



December, 2008

Letter to President elect Barack Obama:

Dear Mr. President elect Barack Obama:

We extend our sincere congratulations and heartfelt enthusiasm that American people have made a historic option of electing you as the 44th President of the United States of America. Your promise of CHANGE is truly needed to heal from and reverse the disastrous impact of the last eight years of the Bush Administration. The CHANGE you promised is needed not only for American people but also to the entire humankind.

We are an interfaith coalition of churches and religious organizations in Japan who have been extremely concerned that the U.S. military transformation of the Asia Pacific poses a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. In particular, the Administration's pressure on Japan to revise Article 9 of our Constitution represents a very real danger of a new Cold War in Asia.

We are committed to keep Article 9, which states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Article 9 articulates the Japanese people's commitment to constitutional non-violence as the fundamental structure of our country, and we believe it is a model that this world desperately needs, particularly in light of the "war on terror"

Under the guise of the "War on Terror," the Bush Administration has waged wars which have resulted in tremendous violence and devastation, ignored international laws, trampled sovereign nations and violated the basic human rights of many peoples. For the Japanese people, this represents powerful proof that not only Japan but also the entire world needs Article 9. We, therefore, profoundly welcome your promise to change the present strategy of unilateral domination of the world into one of dialogue and collaboration, a re-entry of the U.S. into the community of nations.



With regard to the military strategy imposed on the Asia Pacific Region, we hope this would be replaced by a more humble and realistic foreign/military policy. We ask you to study and reconsider the U.S. military presence with its ongoing plan of transformation and realignment, and we would welcome the opportunity to be in dialogue with your staff dedicated to policies concerning our region.

Under the Bush Administration, Japan has been pushed into a U.S. led military strategy which had little to do with peace and stability of Japan, as well as the entire continent of Asia. In 2005-2006, Japan's Self Defense Forces which are in themselves unconstitutional were placed under the U.S. command through a series of agreements and have become an highly important support structure of the "War on Terror" The First Headquarter of the U.S. Armed Forces was transferred from Seattle to Camp Zama near Tokyo last December, 2007 where the Headquarter of Japan's SDF Forces Central Readiness Forces will soon be deployed. In Okinawa, the construction of a new U.S. offshore base continues against the impassioned protest of a broad based people's coalition. In Yokosuka, Iwakuni, Zama and Yokota, the U.S. military presence meets strong protest from the local residents supported by national and international people's networks against bases.

Japan's s defense policy directed by the Bush Administration, means a blatant interference to press Japan to revise Article 9 that defines our way of defending the country. Right now, the U.S. government is implementing the plan of transforming the Anderson Naval Base in Guam into a huge Marine Base to meet its global military strategy. Our tax money will be spent to finance the billion dollar plan. These moves jeopardize peace and security of the Asia Pacific Region intensifying the Arms Race with China. This could well resort to a real danger of a new Cold War in Asia.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to give consideration to the following requests:

1. Review and freeze the U.S.-Japan agreement reached on February 19, 2005 on "U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future" and reorient the ongoing plan of consolidation of the U.S. bases towards a non-military U.S.-Japan agreement that would replace the present U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.
2. Review and suspend the construction plan of a new base in Okinawa and study the U.S. presence in Okinawa and possible withdrawal.
3. Suspend the construction of a new base in Guam.
4. Stop pressuring the government of Japan to revise Article 9 and, instead, adopt a new multilateral policy that would guarantee peace and stability in East Asia and enable Japan's disarmament and the withdrawal of the U.S. Forces.
5. Promote the vision of Nuclear Free East Asia as the first step.



We thank you for your consideration of our proposals, and we pledge our support in pursuit of these goals.

Blessings of peace!

Asian Muslim Action Network

Christian Conference of Asia

Pax Christi USA: Catholic Peace Movement

National Council of Churches in Korea

Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Advanced Institute for Integral Study of Life

United Church of Canada

Church of South India

The Buddhism Human Rights Committee, Korea

Nipponzan Myohoji, Japan

Buddhist International Cooperation Network, Japan

Nenbutsu Followers for Constitution on Article 9, Japan

Rissho Peace Association, Japan

Shin-Buddhism Otani for Article 9, Japan

National Christian Council in Japan

Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, Japan

National Christian Council in Japan

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