time upheld a belief in a “humanistic socialism.” Though its substance was unclear, the party once said that a society overcoming the defects of capitalism should be the aim. I have here a booklet entitled “For mass welfare” published by the Komei Party in 1964. It said: “The capitalist system is most convenient for the capitalist class in pursuing profits. To the working masses, accounting for a major part of the population, however, the system cannot but be said to be a system that involves many contradictions and defects, a system under which they cannot escape poverty.” I wish that the present Komei Party leaders reread this passage.

But at present, the JCP is the only party in Japan that publicly upholds a perspective for a future society after capitalism.

Does the reality of the world in the 21st century guarantee capitalism as the winner and the capitalist system as everlasting? On the contrary, the world is concerned that the conditions for human survival itself is endangered under the capitalist system. The system cannot resolve the widening gap between the rich and poor, the North-South problem, and the environmental issues that humanity faces on a global scale. People who are seriously concerned about the future of humanity have expressed their worries at various occasions.

I was invited to give a lecture at the University of Tokyo in 2005. I introduced to students a book entitled “Technology for global sustainability” written by Komiyama Hiroshi, a global environment expert and now the president of the University of Tokyo. The author criticized the chorus for

relaxing regulations, and says:

“Can markets function appropriately to meet the needs of humankind and make a long-term response to such issues as the environment and energy, part of the gradually depleting foundation of human civilization? The answer is no. Expectations for a pre-established harmony utilizing the market principle is impossible as long as business corporations act with a short-term view.”

This statement left me with a strong impression that the profit-first principle based on a quest for quick profits in the short term will not be able to undertake the tasks that humankind should deal with using a long-term perspective.

I want to quote another person. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, one of the leaders of the democratic revolution now under way in Latin America, said in the fourth summit on social debts in February, 2005: The capitalist model cannot resolve poverty and inequality. This model destroys the global environment, and makes life on earth unsustainable. With a proviso that he is speaking from the capacity of one person, the president added that countries should establish their vision of socialism in the 21st century.

The 21st century is the century in which the capitalist system will wane and its period of duration will expire. This is when people will begin to explore new ways of organizing the future of humanity.

Isn't it being narrow minded if people, in this turbulent world, think that the present capitalist society will last forever?

The JCP Program in this age of turbulence makes clear its goal of a future society centering on “socialization of the means of production” aiming at a community based on human relations of genuine freedom and equality to secure human development of all members of society. I am convinced that this is a really worthwhile undertaking.

Maintaining the name of the Japanese Communist Party, which embodies the ideals and perspectives for a future society, we will tackle the task facing us in the 21st century.

2. JCP influences real politics by people power at grassroots

The second point is that the JCP is a party closely connected with people at the grassroots and influences politics using their strength.

The JCP has 400,000 members across the country, and a total of 24,000 branches at workplaces, in residential areas and at campuses. It has 3,385 local assembly members, 2.88 million members of JCP supporter organizations, and 1.68 million readers of the party newspaper Akahata.

Only the JCP among all political parties has its own grassroots organizations and is carrying out activities day and night to help alleviate some of the hardships of the people and to respond to their requests.

Nationwide, there are 24,000 post offices, 23,000 primary schools, and 23,000 nursery schools. The number of JCP branches is comparable to that of post offices, primary and nursery schools. The JCP takes pride in its nationwide network that is working at grassroots level to defend the interests of the people.

Four examples of JCP having influenced real politics with help of grassroots movements

At first, I want to stress that the JCP, having trust in the strength of people united at the grassroots, always uses its influence to move real politics in cooperation with grassroots movements.

Ties between workers and JCP Dietmembers help to end unpaid overtime

One example is the struggle to eliminate overtime work without pay. The JCP Dietmembers Group took up this issue 276 times since 1976. The result was that the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry in 2001 issued a circular instructing corporations to correct the practice. As a result, for example, the major non-bank financing company Takefuji was obliged to pay 3.5 billion yen in backpay for unpaid overtime work. To date, 65.3 billion yen in total has been paid to workers for past overtime work without pay. What has enabled the JCP Dietmembers to achieve such dramatic results?

We must note that even after the ministry issued the circular, labor standards inspection offices were showing a reluctance to investigate the actual situation at large corporations. At that time, a JCP workplace branch in a large corporation in the electric appliances industry sent to the JCP a detailed complaint. They said that computers at the workplace are programmed to not compute any entry of overtime hours that exceed the set standards and instruct workers to first get their superiors to approve the figures. Such detailed complaints from workers in the field helped JCP Dietmembers to know in what ways unpaid overtime is actually perpetrated and how the situation can be corrected.

JCP Parliamentarians' prompt response to workers requests changed real

politics. I think that such close teamwork is possible only for the JCP. The back payment of 6.53 billion yen is a joint achievement supported by struggles at workplaces.

