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JCP Program and Its View of Japan and the World

Speech by

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At JCP head office, Tokyo

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FUWA Tetsuzo, director of the Japanese Communist Party's Social Sciences Institute, spoke on "JCP Program and Its View of Japan and the World" at the closing session of the 1st Special Party School on November 7, 2007.

JCP Program and Its View of Japan and the World

Fuwa Tetsuzo

In this Special Party School, I lectured on the “Program of the Japanese Communist Party” and on “Party History.” Many participants have expressed their determination to use what they have studied here about these subjects in their party activities. Today, I want to talk about several things that I believe are important in assessing the situation in Japan and the world in relation to some recent events.

Assessing Japan’s Political Turmoil in the Last Several Months from the Position of the JCP Program

Let me begin with the political situation in Japan focusing on how to assess the recent House of Councilors election and the changes that have taken place in the aftermath of this election using the Program of the Japanese Communist Party as the guide.

Key to understanding the current Japanese situation

What is the key to understanding current Japanese society? The JCP Program provides the analysis that the general public is suffering in many ways in present-day Japanese society mostly due to the tyrannical rule of large corporations and financial circles and Japan’s subservience to the United States as characterized by an “extraordinary state subordination to the United States.”

The JCP Program proposes that removing these two sources of suffering is indispensable for solving the various problems to meet the needs of the public and calls for a democratic revolution and the establishment of a democratic coalition government.

In giving the crux of how to view Japanese society, the JCP Program provides the direction that shows how we can do away with these two evils as well as their sources.

This view is not something that we have invented. In their youth, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels made clear that “it (Communism) proceeds not from principles but from *facts*.” I think that the same applies to the JCP Program.

The JCP Program deals with the source of evils that are plaguing Japanese society and the way to remove them. We arrived at this conclusion based on the facts of Japanese society instead of on particular principles we invented. This approach is precisely the foundation of reason and the power of rigorous analyses and persuasiveness.

In considering political and economic changes that we need in Japan, we must recognize that the main goal will not be achieved in one stroke. Various intermediate steps should be considered. For example, we are calling for the problems in Japan’s relations with the United States to be solved through “abrogating the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and achieving a Japan of peace, non-alignment and neutrality.” But an important intermediate step would be to end its diplomatic subservience to the United States and begin to practice an independent diplomacy for peace.

Economically, in Japan today the prevalence of the tyranny of financial circles is a major problem. One of our main goals is to establish an “economy with rules” to democratically control it in order to defend the living conditions and human rights of ordinary citizens. But even before achieving these goals we should be able to put a check on the outrageous behavior by large corporations in various fields. Even though this may not be a full and complete solution, it will be an important solution to the immediate problems facing the general public.

However, if reforms are to be successful in the interest of the Japanese people, they must be carried out with a commitment to breaking away from subservience to the United States and Japanese business circles.

This is the key to understanding various problems in present Japanese society.

LDP influence in decline

The Liberal Democratic Party came into existence in 1955 following a major merger of two conservative parties. For 52 years since then, Japan’s politics have been led by the LDP, although there was a one-year period with a non-LDP government. Liberal Democratic Party politics represent the interests of the United States that has been in control of Japan-U.S. relations with Japan as its subordinate ally as well as the interests of large

corporations and financial circles that continue their tyrannical rule over the nation's economy. Historically, changes in the prime minister or changes in political party combinations have never affected this basic structure.

What happens today is that LDP influence is in decline. LDP politics are seen to be increasingly against the public interest. The LDP government foreign policy is more and more incompatible with the reality of the world and is losing the ability to manage it in a stable manner. LDP politics are in decline not just because of this or that administrative error, personal missteps, or a lack of wisdom. The point is that the framework of LDP politics has become negative and is failing as well. It's a framework for the LDP to defend the interests of the United States as well as large Japanese corporations and financial circles.

