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WORLD AND ASIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Central Committee Chair
Japanese Communist Party

*Speech at a gathering on May 31 in Osaka to mark
the 40th anniversary of the founding of
the Osaka Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee (Osaka AALA)*

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Speech by

FUWA Tetsuzo

JCP Central Committee Chair

Following is a translation of the speech Japanese Communist Party Central Committee Chair FUWA Tetsuzo delivered at a gathering held in Osaka City on May 31 to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Osaka Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee:

Good evening, friends. I am FUWA Tetsuzo.

At this gathering to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Osaka Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee, I had an opportunity to see a slide show on the 40 years of the Osaka AALA. It is 39 years since I started my career at the Japanese Communist Party's head office and began to be involved in international affairs. It was an impressive slide show because I have known the same history as the Osaka AALA.

'Century' as Yardstick to Look at World Developments

At the threshold of the new century

We entered the 21st century in 2001. The beginning of the new century inspires us to try to look to the future with ambition and new hopes. We are already at the 30th month of the new century. The first year of this century was marked by the start of the retaliatory war against Afghanistan. This year has seen a war on Iraq started by the United States with a preemptive attack. This seems to have made some people feel uncertain about the world we live in: "A lawless war is rampant already in the early part of this century. Is this world all right?"

I would suggest that we should first look back on what we experienced in the 20th century.

What was the 20th century like?

The 20th century underwent two world wars. During that period, fascism prevailed in Europe and militarism ruled Japan. It was indeed a barbarous and dark era. In World War II, the aggressive forces surrendered to the anti-fascist allies. But the two countries that led the Allied Forces, the United States and the Soviet Union, carried out wars of aggression seeking hegemony in the second half of the 20th century: the Vietnam war and the Afghanistan war.

These historical facts may paint the 20th century exclusively as a dark period, but if you look at history in a span of 100 years, you will see the last century in a different light.

First of all, the 20th century was a century in which many countries achieved national independence. In the early stages of the last century, European countries, the United States, and Japan's imperialism took control of the world. Although Asia, Africa, and Latin America had the greater part of the world population, they were subjected to these powers, either colonized or dependent. But toward the end of the 20th century, colonization became history in most parts of the world. Those countries which had been forced to endure foreign rule all achieved political independence and joined the United Nations. The abolition of colonialism was thus achieved by the end of the 20th century.

The 20th century also marked the beginning of an era in which democracy became the main political trend throughout the world. Early in the 20th century, countries that stood for democratic principles, including sovereign power residing with the people, were very few. As the 20th century drew to a close, those countries that turned their back on people's sovereignty and stood for sovereign power residing with a monarchy or maintained a dictatorship were very few. Democracy with sovereign power resting in the people is now the world's great political principle, which represents the great stride achieved in the 20th century. Major progress has been achieved also in the field of human rights, although many problems still remain to be solved. The advancement of women's rights is one such example. In the early 20th century, women's suffrage was established in only one country, New Zealand. Today, discrimination against women is forbidden in society not only in political life, but in social life in general. This is an example that shows how the world has changed.

The same applies to the issue of war and peace. In 1945, the United Nations was founded. The new international organization adopted the U.N. Charter to establish international rules for peace, confirming that the purpose of the United Nations is to create a world in which individual countries will not start wars for tyrannical and selfish purposes. Under the U.N. rules war is prohibited; war is only allowed in self-defense against

attacks or in military actions authorized by the U.N. Security Council to maintain international peace. These were the first rules to be established in the world for peace .

Looking back on these events that took place throughout the last century, you will understand that it was an epoch-making century marked by major progress unparalleled in history, although it was also full of tragic events.

Historical progress in the true sense of the word can only be understood in a span of a century instead of a year. This is the lesson of the 20th century. World history contains straightforward currents and back currents. But ultimately, the course of history is determined by the people's movement for progress and peace.

Iraq War and International Politics

Now let's take a look at this century in a wide-ranging perspective.

We have just witnessed the U.S. war on Iraq , which was started with a lawless preemptive attack. How was this war prosecuted? I want to stress that the course of events that led to the war represents a clear manifestation of what the 21st century is about.

Anti-war movement on a global scale

First, an anti-war movement swept the world even before the start of the Iraq war. Never in the past have "stop the war" calls erupted on such a large scale.

How the anti-war movement evolved on such a large scale is clear from the Daily Akahata's reports. I would like to mention several rallies and demonstrations that attracted more than 500,000 participants.

On November 9 last year, about 1,000,000 people assembled from all over Europe in an anti-war demonstration in Italy's Florence.

On January 18, about 500,000 people demonstrated in Washington, D.C., the U.S. capital.

On February 15, demonstrations attracted 500,000 people in New York, 2,000,000 people in London, and a total of 600,000 in various parts of Germany.

