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A Trip to Vietnam for Friendship and Solidarity (Part II)

On the 21st Century World

Lecture by SHII Kazuo, Japanese Communist Party Executive Committee Chair
At Hanoi University, January 12, 2007

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On the 21st Century World

Lecture at Hanoi University

January 12, 2007

By SHII Kazuo

Japanese Communist Party Executive Committee Chair

The following is the text of the lecture by SHII Kazuo, Japanese Communist Party Executive Committee chair, on January 12, 2007 at Hanoi University.

Xin chao cac ban! Toi la Shii Kazuo cua Dang Cong san Nhat Ban.
(Hello, everybody! I am Shii Kazuo of the Japanese Communist Party.) I think I should stop speaking in Vietnamese here.

Well, this is my first visit to Vietnam. I have been looking forward to meeting young Vietnamese people.

Vietnam is important to JCP members of my generation

I'm 52 years old. Vietnam is important to JCP members of my generation. It was during our youth that solidarity with the Vietnamese people struggling against the U.S. war of aggression spread throughout our country and when popular struggles developed. I cannot but get emotional when I remember participating in rallies to express opposition to the war of aggression against Vietnam and singing the Vietnamese song "Dedicating Our Lives to the People's Interests". I still remember the words of the song. (Note: Asked by participants to sing, I sang the first part of the song and received a round of applause.)

JCP and CPV agreed to heighten their mutual friendship and solidarity to a new level

Exchanges between the JCP and the CPV began in 1966 amid the Vietnamese people's fierce struggle against the U.S. war of aggression.

(Note: The Vietnamese party at the time had the name of the Workers' Party of Vietnam.) For the past 41 years since then, our two parties have further developed our friendship and solidarity. My trip to Vietnam at this time is aimed at increasing our bilateral relations of friendship and solidarity in a way that will meet the needs of the 21st century. I am pleased to inform you that I had talks with CPV General Secretary Nong Duc Manh and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and that we agreed to work together to raise the level of our relation of friendship and solidarity between our two parties and between our two peoples.

Although the JCP is a Japanese opposition party, it has been working hard to increase exchanges with foreign governments and political parties. We used this experience for revising the JCP Program in 2004 at the JCP 23rd Congress by reviewing the history of the world in the 20th century and the early 21st century. We made clear in detail how we should view the present-day world.

So, I have chosen the theme “On the 21st Century World” for my speech to explain how we assess the world through our theoretical studies and practical activities.

I understand that you are studying foreign languages. You are the ones who will play an active role in developing relations with the rest of the world. I hope that my speech here will be of some use to your future endeavors.

Two major structural changes in the 20th century world and the Vietnamese people's struggle

In order to understand the world accurately, we must look at the structural changes that took place in the 20th century. In the early 20th century, the world was under the control of a few imperialist countries.

Have you ever read Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*? He wrote it between January and June 1916 during World War I. Lenin kept many notebooks on imperialism that he used in preparation for *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. After writing it, he continued his study in order to unravel how the world was dominated by the imperialist nations and compiled them in *Distribution of Colonies among the Imperialist States* in *From the Notebook "Austrian agricultural statistics, etc* (Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 39). In this notebook, Lenin showed the geographical distribution of the 1.65 billion people of the

world. He said that monopoly capitalist states with a population of 550 million were controlling colonial and dependent countries with a total population of 1.1 billion. This shows how unjust the world was just a century ago.

However, people's struggles brought about two major structural changes in the 20th century.

One is that with the 1917 Russian Revolution as the turning point, the world entered an era of coexistence of the socio-economic system aiming for socialism with the capitalist system.

In 1991, the former Soviet Union ceased to exist. This change was not one of representing the failure of socialism. In our view, what took place 16 years ago was the collapse of a regime operating under the policy of hegemony, autocracy and bureaucratism, a sharp deviation from the road to socialism.

It is important to note that this did not mean an end of them movement toward socialism. Even after the Soviet Union's collapse, Vietnam, China, and Cuba are following the road to socialism and developing into a major world current. These countries are increasing day by day their political and economic weight in the world.