LDP politics are losing popular support and failing in many areas of society and politics. This became obvious when the LDP suffered a crushing defeat in the House of Councilors election, in which its voting strength decreased to 28 percent from 38 percent in the 2005 House of Representatives general election. But more importantly, voices calling for an end to the present politics have been spreading more extensively than ever, showing the extent to which the LDP has been declining. This was the most important point in assessing the House of Councilors election results.

Some of you made comments on the JCP Standing Executive Committee statement on the House of Councilors election results. One said he was surprised by the assessment that "a new political process has begun", but I think that three months after the election held in late July, many people are aware that a new political process has indeed been set in motion"

Prime Minister ABE Shintaro's cabinet collapsed in early September in an unusual way, followed by a turmoil that took place unexpectedly in the DPJ shortly after its electoral success. The DPJ leader discussed a "grand coalition" with the LDP leader behind closed doors, but he soon issued a statement expressing his intention to resign because he failed to get his party endorsement concerning the idea of holding such talks with the LDP. But he retracted the resignation announcement after being requested by many in the DPJ to stay on as party leader. What a clumsy move that was! Anyway, that was a turmoil that took place at a time when LDP politics are declining thus far.

Japan's political parties in JCP Program's view

Another important thing is that we should try to assess Japanese political parties from the viewpoint which I said is the crux of the JCP Program.

Let's begin with the LDP. The Abe Cabinet has been replaced by the Fukuda Cabinet. Has there been any change in the main framework of LDP politics?

The Koizumi Cabinet took on the pro-Yasukuni Shrine forces' harmful elements featuring praise for Japan's past war of aggression in addition to the LDP government's harmful role which we already know. The successor cabinet under Prime Minister Abe reinforced this feature. We opposed these two cabinets' policy of defending the cause of the pro-Yasukuni forces. The Abe Cabinet, which was referred to as a "pro-Yasukuni Shrine" government, came to its quick and miserable end. Prime Minister FUKUDA Yasuo has stated that he will not visit Yasukuni Shrine, marking a change in this domain. I think the Fukuda Cabinet will have to make some adjustments in dealing with the differences that arose between Japan and the United States under the Abe Cabinet.

But there are no signs of change in the main direction of LDP politics regarding what to do about Japan's relations with the United States and about Japanese large corporations and financial circles. In the Diet, the LDP holds the majority only in the House of Representatives. The LDP government may be obliged to delay enactment of some undemocratic bills, but it has no intention at all to change its general political framework.

What about opposition parties?

The JCP with the present programmatic line first obtained its seats in the Diet in the 1960s. In the 1970s, it came to wield effective power in parliament. In those years, the state of opposition parties was different from today. In 1960, in the struggle against the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the Socialist Party was with us in a joint struggle coalition. It publicly called for the abrogation of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and opposition to government policies mostly in the interest of large corporations. Even the Komei Party changed its position to call for the immediate abrogation of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty apparently in order to regain the ground it lost in the 1972 House of Representatives general election. In these circumstances the JCP called on the Socialist and Komei parties to consider creating a progressive joint struggle and a progressive united front. This proposal of ours was one of the major political issues at the time.

But political circles are very different nowadays. No parties, except the JCP, clearly point to the two root-causes of the adverse policies and call for the present policies serving the interests of financial circles to be ended. No parties, except the JCP, have progressive policies to put forward and the readiness to carry them out to defend the public interest, even if such policies conflict with what financial circles want to do. Concerning the issue of relations with the United States, no political party except the JCP calls for the abrogation of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Even the Social Democratic Party has abandoned this stance since Social Democratic Party leader MURAYAMA Tomiichi was the prime minister. What's more, the largest opposition Democratic Party completely supports the stance of making Japan's alliance with the United States the key element of Japanese politics. The political goals set by the DPJ and the LDP overlap to the extent that they are both calling for constitutional revision. Both parties which are bound by the will of the United States and the interest of Japanese financial circles do not have a foothold for carrying out reforms in the real sense of the word.

