

# The Japan-NATO Joint Political Declaration as a Yellow Card to the US

By KATO Akira

The first political declaration between Japan and NATO was signed on April 15 this year by Prime Minister ABE Shinzo and Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. This declaration is based on Prime Minister ABE's speech at the North Atlantic Council in Riga, Latvia on January 12, 2007 in his first term. The political declaration is in accordance with the Riga speech. In a sense, Prime Minister ABE presented his previous speech at Riga as a political commitment to NATO this time.

The key point of this political declaration is stated, "Japan and NATO are dedicated to the values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We are each determined to safeguard these shared values as well as the freedom and the security of our populations." Prime Minister ABE articulated the same principle, "Japan and NATO are partners. We have in common such fundamental values as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is only natural that we cooperate in protecting and promoting those values" at the beginning of the Riga speech.

In some ways, Japan and NATO confirmed that they are an "alliance of ideology" to share common values through this declaration. Come to think of it, there is nothing strange that Japan and NATO share values of freedom and democracy. That is because the US-Japanese Security Treaty models after the NATO treaty. Article 4 and 9 of the former Security Treaty of 1951 are based on Article 3 and 9 of the NATO treaty.

On the other hand, the preamble of the revised US-Japanese Security Treaty of 1960 is almost the same as that of NATO. For example, the revised security treaty states "Japan and the United States of America, Desiring to strengthen the bonds of peace and friendship traditionally existing between them, and to uphold the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law," while the NATO treaty states "[The Parties to this Treaty] are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." The ideals of "the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of

law” in both treaties have been the common bond among Japan, the United States, and NATO members throughout the postwar period, and therefore, they constitute a trilateral alliance of values.

Furthermore, I would like to mention one point that many experts dismiss. When you compare sentences of Article 1 and 2 of both treaties, including periods and commas, you will find striking similarities. This is an inevitable consequence, in a sense. We must take note of Article 2, which is known as the economy clause. The United States inserted this clause into the security treaty from NATO’s Article 2 to meet Prime Minister-then KISHI’s intention to weaken military nature of the US-Japanese treaty. With this economy clause, the relationship between Japan and NATO nations can be regarded as an economic alliance.

If Japan can overcome the collective defense problem of the US-Japanese Security Treaty, practically, this will pave the way for joining the collective security system with NATO. Both treaties are so alike each other. Actually, the joint political declaration this time seems to be the first step toward Japan’s participation in collective defense, as it states mutual cooperation in international conflicts. Both the US-Japanese Security Treaty and the NATO Treaty are commonly led by the United States. During the Cold War era, both treaties were anti-Soviet military alliances, economic alliances, and above all, value (ideology) alliances.

The value alliance among Japan, the United States, and NATO rifted when US-Chinese diplomatic relations were restored. America had been distancing itself from European styled power politics since the independence, but Kissinger’s balance of power diplomacy (though some experts say it was Nixon’s initiative) led the United States to form an anti-Soviet alliance with China, despite the lack of shared values, as in the case of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. Apparently, the United States ignored the trilateral common values of “the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law” at that time. Today, some pro-China policymakers such as Kissinger and his fellows, dismiss these fundamental principles and common values, and plot to share hegemony with China simply on the basis of power politics, as if both countries signed a secret agreement. America must remember that its foreign policy priority be given to shared values with Japan and NATO which are “the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law”, and never to shared hegemony with China for the purpose of cold blooded power politics.

This time, the joint political declaration between Japan and NATO confirmed that both parties can form a security alliance for cooperation to resolve international conflicts

and an alliance of common values. In addition, I would like to emphasize that this declaration is a yellow card to the United States as it dismisses our common values of “the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law” and appeases China for the sake of power politics, rather than to China that is pursuing dangerous and provocative expansionism.

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