Cuts in usurers' excessive rates with help of JCP consultative activities

Another example is achieving cuts in the high interest rates charged by non-bank financial institutions. Borrowing from these money-lending institutions had led to multiple debts, voluntary bankruptcies, and suicides. In this year's ordinary Diet session, the JCP Dietmembers Group directly raised the issue of the so-called "gray-zone" in interest rates that legally allow these non-bank financial institutions to charge an interest rate of up to 29 percent a year. Prime Minister Koizumi said that measures should be taken to prevent disasters that may be incurred by using usurious money-lenders. This statement signaled a move to cut their interest rates. Yosano Kaoru, state minister in charge of financial, economic and fiscal policy, said, "What is disagreeable to me is that consumer loan companies are publicly running advertisements on TV." This comment drove non-bank financial institutions to voluntarily limit their TV advertisements.

The consumer loan firm Aiful Corporation is well known for its TV advertisements showing cute Chihuahuas. It is said that the company ran 316 TV advertisements a month starring Chihuahuas. The company was ordered to suspend its operations because its gangster-like ways of collecting loans came to light and its TV ads were temporarily suspended.

The situation over non-bank financial institutions turned into a serious social problem, but the LDP, Komei, and the DPJ did nothing about it. It is because these parties asked the political association representing money lenders to buy tickets for the fund-raising gatherings of these parties. Thus these parties showed no enthusiasm for regulating the money-lenders, and were ready to help them instead. Only the JCP was capable of calling for regulations.

Behind JCP activities in the Diet lies our livelihood consultative activities that have been carried out for a long time by our branches and local assembly members. No other party makes such an earnest effort as the JCP regarding hardships caused by borrowing from non-bank financial institutions. The JCP has the experience of providing consultations on this problem for more than twenty years. In fact, the JCP is the only political party that even cares about this problem.

We used to ask those who come to the JCP for advice what prompted them to come to the JCP. Most said, "It is well known that the JCP will listen." Other people said that they went to the town office and were advised to visit the JCP, or that they went to the police and the police told them to consult the JCP. Some Soka Gakkai members were also advised to visit the JCP. This kind of

counseling activity lies behind the JCP influence exerted on real politics. I think that this is one of the unique achievements of the JCP.

Government retracts its policy on PSE marks on used electric appliances due to JCP-citizen joint movement

Another major achievement was the retraction of the government policy of forcing secondhand electric appliances to be labeled with “PSE” marks showing that the goods are in compliance with the Product Safety of Electrical Appliance Law. From February through March, it became a serious social issue that this law was being used to ban the sale of used electrical appliances without “PSE” marks from April. JCP Dietmembers many times stated that the law was initially intended to apply to new products and that no provisions can be found in the law stipulating that the law is applicable to secondhand products. The government was unable to defend its position as it became known that there were no legal grounds to support their position. This dealt a decisive blow to the government, and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry officials were shocked that they had to give in and that the ministry suffered a debacle. Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Nikai Toshihiro commented, “The ministry today looks like a burnt-out zone.” This was a victory in that the government had to retract its ill-advised government policy.

Over this issue, a unique form of cooperation increased between the JCP and citizens movements. It was an achievement of cooperation with shops dealing in used electrical goods, musicians, and many young people. The JCP’s activities in the Diet caused repercussions on the Internet. There were entries, saying, “The left-hand batter made a clean hit.” The “left-hand batter” is a clever expression, isn’t it? Many messages like this were posted on Internet sites, which were encouraging to the JCP.

The background of this was the change in government policy by which the government shifts its responsibility of guaranteeing the safety of electrical appliances to voluntary inspections by electric appliance producers. This is part of the policies of deregulation. Only the JCP clearly opposed the adverse revision of related laws.

Nationwide movements against assessment of children’s “patriotism” in report cards

The last example is the JCP activity concerning school report cards evaluating patriotism. During the ordinary Diet session, the JCP did its utmost to reject the proposals made by the government and the ruling parties to adversely revise the Fundamental Law of Education.

I took up in the Diet the issue of school report cards used at primary schools in Fukuoka City in which pupils were ranked A, B, or C in an

assessment of “how patriotic they are.”

I handed a copy of the report card to Prime Minister Koizumi, asking him if he thinks the system is acceptable. The prime minister said, “Assessment (of patriotism) is difficult and unnecessary.” Taking this answer as a cue, the party has made efforts nationwide to block such moves.

The activities have spread in liaison with movements at the grassroots. Talks with school principals or boards of education were held in many places. In talking with boards of education, our local assembly members and parents of students showed the prime minister’s reply in the Diet, asking the board if it disagrees with the prime minister’s response or not. The boards of education could not but admit that “the prime minister was right,” which brought about improvements in many places. This is an example of a joint result of JCP questionings in the Diet and actions by grassroots movements.

Asahi Shimbun had a feature story on June 25 covering the Diet interpellations under a big headline, saying, “Education ministry’s scenario goes wrong.” The article neglected to report that it was the JCP that took up the issue. At any rate, our activity in the Diet has moved public opinion a step forward. The struggle over the plan to revise the Fundamental Law of Education will enter a critical stage from now on. Let us develop a national movement and foil the revision bill in the next session of the Diet.

JCP local assembly members’ hard work is indispensable to residents

Another pride of JCP strength at the grass roots is its 3,385 local assembly members.

