

International Meeting Session II
2025 World Conference against A and H Bombs

80th anniversary of the atomic bombings – Solidarity for a nuclear weapon-free
peaceful Korean Peninsula and East Asia

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Thank you very much for inviting me to the World Conference against A and H Bombs marking the 80th Anniversary of the atomic bombings. The 80th anniversary means that since the first World Conference was held in 1955, the movement against A and H bombs has led the global anti-nuclear peace movements in solidarity with hibakusha for 70 years. The Hibakusha movement and the global anti-nuclear peace movements bore fruit such as opening up the "era of nuclear weapons prohibition" with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017 and its entry into force in 2021, and the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Nihon Hidankyo last year.

On the other hand, however, the world is so turbulent that we cannot see which direction it is heading for. Some people define the current moves as "multipolarity". In reference to the BRICS and the Global South, they say as if a new world order is emerging. They regard even Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the restoration of the North Korea-Russia alliance as leading the U.S. unipolar system to a multipolar one. But multi-polarization or multipolarity itself is not an order of multilateral cooperation. The discourse of geopolitics like the ghost of imperialism and the Cold War is still roaming around, and the confrontation between the U.S. and China and Russia's aggression of Ukraine are no doubt a struggle to secure a sphere of influence misled by this discourse. The reality of world politics is highlighted by power politics among powerful nations, and the arms race is on the rise.

Those like Putin, Trump, and Netanyahu see war as a bargaining chip and a power game. They seize power of the states. In the current state of international politics, the influence of the right-wing populism and fascism, which is taking advantage of war, conflicts, disgust and confrontation for domestic politics, is increasing. It is not an exaggeration to say that this reminds us of the warning made on the eve of the WWI that "all actors sleepwalked into war".

In particular, nuclear armament initiated by the US and Soviet Union spread to UK,

France and China. It was further proliferated to Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. Their nuclear doctrine is based on nuclear first strike. "Usable nuclear weapons" such as low-power nuclear weapons and tactical nuclear weapons are deployed for actual warfare. Under the deceptive term, "modernization" of nuclear weapons, "diversification" and buildup of nuclear armaments are promoted, thus accelerating nuclear arms race.

The Doomsday Clock released by the 2025 Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was 89 seconds before midnight, one second earlier than last year. 89 seconds is the shortest time since the Doomsday Clock was created in 1947. The Doomsday Clock got closer to midnight in 2023 when Russia invaded Ukraine and threatened to use nuclear weapons. Wars and conflicts increase the risk of nuclear war. Humanity may be standing on the brink of nuclear war.

As we gather in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings and the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, we should reaffirm our solidarity with hibakusha and renew our determination to struggle for prevention of nuclear war, the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons as the starting point of the movement against A and H bombs, and for universal values such as peace, anti-nuclear, human rights, democracy and the environment, and then discuss and put forward tasks to respond to the turbulent world and achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The year 2025 also marks the 80th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule. After liberation, Korea experienced ethnic division, war, the Cold War, and military dictatorship, and then the people won democracy through the democratization movement, and has been advancing the democratic republican government despite its twists and turns. However, on December 3 last year, then-President Yoon Sok-yeol attempted a coup d'état. It was the citizens who devoted themselves and filled the square in the dead of winter to stop the coup and remove Yoon Sok-yeol from power. The coup d'état, impeachment, conviction of him and the other civil war conspirators, presidential election, and change of government were all historical moments that marked another milestone in the history of the "Democratic Republic," which started with the establishment of the Provisional Government in 1919.

However, in reality, South Korea and the Korean peninsula face a number of challenges. First, far-right fascist forces, taking advantage of inequality, social disparity, and a fiercely competitive structure, are marginalizing conservative parties, and right-wing conservatives are fueling political and social divisions. What is important is not the size of such forces, but whether such thoughts and actions will permeate the

bottom of society!

The only answer to overcoming such reactionary politics is a major political and social reform. Political and social transformation is a step forward for a democratic republic. I believe that this transformation is in the hands of citizens.