The other major structural change took place in the aftermath of World War II, bringing down the colonial system. This dealt a heavy blow to the old system in which a handful of monopoly capitalist countries dominated the rest of the world.

Vietnam marked the beginning of the global collapse of colonialism. In September 1945, the declaration of independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was issued in Hanoi. In the same year, Indonesia also declared its independence, followed by India and Pakistan in 1947. The Chinese Revolution led to its victory in 1949. The collapse of the colonial system spread throughout Asia. In the 1960s, colonialism collapsed in Africa.

Thus, the Vietnamese people's struggle played an important role in both structural changes that took place in the 20th century. I believe that the Vietnamese people's struggle that defeated two imperialist forces, France and the United States, had a historic significance in promoting world peace and social progress.

Japanese peace and progressive forces still have strong feelings of respect for the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people that achieved Vietnamese independence. I have deep respect for Vietnamese people of your parents' and grandparents' generations who took part in the indomitable struggle for national independence.

Four groups of countries in the 21st century world

Let's take a look at the 21st century that followed in the wake of the two major changes that took place in the 20th century. Just as Lenin explained the world situation at the beginning of the 20th century by using the numbers of population, I'll give an outline of the world in the 21st century by using population numbers. I will classify the world into the following four groups of countries (*):

The first group consists of the developed capitalist countries with a population of 900 million.

The second group consists of the countries taking the road to socialism with a population of 1.4 billion.

The third group is made up of Asian, African, and Latin American countries with a total population of 3.5 billion.

And the fourth group consists of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries with a population of about 450 million.

These figures themselves are a testimony to the major changes taking place in the world in the last century.

These figures tell us that the developed capitalist countries that maintained a predominant position in the early 20th century are running out of steam.

(*) Four groups of countries of the world:

FUWA Tetsuzo, JCP Central Committee chair at the time, in a speech on February 14, 2004 for the first time classified the countries of the world into four groups formed as a result of the two major global changes in the 20th century. Entitled "The New Century and New JCP Program," the speech was delivered at the Democratic Youth League of Japan 31st National Congress.

Later on November 3, 2006, he developed this concept in his “Scientific View” Lecture at the 39th Akahata Festival.

Changes in monopoly capitalist countries and the United States

Let us examine each one of the four groups to have a better understanding of the changes taking place in the world.

First, the developed capitalist countries. Their weight in the world in terms of population has become much smaller. In the past, they controlled the whole world, but today they have direct influence on 900 million out of the 6.2 billion.

These demographic changes have necessarily changed the characters of the monopoly capitalist countries. In the early 20th century, the equation of “monopoly capitalist countries=imperialist countries” was valid. But in the present era, this equation seems to be too simplistic as even monopoly capitalist countries are obliged to adapt themselves to a new world without colonies.

What about France? When Vietnam declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945, France refused to recognize it and launched a war to frustrate the Vietnamese people’s struggle for independence. France also sought to crack down on the Algerian people’s struggle for national independence. These French actions were typically imperialist and ended up in failure. After this, France was obliged to adapt itself to the new era that does not allow colonialism to exist. Today, France is obliged to maintain equal relations with its former colonial countries. More recently, France was very critical of the Iraq War as a war of aggression in violation of the United Nations Charter. This shows that in the present-day world, monopoly capitalist countries cannot necessarily be treated as imperialist in general terms.

The only country that we regard as an imperialist country is the United States. This is a conclusion we arrived at after an in-depth analysis of U.S. foreign policy and military strategy. Yet, the United States is not strong enough to impose its imperialist policy of hegemony on any place in the world at any time. It is necessary for us to have a comprehensive view of U.S. policies.

It is true that the United States is clinging to its policy of military supremacy and hegemony, as is the case with the Iraq War. Despite the fact

that the failure of the U.S. war of aggression and military occupation is undeniably clear, President Bush has launched a plan to send additional troops to Iraq. How arrogant this option is! I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that a withdrawal of the occupation forces is the answer.