Though the number of local governments recently declined due to the mergers of cities, towns, and villages, the JCP has been putting up a good fight in local assembly elections. In the result of local elections after the JCP 24th Congress in January 2006, the percentage of JCP share in local assembly seats increased from 6.7 to 7.7 percent. In the past two years while municipal mergers were under way, the JCP won 13 elections over a single seat, and won 17 elections over two-seats. In the past, the JCP winning a single-seat election was a very rare thing, and was mostly limited to urban areas. However, victories recently spread to rural areas in such prefectures as Nagasaki, Miyazaki, Kagawa, Kochi, Nara, Okayama, Niigata and Hokkaido.

Why has the JCP won these elections? Of course, people’s trust in JCP policies is the major reason. In addition, residents in every region regard JCP local assembly members as the only members representing the public interest.

For example, the JCP won the single-seat election in former Koyagi Town which merged with Nagasaki City, defeating the conservative opponent in the one-on-one fight. The decisive factor behind this victory was very simple. Residents chose between the candidate who spoke out to defend the interests of citizens and the other who did not. The JCP candidate spoke 126 times at the former Koyagi Town Assembly while the opponent did not speak at all in his 8 year-term. Driven by desperation, the opponent said, "Because I belong to the ruling party, I need not speak in the assembly like the communists." The JCP candidate made a sharp rejoinder: "The assembly has no need of a person who does not speak." This decided the election battle.

There are many examples in which a former chairman of a local assembly or other influential officials supported JCP candidates following municipal mergers. In former Kuzuu Town which merged with Sano City in Tochigi Prefecture, the former assembly chair who is a conservative, enthusiastically recommended the JCP candidate: "The candidate's victory will benefit Kuzuu Town because he understands residents' viewpoints, and speaks and acts in the interest of residents. I want him in the assembly. If he loses, it will be to the disadvantage of citizens." Support from a wide range of conservatives was behind the JCP victory in this case.

To the residents of municipalities that will be merged with others, JCP seats should be maintained by all means in order to represent local opinions. This requirement comes to be understood irrespective of party affiliation and has led to JCP victories even in constituencies with just one or two seats.

The 3,385 JCP local assembly members who day by day serve the interests of residents are the treasure of the JCP. I want you to help to increase this treasure.

Struggle against anti-communist attacks strengthens JCP

Another point I want to stress is the special significance of the JCP's building up, defending and developing organizations at the grassroots in the face of the traditional anti-communist political climate.

A few months ago, we held a meeting of study and exchange over workplace problems, with delegates of JCP workplace branches participating from all over Japan. Hearing their speeches, I was most impressed by the fact that they are always carrying out struggles in defense of the interests of workers and the general public, however difficult the circumstances may be. There was a report of a victorious 13-year court struggle to end illegal discrimination against JCP members. The reporter said, "There were many hardships. But I'm happy that I've been a member of the JCP. I'm glad the Party invited me to join. I thank senior comrades for asking me to join the JCP."

At workplaces in Japan, unfair discrimination against those who joined the JCP still remains, though they are diminishing. It is said that such a thing is unthinkable in Western European countries such as France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. A subway in Paris has a station named after Louis Aragon, a communist poet. A street in Naples in Italy is named after Antonio Gramsci, a prewar leader of the Italian Communist Party. This is just like having a Miyamoto Yuriko Station or a Kobayashi Takiji Street in Japan. A comparison with these countries will give you an idea of how persistent the attacks against the JCP are.

We feel the pride of JCP organizations at the grassroots that have been strengthened in their struggle against anti-communist campaigns. I want you to extend your help to make this indispensable strength at the grassroots bigger and stronger than ever.

3. JCP finances depend on the people

The third point is that JCP finances entirely depends on the people.

Party finance indicates in whose interests a party works

The finance of a political party is not just a matter of money. It is a touchstone showing in whose interests and based on what group a political party works.

In the 84 years since its founding, the JCP has never received donations from business corporations and other organizations. The JCP has not accepted government subsidies to political parties, which are unconstitutional because the system forces people to donate a certain sum to political parties in violation of the freedom of thought and belief. The JCP receives its finances entirely from the people, that is, membership fees paid by JCP members, subscription fees paid by newspaper Akahata readers, and donations from JCP members and supporters as individuals. These are the three components of JCP finances.

It goes without saying that such independent financial activity involves much difficulty. However, the JCP policy of financial activity that relies entirely on the public is a guarantee that we can defend the interests of the people on whatever questions. It is the source of our strength in fighting against the outrageous actions of business circles. We can pursue the truth of political corruption without hesitation because the JCP has nothing to do with political donations from business circles.

Recently, I happened to feel anew how splendid it is for the JCP finances to be supported completely by the people.

Major disasters have occurred recently one after another in the world. Every time in Akahata we called for fund-raising for relief. Many people responded to our calls. After the major earthquake in Pakistan, 14.1 million yen was donated, followed by a donation of 5.8 million yen for the relief from the earthquake on the Island of Java in Indonesia. Postal money transfer notes from donors carried messages, saying, "This meager sum is for milk for babies." "I have a job at the center for retirees. This is my share of work for three days." With their compassion for victims abroad, many people managed to donate a modest sum out of their frugal budgets. On reading their messages, I was filled with an emotion that we are really supported by a wonderful human network. We took the donations to the related embassies. I take this occasion to report this to you that both the Pakistani ambassador and the Indonesian acting ambassador expressed their gratitude.