From a diplomatic security perspective, the "Trump's America" running out of control has posed difficult challenges to South Korea and the international community. It is not just a matter of tariffs. Trump's obsession with strength and money is transforming the U.S. into a "predatory state" that plunders profits and resources nationally and internationally. Trump is also demanding increased military budgets from NATO members, South Korea, Japan, and other allies. While he criticizes the existence of NATO, U.S. forces in South Korea, and U.S. forces in Japan, he demands money under the pretext of security, shifting the cost of U.S. hegemony onto allied nations.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the US Indo-Pacific strategy, which has been in place since the first Trump administration, has led to the creation of a multi-layered alliance network of QUAD, AUKUS, Five Eyes, and the US-Japan-Australia and US-Japan-Philippines security partnerships. South Korea and Japan, which are bound to the US by military alliances, are being made forefront bases of the new Cold War geopolitics envisioned by the US - that is, a network to contain China. Japan has already been a complicit of the US strategy by institutionalizing the right of collective self-defense, possessing an enemy base attack capability, military buildup, deploying the Self-Defense Forces in Okinawa and the Nansei Islands, and changing the posture of the SDFs.

The August 2023 Camp-David ROK-US summit was to officially form the "US-Japan-ROK military alliance," from the trend that had continued prior to that time, including missile defense (MD) cooperation, joint US-Japan-ROK military exercises, and GSOMIA for military intelligence sharing. In addition, the Yoon Suk-yeol administration, with its commitment to strengthening the alliance and extended deterrence (to counter North Korea), established the 2023 ROK-US Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) and in 2024 formulated the "Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula.

After the DPRK-U.S. summit in Hanoi in 2019 and the breakdown of the working-level talks in the fall of the same year, North Korea has been pursuing "upgrading its nuclear forces" and "strengthening its national defense capabilities," which includes the development and deployment of tactical nuclear weapons and diversification of its nuclear capabilities. In 2022 by enacting the "Nuclear Force Policy Law", North Korea established the nuclear doctrine and nuclear posture, including nuclear first strike

doctrine.

In the name of nuclear deterrence or extended deterrence (including nuclear umbrella), the nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula is becoming increasingly serious.

In this sense, unless the alliance with the U.S. is considered an issue, the ROK will be forced to get involved in the U.S.-China confrontation - for example, the Taiwan emergency - and the prospects for resuming the non-nuclear peace process to break the structure of nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula will also be uncertain. However, the "pragmatic" government of Yi Jae-myung has stated that it will maintain the framework for ROK-US military cooperation and its traditional policy toward the ROK-US alliance. However, when we look at the reality of the recent "alliance with the US," we cannot help but question whether such a policy is pragmatic.

In terms of relations with North Korea, as mentioned above, with the nuclear first-strike doctrine of the ROK and the U.S. and Japan facing off against the nuclear first-strike doctrine of North Korea, there is an urgent need to ease tensions, take preventive measures against armed conflict, and resume dialogue. On the one hand, there is a view that the Trump administration is positive in resuming dialogue with the U.S., and that a dialogue channel may be opened. However, it is uncertain under what conditions North Korea, which has chosen a "new path" domestically and externally, will embark on dialogue. In particular, North Korea last year defined North and South Korea as "two hostile states" and "belligerent relations". It also denies their ethnic identity and is implementing the abandonment of its unification policy. Given such changes in North Korea, it means that even if North Korea agrees to dialogue, whether that dialogue will be sustained or lead to a process of denuclearization and peace-building will be another challenge. We cannot forget the emptiness we experienced after the politics of the 2018-2019 spectacle, or even its reversal.

That is why I believe that what is required of us today is to build up a powerful force and organize a broad range of people to promote denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a peace regime through the solidarity of domestic and international anti-nuclear peace forces. In this process, solidarity with the global anti-nuclear peace movements, which are rallying behind the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), will become the way to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a peace regime, which will contribute to the creation of a nuclear-free East Asia, and ultimately to realizing a peaceful world without nuclear weapons and war.