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## How Japan Should Respond to Russia's V-J Day

By HAKAMADA Shigeki

Some people argue that Japan is not in a position to protest against Russia's celebration of Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day) designated on September 2nd, because it is an internal affair of Russia just as other Allies of WW II such as the U.S. designate the same day as their own V-J Day. However, as far as the meaning of this particular day to Japan is concerned, there is a huge difference between Russia's V-J Day and that of the U.S. Therefore Japan should express strong protest against Russia for the following reasons.

(1) The USSR broke the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact and attacked Japan. (2) The USSR had celebrated September 2nd (3rd) as a day when it took revenge on Japan for the defeat in Russo-Japanese War (during the Soviet era, September 3rd was designated as the day of its official celebration based on the Stalin's revanchist speech published on newspapers). In short, it was the memorial day of Revanchism. (3) Based on the Yalta Agreement in which Japan was not involved, the USSR extended its territory in violation of the Atlantic Charter and the Cairo Declaration. (4) Despite its being the day of Russia's victory over Japan, Russia has neither set the border nor closed Peace Pact with Japan. Moreover, the USSR did not sign the San Francisco Peace Treaty. (5) The Russia's V-J Day on September 2nd justifies its unilateral military attack on Japan (Kuril Islands) after August 15, 1945 on which Japan disarmed itself and announced its acceptance of Potsdam Declaration to its people.

Related to the Revanchism mentioned in (2) above, Russia makes distorted historical accounts on the opening of the Pacific war against Japan and the occupancy of Northern Territories. I had a chance to attend the ceremony and the parade of V-J Day at the central park in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk during my visit to participate in the Sakhalin Forum sponsored by The Council on National Security Problems. In the Ceremony, they celebrated Sakhalin's "liberation from the invasion of militaristic Japan," and swore defense of South Kuril Islands, or The Northern Territories, as the land once redeemed by the sacrifice of Soviet soldiers' blood.

Southern Sakhalin was, under the international law, handed over to Japan based on the mutual agreement through the peace treaty of the Russo-Japanese War. Besides, there has neither been a military combat between Japan and the USSR in Kuril Islands, nor bloodshed of Russian soldiers. Lacking correct views on history, Russians, including such national leaders as Vladimir Putin, publicly state that their occupancy of South Kuril Islands is a natural consequence of the war.

In Russia, there is no move in its history education to correct such a distorted historiography and Revanchism based on it, and they lack proper history education. Territorial

disputes have yet to be resolved. For this reason, Japanese Government needs to protest against Russia's establishment of V-J Day on September 2nd. Of course, Japan has to clarify its reasons to protest not only toward Russia, but also both to Japan and the international community.

In this connection, we are reminded of the Ceremony of the 60th anniversary of Victory-German Day in Moscow in May, 2005, which invited top national leaders from many countries. There was a clear contrast between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi and U.S. President Bush in their approaches to this event.

Prime Minister Koizumi responded to Putin's invitation by denying his intention to attend it. And this rattled Putin, as the absence of Japanese Prime Minister in the event would make the Russia's image down. Besides, the Japan's intention not to attend the event might have been understood in the international community because Japan was the only country, among the defeated nations like Germany, which had not concluded a peace pact with Russia. With the unsolved territorial disputes, Japan could not naively attend the event and celebrate Russia's Victory Day. Of course, it may be necessary for Japan to consider attending the celebration from diplomatic point of view. But, in that case, Japan should use it as an opportunity to insist on Russia having correct historical views and concluding a peace pact.

US President Bush, on the other hand visited Moscow after stopping over at Riga, capital of Latvia. There, he delivered a clear message by stating that Yalta agreement was the "biggest mistake in the American history." Japanese Prime Minister, who was in position to claim this point more strongly, only appealed his amicable personal relations with Putin smilingly without saying what he had to say. If Japan had taken resolute attitude and made a due claim, Japan would have been able to take consistent and clear attitude today. By doing so, Japan can gain Russia's respect and realize better relations with it. Russia's recent disregard or disdain of Japan clearly shows that it considers that "Japan is a country that does not and cannot claim anything. It is not a country to treat as a serious counterpart anymore."

**(This is the English translation of an article written by Prof. HAKAMADA Shigeki, Professor of Aoyama Gakuin University, which originally appeared on the BBS "Hyakka-Somei" of CEAC on September 2, 2010.)**