



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

at the Seventy-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly

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[Provisional translation]

North Korea as a threat to peace

Mr. President, North Korea has now manifested itself directly before us as an open threat to peace. What can we do in response? The *raison d'être* of the United Nations is now truly being tested.

North Korea launched SLBMs. Immediately after that it fired three ballistic missiles simultaneously, each traversing 1,000 kilometers to reach Japan's exclusive economic zone. It is purely a matter of good fortune that no commercial aircraft or ships suffered any damage during this incident.

This year alone, North Korea has launched a total of 21 ballistic missiles. In addition, it claims to have successfully detonated a nuclear warhead in a test on September 9.

That nuclear test followed another test conducted this past January. This series of launches of missiles and a detonation of a war head does change the landscape completely.

North Korea's nuclear development and the repeated launches of ballistic missiles are two sides of the same coin.

Right before our eyes, North Korea is carrying out a plan about which there can be no doubt. There is no alternative but to say that the threat has now reached a dimension altogether different from what has transpired until now.

We must therefore respond to this in a manner entirely distinct from our responses thus far. We must concentrate our strengths and thwart North Korea's plans.

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Immediately upon hearing the report of the nuclear test, I telephoned President Barack Obama of the United States. After that I also held telephone talks with President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea. We all agreed that our three countries will demonstrate a resolute attitude towards North Korea, acting in close coordination.

Next is the United Nations' turn on the stage. Now is the time for the Security Council to indicate an unmistakable attitude towards this threat of a new dimension.

Leading Security Council discussions

It was only four months ago that President Obama visited Hiroshima, where countless innocent citizens fell victim to the first atomic bomb ever detonated.

It was a day on which we renewed pledges. However much time it may take, we must never, even for the briefest moment, let up in our efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Our pledges on that day linked both sides of the Pacific and gained new strength.

Despite this, North Korea is now escalating its provocations. This is a challenge posed to the conscience of humankind. Were we to overlook it, how would we justify it to our own consciences?

Peace is something very much like glass. When well-polished and transparent, we are not conscious of its presence. And a small crack can be overlooked for a while without giving rise to any changes.

But before you know it, the crack expands and the glass in time shatters with a crash. That is why day in and day out we must continuously foster the habit of mind of handling glass with great care so that no cracks form.

I believe the original intention of the United Nations, created in the wake of two world wars, was that kind of keen awareness.

For that very reason, it would simply be unacceptable to continue to tolerate military provocation. It is because that would be an act equivalent to openly and in broad daylight setting a crack into glass.

Moreover, the threat to peace now manifest before us, and the nature of the military provocation North Korea has persisted with, are substantially more serious than before.

Ballistic missiles to be launched from submarines. Nuclear warheads to be mounted on ballistic missiles. North Korea is without a doubt poised to have these in its possession.

And the country carrying this out is a country that abducted a large number

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of Japanese, including a girl aged 13 at the time, and deprived them of their peaceful lives, not allowing them to return to their homeland even now.

It is a country that tramples human rights, where no heed whatsoever is paid to restraints on or balances of power. It is a country pushing ahead with a buildup of arms including nuclear weapons and missiles while paying no attention to the plight of its citizens.

The threat to the international community has become increasingly grave and all the more realistic. It demands a new means of addressing it, altogether different from what we applied until yesterday.

Mr. President, this December, Japan will mark the 60th anniversary of its accession to the United Nations.

And 62 years have passed if we count from when the peaceful toll of the bronze bell sent by a Japanese citizen began sounding in the front gardens of the UN grounds on the International Day of Peace each year.

That bell was cast by melting down within the mold coins sent by the Pope. Coins and medals sent by children and adults from more than 60 countries around the world were melted to cast it. What was the wish of the Japanese people contained therein?

Sixty years ago, what the Japanese who had attained a seat in this distinguished Chamber sought from the depths of their hearts, and thereafter consistently and absolutely unfailingly wished for and advocated for was, single-mindedly, world peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

It was a pledge to be passed down for generations not to stop walking along the path which would make that a reality.

Mr. President, on this occasion today, I had originally intended to look back on the path we have walked these 60 years and convey a quiet reflection on how Japan has travelled that road, aiming at world peace and prosperity.

However, now, with the North Korea threat reaching a new level, I feel I must state my determination in light of Japan having upheld its pledge these 60 years.

Now, as the world concentrates on whether the United Nations will thwart North Korea's ambitions or the Security Council will be able to confront North Korea in a united way, Japan, as a Security Council member, will lead the Security Council's discussions.

This, I wish to declare absolutely as my resolution before the distinguished

national representatives gathered here in the General Assembly chamber.