Business circle's scheduled policy-buying -- new feature

How are the other parties doing? The JCP has been criticizing the donations from business corporations and other organizations as bribes intended to buy policies with money. The corruption connected to these practices has become more serious than ever. We want you to pay attention to the two new characteristics recently emerging in the collusive ties between the business and political worlds.

Business circle leader as direct commander of political operation

The first aspect is that a new mechanism has been established in which business circle leaders act as a commander directly controlling politics. The following two organizations directly to business circles actually pursued the "structural reform" policy of the Koizumi Cabinet.

One is the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. The panel is dominated by Okuda Hiroshi, former chairman of the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), and Ushio Jiro, former Chairman of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai). Having the annual national budget compilation in mind, the panel has decided on the "big-boned" reform policy -- the policy of "shaving people's bones" by imposing tax increases, cuts in social welfare services, and all kinds of policies adversely affecting the public.

The other body is a Council for Regulation Reform and Opening of Government-driven Markets to the Private Sector. This is chaired by Miyauchi Yoshihiko, Chairman and CEO of Orix Corp. During the last ten years, more

than 6,000 regulatory reforms have been imposed. (The panel was organized in 1995 as the deregulation subcommittee of the Administrative Reform Committee and has since gained increasing power. --ed.)

I have here a brochure boasting of the panel's achievements. It was published by the Cabinet Office, entitled "For an affluent society through regulatory reform and opening government-driven markets to the private sector."

What does it say? It says, for example, "Contingent workers have a choice of a variety of ways of working." This is a boast of the policy that has caused an increase in contingent workers and created a category of labor in which workers are treated as something disposable.

The brochure goes on to say, "Convenience of taxis is increasing." What has taken place after regulations on taxis were relaxed? Taxi drivers have experienced severe wage cuts, and they are now suffering from a low wage level of 2 million yen a year. It happens that a worker, though employed, cannot support his family because of low wages, and becomes an employed person living in poverty. Newspaper Akahata reported on the dismal situation of taxi drivers, and this caused repercussions.

I want to blame government policies as the underlying cause of allowing "capitalism without rules" to go to such extremes.

We must not overlook the fact that those who promoted these neo-liberal economic policies have gained enormous profits from the nature of money-games. Orix Chairman Miyauchi founded the Murakami Fund, and Ushio is an investor in this fund. Bank of Japan Governor Fukui Toshihiko also had an investment in the Murakami Fund through the Orix Corp. Those who made up the policies that hurt many ordinary people personally gained easy money through their own scams. The JCP will thoroughly investigate this new type of concession-hunting politics controlled by business circles.

Policy-buying and vested interests

The second aspect is that the Japan Business Federation, in order to strengthen its control of politics, in May 2003 announced that it will resume its arrangement of political donations from business corporations, a system of buying political parties according to an annually fixed procedure. The procedure is as follows:

First, Nippon Keidanren annually publishes a list of policy priorities, including corporate tax cuts, consumption tax increases, and other outrageous requests.

Next, Nippon Keidanren holds meetings with the LDP and the DPJ

separately, ostensibly to discuss policies. Neither the LDP nor the DPJ can attend the meeting empty-handed. They are assigned to hand in a report under the headline “Nippon Keidanren’s policy priorities and the LDP’s (or DPJ’s) policy.” I have here the two reports, one by the LDP and the other by the DPJ. The two reports are identical in form. It is as if the two parties are required to fill in a prescribed form on a test paper. Party representatives attend the meetings to discuss policies, bringing the report with them, and Nippon Keidanren leaders question them about party policies. Nippon Keidanren then assesses their policies with grades from A to E. Nippon Keidanren makes political donations based on this evaluation. This is an annual event to buy political policies favorable to corporate interests.

In the meeting with Nippon Keidanren held in May this year, DPJ secretary-general Hatoyama Yukio, who accompanied DPJ president Ozawa Ichiro, said that the ban on political donations from foreign-capitalized enterprises should be lifted. I was surprised at hearing about this. Mitarai Kiyoshi, Canon Inc. chair, has become the new president of Nippon Keidanren, and Canon is virtually a foreign-owned enterprise with a majority of its shares held by foreign corporations. Therefore, under the present law Canon is not allowed to make political donations. Hatoyama said to Mitarai directly that the DPJ wants the law to be changed so that the DPJ and LDP can accept donations from Canon. Isn’t this a very disgusting statement?

The LDP and the DPJ are calling for slashing away all sorts of vested interests. But how can they end the system of defending business interests, the biggest and worst form of vested interests, if their leaders act that way? I want to make it clear that the political parties whose policies have been bought by corporate and business donations are not qualified to talk about politics in the interest of the public.

Government subsidies to political parties -- a degrading and corrupt system

In addition to corporate donations to political parties, the system of government subsidies to political parties also creates a serious problem. I want you to pay attention to the extent this system has degraded and corrupted political parties in Japan aside from the JCP.

Ten years have passed since the system of government subsidies to political parties was introduced.