The United States is engaging in East Asian affairs mainly based on its own diplomatic strategy. North Korea is the main issue in this region that the United States is seeking to resolve through diplomacy. It has improved its relations with Vietnam, China, and other ASEAN countries.

In Vietnam, seeing that Vietnam-U.S. relations are improving, I was impressed by the Vietnamese people's generosity and broad mindedness. At the meeting with CPV General Secretary Nong Duc Manh, I stated, "The Vietnamese people have twice won victory over the United States. It won in the war, and is now winning in terms of morals."

In the present-day world even the United States cannot impose a military solution as the only way because of the structural changes taking place in favor of peace.

Countries aiming for socialism are achieving economic development while reducing poverty

Now let's move on to the second group of countries, countries aiming for socialism. Vietnam, China, and Cuba have a total population of about 1.4 billion. The current represented by this group has much greater weight than the former Soviet Union.

China is achieving major economic development. Vietnam now chairs the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. It has joined the World Trade organization (WTO), thus increasing its international presence both politically and economically. I am glad to see with my own eyes how Vietnam is achieving social development. Cuba, which has withstood a sustained U.S. economic blockade, is moving out of isolation into the mainstream in the Americas, where democratic transformation is underway extensively in Latin America.

It is important to note that countries of this group are successfully solving problems that capitalist countries cannot, in particular poverty reduction. In Vietnam, the *Doi Moi* (renovation) process has been successful in reducing poverty. During the last 10 years, Vietnam has reduced the poverty rate from 50% to 20%. The United Nations and the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) have praised this as an outstanding result.

I have here a press cutting. It's an article about a Gallup survey that drew public attention early this year in Japan. Late last year, Gallup, a U.S. opinion poll company, conducted a survey in 53 countries and regions around the world. One of the questions was if they expected that 2007 would be a better year than 2006. Do you know which country marked the highest percentage of respondents who answered "yes"? (Note: The audience shouted, "Vietnam!") I see everyone here knows about the finding. I am glad to know that Vietnam was number one with 94% of the respondents answering "yes." Japan ranked 52nd, with only 19% giving "yes" responses. This makes me sad. I have mixed emotions toward these findings. In Hanoi, I am very impressed to see that Vietnamese people, in particular young people, are so vibrant.

The road to socialism through a market economy in China and Vietnam has a universal relevance. It has a bright future. The Program of the Japanese Communist Party also states clearly that Japan will follow a similar road to socialism/communism. It is my hope that you young Vietnamese people will work to have your country complete the journey that has not yet been taken.

Changes taking place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America offer a promising future

Now let me talk about the third group of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. About 3.5 billion people live in these areas. They account for more than half of the world population and have different social and political systems. They also have different cultures, but most of them have come to assert their right to independently determine their future course instead of following the dictates of big powers. This trend of sovereign independence is developing as a matter of course. Let me talk about some of the recent events that we have felt significant through our diplomatic activities.

Latin America is one such example. In the recent years, left government has been established in Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. In Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, left-wing candidates put up a good fight and came close behind the victorious candidates in their presidential elections. The slogans that were put up by the left forces in these elections were: No

neo-liberalism; independence from U.S. rule; and people-first economy. There is a Latin American country that is trying to develop its democratic change into socialism. Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez says his country's next goal is to achieve socialism.

There is another change that calls my attention. It is taking place in India following the state assembly elections held in April and May in 2006. The left forces led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) were victorious in West Bengal and Kerala. They achieved their seventh victory in a row in West Bengal defending the state government led by the left forces for 30 years since 1977. Kerala is the first Indian state to establish a left government. In the recent election, the left forces re-established their government there. India now has three states under left governments. About 122 million people live in these three states.

