

2018/11/2

## **New Development in North East Asia and A Vision of a Community of Peace in East Asia**

The president of Japan AALA, Mr. Yasuhiro Tanaka delivered the following speech at the ACSC/APF2018 Singapore November 2, 2018 at Singapore Polytechnic Graduate Guild.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

First of all I would like to thank the organizing committee for inviting Japan AALA to this conference. I am great honored to have this opportunity to speak about peace and security in East Asia. Japan AALA is a Japanese private peace organization with thirty five hundred associates. Since its foundation in 1955, we are working towards a just and peaceful world without nuclear weapons and no nuclear, no aligned and neutral Japan. We are a member of AAPSO and participating in the Non-Aligned Summit Meeting as an observer.

From our standpoint, we have been watching with keen interest the development and peace efforts ASEAN which concluded the Treaty of Nuclear Free Zone and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). Last year, although we were outside of the region, our request was accepted to participate in the Manila conference as an observer, and we enjoyed opportunity to exchange views with other participants. This time, I would like to speak about the latest development in North East Asia including a dramatic evolution of Korean Peninsular and a vision of creating a Community of Peace in whole East Asia.

### **Significance of the change of the situation of the Korean Peninsular**

Since the beginning of this year, a sweeping change has come over in the Korean Peninsula. Until last year, tension kept increasing due to the nuclear test and long range missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) as well as a provocative posture of the US Trump Administration. A move for reconciliation between North and South Korea began in February when North Korea decided to participate in the Pyeonchang Olympic game. The move led to three summit talks between Chairman Kim Jung-un and President Moon Jae-in, which brought remarkable advance toward peace, coexistence and unification. One year ago, President Trump and Chairman Kim were threatening each other with nuclear weapons. This year, they staged a historic Summit meeting - first in history and agreed to establish a new relationship for "peace and prosperity of the Korean Peninsula". Factors that made this move possible include Chairman Kim's shift of priority from military to economy and

the peace initiative by President Moon, together with President Trump's America First policy and his personal interest to make a deal with opponents. However, in the background, there is a voice of the people for peace which was symbolically expressed by the South Korean people in their massive candle rally.

What is the nature of the change happening now? From where to where things are moving? It is important to identify significance of the change. The first point is the shift from arms to dialogue. The Trump regime had turned off the "strategic patience" policy advocated by the former Obama administration, and instead, showed off "all options on the table", implying possible military attacks. However, the South Korean Moon administration categorically denied the military option stressing that "there must be no war in the peninsula". The overwhelming international community including China and Russia were also seeking diplomatic solution. Japanese Prime Minister Abe insisted on giving more pressure and denied dialogue, stating that "dialogue for dialogue is meaningless". However, the Trump administration could not take military option which would demand tremendous sacrifices. In place, the regime sought for the dialogue line, because it had to pay consideration to its domestic support base, which has far less interest in Korea than in the Middle East.

The second point is to select cooperation over confrontation and coexistence over tensions. In the Panmunjom declaration in April as well as Pyongyang declaration in September, both leaders, clearly stated that the only way to achieve peace and security is to stop the state of war. There was a clear decision to shift from security by arms to security by trust and cooperation. The US and North Korea joint statement also stated in the first clause that the two countries will establish a new relationship to reflect expectations of people., The transition from "war and hostility" to "peace and prosperity" is the main point of the agreement. The symbolic step of the change was the announcement made immediately after the Summit to cancel the joint military exercise between the United States and South Korea.

The third point is the shift from dependence on other country to self-determination by the same ethnicity. This principle of autonomy was repeatedly stated in both Panmunjom and Pyongyang declarations. I think two leaders share a reflection that politics that depended on outside powers resulted in prolonged conflicts and increased danger of war. The position to make independent decision, not being influenced by intentions of other countries, made it possible to reach the agreement. The same position had prevailed in the past North-South Korean Summit Meetings held in 2000 and 2007, however, it could not materialize. The both Kim Dae-Jung and Nom Hyeon administrations did not have firm supporting base, therefore, they were not able to

overcome pressure from the United States and calculations of neighboring countries. This time, the Moon administration moved things in a way by taking initiative to propose settlement without asking for official consent from the United States.

The fourth point is the shift from nuclear armament to disarmament. Chairman Kim entered the stage as the successor of the policy of military First. But he made the change to give priority to economy, and promised to abolish nuclear weapons in return for security guarantee by the US. Chairman Kim used to justify nuclear weapons as deterrence the "treasured sword" to secure his regime. Now, he is ready to accept denuclearization, mentioning that the nuclear free Korean Peninsula had been the will of his grandfather. In response to this change, the Trump administration had to agree to denuclearize not only North Korea but also the entire Korean Peninsula. The process has just started, and complexed negotiations are anticipated. However, if agreed steps go on, the precondition that has been binding Korea and Japan to the "U.S. nuclear umbrella" will collapse, thus the prospect of building a nuclear-free zone in Northeast Asia including Japan will become a reality.

