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Establishment of a "Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone" Taken up as an Issue by the United Nations

Hiomichi Umebayashi (RECNA Director)

The question of how universities and other research institutions can contribute to the establishment of a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ) has been a central theme at RECNA since our founding. Now an important development suggests that our efforts in this regard may be repaid to some extent. In July 2013, the NEA-NWFZ was, for the first time in history, officially taken up as a topic by the United Nations.

On July 26, 2013, the Secretary-General of the United Nations delivered the 2013 activity report on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the UN General Assembly (A/68/206). According to this report, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters made five recommendations to the Secretary-General regarding NWFZs, and four recommendations regarding so-called robot weapons or autonomous weapon systems. The regions specifically named in the recommendation regarding NWFZs were the Middle East, Northeast Asia, and South Asia. This was the very first time that the NEA-NWFZ was officially singled out as an issue for the United Nations.

The specific language used in the recommendation regarding Northeast Asia was as follows :

"The Secretary-General should also consider appropriate action for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in North-East Asia, including by promoting a more active role for the regional forums in encouraging transparency and confidence-building among the countries of the region."

In other words, the Board was recommending that the United Nations to take "appropriate action," and more specifically, that this start by creating a forum for confidence-building that would bring together the countries concerned. Various forums at different levels in which the relevant parties from the countries concerned could engage in an unreserved exchange of views on this topic, would certainly contribute to promote the process of confidence-building. From our point of view at the university researcher level, we also may participate and strengthen the process by organizing such a forum at academic level with the involvement of the United Nations with favorable atmosphere. RECNA has already been engaged in discussion of the framework for forming a think tank on the pattern of an international network to address comprehensive approaches to the NEA-NWFZ. Such an academic network could indeed be expected to contribute to the formation of a forum for confidence-building. The workshop which was held in Tokyo in last September was also situated as part of this movement. The Japan-Korea Researchers Caucus, in particular, which was taken place at that workshop, was conceived as a starting point for development intended to involve a broader range of international researchers, and it may become possible to invite United Nations involvement in it.

Meanwhile, it is also essential to bear in mind that the discussion resulting in the above recommendation by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters was not by any means optimistic in tone.

According to the report, one council member stated that in order to establish a new zone such as a NEA-NWFZ, "there should not be any serious security concerns among the States concerned," and there should be "a minimum level of confidence." The report stated that, "Therefore, the creation of such a zone in North-East Asia was deemed difficult."

It is probably because of this background that the recommendation emphasizes the role to be played by the United Nations in confidence-building. Elsewhere in the report are recorded such statements as: "...the need for constructive dialogue and confidence-building as necessary steps for the development of future zones in the Middle East and North-East Asia was emphasized." "The positive role that regional forums could play to promote the establishment of a zone in North-East Asia was mentioned by another Board member."

However, discussion that places emphasis on an environment that poses difficulties for regional security is something that we have come in contact with many, many times already. Of those regions named in the discussion, the one with the most problematic environment is probably the Middle East, and the Middle East is where international, multilateral discussion for the formation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has made the most progress. This point alone suggests that parties debating whether a peaceful environment should come first or a nuclear weapon-free zone should come first must not fall into deterministic positions based on the given environments. The point to emphasize here is that the proposal for a NWFZ in the Northeast Asia of today functions as an inducement to develop an environment of peace.

When we learned of the Advisory Board's recommendations, President Tsakhia Elbegdorj of Mongolia had already made the following penetrating remarks to the General Assembly in light of those recommendations:

"Mongolia is prepared, on an informal basis, to work with the countries of Northeast Asia to see if and how a nuclear weapon-free zone could be established in the region. Though we know well that that would not be easy and would require courage, political will and perseverance, it is doable, if not right away." (High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, September 26, 2013)

Note: The original texts and Japanese translations of the "Recommendation by the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters" and of the "President of Mongolia at the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament" are available in the RECNA citizen's database.

"Denuclearization of Northeast Asia and of the World" the 3rd Workshop Held in Tokyo

Hirofumi Umebayashi (RECNA Director)



The participants of the 3rd Workshop at Meiji Gakuin University, Shirokane campus 15 September 2014

The research project on "Developing a Comprehensive Approach to a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ)" that RECNA has been engaged in since its establishment in 2012 culminated with the project's third workshop, which was held September 14-16 2014 in Tokyo.