On March 15, about 700,000 people demonstrated in Milan, Italy.

On March 22, two days after the war on Iraq was started, 1,000,000 people participated in demonstrations throughout Spain. On March 30,

about 600,000 people demonstrated in Calcutta, India.

On April 12, 500,000 people held rallies in Spain, and the same number in Italy.

As the start of war was imminent, even in Muslim countries, where assemblies and demonstrations are prohibited, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Syria, Pakistan, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, and other countries to stop the war. Although these demonstrations were not as large as in Europe and the United States, such a movement is very significant.

Again, it is the first time in history that united stop-the-war calls resounded throughout the world on such a large scale even before the war was started and that the anti-war calls did not diminish.

A great majority of countries voiced opposition to the war

Secondly, backed by this anti-war movement, a great majority of countries expressed opposition to the war. We can name at least 130 countries that expressed either opposition to or disagreement with the war. Given the number of U.N. members is 191, about 70 percent of countries firmly expressed opposition to the war.

The United States tried hard to increase the number of countries in favor of the war, but the U.S. Defense Department could name only 30 countries that expressed support for the war immediately before the outbreak of the war. Later, it tried hard to win over more countries to its side, but the number stopped at 49.

It was not easy for many countries to state that they were opposed to the war. Pakistan is one such country. During the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. forces set up its forward deployment base in Pakistan. The United States used the carrot and stick to pressure Pakistan into supporting the war. The carrot was an offer of economic assistance. But in the backdrop of the growing anti-war opinion and popular movement, Pakistan's parliament discussed the issue in earnest and its conclusion was that Pakistan could not support the war. Pakistan held fast to this position during the war. Such opposition to the war was voiced by more than 130 countries.

Under the banner of defense of U.N. Charter and the peace

The third point concerns the United Nations. Given the course of events that led to the Iraq war, some argue that the United Nations is powerless. I think it's a superficial view; they should look at the facts.

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the U.N. Security

Council debate over support for the war continued until the war broke out. What happened was that the United States finally conceded defeat in the United Nations and was forced to give up seeking a U.N. Security Council resolution to go to war with U.N. authorization.

More importantly, in the anti-war movement that has swept the world, the banner read: "Defend U.N. Charter rules for peace".

I said that rules for peace were established in the United Nations in 1945 in connection with the progress achieved by humankind in the 20th century. Look at the fact that the issue in U.N. Security Council discussion was about the need to follow these rules for peace. This serious discussion was also attended by non-Security Council member countries, and the calls of the world's popular movement grew larger than ever in defense of the U.N. rules for peace. Never in the past had such events taken place.

The point is that, for the first time, the issue of observance of U.N. rules began to be discussed in world politics and among the world peoples.

Iraq war compared to Vietnam war

I think you will understand better the changes we are experiencing today if you compare the present international situation with the situation surrounding the Vietnam war, the largest war of aggression in the second half of the 20th century.

Unlike the recent Iraq war, the Vietnam War was an all-out and unjust U.S. war of aggression. Iraq's Saddam Hussein was a dictatorial regime, and the world knew that. It was widely known that this regime by no means represented the Iraqi people in the true sense of the word. By contrast, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the time was a country with a government established as a result of the people's struggle shortly before aggressor Japan's defeat. The DRV later waged a war of independence and defeated French colonialism, which provided proof that the DRV government was truly qualified to represent the Vietnamese people. The future of a unified Vietnam was a promise made by major countries in the Geneva Agreements. But later, the United States took control of the southern half of Vietnam in violation of the Geneva Agreements, and in 1964, it began attacking North Vietnam. That was how the U.S. started its war of aggression, which by no means had justification.

What was the world like during the Vietnam War era? When the United States started its war of aggression against the DRV in 1964, nowhere in the world was there a large-scale movement against the war. In the United Nations, no one thought of condemning the U.S. aggression. Forces for peace, social progress, and democracy in Japan and many other countries cried out for opposition to the aggression, but opposition was not very

strong in its early stages.

In February 1966, almost two years after the start of the war of aggression, the JCP sent a delegation to Vietnam in order to help increase the movement in support of the Vietnamese people. The leader of the delegation was MIYAMOTO Kenji, JCP general secretary at the time, and I was also a member. This JCP visit and its first ever full-fledged talks with the Workers' Party of Vietnam marked the start of firm solidarity between the Japanese and Vietnamese people. I remember what a WPV representative stated in that meeting very well:

"The world was surprised at the weak reaction the Soviet Union and China showed to the start of U.S. attacks."

The Soviet Union and China at the time were as it were "brother countries" calling themselves "socialist countries". In the event of war against either one of those countries, it would logically be a major issue in world politics. But the fact was that the war was only treated as a trivial matter that arose in a corner of the Far East. The description of the situation by the WPV representative was so objective and modest that we keenly understood how they were critical of the unjust state of affairs.