This being the present political situation, the Democratic Party, now led by Mr. Ozawa, resorted to a unique move in the recent House of Councilors election. In the past, when the DPJ was led by OKADA Katsuya or MAEHARA Seiji, it shared the main policy goals with the LDP and even competed with the ruling party for how the Constitution should be revised and how the consumption tax should be increased. But Mr. Ozawa, a strategist, thought that this way would not be effective if the DPJ is to take the offensive against the LDP. This is why he switched to "confronting" the ruling parties. For this reason, the DPJ moved away from the previous policy of joining hands on 99 percent of policies with the LDP, including the law to establish procedures for a national referendum aimed at revising the Constitution. This was also a strategy made with the aim of absorbing the public sentiments in favor of breaking away from LDP policies into the DPJ. However, in the recent election campaign, the DPJ leader stopped short of discussing what kind of policies the DPJ would carry out if it brought down the LDP from political power.

This DPJ strategy turned out to be effective in achieving its major advance in the House of Councilors by winning more than 80 percent of voters who gave up on the LDP. In the House of Councilors election, about 10 percent of traditional LDP supporters decided not to vote for the LDP.

What's going to happen after this election? At the time when the election results were announced, Prime Minister Abe had the intention to continue his tenure. But, no matter who becomes prime minister, the LDP government will be unable to offer policies that meet the needs of the public. So, in the next stage, all political parties will necessarily be asked to present their policies as an alternative to LDP policies. The DPJ cannot

continue to call for “a change in political power” without presenting a clear alternative to show what it will do in practical terms.

The JCP Standing Executive Committee statement characterized the emerging political process as an era in which we will explore the new direction and concrete policies that will replace LDP government policies.

Calling for ‘confrontation’ without presenting an alternative will not be accepted

The rapid DPJ advance in the House of Councilors election led the opposition parties to form a majority in the upper chamber of parliament, making the role of the “new political process” more significant.

Regardless of its timing, the next House of Representatives general election will be an arena in which the DPJ will seek to grab power by building on its success in the House of Councilors election. That’s how DPJ strategy is seen by everyone. In other words, policies to be published by the DPJ in its parliamentary activities in the run-up to the election will be regarded as policies that should be put into practice once it takes power after winning in the general election in line with this scenario. In this respect, the DPJ should be obliged to present all its policies to the public. In the House of Councilors election it put more emphasis on the criticism of LDP policies without presenting alternatives to LDP policies, but this method of confronting the LDP government will no longer tenable.

Furthermore, the fact that the DPJ is the main force of the opposition that forms a majority in the House of Councilors requires the DPJ to bear responsibility in deciding whether to pass or not bills introduced by the government or the LDP. Not a few government bills have direct bearing on the interests of the United States and financial circles. In the past, government bills would be approved in both chambers by a force of the majority of the Liberal Democratic and Komei parties, and the DPJ’s opposition would not be called into question regarding the outcome. But in the emerging situation, the DPJ’s opposition will have bearing on its relation with the United States as well as Japanese corporations and financial circles.

DPJ-proposed ‘alternative is the worst form of troop dispatches abroad

The DPJ faced this question regarding the proposal for extending the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law. This has a lot of bearing on the strategic interest of the United States and the Japan-U.S. relations that are structured on a military alliance. If the DPJ keeps its election promise and maintains its opposition to the legislation, there will be no Diet action either to extend the anti-terrorism law or to enact a new law. But if the DPJ supports the legislation, it may come under fire because it amounts to supporting the LDP government’s dispatches of troops abroad in violation of the Constitution, thus losing public trust.

On this issue, Mr. Ozawa made an offer that the DPJ can agree with enacting a permanent law allowing overseas dispatches of the SDF if they are based on a United Nations resolution. So, the DPJ is opposed to SDF participation in the refueling operation in the Indian Ocean because it is not based on a U.N. resolution, but it says that the SDF should be authorized to participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that consists of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) multinational forces operating in Afghanistan and that they will be allowed to use arms.