From the viewpoint of healthier political party’s finances, we made a research into the LDP finances. Membership fees and personal donations are sound income of a political party, though, in the case of the LDP, “phantom members” or “paying membership fees for another” once became problems. At

any rate, what has taken place in the LDP finances? The percentage of income from party membership fees and personal donations was 14.4 percent of the LDP's income in 1995. In 2004, the percentage sharply declined to 5.1 percent. This shows that the share of sound income from member fees and personal donations declined while the party was receiving government subsidies.

How about the DPJ? From the outset, the DPJ percentage of income from member fees and individual donations is very small. The percentage of party fees and personal donations to the whole party income is 0.8 percent. Personal donations to the DPJ head office in 2004 was 360,000 yen. That amount is equivalent to that of a local branch in the JCP.

Thus, the two parties' dependence on government subsidies is increasing. The percentage of subsidies to the total party revenue is 59 percent for the LDP, and 84 percent for the DPJ. How can the two parties, advocates of privatization (from the government to the private sector) and which are competing for privatization and cuts in government employees, explain the fact that they are "state-operated" parties funded by 30 billion yen in tax money each year?

Subsidies granted by the government to political parties end the need for financial ties between political parties and the people, and turn political parties into rootless entities responsible to no one. Like narcotics, political parties are addicted to government subsidies once they are hooked on them. With time, addiction increases to the extent of killing the body itself.

No halfway measure will be possible in dealing with this issue. In the light of the Constitution, the system of government subsidies to political parties should be totally abolished. The JCP will maintain this position to the last.

The JCP rejects corporate donations and government subsidies, and its financial activity depends exclusively on the people. We want that the people know that this is the surest guarantee that supports our political belief that the people are the key players.

4. JCP has consistent history before and after WW II

The fourth point is that the JCP has a 84-year history of consistency before and after WW II.

How could it operate for 84 years under the same name?

During the 84 years since the founding of the Japanese Communist Party, the JCP has continued without changing its name.

We are frequently confronted with the question why don't we change the name. It is this point that we want the people to understand -- how the JCP can operate without changing its name?

To begin with, isn't it often the case that a political party changes its name because it has committed a major disgraceful mistake? Regarding this point, before and after World War II, political parties in Japan stood at the historical crossroads at which their worth was put to a test.

JCP's unyielding struggle against war of aggression and its contemporary significance

The first test was the attitude towards the war of aggression and colonization perpetrated by Japanese militarism. The war caused tremendous suffering to the peoples of Asia, including Japan. It is only the JCP that consistently opposed the war even at the cost of party members' lives. This is why the JCP could resume its activities after the war, proudly using the same name. Only the JCP can take pride in its prewar history.

The significance of this fact is not restricted just to mentioning the past. Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichiro's visits to Yasukuni Shrine amount to approving the Yasukuni Shrine's view that the war was a just war, as its war museum Yushukan's display clearly indicates. This is the crux of the matter we stress in our criticism of the prime minister's visits to the shrine.

This criticism has spread both at home and abroad. I really think that the JCP can get to the heart of the problem because the party has the valuable prewar history of opposing the war of aggression at the risk of party members' lives.

This history of the JCP is a major source of trust in our exchanges with the peoples of East Asia on whom the Japanese militarist war of aggression inflicted irreparable suffering.

Some countries in Asia outlaw communist parties because of various historical backgrounds. For example, an Akahata reporter visited Singapore in the early 1990s. A Jiji Press reporter wrote that the Singaporean press receptionist who had met the Akahata reporter said, "Can you guess what happened today? I talked with a communist for the first time in my life. I was scared at first, but there was nothing unusual about him." In the past, such an encounter with a "communist" was certainly a thing to talk about.

In our exchanges with people in other Asian countries, we have had many experiences of people soon coming to trust and respect the JCP when we said that the JCP always opposed the war of aggression and colonization, and that

many JCP members were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. They said: “We didn’t know that such a party existed in Japan. Your party fought on the same side of the barricade as us.”

The JCP history of consistent opposition to the war of aggression and colonialist rule now acts as a bridge when Japan promotes friendly relations with the peoples of Asia. Isn’t this a valuable asset not only to the JCP but to all Japanese people?

Constitution and Fundamental Law on Education must not be changed by parties with the same prewar mentality using a new name

How about the other parties? History shows that all of them supported the war of aggression. All prewar parties except the JCP, whether they were conservative parties like the Democratic Party (Minsei-to) and the Political Friends Society (Seiyu-kai) or a party nominally advocating socialism like the Social Masses Party (Shakai Taishu-to), disbanded themselves to be merged into the Imperial Rule Assistance Association on the eve of the outbreak of the Pacific War. That was why these parties had to change their names because they could not continue to use their discredited names after Japan was defeated. Conservative parties later merged and established the Liberal Democratic Party. The forces succeeding to the Social Masses Party and other social democrats formed the Socialist Party of Japan.

However, a serious problem has been retained. Those forces who promoted the war of aggression changed their names, but retained the same mentality, showing no remorse for the war. They were seated at the center of postwar politics. This fact lies behind Prime Minister Koizumi’s Yasukuni visits, the problem of school textbooks distorting history, and other recent retrogressive moves in relation to history.

In the House of Representatives special committee on the Fundamental Law of Education during the latest Diet session, the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan engaged in outrageous discussions. Reading the committee’s minutes, I was shocked at what they had to say.