This explains how the start of the Vietnam War claimed little attention in world politics and in the United Nations. But later, as the Vietnamese people waged an indomitable struggle, democratic and peace forces in Japan as well as in the rest of the world increased their movement against the war of aggression. The AALA played an important part in that. Toward the Vietnam War's end, a large anti-war movement developed in the United States, to the point where anti-war demonstrators surrounded the White House.

The United Nations had no role to play to the end of the Vietnam War.

Compare the situation during the Vietnam War with the present-day world in relation to the Iraq War, and you will realize more clearly that a major change has taken place in the world. The fact is that the United States was obliged to start war against Iraq in a state of isolation both in international opinion and in international politics. This is a new characteristic we are witnessing at the start of the 21st century.

The issue of unilateralism and hegemony remains to be resolved even after the Iraq war's end

The Iraq war was a war against the Saddam Hussein regime, and the United States was victorious militarily. But the problem has not been solved at all.

To begin with, the United States started this war by defying international

law. I said that the rules of peace established in the U.N. Charter prohibit nations from arbitrarily going to war. The United States launched a preemptive attack, an arbitrary war, against Iraq. A preemptive attack is based on a perceived danger of being attacked. If this lawlessness is left at large, the world will go back to an era without rules in which every country has the freedom of territorial partition and acquisition. This is why the U.N. Charter prohibited such a war. But the United States defied the ban.

The United States said that without doubt the Saddam Hussein government was hiding weapons of mass destruction and that war was the only way to protect the United States and the rest of the world from such weapons. Many days have passed since the whole of Iraq came under foreign occupation, but weapons of mass destruction still have not been discovered. The government of Britain, which joined with the United States in the war against Iraq, reportedly is facing the problem of weapons of mass destruction still not being unearthed. It is reported that the British government now regrets it stated that weapons of mass destruction was the reason for starting the war.

In the aftermath of the Iraq war, its lawlessness has become clearer than ever in the light of the present international rules.

It is even more important for the world to know that the United States is aiming its preemptive attack strategy not only at despotic regimes like Iraq's Saddam Hussein government. Last year, the United States referred to the preemptive attack strategy in its Defense Department's "Nuclear Posture Review" and annual 2002 Defense Report. These reports stated that preemptive attack would be aimed against not only Iraq and other countries with weapons of mass destruction but countries that may possibly become military rivals of the United States. Some reports included China in the list. This means that any countries that may hamper the United States' global domination would become targets of its preemptive attacks.

This being what the United States has declared, the end of the Iraq war does not mean an end to its unilateralism seeking to maintain hegemony and its preemptive attack strategy.

The international anti-Iraq war movement as well as the many governments that expressed opposition to the U.S. war also opposed the U.S. attempt to force the world to do what it is told in support of its lawlessness in unilaterally launching a war in violation of international law. It would be a big mistake for us to see the three major currents, which I mentioned earlier, simply as transient phenomena limited to the issue of the war on Iraq. They are by no means a passing movement.

As long as the United States continues to disregard international law to

assert hegemony through unilateralism, it will inevitably sharpen contradictions between itself and the world in the arena of international politics. This is one of the characteristics of the new era which we need to look at.

How to Envisage the World in the 21st Century

Recently, I have been thinking from various angles about what the 21st century will be like. I have used my speeches and writings to point out that there are three major currents that will influence the world and that they will make the 21st century a very tumultuous era that will affect future developments.

Three currents that will help determine the general direction of the 21st Century

The three major currents are as follows:

First, capitalism, which has long dominated the greater part of the world, is at a critical stage. The question now is whether it should or shouldn't continue to exist.

The global environment is one such example. Since long ago, pollution has been pertinent to capitalism, but the pollution we are experiencing today has greater magnitude than ever. It has come to the point where the fundamental conditions for humanity to survive are at risk.

Humankind only recently emerged on this planet after a long period of time that was necessary for earth to become suitable to human life. Earth was formed about 4.6 billion years ago. The first life appeared on earth about 3.5 billion years ago, and living things only lived in the sea until the environmental conditions allowed any life to be sustained outside of water. It took 3.1 billion years for the atmosphere and the ozone layer to come into existence for the first time as they exist today as "life-support devices" enabling life to exist on land and eventually evolve to become humans.

However, due to the profit-first capitalist economic activities, the very foundations of these "life-support devices" that nature spent billions of years to build are being destroyed. This is what the problem of global environmental degradation is all about. If we seriously contemplate the survival of humanity, we cannot evade the fundamental question: Can we allow this profit-first system to continue? This is a major problem facing the world of the 21st century.