Mr. Ozawa is proposing that SDF ground troops should be allowed to participate in overseas missions that involve the use of force. Such overseas dispatches, which will be far more massive than the refueling operation that the MSDF had undertaken, will please the United States. In fact, some U.S. government officials have reportedly said that this is a positive step to broaden the framework of joint U.S.-Japan military operation. It is surprising that he is calling for irresponsible and lawless action to be carried out with the United Nations as a cover for its unconstitutional character. What is more, he is saying that such a measure can be authorized by a permanent law instead of having to ask each time for parliamentary approval. Once the law is enacted, the government can decide to send SDF troops abroad at its will. This will pose an unfathomable danger.

Do you know where Mr. Ozawa got this idea of sending troops abroad? His original plan was set out in a proposal compiled in February 1993 by an LDP panel chaired by Mr. Ozawa. He was a member of the LDP leadership at the time.

Earlier, while he was LDP secretary general, the Gulf War broke out. Japan contributed 13.5 billion dollars to the U.S. war but stopped short of participating in the multinational force. But that form of contribution did not satisfy the United States because Japan did not offer to “shed blood.”

This prompted the LDP to set up a panel chaired by Mr. Ozawa to consider “Japan’s role in the international community.” Its conclusion was that if the United Nations organized a regular “U.N. force” under Article 43 of the U.N. Charter, Japan would take part in it. Obviously, this was a proposal in violation of the Constitution. However, the Ozawa panel used illogical reasoning to insist that ‘Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution will not be applicable to participation in U.N. military activities because they are carried out where Japan cannot exercise its sovereign power.’

But there was an important footnote to this proposal to the effect that Japan can constitutionally participate only in a regular U.N. force and that participation in a multinational force like the one in the Gulf War must be ruled out even though a multinational force operates under U.N. authority based on international agreement. This shows that at that time Mr. Ozawa regarded it as impossible for Japan to participate in a multinational force under the present Constitution.

The recent concept brought up by Mr. Ozawa as a DPJ policy is an adversely revised version of what he drew up in his LDP days in that it specifically calls for Japan’s participation in the ISAF, which is not a regular U.N. force but a multinational force. The DPJ proposal makes no differentiation between a regular U.N. force and a multinational force, making it possible for Japanese troops to take part in any military action with a multinational force if it is based on a U.N. resolution. What’s more, he is calling for this measure to be established as a permanent law. This is why we argue that Mr. Ozawa’s plan is far worse than the past legislative measures enacted under successive LDP governments to dispatch troops abroad. Mr. Ozawa has stated in the November 2007 issue of *Sekai* (The World) magazine, “If I am in power and in a position to decide on foreign and security policies, I will achieve Japan’s participation in the ISAF.”

On this question, that has an important bearing on whether it is good to send troops abroad, the DPJ tries to counter the LDP by proposing another policy that is worse than the LDP government’s policy. This reveals the true colors of the DPJ under the leadership of Mr. Ozawa.

They can agree on a ‘grand coalition’ without discussing economic issues and other issues

What about their economic policies? One focus of attention is the pension fiasco. The point is that successive LDP governments are held responsible for failing to fulfill what they should have done to keep accurate pension records. But the discussion has not yet taken up this key question about the serious damage done to the public trust.

The fact is that the successive LDP governments, including those under Prime Minister KOIZUMI Jun'ichiro and Prime Minister ABE Shinzo, have forced drastic cutbacks in social services, adverse reforms in the employment system, cut-off of local fiscal resources, and cutbacks in agriculture. These are sources of people's suffering. Without addressing these problems and setting to work to resolve them, there can't be solutions to the discontent and anger that are increasing among the public regarding economic issues.

In dealing with these issues, no one can evade the question of what should be done to secure fiscal resources.

In the past, the DPJ would preempt others in raising the question of fiscal resources and insist that there is no choice but to increase the consumption tax rate. But, realizing that this argument is not appropriate in its struggle with the LDP, it shelved the issue of fiscal resources in confronting the LDP policies. However, at this stage, it is impossible for the DPJ to bypass discussion on the issue of fiscal resources. Both the LDP and the DPJ will be obliged to make clear the amount of money available to take steps to improve living conditions.