Four years ago, I visited West Bengal. In Kolkata, the state capital, I held talks with Chief Minister Shri Buddhadeb Bhattacharya. I asked him what his government's priority is. He answered, "Poverty reduction." West Bengal has been the most successful state in India in reducing the poverty rate. The chief minister explained that his government reduced the poverty rate to 26% from 56% in 1977. The West Bengal government launched a ration card system to help reduce the poverty rate. The government issued the ration card (known as the "green card") to needy families. It can be used to receive job training for free, and buy rice, sugar, kerosene, and other daily necessities. In a farming village, I visited a house provided by the state government. It was a simple but clean house, in which I felt the residents' joy of having their own house to live in. Responding to my question about how the program is funded, the chief minister said that the highest priority is given to the effort to help the poorest people get out of poverty. Tax money is allocated to this effort before anything else. This represents a powerful current of social development serving the people's interests.

One more thing that I want to draw attention to is the current of social progress in the Islamic world. Asia, Africa, and Latin America embrace a total of 3.5 billion people, and 1.3 billion are living in member countries of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). We are expanding exchanges with these countries. In many of these countries, you can feel that the cause of social progress and democracy is making progress in accordance with conditions peculiar to them. Many of them are generally seen as pro-U.S. countries. However, the OIC countries were unanimous in opposing the Iraq War. They are unanimous in opposing hegemony by any country. In September last year (2006), I made an official visit to Pakistan

and had talks with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. We agreed on the need to establish a peaceful international order based on the United Nations Charter, find a reasonable way to eradicate terrorism, and get nuclear weapons abolished. Pakistan has opposed the Iraq War in defiance of U.S. pressure to support it.

Do you know the Islamic people's words of greetings? In Islamic society they say, "*Al-salam alay-kum*" when meeting other people. "*Al-salam*" means peace, and "*alay-kum*" is "with you". So "*al-salam alay-kum*" means "May peace be with you." Try to say this when meeting people in Islamic society, you will find a bright smile light up their face.

In my talks with Pakistani Senate Chair Soomro, I spoke about the Islamic way of greeting, and hit it off with him. I said, "Islamic society is probably the only society to use the word 'peace' in everyday greetings. My understanding is that the spirit of Islam lies in peace, generosity, and equality, and thus shares much with communism." M.Soomro said he was moved by the heartfelt words of support for the Islamic greeting.

In the 21st century, mutual understanding between different cultures is more and more important. It is totally wrong to link Islam to terrorism. Each culture has their own way of development. It is important to understand and respect each other's cultures in an effort to achieve peaceful coexistence. This way will enable us to establish heart-to-heart contacts with people in Islamic society.

Try to say, "*Al-salam alay-kum*" to friends from Islamic countries, and you can make good relations with them.

Former Soviet republics and the development of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The fourth group consists of former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries. These countries have brought back capitalism. Initially, it was thought that everything would go fine under capitalism, but that was not the reality.

The path these countries have embarked on is not simple. But what has caught my attention is the moves of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russia, Central Asian countries, China, and South Asian countries are its members. Last year (2006), the SCO held a summit meeting marking its 5th anniversary and issued a declaration that contains

agreement on a reasonable direction, namely to establish a peaceful international order based on the United Nations Charter, respect differences in civilizations, conduct exchanges among civilizations on an equal basis, and enhance harmonious development. The SCO is growing into a community for peace that includes countries in the central part of Eurasia. I believe that this represents a promising move toward a peaceful future.

I have discussed four groups of countries. Isn't it interesting to think about the world in this way?

World order of peace, changing role of the United Nations, and from military alliances to communities of peace

Finally, I would like to talk about two points marking two major structural changes in the 20th century world that have positive effects on building a world order of peace.

One is the changing role of the United Nations. During the era dominated by the U.S.-Soviet confrontation, the United Nations could not function properly. For example, it was unable to adopt even a resolution during the war of aggression against Vietnam. It could do nothing to stop the brutal war of aggression.

But the victory of the Vietnamese people brought about a change in the United Nations. In the 1980s, the U.N. General Assembly began to adopt resolutions critical of superpowers' outrageous acts, including the U.S. aggression against Grenada in 1982, the U.S. attack on Libya in 1986, the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989. The U.N. General Assembly condemned the acts of aggression against the three countries as violation of the U.N. Charter. The Vietnamese people's victory brought about a change in the United Nations. It was a historic achievement made by the Vietnamese people.