Another question is the economic recession and depression. Karl Marx

150 years ago pointed out that cyclical crisis would be fatal to capitalism. Capitalists have been trying hard to get out of this cycle but, far from putting an end to the crisis, economic recession and depression have been increasingly serious throughout the world. This represents another major issue of the 21st century world. The major question facing the world today is whether capitalism should be allowed to exist.

The second current concerns Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These regions embrace the overwhelming majority of the world's population. Most of the countries in these regions used to be colonies or dependents subjugated by imperialist powers; they did not have any say in world politics. In the 20th century, they achieved political independence, joined the United Nations Organization, and began to play an important role in world politics.

But economically, most countries in these regions remain in poverty. After achieving political independence, many of them initially believed that a capitalist path would secure them a prosperous future. However, what they underwent in the second half of the 20th century was contrary to what they had expected. It was related to the growing so-called "North-South gap". These countries had their economic structures devastated severely during the colonial era and were forced to shoulder a heavy burden. After they became independent countries, the North-South gap continued to widen, and Asia, Africa, and Latin America are the world's most impoverished regions today. The second half of the 20th century indeed was full of events that showed clearly that the capitalist world lacks any willingness or capacity to solve the North-South problem.

This is why calls for the advent of a new society that would replace capitalism are being heard in many quarters. These calls do not always mean having socialism in their perspective for the future, but I do believe that herein lies one of the important dynamics of the 21st century conducive to a major change in the socio-economic system.

The third current concerns those countries that broke away from capitalism through revolution. The breakaway from capitalism to socialism began with the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. However, in Russia, during the Stalin era after Lenin's death, a major reversal took place that was followed by successive leaders, leading to the establishment of a regime that had nothing in common with socialism, a regime that was characterized by a quest for hegemony through interference and aggression outside of the country and imposition of despotism repressing its own people. This system eventually collapsed around 1990 in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not mean that the trend away from capitalism to progress towards socialism has disappeared. In fact, a new current emerged in the 1990s in China and Vietnam. Drawing

lessons from the failure of the Soviet Union, these countries began efforts toward achieving a new form of socialism. This will be significant in greatly influencing the world in the 21st century.

Although this course toward "socialism through a market economy" is a first step in the path to socialism, it has become the focus of the world's attention as an original way to build a dynamic economy. This course may entail efforts to solve many problems on the way. But China with a population of 1.3 billion and Vietnam with a population of 80 million together form a vast region and their development may help the world overcome capitalism in the 21st century.

The new currents are already showing their competence in real international politics.

You could say that these currents would exert great power to change the socio-economic system in the 21st century world, when you look at the world in a span of a century.

For instance, even though the capitalist world is facing serious problems that may threaten the very existence of the system, it will actually take a very long time before changing the system becomes a real issue in capitalist countries because it is a process that needs a mature political situation and further growth of progressive forces.

However, seeing from a century-long perspective, we can better see how the world will undergo a cataclysm fostering conditions for a major change. This is what I have put forward as a theory on the 21st century.

What we have experienced during the first 29 months of the 21st century confirms that these emerging currents are already exerting real power in influencing international politics. In this regard, I think that the world response to the Iraq war is a vivid example of this.

Solidarity of Asia, Africa, and Latin America

I referred to the fact that over 130 countries expressed opposition to the war on Iraq as an important development in the changing world.

United actions by the non-aligned countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America played a significant part in such international action. These countries included many that may well have supported the U.S. war because of their subordinate geopolitical positions. For example, most Arab countries since the 1991 Gulf War have entrusted the United States with the greater part of their national defenses and are hosting the stationing of U.S. troops on their soil. They supported the U.S. war in Afghanistan and allowed the U.S. forces to use them regardless of problems they had with the United States. This time around, these

countries did not succumb to the U.S. carrot-and-stick approach and stood firmly against the war.

The non-aligned countries and the council of Islamic countries held summit meetings to act as groups in unity, demonstrating that they now constitute a significant factor in international politics.

The role played by Chinese diplomacy

I want to draw your attention also to the significant role China has played in the international struggle over the issue of peace or war.

Concerning Chinese diplomacy, some of you may think that China, a country committed to socialism, should naturally maintain the most intransigent attitude towards the lawlessness of the United States. But in reality the matter is not that simple.

China is now in the middle of efforts to build a new country under long-term projections and plans. It is for this reason that China stands out as one of the countries aspiring to a peaceful international environment. This makes China seriously pursue the establishment of a peaceful relationship and friendship with the United States, wishing that this relationship be lasting and stable.

In 1998, I visited China for the first time since the JCP and the Communist Party of China normalized their relations. It was right after U.S. President Clinton visited that country. China was celebrating the establishment of a "strategic partnership" from a longer perspective with the United States.