A Liberal Democratic Party member lauded the prewar Imperial Rescript on Education which forced the people to give their lives for the Emperor. The LDP man said that the rescript is “really liberal, generous, egalitarian, and modest,” and went on to say that new moral codes should be legislated as a required national moral charter, taking the rescript as a model.

Then a DPJ member distributed copies of what the DPJ described as a

“modern translation” of the Imperial Rescript on Education. I read the “modern translation” text. It is literally a “mistranslation” arbitrarily omitting the parts that are unacceptable today. The DPJ Dietmember said that the Imperial Rescript on Education was superb, and that it is regrettable that these principles have been lost in today’s education. Reading the minutes, I felt as if I might have traveled through a time warp into the prewar Imperial Diet.

The ringleaders of these arguments are LDP and DPJ members in the “Dietmembers’ Committee of Japan Conference.” It does not publish the names of its members, either in publications or on the Internet. I suspect that it may be shameful for them to announce their memberships, but what they advocate is very clear: the Constitution should be changed; the Fundamental Law of Education should be changed; the prime minister’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine should be made routine, and education should inspire patriotism. This is a parliamentary rightist group approving wars of aggression and demanding constitutional revision.

We must not allow these forces to change the basic education law for the worse and destroy the future for children and to eliminate our contribution to the world, the war-renouncing Article 9 of our Constitution.

Postwar JCP always in confrontation with LDP

I also want to stress that in postwar politics, only the JCP has always been maintaining its clear-cut opposition to LDP politics.

Particularly after the re-grouping of parties after 1993, all political forces except the JCP were either partners or are now partners with the LDP. This negative legacy of theirs has become a weakness of government by party politics.

For example, the so-called two-party system is trumpeted. But what political groups formed the Democratic Party of Japan?

Under the new leadership of the DPJ under Ozawa Ichiro, the party leaders visited Prime Minister Koizumi. After the meeting, Koizumi said to the press, “DPJ president Ozawa, secretary general Hatoyama, and Diet Affairs Committee chairman Watanabe Kozo all formerly belonged to the Liberal Democratic Party. It’s like talking with the Tanaka faction or the Takeshita faction of the LDP. I’ve found it difficult to look on them as opposition leaders.” This was an unusually candid comment.

The DPJ is a political mixture made up of members of the former Socialist Party, former Sakigake (Harbinger), and former Liberal Party, those who formed coalitions with the LDP in forming a government, plus spin-off members of the

LDP. We remember that all those parties that had once formed coalition governments with the LDP had to change their party names or disband themselves. The DPJ is a political merger of such forces.

The DPJ has no major issues to confront the LDP, though the party touts confrontation with the LDP. It cannot get out of the political framework of competing with the LDP for further mal-administration, such as the adverse revision of the Constitution, adverse revision of the Fundamental Law on Education, and consumption tax increases.

Thus, only the JCP has been maintaining the position as an opposition party unambiguously confronting the LDP during the postwar period.

The JCP does not pretend to be free of all errors. In the party history book, "Eighty Years of the Japanese Communist Party," we admitted that errors were made and that historical constraints existed. However, throughout the 84 years of its existence the JCP has always worked as the defender of people's interests when it faced such fundamental issues as peace, democracy, and people's livelihoods. Please understand that this is why the JCP has never once changed its name in the 84 years since the party's founding.

I want to stress that in the name "Japanese Communist Party" is inscribed the struggles of members and supporters before, during, and after the war, having undergone the severe tests of history.

5. Maintaining sovereign independence and seeking international solidarity

The fifth point is that the JCP seeks international solidarity based on the position of sovereign independence.

JCP established sovereign independence 50 years ago

The Japanese Communist Party had a bitter experience called the "1950 question" -- a split within the party as a consequence of the then Soviet and other foreign interference. Summing up the matter at the 7th Congress in 1958, the party restored its unity and established a position of sovereign independence. The JCP does not allow any foreign parties, no matter how powerful their countries may be, to interfere in the internal affairs of Japanese revolutionary movement, and the JCP debates and decides about party activities by and for itself, and acts on its own decisions to create a better future for all. The JCP established this position over a half century ago.

Later, the JCP experienced high-handed interference by the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev and China under Mao Zedong. The interferences were not just limited to verbal condemnation. They placed agents inside the JCP to subvert the JCP from within. After the Soviet Union collapsed, it came to light that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union planted agents inside communist parties throughout the world, so the CPSU had a secret network to control foreign communist parties from within. There were some JCP leaders who became agents for the CPSU.

At the time when the JCP was fighting against Soviet interference, the JCP did not realize the extent of interference. The JCP, however, squarely confronted the superpower that called itself the authentic socialist state, using all its state power to attack and destroy the JCP. In the end, the JCP repelled the Soviet attack. I want to express my respect for the wisdom and courage of older members who carried out this difficult struggle.

That struggle supplied the JCP with its source of strength to date.

Through this experience, the JCP has established the following principles for our relations with parties abroad: the JCP does not allow interference or any unlawful attacks from anyone; the JCP refrains from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, even if the situation does not conform to JCP views. At the same time, on questions having international aspects, the JCP does not hesitate to speak out and clearly express its opinions.