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about another change in the role of the United Nations. The United Nations became more active after the collapse of the Soviet Union. On the Iraq War, there took place a heated debate in the U.N. Security Council over whether it was appropriate to endorse a war against Iraq. The United Nations never approved of the war. For the first time in history, a major debate on the eve of the invasion resulted in refusal to authorize the war.

The other change to note is that military alliances have weakened throughout the world. In Southeast Asia, there was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) (*). Some of its members participated in the war of aggression against Vietnam. It was disbanded after the Vietnamese people defeated the aggressors. There was also a military alliance called Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) (**) That was dissolved after the Vietnamese people's victory (1975) and the Iranian Revolution (1979). In the case of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), France, Germany, Canada and other countries opposed the Iraq War, causing cracks in the alliance. Thus, the military alliance setup has been weakening worldwide. There is one exception. That is the Japan-U.S. military alliance which continues to exist contrary to the world trend for peace. We are strongly demanding the abrogation of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, a major military alliance treaty.

(*) SEATO: An alliance organized (1954) under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty by representatives of Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States.

(**) CENTO: The treaty was adopted in 1955 by Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran, as well as the United Kingdom.

What is emerging to replace the military alliance setup in the world? A current in favor of establishing communities of nations for peace is. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in which Vietnam is a major member nation, is a good example. So are the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and the 12-country South American Community of Nations (CSN).

These communities of nations for peace are very different from military alliances. They do not seek to have enemy countries outside their regions. A military alliance necessarily seeks to have one or more potential enemies. Do you know what the U.S. president's main job is? It is often said that his main job is to look for an enemy. But a community of nations for peace does not have a potential enemy. It is open to the outside world. ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia has been expanding with the participation of China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Japan, and Republic of Korea. It embraces countries in which 53% of the world's population lives. ASEAN is now asking the United States to join the Treaty. The United States seems to be reluctant to do so. At any rate, the community of nations for peace is open to the outside world instead of seeking enemies.

In the present world order of peace, military alliances are being replaced with communities for peace. This is a major change in the world.

I would like to emphasize that the Vietnamese people's struggle that defeated two imperialist interventions has made a great contribution to the huge changes taking place in relation to the world order for peace. The Vietnamese people's struggle has helped change the role of the United Nations and has given impetus to the dissolution of military alliances. I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my respect for the Vietnamese people's struggles.

We will do our utmost to advance the struggle and win in Japan

Japanese people's struggle is essential for world peace and social progress. The biggest problem in Japanese politics is subservience to the United States, an aberration that has no parallel in the rest of the world. In Japan, we are now fighting against policies that the United States is forcing Japan to carry out by revising the Japanese Constitution to be able to fight wars abroad with the United States. The main task in this struggle is to defend the Japanese Constitution's Article 9 that renounces war and prohibits Japan from maintaining war potential.

In the struggle to pave the way for a bright future in Japan, we are facing fierce reactionary and anti-communist attacks. This is a difficult part of our struggle peculiar to a highly developed capitalist country, and in particular Japan. The JCP is the most powerful party in terms of connection with the people at the grassroots level. We will further increase this power in order to achieve victory in the democratic revolution in Japan and to pave the way for socialism/communism.

Tuong lai la cua cac ban tre (The future belongs to young people).

Xin cam on (Thank you).

[Question and Answer Session]

Shii: we have 20 minutes before closing this meeting. I invite you to ask any questions you might have.

JCP's role in promoting exchanges between Japan and Vietnam

Q: I want to thank you very much for giving us an opportunity to listen to you talk. I have a question. What is the Japanese Communist Party's role in promoting exchanges between Japan and Vietnam?

SHII Kazuo, Japanese Communist Party Executive Committee Chair:

I am pleased that very friendly relations are developing between our two governments as well as between our two peoples.

During the years of the Vietnamese people's war for national salvation against U.S. aggression, we fought in solidarity with your struggle for independence. This was the major form of friendship and solidarity we expressed at the time. Today, we are trying to play the role of developing friendship and solidarity with the Vietnamese people in new ways.

