

## To Our Friends in Asian Countries

In early July 2016 in Japan, the House of Councilors election was held and the forces that support the revision of the Japanese Constitution, led by ruling Liberal Democratic Party, occupied two-thirds of all seats enough to start the revising process in the Diet. Soon after the election, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his intention to enhance the debate on this issue.

He and other constitutional revision forces are aiming at making Japan a country which can wage a war overseas by revising Japanese Constitution article 9 which renounces the sovereign right of war. Last year, the government steamrolled the so-called 'War Bill' that allows the Japanese Defense Forces to engage in a military operation beyond the Japanese territory. In many Asian countries where the memories of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War have not vanished, people are worried that it may let Japan give up its pacifism that has been protected by article 9 for more than 70 years and come back to militarism again.

Japan Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee (Japan AALA), opposing such attempt by the ruling coalition government, actively involved in the election campaign making an effort to restore constitutionalism by canceling the War Bill and not least to prevent the constitutional revision forces from occupying the majority of the Diet. The ruling LDP and Komeito coalition, evading the issue of constitutional revision throughout the electoral campaign, propagandized 'the threats by China and North Korea'. We appealed that promoting the peace diplomacy based on the Japanese Constitution article 9 and gaining the Asian people's confidence is the greatest security for Japan, calling for a creation of a Community of Peace, Cooperation and Prosperity in East Asia. Steamrolling unconstitutional War Bill led so many citizens to have a sense of crisis about deterioration of the constitutionalism of Japan. They strongly demanded the opposition parties to unify in order to stop Abe politics, by which the historical coalition between 4 opposition parties and citizens' movements came true before the election.

As a result of the election, the 4 opposition parties' unified candidates won 11 of the 32 single seat constituencies including Okinawa Prefecture and others in the northeast Japan, gaining more vote than three years ago. Particularly in the districts above where problems of an American new base construction, nuclear power plant reoperation and TPP were the main issues, the opposition parties' unified candidates gained important victories which clearly showed the determination of the people to fight the Abe coalition. Although the constitutional revision forces occupy the two-thirds of the Diet, we are surely convinced that the first coalition between the 4 opposition parties and citizens' movement was a great

success and of great use for our coming struggles against Abe's reckless policies.

It is the tension increasing in East Asia that has brought us the biggest difficulties in our campaign. We are facing conflicts and military tensions in the South China Sea, in addition to the perpetual nuclear experiments and the missile launches by North Korea. Mass media in Japan report these incidents in incendiary ways which give the greatest excuses for the expansion of the military role of Japan in accordance with the U.S.-Japan Alliance.

We strongly demand North Korea to stop the nuclear experiments and missile launches. At the same time, we oppose the military pressures like the joint military exercises carried out by the US and South Korea. We call for the concerned nations to immediately reopen the Six Party Talks in order to resolve the nuclear and missile issue with North Korea and formally end the Korean War by replacing Armistice Agreement with permanent peace pact. As to the South China Sea issue, we demand the concerned nations not to take further unilateral actions to change the existing conditions and to stop militarization of the reclamation.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China are negotiating the Code of Conduct (COC). We ask for an agreement to be settled as soon as possible on the COC and the peaceful resolution of overlapping claims in the South China Sea. We call for concerned nations to establish the mechanism for solving territorial issues in the whole East Asia. We demand the governments of the US and Japan not to intervene into the South China Sea dispute, much less militarily.

Japan AALA, fighting for no nuclear, no allied, neutral Japan, pursuing peace diplomacy based on the Japanese Constitution article 9, appeal to all the people struggling for the right of self-determination and peace, independence and co-existence in Asia, to strengthen our cooperation and solidarity.

July 26, 2016

Japan Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council