We have maintained these principles in our diplomatic activities in all international arenas.

Take our relations with the Communist Party of China, for example. In the late 1960s, relations between the JCP and the CPC were severed due to extreme interference in the JCP by the Mao Zedong leadership. However, the CPC leadership in 1998 traced back and admitted its past errors in order to normalize relations between the two parties. At that time, we were surprised to know that the CPC leadership publicly announced a self-criticism of their past relations with the JCP in newspapers and on TV. When I visited China with then JCP chair Fuwa Tetsuzo in 1998, I found in this publicity the sincerity of the CPC leadership in dealing with historical matters.

During the subsequent eight years, relations between our two parties have greatly improved. The relations have not been limited to a common response to international issues such as opposition to the Iraq War, but further developed into theoretical exchanges concerning the world outlooks of the two parties.

In these exchanges, we also maintained a position that we will speak out, frankly but in moderation, our opinion of China's internal affairs, if they have

international implications.

In April 2005, the so-called “anti-Japan demonstrations” were taking place in China. Immediately after the demonstrations, Lu Yongxiang, vice chairman of the Chinese National People’s Congress, visited Japan. I had an opportunity to meet him at that time. I expressed concern about the worsening relations between peoples of the two countries. I pointed out, “One of the causes of the deterioration is the fact that in Japan there are some who try to propagate views affirming and even glorifying the history of the Japanese war of aggression and colonialism.” I said that I hope that the Chinese people take into account the following three points:

First, the Japanese war of aggression and the present business activities carried out in China by Japanese firms must not be considered to be the same.

Second, although some Japanese politicians turn against the lessons of history, they must not be seen as representing the opinions of all the Japanese people.

Third, the use of violence must be rejected as a means of expressing protests or criticism of the reactionary moves of some Japanese leaders and that it is important to maintain a reasoned and calm attitude in dealing with any emerging issues.

NPC Vice-Chair Lu nodded approval to each of my three proposals, confirmed them in his own words, and then commended the JCP for maintaining a firm position on issues during difficult times. He said that the three points were all reasonable, adding that “the Chinese government and the Chinese people will endorse that position.”

The talks gave me a warm and secure feeling because we could understand each other’s position. Subsequent responses of the Chinese government moved in the direction pointed to by Lu. Through this experience, we sensed the rationality of the Chinese leadership in dealing with issues.

We won’t allow any interference into internal affairs of our movement, we will refrain from interfering in that of; but we will say moderately what we need to say. These are the principles that we have maintained and will continue to maintain in international activities.

Trust in JCP independence has made us new friends in Islamic world

Our position of sovereign independence is the surest guarantee of JCP credibility when we extend diplomatic activities to countries with which we had had no relations before.

For example, we attach great importance on developing friendly relations with Islamic countries in our foreign relations as an opposition party. The first JCP delegation to an Islamic country was the one to Malaysia, led by the then Central Committee Chair Fuwa in 1999. In 2002, International Bureau director Ogata Yasuo visited six countries in the Middle East: Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In the same year I visited Pakistan, and in 2003 then Chair Fuwa visited Tunisia. Thus, JCP footsteps spread from South-East Asia to North Africa and the Middle East.

How has it been possible for our international activity to increase to such an extent? The major reason is trust in the JCP policy of sovereign independence, particularly in light of the JCP history of having struggled against Soviet hegemony.

In the Islamic world, criticism of the former Soviet Union is very strong. But this was not so when the Soviet Union first came into being. The history of Saudi Arabia, regarded as the Islamic leader, shows that the country in the 1920s was very friendly with the Soviet Union, being the first country in the Arab world to enter into diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. However, as Stalin's despotism increased, Islamic brethren living in the Soviet Union came to suffer persecution. The faith and pilgrimages to the holy cities by Muslims living in Central Asia in the Soviet Union were banned. Taking the ban as a cue, relations between the two countries worsened, and in the late 1930s Saudi Arabia severed its relations with the Soviet Union, and the severance continued until just before the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition, the 1979 Soviet aggression against Afghanistan aroused severe criticism in the Islamic world as aggression on Islamic brethren. This shows that the Islamic world was not opposed to communism but was severely critical of Stalin's despotism, Soviet hegemony, and associated tyrannical rule.

With such a history, Islamic countries can have a favorable view of the Japanese Communist Party when they realize that the JCP consistently struggled against Soviet hegemony and its despotism. I feel that strong ties of trust have now been formed between the JCP and the Islamic world.

I want to refer to the example of our relations with the Pakistani government. Pakistan has a population of 150 million, and plays an important part in the Islamic world. Relations between its government and the JCP have undergone an important development in the last several years.

It happened when Mr. Touqir Hussain, former Pakistani Ambassador to Japan, "discovered" that Japan has a sovereign independent party in the Japanese Communist Party. During the Afghan War in 2001, the JCP sent a delegation led by Ogata to survey the situation in Afghanistan. After the survey, Ogata visited Ambassador Hussain to pay his formal respects. Saying that it was the first time

that the ambassador ever met anyone from the JCP, Mr. Hussain asked Ogata many questions, including questions about the history of the JCP and about its relations with Moscow and with China. After Ogata talked about the JCP history based on sovereign independence, the ambassador approvingly said that that was very interesting, and said that he wanted to invite the JCP to visit Pakistan again. Mr. Hussain later told us that he took that occasion to study the JCP and wrote a report on the JCP to the home government.