In my talks with CPV General Secretary Nong Duc Manh, I made two points. One is that our two parties will cooperate for peace throughout the world as well as in Asia. We agreed that U.S. troops must pull out of Iraq. We also agreed that the issues relating to North Korea must be resolved through peaceful diplomacy. Japan is the only atom-bombed country. We confirmed that we will cooperate with each other for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Vietnamese people are victims of chemical defoliants, weapons of mass destruction. I am very satisfied with the agreement we reached to work together to get nuclear weapons abolished. In Japan, the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs is held every year. Vietnam sends its delegation to the World Conference every year. The Vietnamese president has sent heartfelt messages to the World Conference. I want to thank all of you for your continued cooperation.

There is another way of developing cooperation between Japan and Vietnam, and that is theoretical exchanges between the JCP and the CPV. In Vietnam, you are trying to develop the road to socialism through a market economy under the *Doi Moi* policy. The JCP is also trying to develop a similar path toward achieving socialism although our conditions are different from yours. The JCP and the CPV have agreed to have theoretical exchanges on such questions as paths to socialism and views of

the 21st century world.

I want to point out one important thing in this regard. “Socialist-oriented market economy is what the *Doi Moi* process is about. By the way, what is socialism? Socialism is a product of a critique of capitalism, and it becomes necessary because of the problems that capitalism causes. In your effort to develop your cause, it will be useful to study about the evils of capitalism. Japan is a textbook example.

In Japan, a recent increase in poverty is a major social problem. It can be seen in stark contrast with Vietnam, where you are successfully reducing the poverty rate. You may find it hard to believe that people are starving to death or committing suicide because of hardships in the world’s second largest economy. We are struggling to solve this problem. The market economy does have merits, but laissez-faire market economics will result in harming people. Well-regulated economics is necessary because if you use the market economy as panacea, as it is practiced in Japan, serious poverty and social disparities will follow. In this sense you will find it useful to take a look at Japan’s experiences and our struggle. So in sum, our two parties have agreed to cooperate on two fronts, one on the issue of peace in the world as well as in Asia, and the other in theoretical exchanges.

On nuclear power generation and nuclear weapons

Q: I am in the third year of Hanoi University’s department of Japanese. I would like to ask questions concerning nuclear issues. What is your view of nuclear power plants? Without them, we will face a major issue of the shortage of electricity. I also would like you to tell us your view about North Korea.

Shii: Let me begin with the issue of nuclear power generation. Our position is that every country has a right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Every country has the right to choose their energy policy on its own. However, as far as we know, nuclear power plants are still incomplete in terms of safe technology. They are not free from the danger of radioactivity-related accidents. Accidents are occurring frequently in Japan. This is why we are insisting that Japan’s energy policy should stop depending on nuclear power generation and should develop alternative energy sources.

On the question of nuclear weapons, we are working hard to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Of course, we are absolutely against North

Korea's nuclear armaments. Talks aimed at achieving a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons are underway with six countries participating. We wish this effort success. We oppose any country becoming a new member of the nuclear club.

We are also critical of the present Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty because it is an unequal treaty that allows five powers to maintain their monopoly over nuclear weapons. It tempts non-nuclear countries to seek to have nuclear weapons on the grounds that there is no reason for allowing the United States to maintain its nuclear weapons and others not to do so. The consequence will be an increase in the number of nuclear powers. So, this problem can only be solved fundamentally by eliminating nuclear weapons from all over the world.

Last year (2006), I visited Pakistan and raised this question in my talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Pakistan has nuclear weapons. It became a nuclear power on the grounds that it is in rivalry with India. Although we were aware of this situation facing Pakistan, I said to Prime Minister Aziz, "I am speaking on behalf of a political party of the only atomic-bombed country, Japan. We are not in a position to ask Pakistan alone to give up its nuclear weapons. However, I request the Pakistani government to take the initiative for eliminating nuclear weapons from all over the world." Mr. Aziz said he agreed with me.

