

How can we realize Japanese Redress for the War Crimes?

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Why has Japanese Redress been so late?

It's extremely important today to clarify the Japanese past war crimes and to realize the compensation for victims.

International Citizen's Forum on War Crimes & Redress was held in Tokyo on December 10 - 12, 1999. The Forum was organized under the Japan Organizing Committee (JOC) representing many groups of concerned Japanese attorneys, scholars, doctors, and activists. And the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WW2 in Asia joined the JOC in initiating as the Forum's co-organizer. Other supporting organizations include World Jewish Congress, Canadian Jewish Congress, Teacher's Federations from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Including 80 delegates from the US, Canada, Germany, Philippines, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China, an aggregation of about 1200 people participated.

Let me report here what has been clarified on the panel in the Forum.

On the 1st panel "Why Japan has not been able to recognize the War crimes and to make the redress after WW2 ----analysis and evaluation inside & out side of Japan" held at night on 10th, Mr Gunter Saathoff, political scientist, the political plan maker of Green Party in Germany told that Germany is only 10 years ahead compared to Japan, and had done little for as long as 40 years after the war. He also said that in Japan a thorough investigation had not been carried out on the Emperor's responsibility of the war crimes, which does not encourage Japanese people to feel more responsible.

In Germany they persecuted the war criminals and found them guilty by internal laws even after Nuremberg Tribunal. On the contrary, in Japan Emperor Hirohito was not prosecuted in Tokyo Tribunal which reflects the occupation policy of the US and only a few people were prosecuted as "A class" war criminals and a few among them were found guilty. No judgement by internal laws were carried out and no one was called to account.

In Germany people recognized that the Nazis is most responsible for the war so that everybody who had belonged to Nazis has been swept out of political power.

In Japan, contrary to Germany, those close to the emperor, so called "Kyuchu Group" remained in power after the war in making a deal with the US occupation forces, although Emperor's military was cut down because they were held responsibility for the war. They stayed in power and kept the Emperor system "Kokutai" and continued to be rulers even after the war like before the war.

They made up a story that military forces waged the war although Emperor Hirohito was reluctant and that it was Hirohito that made the 'Holy Decision' [Seidan] to stop the war at last although military forces were eager to continue the war. Such decision saved many lives of

Japanese people.

This fabrication is similar to the argument often made by the US that they dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to save a millions of lives of US soldiers. This story was made up by the US president Harry Truman and others to justify using atomic bombs and the US nuclear policy after the war.

Japanese Emperor's military forces, army and navy, and government sent research groups to investigate the damages made by a-bombs. And these data were sent to the US military.

These data were the most precious to develop more efficient A-bombs. Japanese government cooperated with the US military press code, which prohibited them to make the A-bomb information public. It definitely contributed to the US nuclear policy.

This cooperation was aimed to mitigate punishment for the war crimes. Especially Emperor Hirohito desired to be exempted from accusation by helping US occupation policy. The commander of occupation forces, Douglas MacArthur intended to use Hirohito to rule Japan without accusation. Commander Ishii Shiro and chief officers of Unit 731 were in a similar situation. They were exempted from being accused as war criminals because they offered the US military the data about the results of biological weapons technology.

War crimes are deeply connected to the Emperor's responsibility for the war. It's hard for a Japanese ruling class to recognize the fact. They fear it will fatally lose the emperor's authority. And it requires so much money.

The 2nd reason why redress has become so late is the same in Japan and Germany. The US placed Japan and Germany as front bases against the Soviet Union. Both countries were supposed to be reconstructed as soon as possible after the ruins by the war. So the US supported both countries economically and suggested they give the least or late or no compensation.

Facing the new aggressive war

After the war Japanese ruling class has been making a policy in dealing with the US openly and secretly for the people.

The governments of Japan and the US signed 'new guidelines for Japan-US defense cooperation. That means that Japan was obligated to prepare with the US to participate in a new war on the Korean peninsula.

On the 3rd panel symposium "Reflections on Humanity from the Atrocities past and Pacifism against Resurgence of Militarism in Japan" held on the morning of 12th, I served as moderator on this panel. Mr. Lee Soogap from Korea, adviser of Democratic Labor Party, said as follows.