After these developments, a five-member JCP delegation, including myself, Ogata, and International Bureau deputy director Morihara Kimitoshi, visited Pakistan in December 2002. Our travel plan was to visit India, Sri Lanka, and then Pakistan. When we finished our stay in Sri Lanka and were about to head for Pakistan, we learned from a newspaper that the then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami was to visit Pakistan at the same time as us. The Iranian delegation had 150 members, including key cabinet ministers. We imagined the host country's trouble of having a major delegation of a neighboring country at the same time as a five-member delegation of a Japanese opposition party.

When we entered Pakistan, it turned out that much importance was attached to the JCP delegation, and we were able to meet key cabinet ministers.

First we held talks with additional secretary of Foreign Affairs Kamran Niaz (present Pakistani ambassador to Japan). The Iraq question was a major subject in our talks. At my statement expressing the JCP position of opposing the use of military force against Iraq and calling for the question to be resolved within the framework of the United Nations, he agreed with me, saying that that was also the position of the Pakistani government. Later, intense discussions over the Iraq question took place at the United Nations Security Council. Pakistan, then a non-permanent member of the UNSC, displayed a lot of courage by maintaining openly and firmly to the last its opposition to the use of military force against Iraq.

During this visit I also held talks with Mr. Shaukat Aziz, advisor to Pakistan's prime minister in financial affairs, and the talks turned out to be fruitful. Among our topics was the major damage incurred on Pakistan by an enormous inflow of refugees, guns and narcotics into Pakistan following the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan. I said that the JCP protested against the Soviet Union over this issue and that severe polemics continued but that the Soviet Union collapsed before the polemics were settled. Mr. Aziz commented, "They fell before they answered, didn't they?" This was impressive to me. During the talks he said that the Pakistani government studied the JCP and knew well that the JCP is an important opposition party in Japan. This comment also remains imbedded in my memory.

Mr. Aziz became the Pakistani prime minister. He visited Japan in August 2005, and I had talks with him again. The scope of our talks widened to the

creation of a new international order in the 21st century. Prime Minister Aziz in March 2005 wrote an essay on Pakistani foreign policy in a new world order. In this essay, he gave the following four points as the basic principles for a just world: (1) solid U.N. system; (2) peaceful settlement of disputes; (3) tolerance and understanding of different values and cultures; and (4) economic order based on equality and fairness. I said to him that I read the article carefully and that his views share common points with the new JCP Program. Prime Minister Aziz welcomed my comments, and the talks became really enjoyable.

Pakistan's attention to the JCP policy of sovereign independence led to their agreement with JCP views on the Iraq question, and then further to a shared view of a world in the 21st century. In this way, relations of friendship and deepening exchanges are developing. Through this experience, I keenly felt that the JCP policy of sovereign independence is really valuable.

To make Japan truly independent

The foreign relations experiences of the other political parties in Japan are often referred to as their representatives acting as messengers by just unconditionally listening to foreign requests and conveying them to the Japanese government on their return home. Their common trait is the tendency to curry favor with great powers and their lack of a position of sovereign independence. Their weakness is typically shown by the government and the ruling parties that see nothing wrong in accepting any U.S. requests by freezing when the phrase "Japan-U.S. alliance" is uttered.

The JCP is determined to firmly maintain its long-standing policy of sovereign independence, with whatever countries and in whatever diplomatic activities. We are determined to join hands with the people to end subservience to the United States and to enable Japan take the course of sovereign independence.

To win next year's two major elections

I have talked about what kind of a political party the Japanese Communist Party is from five aspects: the Party Program calling for a fundamental change of politics; influencing politics by the power of people at the grassroots; party finances depending on the people; prewar and postwar JCP history of consistency; and international solidarity while maintaining sovereign independence. Each of these aspects is what a political party must stand for if it is to be responsible to the people. The JCP takes the high-road as a political party putting into practice these principles as common sense.

The House of Councilors election is a year ahead, and simultaneous local elections are 9 months ahead. We aim at winning an advance in these local elections and obtaining more than 6.5 million votes in the proportional representation constituencies for the House of Councilors election in order for all the five candidates who have just been introduced to be elected without fail. All five candidates are younger than me and will be able to work in parliament as people's representatives. In the House of Councilors election, we will put up candidates in all prefectural constituencies. We want Ogata's Tokyo seat for the JCP be turned over to Tamura Tomoko. In addition, we are determined to take back seats in the prefectures of Saitama, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kyoto, Osaka, and Hyogo where we lost seats in the last election.

At the beginning of my speech, I referred to changes that are taking place in politics. But we must not forget that the JCP will not be able to win any election if it counts on "chance factors." We are determined to create the chance by ourselves to create a favorable wind and win. The JCP is determined to grow into a strong party so that it will create a favorable wind under whatever turbulent situation and to win in elections.

I close my speech by expressing my determination to lead the election struggle to win in the next year's two major elections, and I earnestly call for support and cooperation nationwide. Thank you.

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