We want to do all we can to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world. There was a time in the past when the use of nuclear weapons against Vietnam was considered. At the time, we raised our voices to stop such a horrendous act.

Friends, let us work together to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world as quickly as possible.

On former Soviet society and socialism

Q: *What is your view of Russia's failure in socialism? Historically, Russia had an important role to play in developing socialism. Socialism collapsed in Russia, but its communist party continues to exist. You said that you are aiming for socialism. What relations does your party have with the communist party in Russia?*

Shii: The Japanese Communist Party has relations with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. But in the past, the JCP and the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union were engaged in heated polemics prompted by the CPSU trying to organize a group that could be used as its agent and to overthrow the JCP leadership from within. We renounced this interference. But the CPSU refused to abandon its policy of hegemony and interference.

Initially, our party believed that the Soviet Union was a socialist country. But we changed our perception of the Soviet Union because the great socialist power under the cover of socialism tried to overthrow an independent communist party struggling in a capitalist country. Seeing the Soviet Union carry out interference and aggression against other countries, the fundamental question came to our mind: Is this socialism in the true sense of the word? That's why when the CPSU was disbanded in 1991, the JCP issued a statement wholeheartedly welcoming an end to a colossal evil that had adverse effects on the world.

We then began studying about the Soviet society that collapsed. As a result, we concluded that it cannot be regarded as a socialist society not only because of its policy of hegemony and autocracy, but because of its economic foundations. In the early period of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin, there was trial and error in the course of seriously making efforts to build socialism. Some of its achievement had positive impact on the world. However, after Stalin became the leader, Soviet society took a wrong course marked by hegemony and autocracy that had nothing in common with socialism.

The main issue in socialism is socialization of the means of production, which means transferring the ownership, control and management of the means of production to society. The socialization of the means of production can take various forms in accordance with the situation and other conditions of the country. But we believe socialism must not ignore the principle that "immediate individual producers are the key players." This principle is clearly established in the JCP Program.

It is true that former Soviet society had state ownership and collective ownership, but were the workers treated as the key players? Rather than being treated as the key players, they were oppressed. This does not qualify the society to claim to be socialist. Workers should be the key players of the society and of productive activities. Only when workers can voluntarily participate in economic decision-making can the society be called socialist.

In Vietnam, I have learned that one key phrase of your society under

the *Doi Moi* policy is “People are the masters” and that you are seriously exploring how to implement this.

Society in the former Soviet Union was not like that. What do you think if the Soviet regime remains today? It would be difficult for Vietnam to follow the road to socialism through a market economy. I think that the demise of the Soviet Union was good for all of us because it has enabled you to push ahead with socialist-oriented nation-building freely and independently.

I have explained the position of the Japanese Communist Party on this difficult question elsewhere.

Japanese-Vietnamese translation

Shii: Finally, I would like to express our thanks to KITAGAWA Toshifumi for his translation.

Do you know the history of Japanese-Vietnamese translation? It began in 1966, when the JCP delegation led by then JCP General Secretary MIYAMOTO Kenji and attended by FUW Tetsuzo, former JCP Central Committee chair, visited Vietnam and held talks with the Vietnam Workers’ Party delegation led by First Secretary Le Duan. Our two parties had the first ever in-depth discussion there and established relations. President Ho Chi Minh also attended a session. The main theme of the talks included forming an international united front against the war of aggression against Vietnam. Our two parties reached agreement on many issues. But there was one difficulty due to the lack of interpreters between Japanese and Vietnamese. Can you guess how the discussion went? The two delegations used Chinese between Vietnamese and Japanese.

At that time, President Ho Chi Minh proposed exchanging students to study each other’s language. The JCP accepted his proposal and began sending students to Vietnam. Vietnamese students came to Japan to study Japanese. I hear that many of you are studying Japanese. I want you to know that that was how we began to study each other’s language. Those who studied in Vietnam and Japan are doing good jobs in their respective countries.

Wishing you every success in the study of language and in the study of social and natural sciences, I conclude my talk. Thank you for your attention.

(E N D)