This also served as a celebration of the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was to be held on September 26 as declared by the UN General Assembly. The workshop took place at two locations, the Grand Prince Hotel New Takanawa and the Shirokane campus of Meiji Gakuin University.

A consistent theme throughout the workshop sessions was the multifaceted examination of the proposal by Dr. Morton Halperin (Open Society Institute in the United States, and former Special Assistant to

the President of the USA) that the objective of establishing a NEA-NWFZ be positioned as one element of the Comprehensive Agreement on Peace and Security in Northeast Asia. Such an agreement would simultaneously resolve this and a number of closely related issues. Given this orientation, the workshop yielded formulations of objectives like the following:

- In the 70th anniversary year of the atomic bombing, and in advance of the NPT Review Conference in 2015, examine the relationship between establishment of a NEA-NWFZ and global nuclear disarmament.
- Share topics and awareness of issues with informed people and researchers who are directly or indirectly involved in formulating Japan's policies.
- Exchange topics and awareness of issues with researchers and policymakers in Japan and South Korea, and develop upcoming joint initiatives.
- In light of the recommendation by the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the Secretary-General that the United Nations contribute to establishment of a NEA-NWFZ, expand research cooperation with the United Nations.

Given objectives of these kinds, the following steps were taken with regard to the form and content of the workshop:

- Dr. Jayantha Dhanapala, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Chair of the NPT Review and Extension Conference of 1995, was invited to be the keynote speaker.
- Dr. Halperin, Dr. Peter Hayes, Dr. Kiho Yi, Amb. Jargalsaikhan Enkhsaikhan, and others who have been engaging in joint research on comprehensive approaches to achieving a NEA-NWFZ were invited as continuing core members.
- Obtaining the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japanese government policymakers and senior specialists were invited to the workshop and a meeting for exchange of views with Dr. Halperin and other researchers from outside Japan was also held at MOFA. Diet members Hon. Keisuke Suzuki (Liberal Democratic Party), Hon. Natsuo Yamaguchi (Komeito), and Hon. Katsuya Okada (Democratic Party of Japan) made statements relating to workshop themes.
- Eight researchers from South Korea were invited to the work-

shop. The Japan-Korea Researchers Caucus also held a meeting and discussed future joint research between Japan and South Korea. Two members of the South Korean National Assembly were invited to attend from the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) Republic of Korea Section, as well, and the opportunity was taken to have an exchange of views in the forum for Diet members held by the PNND Japan Section.

- In addition to obtaining the cooperation of the United Nations Information Centre, we also gained the participation of Mr. Valere Mantels, Senior Political Affairs Officer in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch of the United Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The following will recapitulate some noteworthy points from the discussions that took place during these events.

Dr. Halperin, in his presentation, emphasized the need for the Japanese government to initiate action now regarding the NEA-NWFZ, and the benefits of doing so. The fact that the workshop venue was in Tokyo no doubt had some part in this, but as he himself has pointed out, the perception of the current situation in Washington makes it difficult to create movement in the US government. Nevertheless, Dr. Halperin remains unchanged in his conviction that the denuclearization of North Korea is crucial both for the stability of East Asia and for the global non-proliferation regime. In that case, the government of some one of the countries involved will have to initiate action, and according to his analysis, right now that country is Japan.

Dr. Dhanapala related his position on the significance of NWFZs, giving the listeners a sense of the depth of his insight and the magnitude of his experience. As a result of the expansion of NWFZs, the locations where nuclear weapons can be deployed have been growing more limited, and Dr. Dhanapala pointed out the effect this has had in imposing constraints on the strategic concepts of the nuclear weapon states. He also explained that although NWFZs have not eliminated regional conflicts nor brought about general and complete disarmament, the NWFZs have been creating a foundation for the proliferation of peace and establishing the right of humankind to live in a nuclear-free world.

The workshop was characterized by repeated discussion of NWFZs and extended nuclear deterrence, or the "nuclear umbrella." This is to be expected given the theme of the NEA-NWFZ, in which Japan and South Korea are central. However, the discussion also indicates that this issue is on the new front of theoretical debate regarding the NWFZ. Dr. Dhanapala stated that "extended nuclear deterrence and a NWFZ are not compatible," and Mr. Mantels stated that "it is not productive to create a zone in which signatory nations continue to depend on extended nuclear deterrent force." There was a distinct impression that the cumulative weight of discussions on the part of persons connected with the UN lay in this direction of incompatibility of NWFZ and "nuclear umbrella". On first hearing, this may seem to be inconsistent with the argument Halperin used to persuade Japanese and South Korean policymakers in which he stressed the compatibility of NWFZ and existing security treaties with the United States. Under more precise examination, however, it is apparent that such is not the case, and this seems likely to become one of the important issues on which RECNA should make a contribution toward logical construction to reconcile these opinions.