That being China's wish, however, China firmly stands for the principle of not accepting any lawless act that breaks the international recognized rules by whoever it is committed. This is why China is very cautious and serious in examining and deciding on its attitude toward specific international issues that involve the United States.

Last August, I visited China for the first time in four years and held talks with Jiang Zemin, Communist Party of China general secretary at the time. The summit meeting was preceded by discussions with foreign policy officials from the CPC and the Chinese government. I will later talk about the details of our discussions. It was at that summit meeting that CPC General Secretary Jiang Zemin for the first time officially declared that China was opposed to the planned U.S. attack on Iraq.

Importantly, China never changed its opposition expressed at that summit meeting and engaged in active diplomacy that went beyond its traditional framework.

For example, last November, when the U.N. Security Council adopted a

resolution calling on Iraq to accept full weapons inspections, the United States was maneuvering to use Iraq's rejection of this resolution as an excuse to launch an attack without waiting for a U.N. decision. Then came a declaration by three permanent members of the Security Council, France, Russia, and China stating that any problem arising from the process of the implementation of that resolution should only be dealt with by the Security Council and that no country has the right to take unilateral action. It was a decisive blow to the vicious U.S. war plan.

At the time, Japanese media did not pay attention to that joint statement, but we, recognizing its importance reported it on the front page of our Daily Akahata. We noticed that the joint statement was quite exceptional and that China broke its diplomatic framework to take part in that action.

There is an interesting episode concerning this. Shortly after that joint declaration, JCP representatives visited the French Embassy in Japan and said that they appreciated the joint declaration in which France took part. But the French diplomat who received the JCP representatives did not know that such a declaration had been issued. He said that can't be true, and insisted that China was too cautious to take part in such a joint action. The JCP representatives showed him the text. The diplomat was apparently doubtful. When they parted, the French diplomat said he would call Paris to verify the information. Later, the JCP head office received a phone call from him informing the office that Paris had confirmed that the three countries did issue the joint declaration. He commended the JCP's information gathering ability.

In dealing with the Iraq war, China stuck to the principle and worked hard in the United Nations to build a joint action for peace. This action was very unusual in the eyes of a French diplomat who for many years has known the expected behavior of each country.

Failed joint NATO action

It was also unusual that NATO joint action broke down due to opposition arising from within to U.S. arbitrary and outrageous action. The opposition was led by France and Germany and joined by other major European countries within the military alliance. NATO had never experienced such disarray before, even at the time the United States carried out air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999 or the war on Afghanistan in 2001. U.S. hegemony that disregarded international law and turned its back on the United Nations has undermined the unity of action in a military alliance that in principle bands together the member countries around the United States.

What's more, this contradiction cannot be dismissed as an internal problem within NATO; as demonstrated by the declaration by France, Russia, and China, a current that emerged within NATO joined hands with China and

Russia and built cooperation with the non-aligned countries to develop a de facto common front in the United Nations in opposition to U.S. hegemony. This was how they succeeded in driving the United States into a minority position.

The U.S. policy of asserting hegemony does not reflect the strength of U.S. capitalism. The fact of the matter is that the United States is clinging to hegemony in disregard of all international rules despite the fact that it is facing the undeniable reality that in the long run, such a policy will politically isolate the United States from the rest of the world and weaken its position in the international community. This in itself is a manifestation of a crisis of U.S. capitalism. At the same time, the U.S. pursuit of hegemony will inevitably sharpen the contradictions of world capitalism as a whole.

In fact, the attitude and actions of many countries regarding the war against Iraq explain what may characterize the 21st century world.

Struggle for Peaceful World Order

The question of U.S. hegemony is not just a matter related to the Iraq war.

The United States in the aftermath of a victorious war on Iraq is trying hard to colonize the country, but it is opposed by a worldwide movement calling for a political system to be established by the Iraqi people and for reconstruction efforts to be led by the United Nations.

Unable to discover weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the United States is now turning to other countries to attack. Any country that contradicts U.S. interests may become a target of preemptive attacks. Future applications of this strategy could be boundless.

This is why activities to achieve world peace in the 21st century need to focus on the important task of struggling against U.S. unilateralism and hegemony.

Opposition to hegemony – 'Struggle between two international orders'

The significance of the struggle against U.S. hegemony is not limited to opposition to U.S. preemptive attacks or particular U.S. wars of aggression or any other lawlessness. Opposition to the Iraq war developed into a worldwide struggle for the cause of defending the international peace.

The "maintenance of international peace" is enshrined in the U.N. Charter established at the time when the United Nations was founded 58 years ago. It prohibits nations from carrying out wars of aggression or making

preemptive attacks. It only permits nations to exercise the right of war in self-defense against outside aggression- this includes individual and collective self-defense - and when they participate in military actions sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council in the cause of world peace.