The DPJ has so far said that fiscal resources necessary for implementing these measures can be obtained by eliminating wasteful expenditures. But the fact is that the DPJ has no data to support this argument. In reality, the only possible choice is between two ways of securing fiscal resources to improve people's critical living conditions: One way is to force large corporations and business circles that are making record profits to pay their fair share in taxes and put an end to giving them privileged tax breaks. The other way is to force the general public to accept another consumption tax increase. But the DPJ and the LDP have their policies evaluated by the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren). Both parties accept corporate donations. Both parties have cozy relationships with business leaders, although they have different levels of intimacy with the business sector. So, we can predict what they would say if they have to choose between the two options: forcing the business sector to shoulder appropriate burdens or forcing the general public to pay more.

In their talks behind closed doors, Prime Minister Fukuda and Mr. Ozawa found common ground on the issue of dispatching troops abroad and reached an agreement to form a "grand coalition" without discussing any of the serious economic issues facing the public.

JCP's programmatic position and people's quest for better society come closer

Thus, regarding the question about an alternative to the LDP government, the “political process” on the part of the DPJ has already begun through an adjustment in the policies of the two parties. The recent discussion on a “grand coalition” has been cut short due to the DPJ's internal differences. But given the fact that the LDP and the DPJ have not changed their main policy stance, it is possible that the two parties will repeat similar political moves like the recent one, though they may take on different forms.

It is imperative that the DPJ put forward an alternative if it is to actually “confront” the LDP. So, the DPJ will be obliged to present its alternative on any issues that may arise in the future concerning national policies. It will also have to present its true intentions.

Under these circumstances, as the JCP is the only political party that confronts LDP politics, greater public attention will be focused on the solutions or policies the JCP presents. We are currently developing an effort to explain the JCP Program and discuss the future of Japan. Our analysis of the LDP-DPJ rapprochement will be useful for enriching this effort.

In the earlier part of my speech, I said we relied on facts instead of on obscure principles when we set out the programmatic definition of present Japanese society and put forward a way of remaking Japan. This is an important point when we work to further develop the movement.

We do not have the intention to use this effort to impose the party's ideology on the public.

Overseas dispatches of troops will soon become a major issue. Everyone who has read Article 9 of the Constitution can easily comprehend that it is unconstitutional to send troops abroad or allow them to use force abroad. It is also a clear fact that the Afghanistan War and the Iraq War only helped to increase the danger of terrorism in these two countries and across the world as well instead of lessening the problem of terrorism. No special theory is necessary to acknowledge this act.

The same is true of the issue of fiscal resources. Large corporations are reporting huge profits that are even larger than those they gained in the economic boom experienced by Japan in the period between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, while the general public is in a weakened condition. This is the situation that can be explained based on numerous facts and people's experiences. At this juncture, there should be no need to

seek a special theory in order to conclude who should pay the cost for solving this problem, the business sector and large corporations or the general public who are already experiencing hardships.

Our plan for solving these problems is in accord with the interests of the majority of the people. So, if we reach out to those people with various troubles and demands and explain the relation between their problems and the surrounding facts and events, their understanding and the JCP's position will necessarily converge.

If we put the public interest before anything else, we necessarily have to face up to the tyranny of large corporations and financial circles and Japan's subservience to the United States, the two main sources of the various problems in our society. If the public tries to remove these sources of corruption, it should necessarily come closer to the JCP's programmatic line. I want to stress again that it is important to have confidence in this point when we are to look at Japan from the position of the JCP Program.

Three Viewpoints in Understanding the General Trend of the World

I now move on to the next question, world affairs.

In my lecture in March last year, I explained in detail the JCP Program's view of the world today. Here, I want to discuss several general features of the JCP's view of the world from several angles.

