

# Nonnuclear Weapon Policies

By Noboru HATAKEYAMA

An original paper on a secret agreement jointly signed in 1969 by then Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and then US President Richard Nixon was reportedly found last December. They agreed to the effect that although the United States intended to remove all nuclear weapons from Okinawa by the time it returned the island to Japan, the US government may require in time of great emergency the reentry of nuclear weapons through prior consultation with the Japanese government and that the latter would meet such requirements without delay.

The late Sato is known as the prime minister who formulated the three nonnuclear weapon principles of Japan back in 1967. The principles call for Japan (1) not to produce, (2) not to possess, and (3) not to have other countries bring nuclear weapons into Japan. Also, he was prime minister when he signed the controversial Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Because of his contribution to opposing proliferation of nuclear weapons, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974. So it was quite ironic for him to have agreed to permit the reintroduction of nuclear weapons into Japan even if it was conditioned on a great emergency, although it is true the negotiations for Okinawa's return would have been much more severe had there not been such a secret agreement.

Would the secret 1969 agreement be still valid? An American friend of mine replied on the spot, "Oh no!" According to him, newer technologies such as those to launch nuclear missiles from submarines and to hit targets more accurately have been developed since then, making the reentry of nuclear weapons unnecessary. Furthermore, President George H. W. Bush announced in September 1991 the withdrawal of all American land-based tactical nuclear weapons from overseas bases and their offloading from all US surface ships and attack submarines. All these nuclear weapons overseas except for land-based air-launched nuclear bombs such as those still left in Germany will be, or already have been, brought back to the United States and either stored or destroyed there. Therefore, the reentry of nuclear weapons cannot happen. Visits of US ships to Japanese ports with nuclear weapons loaded will not happen either.

Thus, the Japanese government can say that it successfully has maintained the three nonnuclear principles. However, would these principles be working meaningfully?

Article 2 of the NPT stipulates that every member country should not produce nor acquire any nuclear weapons. The first

and second principles that bar Japan from the production and possession of nuclear weapons overlap the rules incorporated in the NPT article. Accordingly, logically speaking, these two principles are not indispensable as long as the NPT works.

The third principle prohibits Japan from having other countries bring any nuclear weapons into its territory. The only country that has a possibility of doing so is the United States, which has a security treaty with Japan. But as mentioned already, the United States has the policy to withdraw overseas tactical nuclear weapons and offload them from its ships or submarines. Therefore, as long as this policy remains intact, bringing nuclear weapons into Japan will not occur. Accordingly, logically speaking, we can dispense with the third principle.

Japan is under the US umbrella of nuclear protection. It is said that the third principle contradicts the fact that Japan is protected by the extended deterrence of US nuclear arms. Due to the very security of Japan against possible nuclear attacks from outside, Washington may request Tokyo to allow the United States to bring in nuclear weapons temporarily in time of great emergency. If Japan declines, its own security may be exposed to serious risks.

In view of these observations, I would like to propose personally the following policies.

First, the Japanese government should review the nonnuclear principles thoroughly, come up with a draft of new nonnuclear policy and seek a Japanese Diet resolution as well as an agreement with the US government thereon, including for both governments to recognize a possibility of US nuclear-armed ships and submarines coming to Japan temporarily in time of great emergency, despite its nuclear weapon withdrawal policy.

Secondly, Japan should launch a study on leverage for negotiations to solicit nonmember countries of the NPT to join or come back to the treaty. For example, prohibition of nuclear weapon-possessing countries to take a preemptive attack against NPT member countries may be an interesting idea. If such a measure is introduced, nonmember countries will feel the risk of being attacked preemptively.

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