### **Bandung spirit and the track of ASEAN.**

The process has just begun, and the situation remains unpredictable including the fate of Trump administration. But the change is different from the past. The Moon administration is supported by strong democratic public opinion, and the agreement between the United States and North Korea was made at the summit level. As process of the agreement goes on, north-south confrontation will resolve by concluding the peace treaty, the headquarters of UN forces in Korea will be removed together with , its rear command which is located in Japan. The confrontation in the Korean Peninsula had been used as the leverage to subordinate surrounding countries. If such cold war structure is breaking down, the prospect of building a peace zone in Northeast Asia will come true. .

In this context we recall the Bandung conference which was held in Indonesia 63 years ago. At the conference, leaders of newly independent Asian and African countries first met. They launched 10 principles of coexistence, aiming at fundamental break down of the bilateral confrontation between two giants, the United States and the Soviet Union, and establish national independence and cooperation as "the goal of the third-world". The Bandung spirit was inherited by Non Aliened Movement and played key role in international politics. At that time, North and South Korea were at state of war, therefore could not join the conference. Now, time has come to revive and materialize Bandung Spirit in the Korean Peninsula. If it happens, the same change will spread beyond Korean Peninsula and affect the peacebuilding process throughout East Asia.

One more thing I would like to point out is that the change happening in the Korean Peninsula actually overlaps with the process how ASEAN was developed in Southeast Asia. ASEAN was established in 1967 with five countries. The ASEAN Declaration expressed the spirit of cooperation among nations with diverse history, religion and culture. It was in the middle of the Indochina war, and Philippines and Thailand were at the war. Therefore, there were some misled observations in the international community that the association was an anti-communism league. However, the declaration itself had no anti-communism provision. The primary object of the declaration was to avoid ideological conflicts and appeal cooperation of countries in the Southeast Asia. Later, this spirit evolved into the ASEAN Neutral Declaration of 1972, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord in 1975, the Treaty of the Southeast Asian Nuclear Free Zone and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (TAC). During the period, three countries that had conflicted in the Indochina war joined ASEAN and member countries increased to ten, and finally arrived at establishment of the ASEAN Community 2015.

During these processes, various conflicts occurred, such as tragedy in Cambodia and some military conflicts in boarder area. There were also variety of problems such as human rights suppression and exploitation, poverty and environmental destruction. There are many problems to solve under different conditions of each country such as diverse ethnicity, size of the country, religion, culture and political system. Nevertheless, as far as peace and security is concerned ASEAN achievement in the past 50 years is remarkable. From the perspective of the North East Asia, it is worth asking why many conflicts did not evolve into massive war between countries in ASEAN? Why confusions did not spread as seen in Middle East and Africa? And we see that two teachings have played major role in the history of ASEAN, one is the “Wisdom of coexistence” and the other is “Rule of peace efforts to settle dispute before it develop into war” .Through its growth, ASEAN developed framework of dialogue and cooperation, and expanded them beyond its region to surrounding area to achieve peace. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only international conference that North Korea participates in Asia, and it worked as the valuable window for dialogue. ASEAN countries took this opportunity and moved the situation toward reconciliation of North and South Korea and nuclear disarmament. It was also ASEAN’s initiative to set up periodic forum for dialogue between Japan, China and Korea which are conflicting on historical and territorial issues. In addition, the East Asia Summit involving the United States and Russia began in 2011. Now we can say ASEAN is playing a leading role to establish a new order in East Asia.

Under these circumstances, Japan's political choice is under test. The Abe administration has been taking advantage of the cold war status in the Korean Peninsula to maintain its own power, Magnifying the threat of North Korea he rejected a dialogue, appealing for a stronger pressure and sanction, so that he has left behind and isolated from the movement of reconciliation. It is because Abe administration, getting more subordinated to the US, has been reinforcing military alliance and playing a larger role in the Indo Pacific region. Three years ago he pushed through new security legislations so that Self Defense Forces (SDF) could engage in a war outside its territory together with US forces. Now SDF battleships are dispatched to the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, conducting joint military exercises with US navy every year. His “Indo Pacific Strategy” is aiming to form encirclement around China, using aid program or investment to neighboring countries .He has launched a campaign for revising the article 9 of the constitution which constitutes a base of the Japanese postwar pacifism, by renouncing the sovereign right of war and banning possession of the armed forces.

In the latest election of governorship of Okinawa, southern island of Japan, the candidate opposing a construction of new US military base won a landslide victory, which shows a strong public opinion for a peaceful Japan without foreign military bases. Nevertheless, Abe administration, ignoring the will of Okinawan people, is to hasten the construction works. We think that this policy is going against the tide of peace running in North East Asia. Opposing Abe foreign policy and Japan US military Alliance, we are calling for establishment a relationship of friendship and goodwill with all Asian nations based on the Japanese Peace constitution and principles of Non Aligned Movement, We have been carrying out a signature campaign for a petition to the leaders participating in East Asia Summit to make the best effort to create a community of peace and cooperation in East Asia. Every year we submitted the petition to the government which sponsors the EAS meeting. We believe that this campaign is coincident with desire of ASEAN people as well as Korean people. I conclude with my wish that people understand and work together towards a peaceful East Asia and a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you very much.

(END)