We do not overestimate U.S. power

One is regarding our assessment of U.S. power. We try to be realistic about assessing it and base ourselves on facts. There are widespread views on the world that overestimate the power of the United States. Among Japanese politicians, in particular, there is a strong tendency to believe that the United States is the world hegemon, throwing Japan's foreign policy in disarray.

The JCP Program states that the present-day world is not such that can be moved by any one single country no matter how big it is. In fact, the seven years of the Afghanistan War and the five years of the Iraq War are a living testimony to this.

Bush, who firmly believes that the United States is invincible, may have started the two wars hoping that the U.S. values can be imposed on the whole of the Middle East and that it can place the whole of the Islamic world under its control if its enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq are wiped out. But the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq are failing, and a majority of the U.S. public is now calling for an end to the war.

In these circumstances, the U.S. came to take on a double-edged global strategy. It will launch pre-emptive attacks on countries that are suspected of possible terrorist attacks or possession of weapons of mass destruction even without having solid evidence. The United States used such an arbitrary approach to attack Afghanistan and Iraq. What about North Korea? Will the United States attack it in the same way? No, it has realized that it is impossible to do so and made a major change to adopt greater emphasis on diplomacy through dialogue in seeking the resolution of disputes.

The annual report of the U.S. secretary of defense to the president and Congress is very bold in viewing China as a potential threat to the United States. But such a simplistic view will not be effective in actual foreign relations. The United States and China are “strategic partners”. “Strategic partners” are not countries that wage war against each other. It is about partnership that attaches importance to mutual benefits to defend the strategic and general interests of both sides. In its actual foreign relations the United States has come to be obliged to accept such diplomacy. That’s why the neocons who were the main players in the first term of the Bush administration have lost their influence in the second term.

The LDP’s foreign policy has ignored these changes taking place in the United States. The LDP has believed that it has been playing its part in line with U.S. strategy. How embarrassing it is for the LDP government to find a gulf between the two countries in foreign policy approaches!

The JCP Program’s strong point is that it bases its views, including assessment of the power of the United States, on facts. It is important to do so, particularly in a country like Japan which is structured as a country subordinate to the United States.

World gained vigor in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union

The second point is how to view the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a major event that took place at the close of the 20th century.

In Europe, there is a widespread pessimistic view of the present-day world, that the forces of peace and progress have weakened and that they are in a disadvantaged position. Thus they hold a view contrary to ours that the 21st century is an era full of promise.

Why do they see the world that way? I have found that the demise of the Soviet Union is a major dividing issue. The pessimistic view arises from the belief that forces for peace and social progress have suffered a major setback following the demise of the Soviet Union which they counted on despite the errors it committed. This has led to an emergence of a pessimistic view that the whole of the world has become capitalist and that China and Vietnam have been swallowed into the market economy. With such pessimism, the United States and the Bush strategy look greater than they actually are.

But the 16 years after the demise of the Soviet Union show a world quite contrary to the negative image held by many Europeans. All the continents are showing renewed vitality.

(1) There was an era when many European countries had high regard for the United States as the Atlantic leader. But today, diplomacy has been invigorated. The main players may change. For example, when the United States was starting the war on Iraq, France and Germany joined forces to firmly oppose it. Although we now witness a different situation after France moved to the right recently, most European countries are developing their own diplomacy.

During the era of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, these countries were united around the United States to counter threats from the Soviet Union. Now that such threats are gone, they no longer need to maintain such unity. They only have to develop their own diplomacy, in which they can say "No" to the United States whenever they disagree with it. They do not have to pluck up enormous courage if they are to disagree with the U.S. position.

(2) World economic power relations are changing steadily

The conclusion that China and Vietnam arrived at after their respective explorations was that they should "take a path to socialism through a market economy." This has had such an impact as to lead the economic development of these countries aiming for socialism to change the global power balance.