As was the case in 2013, the Nagasaki Peace Declaration that was announced on August 9 in 2014 included specific content in response to the recent developments inside Japan and overseas. Firstly, regarding the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, and the results of the Nayarit Conference, the declaration pointed out that the damage caused by nuclear explosions is wide-ranging, affecting the economy, environment and climate, and once again reiterated these dangers.

In addition to this, another noteworthy point of the declaration is the way that it makes a positive appeal not only to the nuclear weapon states but also to those states such as Japan that are in alliance with them and follow a security policy of sheltering under the so-called "nuclear umbrella." This is of course clearly a reference in consideration of the Japanese government's principle of adhering to the policy of dependence upon the United States' nuclear deterrents, but it can also surely be seen as reflecting the debate about what role the non-nuclear weapon states under the nuclear umbrella should be playing in order to abolish nuclear weapons, a debate that is becoming more prominent in the current international society. Hitherto in international society, because of the conflicting opinions of the nuclear weapon states who believe in the nuclear deterrent and the non-aligned states who strongly urge the encouragement of nuclear disarmament, the states who have relations with the nuclear weapon states have had to fall in line behind the nuclear weapon states, and have not been able to make their presence felt. However, the fact is that the opinion that the states under the nuclear umbrella should newly examine what role they can play in nuclear disarmament and whether they should play such a role is being more widely voiced on an international basis. This raises for Japan – a country that while it sits under the nuclear umbrella is also at the same time the only war victim of atomic bombs – enormously important questions.

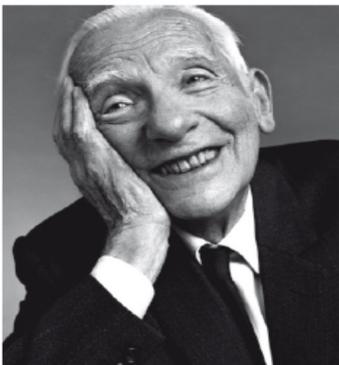
In answer to these questions, endlessly reciting the so-called "argument base on the realism" that Japan has no choice but to rely on the United States' nuclear arms and their deterrence in the face of the threatening reality surrounding Japan can only be described as inflexible and unimaginative. If that really is the case then one might just as well say that the states under the nuclear umbrella have no choice but to keep quiet and submit to the present state of affairs. Without an inkling of their own volition or prospects for the future,

states can hardly be expected to make their presence felt in the international society. If Japan wishes to earn an honorable status within the international society it should put forward a vision that is crystal-clear and that can earn the empathy of other states, and then work towards the realization of that vision, not just with words, but by showing a stance of persistent effort. Regrettably, in present day Japan, while the notion of peace is espoused as Japan is the only country to have experienced a nuclear attack, when it comes to the debate about abolishing nuclear weapons we have for many years timidly covered behind the shield of the "argument base on the realism." The Peace Declaration can be described as a cry to spur on this timorous Japan from the atomic bombing site of Nagasaki, a cry that contains a degree of frustration and irritation.

The year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the nuclear attacks, and from now on the opportunities we have to hear the actual voices of the survivors will become more and more infrequent. From now on the age group who are the children of a generation that has experienced neither exposure to nuclear weapons nor war itself will take on the role of seeking the abolition of nuclear weapons, and the expectations towards this young generation are incorporated in the declaration. Handing down to future generations the actual experience of "hibaku," exposure to nuclear weapons, will now become extraordinarily difficult. It is for this very reason that the unshakeable vision of "the abolition of nuclear weapons" must be established as a bond that ties together people and goes beyond the bounds of generation or nationality. The genuine "argument base on the realism" does not consist of shrugging one's shoulders and unquestioningly submitting to the current state of affairs. Having thoroughly grasped the present circumstances and made a fresh starting point from there, moving on to try to improve the situation and push it towards the ideal state of affairs is the "realism" in its truest sense. I hope that it will be the 2014 Nagasaki Peace declaration that becomes the herald of a new "realism" against nuclear weapons in Japan.