And now, the United States is pushing for its own rules to replace the U.N. rules for peace. The United States, which is the only superpower in the world with the strongest military forces, asserts that it cannot be bound by any general rules; it refuses to accept any international rules that are not in its interests; and asserts that it will carry out preemptive attacks and maintain the right to put Afghanistan, Iraq or any nation under its rule whenever the need arises to do so to protect U.S. interests without being affected by the U.N. Charter prohibiting preemptive attacks or colonization. In short, the tyrannical United States is asserting rules that subjugate the entire world.

At issue is whether we strive to maintain international peace under the established world rules or allow the United States to assert hegemony that would force the world to accept its tyrannical acts.

It is important to note that in the recent struggle against the Iraq war, many governments and popular movements called for the defense of the rules of the U.N. Charter and the international peace.

In this connection, I want to call your attention to the fact that the JCP 22nd Congress in 2000 set forth the view that the struggle over the two international orders is a major issue we must take up in the struggle in the 21st century.

"Two conflicting international orders are clashing over what the world in the 21st century should be. One is an order of war and oppression, which accords with the U.S. policy of tyrannical domination; and the other an order of peace under the U.N. Charter. Humankind is faced with a choice between these two orders" (Resolution of the JCP 22nd Congress).

At the time of the JCP 22nd Congress, neither Afghanistan nor Iraq was at war, but we clearly perceived that there were dangerous moves to overturn the international peace as the United States had begun to implement the "Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation" and was preparing to adopt the "New Strategy Concept" for Europe with NATO.

The danger we pointed out three years ago has become a reality in world politics, and the central task is for the worldwide movement to remove the danger.

International common action by individuals, organizations, and governments for the defense of international peace

In the first segment of my speech I showed a comparison between the Iraq war and the Vietnam War in an attempt to describe the characteristics of the present-day international situation. In fact, this comparison is helpful in grasping the characteristics of the popular movement. During the Vietnam War, our movement put forward the objective of establishing an "international anti-imperialist united front" to develop the struggle against the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam.

It was in March 1966 that the JCP sent a delegation to Vietnam. In January of the same year, representatives of the movements from Asia, Africa, and Latin America met at the "Tricontinental Conference" in Havana, Cuba, calling for an international anti-imperialist united front against the war of aggression in Vietnam. Of course your movement, represented at the time by the Afro-Asia Solidarity Committee, played an important part in the Tricontinental Conference. Later in the year, the JCP delegation visited Vietnam, China, and North Korea and stressed how important it is to form an "International anti-imperialist united front" following the results of the Havana conference.

Today, the struggle against U.S. hegemony has a wider focus than during the Vietnam War.

Our present struggle is aimed at defending the "international rules for peace" against the policies and actions of U. S hegemony.

This common front should be broad and include all individuals, organizations, and governments that are willing to defend the international peace.

In this regard, I want to emphasize the importance of common efforts that include governments. During the Vietnam War, only governments of countries that proclaimed themselves "socialist", including China and the Soviet Union, were considered as part of such common action. Things are different today. Governments of a much broader range of countries can be part of common actions. In effect, governments of more than 130 countries opposed the Iraq war.

This shows that important changes are taking place in our movements. Let me discuss this issue later.

From JCP's Opposition Party Diplomacy

The characteristics of the present developments and movements which I have referred to are exactly what we have experienced over the last few years in JCP opposition party diplomacy.

Opposition party diplomacy began with my 1999 visit to Malaysia and Singapore

It was during my visit to Malaysia in 1999 that I strongly felt this new development.

Up until then the JCP had had no direct connection with the governments of Malaysia or Singapore. As far as I know, the only contact we had was a visit by an Akahata reporter to Singapore about 10 years ago. The reporter on that occasion called on the public affairs office of the Singapore government. He was met by a woman officer. I happened to read a report written by a Japanese journalist about that encounter. According to the article, immediately after she received the Akahata reporter, the woman officer went to a friend of hers and said that something extraordinary had happened, that she met a communist for the first time in her life! Her friend asked her, "How did you find him?" She answered, "He was just like everybody else!" I found this a very interesting story which illustrated the region's general perception of the Communist party and its members. In fact, the same was true of Malaysia.

When I visited these countries, I said to myself, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." The result was that we had quick and positive reactions from persons we met there.

In Malaysia, every meeting I had with officials of government organizations, including the foreign ministry, provided us with opportunities to discover something new about each other regarding economic and foreign policies. We presented them with our position of sovereign independence and rejection of hegemony by whatever country, our call for the abolition of nuclear weapons, and the placing of importance on friendship with other Asian countries. On almost all issues we raised, we found ourselves on the same wavelength.