In 2006, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published an interesting report. It has been a common practice to measure the size of an economy using gross domestic product (GDP), but the IMF now says that

this way is not rational since it does not take into account the purchasing power parity between currencies. In China, where domestic prices are relatively low, output measured by the currency is low. Recalculating each country's GDP with this in mind, the world will look quite different from what one believes it to be. In fiscal 2006, the international comparison using the GDP calculated by the traditional method shows that the U.S. ranks first while China ranks sixth. Using the new method that takes into account the purchasing power parity as an indicator, China will move up to second place closing in on the United States, which accounts for 20 percent of the world economy. China accounts for 15 percent. According to the 2007 estimate published recently, the gap between the two countries is closing, with the United States accounting for 19 percent and China 16 percent.

This shows that power balances are changing so dramatically in the world economy that even an international institution such as the IMF has to take it into account when it publishes data, to reflect the reality.

We should also pay attention to a major change in relationships between the countries aiming for socialism, including China, and the rest of the world. When the Soviet Union was in existence, "socialism" was regarded as something inseparable from hegemony, as is the case with the Soviet aggression against Czechoslovakia and its invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviet Union ceased to exist and most countries realized that China's policy is not one of seeking hegemony and have begun to develop economic and trade relations with China. In this respect, the demise of the hegemony of the former Soviet Union has contributed to the revitalization of the world.

(3) In my lecture I went into details of the changes taking place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The era of "U.S.-Soviet confrontation made it difficult for countries in these regions to express their opinions freely because they had to show due consideration for both sides. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan as well as during the U.S. war against Vietnam, they could not dare to take these issues to the United Nations. Today, without having to care about it, countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are developing diplomacy with each other as well as at the United Nations.

We now see all continents gaining in vitality. The JCP Program sets forward a view of the world based on the reality. We are developing our opposition party diplomacy in response to the emerging state of a world full of dynamism.

Whither the world?

The third point concerns in what direction the dynamic development of the world is heading for on the whole, toward “hailing permanent capitalism” or toward overcoming capitalism and advancing to a new society in quest of socialism and communism?

Section 17 of the JCP Program states as follows:

“A quest for socialism/communism is not exclusive to Japan.

The 21st century world will be an era characterized by an increase in currents toward overcoming capitalism and advancing to a new society. It arises from the sharpening economic and political contradictions and from popular movements in the developed capitalist countries; it arises from efforts to explore their peculiar ways to socialism in countries that broke away from capitalism; and it arises from the popular movements in many countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America that are unable to find their way for future economic development within the framework of capitalism, even after achieving political independence.”

At the time when we drafted this passage, although we had not yet witnessed any new moves aiming for socialism in any country in Asia, Africa, or Latin America, we included such development for the 21st century and what we wrote in the JCP Program came true.

It has clearly happened in Latin America. In the JCP 23rd Congress in 2004, which adopted the new JCP Program, the Venezuelan ambassador to Japan who attended the Congress gave me a copy of the Japanese translation of a book entitled “Venezuelan Revolution,” a compilation of speeches by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. The book caught my eye because it dealt with great changes taking place in Latin America. In my closing speech at the same Congress, I spoke about my “strong feeling that Latin America was now entering an era of new turmoil.

Nearly four years after the JCP 23rd Congress, waves of political change swept Latin America. Yesterday, newspapers reported that the Central American country of Guatemala established a left government. In Guatemala in the post-World War II days, a democratic government came into being but was soon toppled by the U.S.-sponsored counterrevolutionary forces. More than 50 years since then, the country finally has elected another left government.

In the course of these political changes in Latin America, there have emerged a few countries where socialism has come to be discussed as the order of the day.

Latin America's winds of change

Venezuela

In Venezuela, amid the development of the national democratic revolution, President Hugo Chavez began to call for nation-building to be geared to socialism in around December 2004.

Since that time, President Chavez has maintained that there has never been socialism in the world and that what the Soviet Union represented was not socialism but "corruption of socialism. We took note of his position of treating Soviet "socialism" as something unworthy of discussion and his emphasis on the importance of exploring a new socialism.

