

## **Time to consider a nuclear strategy for Japan (1)**

**By OKAZAKI Hisahiko**

This is a curtain-raiser for discussion on Japan's possible nuclear strategy. Since the Abe Cabinet was installed last year, the issue of Japan's nuclearization has surfaced. However, the nation is still discussing a preliminary matter--whether the nation should be allowed to discuss nuclearization.

For my part, I have so far hesitated to broach the subject partly because I believe Japan does not necessarily have to rush into going nuclear--which actually is the conclusion of this essay.

Compounding my reluctance to raise the topic is the fact that the Cold War prompted many exceptionally talented people throughout the world to hammer out enormous volumes of highly sophisticated nuclear strategies. Against this backdrop, I thought it would take a long time for me to draw up a nuclear strategy for Japan--comprising both theoretical and practical approaches--which would stand up to criticism by future generations. In other words, I believed I had not yet prepared myself to tackle the matter.

However, as I have to keep a close eye on international issues and conceive strategic solutions to them, I have retained a broad personal vision concerning the nation's future nuclear strategy. When I have a future opportunity to discuss this matter in full detail, or find someone else whom I can ask to do so, I am convinced my vision could help lay the groundwork for the country's nuclear strategy. Therefore, I would like to offer an introduction to this strategy in today's column.

First of all, Japan's nuclear strategy must be discussed within the framework of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

In Japan, some people advocate nuclearization as a way for Japan to avoid remaining "a tributary state of the United States," and instead becoming "a genuinely independent country."

But this theory becomes pointless if the debate continues a step further. The idea of possessing a few atomic bombs does not offer a tangible strategy or scenario for making Japan completely independent of the United States.

What is more, how can the security and prosperity of Japan and its people possibly be ensured by severing the alliance with the United States? Such a move would put Japan into limbo and sandwich it between the nuclear powers of China, Russia and the United States. We should regard this kind of theory as nothing but an expression of frustration on Japan's subsidiary position in international affairs.

Those who advocate Japan's "independence" through nuclear armament should recognize that such a goal can only be manifested after the country recognizes the right to collective self-defense and assumes equal responsibility for security with the United States. Otherwise, it

sounds as if a spoiled child is selfishly clamoring for his own car.

**< Stick to Japan-U.S. alliance >**

The ultimate objective of Japan's national strategy is to defend itself and protect the security and prosperity of its people. Any theory on Japan's nuclearization must be discussed within the framework of the Japan-U.S. alliance, which has successfully attained this objective.

The concept of security covers freedom and independence. It is absurd to advocate "independence" by simply puffing out one's chest and bragging to the United States. Japan would have been deprived of its freedom and independence if the Soviet Union had invaded and occupied the country during the Cold War. If Japan yields to North Korea's threats, it will lose its freedom as a nation. The concept of security is relevant to such fundamental matters.

Whenever a country thinks of nuclear armament, it must give due consideration to the impact it will have on its relations with the United States--the world's foremost nuclear power. Such an option taking a course similar to the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran even in spite of opposition from the United States would prove devastating for Japan's national interests.

As part of its global strategy, the United States acknowledges the nuclear armament of Britain, France, Israel and India. The cases of Britain and France, allies of the United States, are good precedents for Japan in its search for a nuclear strategy.

It can be said that Britain's nuclear strategy has experienced almost no problems in connection with the United States. In fact, British scientists joined the Manhattan Project to develop atomic bombs during World War II, while British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower were on terms of mutual respect in and after the war.

Behind the Anglo-American nuclear link is a century-long history of British diplomacy, which has continually placed priority on cooperation with the United States as a national policy. While having to overcome numerous vital issues, Britain has always provided the United States with unwavering support. This means that Britain's nuclear armament is based on there being no discrepancy between the two countries' nuclear strategies, when either of them were to be faced with an emergency critical enough for them to resort to a nuclear response.

France, for its part, has pursued a nuclear strategy independent of the United States. Nonetheless, in the early 1980s, when the Soviet threat intensified in Europe, I personally heard certain U.S. military experts unofficially citing the French nuclear deterrent as a factor confusing the Kremlin's nuclear strategy. (Continued)

**(This is the text of an article by Ambassador OKAZAKI Hisahiko, the director of the Okazaki Institute, which was originally posted in "Daily Yomiuri" on April 8, 2007.)**