The Social Responsibility of Scientists and the Nuclear Issue

Tatsujiro Suzuki (RECNA Vice Director)



Sir Joseph Rotblat (1908–2005)
adapted from <http://fissilematerials.org>

My field of specialization is nuclear energy and non-proliferation policy, and within this field the plutonium issue in particular could be described as my life work and a never-ending theme. My first encounter with plutonium was in 1977 when I was studying in the U.S. and President Jimmy Carter announced a stunning nuclear non-proliferation policy. Ever since those days my central research theme has been the nuclear fuel cycle that uses plutonium as its fuel

and the nuclear issue. In fact, it was from that time that I always describe plutonium as "the nuclear material used in the Nagasaki atomic bomb", which consequently also kept Nagasaki in my mind from that time. I regard the stroke of luck that I was recently appointed as a professor at Nagasaki University as being highly providential, and I am about to start my research work in earnest.

One other activity that could be described as being part of my life work is the action I have made on behalf of an organization comprising scientists seeking the eradication of nuclear weapons and war, called the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Dr. Susumu Shirabe, a RECNA and Nagasaki University Trustee, provided an introduction to the organization in the previous newsletter (Vol. 3 No. 1, August 2014), so in this article I would like to tell readers about the late Sir Joseph Rotblat, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 for his work over many years at the center of the Pugwash Conferences, ever since the organization was founded. Dr. Rotblat was a Polish émigré and scientist who participated in the Manhattan Project. He is known as the only scientist who withdrew from the project when he learned that the German's efforts to develop nuclear weapons had failed and he felt that there was no longer any point in continuing with the development of these weapons. This episode in his life alone demonstrates his integrity and strength as a human being, and this ethos is still a vital pillar of the Pugwash Conferences and its work as the "social responsibility of scientists," a theme that continues to be of the utmost relevance in the present day and age.

The time that I was able to talk in person with Dr. Rotblat is something that I still cherish as an asset in my heart. In the hope of turning this asset, to some extent, into a reality, I started a Peace Pledge Movement for Scientists in Japan in 1999. This movement did not

seek to elicit signatures for petitions against nuclear weapons; it was a movement to ask individual scientists/engineers to pledge not to be involved in any activities (research, development, production and usage) of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. I set up the volunteer body Peace Pledge Japan in the hope of obtaining the promises of many experts and members of the public, but the movement broke down in the space of a few years. One of the major factors behind this was that in a nation with a strong group culture like Japan there are many people who feel uncomfortable with the concept of making "personal promises," moreover, I was shocked to discover that many researchers and specialists felt that as a member of a group or organization if that group decided to go ahead with nuclear weapons development they would have no choice but to acquiesce. The Japanese culture that sees faithfulness to the group as being more important than individual social responsibility may of course have its good aspects, but as you can see there is also a worrying side to it.

The event that made me feel this worrying side most acutely was the accident at the Fukushima No.1 nuclear power plant on March 11, 2011. The background to this accident was the problem of the sense that nuclear power experts in Japan had refrained from research or comments on safety out of consideration to the power industry. The Atomic Energy Society of Japan (AESJ) has a splendid Code of Ethics. Section 4-10 of its Action Manual states: "When necessary, securing the safety of the public through the disclosure of information will take precedence, even if that information constitutes a violation of the obligation for confidentiality." However, respecting the code of ethics is ultimately a personal, individual decision. When that aware-

ness amongst scientists becomes weak just how severe is the impact upon society! Surely "social responsibility" is a question of constantly maintaining an awareness of the size of that impact. I should point out that the Code of Ethics of the AESJ states, with regard to the limits of peaceful use of nuclear power: "The use of nuclear power is limited to peaceful purposes. As a matter of their dignity and honor, members of the Society shall in no way participate in research, development, manufacture, acquisition or use of nuclear weapons." (Section 2-2 of the Action Manual.) This point is rather unusual among such academic societies across the world, and is a little-known fact. Nuclear specialists must respect these guidelines and promote them throughout the world.

Having experienced the Fukushima accident my feelings as an expert towards social responsibility have grown even stronger. I said in the mail magazine when I resigned from the Atomic Energy Commission: "In addition to rationality, policies must not forget humanity and must be compassionate, otherwise they will never gain the trust of society." I think that this is a message that can also be applied to policies concerning nuclear non-proliferation and the abolition of nuclear weapons. I would like to conclude this article with the following words from the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which is at the roots of the Pugwash Conferences: Remember Humanity, Forget the Rest.

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