The governments of Japan and the US agreed with each other secretly that the US would occupy Philippines and that Japan would invade Korea, and this agreement was left as 'Katsura-Taft memorandum' in 1905. Based upon this Japan colonized Korea in 1910.

Under the Japanese rule for 36 years Koreans were enforced to cooperate with Japanese war.

Men were enforced to be soldiers, forced laborers, and young women were forced to be 'comfort women'; sex slaves for Japanese soldiers and officers.

When Korean war broke out in 1950, Japan joined the war, and Japanese ex-officers and ex-soldiers were summoned to participate. Korean peninsula became a battle field everywhere, and inhabitants of more than 25 places were sacrificed by the soldiers.

Therefore, new guidelines agreements for the war means the 3rd invasion plan to Korean people made by the cooperation of Japan and US.

The government, ruling Liberal Democratic Party, ruling Liberal Party and Komei Party forced through the 3 bills related to the new guidelines of the Japan-US defense cooperation (law responding the situation in areas surrounding Japan, Amendment of article 100-8 of the defense law, wartime ACSA) on May 24, 1999. The law of the situation in areas surrounding Japan is the law of war which was made basically from the "1059 points" demands from the US under the US-Korean joint military plan "5027". The list of 26 points demands in the law as "the support from Japan to the US military" is only small portion of 1059 points, that reveals the law functions as a national mobilization law, which can make all Japanese land logistics base and can make workers belong to local government or private sector work for the war. This military plan intend to move a half million US military forces, 200 naval vessels including 5 aircraft carriers, and 1600 airplanes to the Korean Peninsula in short time and deploy large quantities weapons, munitions and logistic materials to win quickly.

This is essentially the same situation, as when Japanese imperialism and militarism made "Manchuria incident" to protect their interest, "Manchuria and Mongolia are Japanese life lines". And they said "The incident" was not war, so they carried out the Nanking massacre, biological and chemical warfare and the "comfort women" system ignoring International Law.

And then the other bills related to the law of war were enacted one after another. On August 9 "the flag-anthem bill" was enacted. Hinomaru-Kimigayo, (rising sun flag and an anthem praising the Emperor), which were used to be the symbol of the emperor system and aggressive war, now became a national flag and a national anthem. On August 13, anti-organized crime 3 bills, including wiretapping bill, which would allow the police to wiretap legally in the name of control organized crime were enacted. But the real aim of this law is to control the organizations and movements for anti-war, labor union, foreigners' union, and citizens' under the pretext of controlling a gang of racketeers. These laws are expected to operate as the old 'law of preservation of order' (Chian iji ho during the war). And on the same day the bill of new basic registration of inhabitants, which could control everyone of us as numbers will be enacted. It is expected to serve as the basic registration for the draft system.

Strong anti-war movements are essential to realize redress

It's difficult to realize redress only in court. The powerful movements are necessary. The

government will use every means to suppress the people's movements to promote war policy. Redress movements will be targeted. If the people fail to prevent the new war, they will be enforced to commit to the new aggressive war against Asia. How can the people press the government hard about its responsibility for the past war and realize redress, if they have already committed new war crimes.

Nakasone Yasuhiro, who carried out to overturn the post war democratic system under the name of "Total summarizing the post war politics" went to pray Yasukuni shrine as prime minister, accompanied by the cabinet members in 1985 for the first time after World War II. And he ordered that the ministry of education should notify the schools to use Hinomaru-Kimigayo on the ceremony as duty. He praised emperor (Tenno) by saying "The emperor is something like the sun". But Nakasone was involved in making 'comfort women facility' as a navy officer under the order from the military authority, namely Tenno.

He has been notorious advocacy of revision of our Constitution. Now he became a member of the investigative committee for constitution in the House of Representative. He is enthusiastic about revising the constitution, especially article 9, namely "renunciation of war".

If we fail to stop the reactionary like him driving recklessly, we can never expect to realize redress.

Mr. Albert Ho Chun Yan, attorney and legislator and vice chairman of Democratic Party of Hong Kong, told redress movements had become world movements on the 3rd panel symposium in ICF. World people's interests depend on these movements. And I think the same could be said about anti-war movements. So the world people's solidarity for realizing redress and preventing aggressive war is the most important and the source of people's power. It's only by way to reconciliation between the people of the countries that we can get together to achieve our goals.

I think this was the conclusion of ICF.

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