This Southeast Asia tour made us realize that a solid trend of peace was emerging in the regio, shared by the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The discussions we had at the time paved the way for the further exchanges that followed. For instance, in 2001, two years after our Southeast Asia tour, a Malaysian government representative for the first time participated in the World Conference against A & H Bombs. I

recently learned that Malaysia's participation in the World Conference was promoted by the senior Malaysian foreign ministry official we had met four years ago. He has also been helpful in introducing the JCP to other Southeast Asian countries. Last year, I received from Thailand an invitation to a conference of Asian political parties. JCP International Bureau Director Ogata Yasuo, who is also a member of the House of Councilors, attended the conference. Ogata told me that Malaysia had apparently recommended the JCP as a participant to that conference.

Once doors are opened and a relationship of trust is established, people are ready to cooperate with us in earnest.

Opposition party diplomacy in opposition to Iraq war (2002)

In August of last year, when tension was increasing over the situation relating to Iraq, we visited China. As I said, I had been well aware of the characteristics of Chinese diplomacy. I had also received from the Communist Party of China a list of issues they wanted to discuss concerning how to view the developments in the world as well as in Japan. As part of my preparations for the visit, I contemplated approaches toward discussing the Iraq question or any other issues in an interactive manner. In Beijing, my talks with Jiang Zemin, CPC general secretary at the time, were preceded by a number of discussions with Dai Bingguo, the head of the CPC International Department and Tang Jiaxuan, China's foreign minister. This way of exchange of opinions helped deepen discussions.

We found in these discussions that one of the issues of major common interest was the need to oppose the U.S. war on Iraq in order to defend the international peace. On this subject I stated, "Opposition to the U.S. war against Iraq does not need the slogan of anti-imperialism. What we need is to stand firmly for reason and oppose anyone who destroys the world order. This can be the position that offers a basis for the world to work together." This concept got positive reaction at each meeting.

These discussions led to agreement at the summit meeting in opposition to the Iraq war.

Later, in October, a JCP delegation led by OGATA Yasuo visited six Middle Eastern countries. We had been invited to monitor a referendum over the presidency of Saddam Hussein and we decided to take this opportunity to hold meetings to press Iraq to unconditionally accept U.N. weapons inspections and to discuss the issue of the Iraq war with Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. After this Middle East tour, Ogata, who had visited Beijing with me, told me that the reasoning we put forward in Beijing was also effective in helping to find a point of agreement with the representatives of all those Middle Eastern countries he visited.

In December, JCP Executive Committee Chair SHII Kazuo led a JCP delegation visiting three South Asian countries: India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. He later said that the viewpoint we had raised in our Beijing visit served as a basis for agreement on the issue of the Iraq war.

These experiences we had on the ground convinced us that the position we put forward regarding the Iraq war reflects the present-day world situation. The U.N. debates that took place from last year to this year, in the final analysis, were about whether we should defend the international peace or allow the United States to wage its lawless wars that overturn the international peace.

JCP's opposition party diplomacy knows no barrier of anti-communism

Let me add one more thing. In all these countries we visited, we found that our opposition party diplomacy knows no barrier of anti-communism.

In Malaysia, which I visited four years ago, and all the Islamic countries in the Middle East and South Asia, which Shii or Ogata visited, the Communist party is illegal or does not exist. The only exception is Jordan. Thus, they would appear to be "anti-communist" countries. Nevertheless, we visited these countries, talked with people in the governments, and established close relations of exchanges and trust. This was a new experience for us.

Saudi Arabia, for example, is a monarchy which is also referred to as the leader of the Islamic world. As a country opposing communism, it for many years had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union or China until the early 1990s. The JCP did have contacts with Saudi Arabia on a number of occasions, but we believed it impossible to visit the country this time. Before his departure for the Middle East tour, Ogata visited the embassy of Saudi Arabia to inform them that the JCP delegation was visiting Middle Eastern countries. The charge d'affaires who received Ogata asked him why his country is not included in the JCP delegation's itinerary. We then included Saudi Arabia in the itinerary. As a result, we were able to have good discussions in Saudi Arabia.

In Pakistan, the present government was established by a military coup d'état. The JCP contacted with its embassy in Tokyo for the first time since JCP members of parliament visited Pakistan in 2001 to investigate the state of affairs related to the Afghan war. Although we did not have a long relationship with Pakistan, the JCP delegation found that Pakistan had studied about the JCP and received us more seriously than any other country that the JCP delegations visited in October and December. Our delegation to Pakistan reported afterwards that the Pakistani embassy in Tokyo had sent home detailed information on the JCP over a year and more that there was virtually no need for the JCP delegation to explain our position.

Trust in the JCP's position of independence underlies hospitality

One of the frequently asked questions is: how was it possible for the JCP to have profound discussions and build trust and sympathy with the Islamic countries, which the JCP had no contact with?