Bringing the rule of law to the seas

Mr. President, no matter the issue facing us, or exactly since we are faced with many challenges, Japan, which marks its 60th year since accession, will spare no effort to strengthen the United Nations.

The cumulative total of the assessed contributions to the UN and assessed contributions to peacekeeping operations that Japan has paid in, as a simple tally of the book value of those contributions, easily exceeds 20 billion U.S. dollars.

The one and only country whose total amount of financial contributions surpass those of Japan over the past 30 years is the United States.

In addition, our track record of development assistance amounts to 334.5 billion U.S. dollars, again as a simple tally of the then book value.

In my view, the United Nations has had three great causes pervading its history.

These are the devotion to peace, the pursuit of growth, and the desire for a world free of injustice and unfairness.

I believe you will recognize that Japan is a country that has made all-out

efforts regarding each of those causes over these 60 years.

Above all, growth serves as the foundation for all. Only when there is growth does peace take root and can injustices be rectified over time.

Take a look and see how greater Asia has now surpassed any other region on earth for the size of its population living under democracy. This is precisely the fruit of the growth that Asia came to enjoy since the mid-1980's, which happens also to be the period since Japanese companies began their vigorous direct investments in Asian nations.

It is only through a free and open trade and investment environment that Japan was able to grow. This is the very same thing that has conferred the prosperity of the present day on the countries of Asia.

Peace, stability, and security of the seas as well as freedom of navigation and overflight are the basis for the peace and prosperity of the international community.

Should there be disputes, the international community must adhere strictly to the principles that states shall make their claims based on international law, they shall not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims, and they shall seek to settle disputes by peaceful means.

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Japan will continue to stand without fail on the side that upholds a world order that is open, free, and unwavering in adhering to the rule of law and international rules.

Let me also say that at the core of the Japanese government I have formed a special team which I lead directly that is working to further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Government of Japan will accelerate the work towards early conclusion of the Paris Agreement on climate change and will carry out without fail its pledge to provide 1.3 trillion yen of assistance for developing countries in 2020.

Japan will spare no effort in strengthening the United Nations in the 60 years to come just as it did over the past 60 years. I wish to pledge this grounded in trust in the Japanese people.

This is Japan's UN Spirit

The person was seen unexpectedly on a corner in Juba. The location was a place where members of a Japan Ground Self-Defense Force engineering unit were in the midst of activities wearing the blue helmets of the United Nations.

"I am really thankful that Japan is building roads. I place my full confidence in you. Isn't there

anything I can do? Let me help you. I don't need anything in return."

Again the next day, and the day after that, the man appeared at the worksite where an arterial road was being laid in the capital of South Sudan, the UN's youngest member state. From the third day, the man began doing the work that he knew would be necessary, and ultimately he continued working together with the members of the Self-Defense Force for eight days.

On the day they went separate ways, as they were patting each other on the back while regretting they had to part, it goes without saying that our engineering unit members, who had heard nothing but words of thanks from this man, were deeply moved.

Juma Ago Isaac. The SDF members each wrote the name of this otherwise nameless man from South Sudan in their notebooks to remember him.

Mr. President, no matter what the job or where, the Japanese engaged in international cooperation there at the local worksites always consider this kind of encounter to be the greatest pleasure.

Wherever they go, the nameless people there wake up to their own abilities and realize that nation-building begins from the very place where they themselves are standing. The Japanese witnessing this are

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moved in ways that become memories lasting their entire lives.

It is a source of quiet pride for me that the relationship between Japan and the United Nations has for the past 60 years brought hearts together in this way in Asia, in Africa, and indeed all around the world. This is Japan's UN spirit. I pledge not to forget this and to foster it and hand it down to the next generation.

Reform of the Security Council as a matter of urgency

I will end my address by pointing out the need for fundamental changes in the UN governance structure. Countries in Africa and Latin America have built up a degree of influence they have never had before in global politics and the global economy, and yet they do not have satisfactory representation on the Security Council. Just this single example makes the current state of affairs on the Security Council indefensible to the generation alive now.

Although international relations at the time the war drew to an end 71 years ago do appear on a page in the history books even now, they have nothing whatsoever to do with the countries that achieved their independence since then.

At the TICAD VI summit Japan convened recently with the countries of Africa, I heard the leaders call the

circumstances by which Africa has no permanent representation on the Security Council a "historical injustice," to which I nodded deeply in agreement. Africa's long-term vision has set forth the goal of Africa having permanent members on the Security Council by 2023, and Japan supports this thoroughly.

If we do not carry out the reform of the Security Council now, it will easily be put off for a decade or two. Will we stand in the position of harming the values of the UN? Or will we wish for a strengthening of the UN? If it is the latter, then it goes without saying that reform of the Security Council is a matter of urgency.

I will end my address here, placing emphasis on this point. Thank you very much.

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