In Venezuela today, the construction of a Venezuelan-model of socialism appears to be the country's main official project that includes construction plans in various areas of nation-building by working grassroots initiatives. Their method is very unique. Local residents draw up their projects and present them to the corresponding regional organization (council). If the projects are approved by the council as meaningful and worthwhile, they will be entitled to be financed with tax money or other funds and set to work on them. Using this system, a myriad of local popular organizations are carrying out various activities under the name of "*socialismo*" (socialism), including the setting up of cooperative farms or cooperative like factories and promotion of local cultural programs.

Venezuela is still to make clear what socialism, its goal, is about or to come up with a national blueprint of the type of socialism it is aiming for. But it's interesting to see that a nationwide effort is already beginning to realize a major plan to overcome capitalism by replacing it with a new society to be built from below.

Bolivia

In Bolivia, a southern neighbor of Venezuela, an effort has begun to build a new country in the spirit of socialism. Candidate Evo Morales Ayma carried the victorious December 2005 campaign leading to establishing a new government in January the following year. He is the country's first indigenous president.

The Indios had already lived in the Americas when the European aggressors began to make inroads into this part of the world. Their ancestors developed the well-known Inca, Maya, and Aztec civilizations, but the Europeans destroyed most of them in the 16th century, and those who had survived have long been forced to endure hardships as the underclass. So an Indio politician's ascendancy to the presidency to lead a country was a landmark event in Latin America's political history.

Historically, the Inca Empire prospered in Bolivia as well as in southern Peru, Bolivia's western neighbor. Indigenous peoples account for 55 percent of Bolivia's population. Mestizo (people of mixed European and Indian ancestry) are 35 percent and the European descendants 10 percent. The Indigenous population has long been discriminated against in society and has even been barred from the area where the parliament buildings are located. In such a country, a new government was established led by an indigenous president with cabinet members that include six indigenous members. I think that this change is historic.

Recently, in a documentary film on video, I saw how the revolution was brought to a success in Bolivia. In the footage of a demonstration that took place before the inauguration of President Evo Morales, Indios were seen carrying placards reading "Proletarian Revolution of Inca." It was an impressive scene that showed that the Indios who had been marginalized emerged as the main players in the revolution.

In Bolivia, too, the movement rejecting the capitalist model and calling for socialism seems to be leading the revolution.

On September 26, President Evo Morales began his speech at the United Nations General Assembly by stating as follows:

"For the first time in Bolivia's history the most abandoned sectors, the most despised, scorned, and vilified in Bolivian history, the indigenous people, have assumed the leadership of the country in order to transform our beloved Bolivia."

He used this speech to expose the negative impact of IMF programs citing the monopoly of resources by the few, global warming, the arms race, and mass destruction as evil consequences of the capitalist model of the economy. Then he concluded his speech as follows:

"I wish to tell you all that I believe it is vital to change those economic models and eradicate capitalism."

I don't know any head of state who has ever called for capitalism to be eradicated. It is very meaningful that the call was made by a leader of a country of Latin America that is confronting U.S. capitalism.

Brazil

Brazil is Latin America's largest country with a population of more than 180 million. Nearly five years have passed since the left government of President Luiz Inacio da Silva was inaugurated.

From late August to early September, JCP Vice Chair OGATA Yasuo attended the national congress of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT), President Lula's ruling party. Ogata told me that although the Lula government does not aim for socialism, "socialism" was the first of 3 items on the agenda during the congress. This suggests that in Brazil, too, discussion about nation-building tends to focus on a quest for the road to socialism as alternative to capitalism.

Of course these countries have not established their goals of socialism or the exact course to take to achieve that goal. There may be successes and failures in implementing their ongoing projects. But at a time when the global contradictions of capitalism are very serious, these moves constitute living examples that shows how socialism as a goal is attracting many people throughout the world. We are living in an uncertain world of turmoil and transformation.

I now conclude my explanation of the three viewpoints of the JCP Program in its view of the world. I hope that you always keep in mind these viewpoints when you hear or read international news everyday, so they will be of some help in understanding the relation between our activities in Japan and the historical movement of the world.

- Akahata, November 10 & 11, 2007

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