There may be a number of reasons, but I can say for sure that the trust in the JCP's position and its history of independence rejecting hegemony by any foreign power is a major factor.

In Tokyo, an Islamic country's embassy official gave a piece of advice to the JCP delegation before leaving for that country. He said there are two things that the JCP delegation should stressed in his country. One is that the JCP is a party that totally opposed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He said that this would help them understand that the JCP is a trustworthy party. The other is that the JCP fought against Chinese interference during the "Great Cultural Revolution" and that the JCP now maintains good relationships and friendship with China after settling the dispute. The official said that by explaining these two things, the JCP can present itself as trustworthy.

I think he was emphasizing the fact that trust in the JCP's position of sovereign independence is essential to its friendship with other countries.

Issues Raised before Us

I would like to devote the concluding part of my speech to emerging issues we should consider in connection with our future international solidarity activities for world peace.

Tasks for establishing peaceful international order

In the international movement, the call for the establishment of an international order for peace in compliance with the U.N. Charter will be increasingly important in international movements as well as in world politics.

Although this demand takes on a high-level task, the struggle against the Iraq war has shown that it has become a common task of the world movements.

For the first time in history the defense of the world order based on the U.N. Charter was seriously discussed. I would take this as a step marking historical progress in human society in that such a high-level issue has become a common cause of the worldwide movement.

The issue of the 'international cooperation between individuals, organizations and governments'

Next, I would like to talk about an international common front and its directions.

In the traditional sense, international solidarity meant joint action by all the individuals and organizations for specific purposes agreed upon. But today, at issue is the need to develop such international joint actions involving governments in addition to individuals and public organizations.

In this respect, it is important to note that the Japanese movements for peace and solidarity have been playing a pathbreaking role.

One is the Movement against A & H Bombs. In the 2000 World Conference against A & H Bombs, Thailand and Sweden were the first government representatives to attend. Government representatives (including embassies) of Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and South Africa participated in the opening plenary of the 2001 World Conference. In 2002, government representatives from Egypt, Malaysia, Bangladesh, South Africa attended. Thus, cooperation between peace-seeking individuals, organizations and governments is becoming a new good tradition of the Movement against A & H Bombs.

The other is the movement of the Japan Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee (Japan AALA). Since its first participation in the 11th summit of the non-aligned nations in 1995, the Japan AALA has attended the 12th summit in 1998 and the 13th summit in February 2003. The Japan AALA also hosted the "Non-aligned International Symposium" in September 2001 attended by embassies of non-aligned countries. This is how you have strengthened relations with non-aligned countries.

On coexistence of cultures with different values

Thirdly, I want to draw your attention to a new development in the issue of peaceful coexistence. Up to now, peaceful coexistence was a slogan used for the coexistence of socialism and capitalism, the two contrasting social-economic systems.

However, the issue of peaceful coexistence means more than that. Some people argue that the relationship between the Islamic world and the rest of the world is one of 'clashes of civilizations.' President George W. Bush even tried to liken the present-day world with the "Crusades" of 1,000 years ago to justify the Iraq war. The Crusades were expeditionary forces organized by European countries against the Islamic world from the 11th to 13th century. Comparing the modern political problem with the

"Crusades" means an attempt to bring back the "clashes of civilizations" of the Middle Ages.

There are innumerable cases, albeit not as extreme as such reproduction of the Middle Age clashes. American and European values are being imposed on the entire world in disregard of cultural differences, thus exacerbating relations between peoples.

Today, peaceful coexistence not only concerns the relationship between capitalism and socialism. Cultures with different values must live together in respect for each others' values – this has become a vital issue in the modern world.

We acutely recognized the importance of this issue since the autumn of 2001 as the cycle of international terrorism and retaliatory war became a serious problem and began to call for "coexistence of different cultures". Later, through our visits to Islamic countries, we have been increasingly convinced of its importance.

I think that the recent movement against the Iraq war has created great assets that will help promote "coexistence of different cultures and their mutual understanding". Remember that peoples of Europe and the Islamic world have risen under common objectives and slogans. Someone reportedly described this as something that had never happened since the Crusades brought about a division. It is just a first one step, but I think it is a step of enormous importance.

We will put this common slogan into practice, but we have to study and know more about the values and the standards of the Islamic world. National institution and efforts differ from country to country and we need to study how the Islamic world is trying to coexist with other cultures. There remain an untold number of things we must learn.

These are just a part of the efforts we should make in order to be in the forefront of the movement to maintain world peace in the true sense of the word. In carrying out our activities, we need to set clear objectives regarding the issue of "coexistence of different cultures".

My talk today has been a bit sketchy. I know that you are the ones who are directly involved in activities of international solidarity. I would be happy if what I have suggested here will be of some help to you in looking at the 21st century world.

With this I conclude my lecture. Thank you for your attention.

(E n d)