

# **The East Asian Armistice System and the Position of Japan: Taking Clues from the Korean War Fought by Japan**

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## **The significance of the combination of “the Korean War and Japan”**

The words “the Korean War and Japan” are an unfamiliar combination. Despite the fact that each includes the other as an indispensable part, no framework for thinking about them tied together has yet become accepted knowledge. As a result, this reality is causing obstacles to fully understanding the present of Northeast Asia. The combination of “The Korean War and Japan” is a “group of concepts in mutually determining relationships” that restores and corrects the distorted image of history in Northeast Asia which has become accepted knowledge.

When talking about the Korean War, Japan had a decisive significance with respect to all of its origins, causes, progress, and results. We cannot fully understand the Korean War without considering Japan. Similarly, the Korean War had a decisive significance for the birth and transformation of postwar Japan. We cannot fully understand postwar Japan without considering the Korean War.

We cannot end the armistice system without correctly evaluating the role Japan played in the Korean War. Similarly, we cannot summarize postwar Japan without correctly understanding the significance of the Korean War in the progress of postwar Japan. Despite that, those who advocate overcoming the armistice system of the Korean War are ignoring the role and presence of Japan in the Korean War, while those who advocate postwar Japan’s settlement are ignoring the impact of the Korean War on Japan’s postwar history. Both sides are turning a blind eye to historical facts, ignoring the key to resolving the issue, and viewing each other as enemies.

The intensification of the conflict between Japan and the Republic of Korea (R.O.K.) due to Japan’s strengthening of export controls in 2019 was a consequence of that. Without understanding the structure in which the Korean Peninsula peace process determines Japan’s postwar settlement and Japan’s postwar settlement determines the Korean Peninsula peace process, neither the Korean Peninsula peace process nor Japan’s postwar settlement can succeed individually, and it will be impossible to overcome the order of confrontation and conflict in Northeast Asia to build a new order of peace and prosperity.

Modernity in Northeast Asia began with the First Sino-Japanese War. It can be concluded that modernity began in Northeast Asia with the First Sino-Japanese War in the sense that it was the first modern all-out war in which the Qing dynasty and Japan both fought with military systems and weapons systems imported from western Europe. Since then, from modernity onward, Northeast Asia has been in a century of war, fighting wars over 130 years.

In *The Common House of Northeast Asia* (2003), Haruki Wada names the warfare from the commencement of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 to the end of the Vietnam War

in 1975 the Northeast Asia Eighty-Year War. That war was a long period of warfare which continued from the First Sino-Japanese War, to the Russo-Japanese War, World War I (the Siege of Tsingtao), the Siberian Intervention war, the Mukden incident, the Second Sino-Japanese War (the Greater East Asian War), the Japan-U.S. War (the Pacific War), the Soviet-Japanese War, the Indochina War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war, among others.

However, regarding the Korean War, only the combat ended in the 1953 armistice, and the hostile relationship between North Korea and the United States, and Japan as a supporter of the United States still remains unresolved and is continuing under the name “armistice.” The reality that the Korean War cannot be ended with a peace agreement means that the long-term Northeast Asian war is continuing.

Meanwhile, the Korean War was the third Northeast Asian war to be waged on the Korean Peninsula since the First Sino-Japanese War. Not only was the First Sino-Japanese War fought on the Korean Peninsula, but the Russo-Japanese War, which was mainly fought in Manchuria, was also fought in the Yellow Sea and East Sea waters in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula, including at Chemulpo, Ulsan, and off the coast of Ulleungdo, among other places, and when the war first started the combat unfolded in the vicinity of Sinuiju, meaning that we can conclude that it was a Korean Peninsula war. Meanwhile, in these wars, Japan fought regular wars against the Qing dynasty and Russia while also fighting irregular wars against the righteous armies of Korea (Choson or Joseon) and the Korean Empire. In that sense as well, the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War were international wars fought on the Korean Peninsula with the participation of a variety of actors from Northeast Asia. Moreover, these two wars formed the origins of the Korean War, following Japan’s war defeat and the division of the Korean Peninsula.

### **The origins and causes of the Korean War and Japan: war in Northeast Asia and the Cold War**

The results of the modern wars in Northeast Asia started by Japan, in particular the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, formed the origins of the Korean War. The result of the First Sino-Japanese War formed the starting point for distorted modernization in Korea, and the result of the Russo-Japanese War formed the starting point for the colonization of the Korean Peninsula by Japan. After Japan was defeated in World War II, the process of the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere and the Empire of Japan being dismantled was the starting point for the division of the Korean Peninsula. Seen from the position of the Allied Powers, the division and occupation of the Korean Peninsula by the United States and the Soviet Union was a part of the occupation policy with respect to Japan of dividing and managing the Empire of Japan.

It should be more clearly recognized that the differences in political positions with respect to modernization and decolonization after liberation, combined with the condition of the geographical division of the Korean Peninsula, formed a state of political division, and that became a factor which prevented the elimination of ideological confrontation. Summarizing these points comprehensively, we can conclude that Japan is a country which has indirect responsibility for the origins of the Korean War as the main actor in three wars, the First

Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Asia-Pacific War (the Japan-China-U.S.-Soviet Union war). Here we can confirm the historical background which meant that Japan could not remain uninvolved in a war on the Korean Peninsula. This was the background to Japan's indirect involvement in the Korean War in the shadow of the United States.

Meanwhile, Japan also acted as a factor which cannot be overlooked concerning the causes (reasons for the start) of the Korean War. One aspect of the Korean War is that it originally started as a test of strength between the United States and the Soviet Union over Japan. Furthermore, for the People's Republic of China, which had just been established, moves by Japan were a matter of the utmost concern. From the perspective of North Korea, the alliance between the Syngman Rhee administration and the revived Japan was seen as not only the biggest obstacle to armed reunification but also the completion of an encirclement which threatened the existence of North Korea itself. Therefore, moves by Japan were a matter of concern to the leadership of North Korea.

Among the analyses of the causes of the war, the analysis that the Acheson Declaration functioned as a green light to the leadership of North Korea to start the war maintained authority for a long time. However, it has been overlooked that the Acheson Line announced on January 12, 1950, was a response to Cominform's criticism of the Japanese Communist Party on January 6, 1950. Early in 1950 the front line of the Cold War was Japan, not the Korean Peninsula.

Moreover, the structure of the Second Sino-Japanese War was being reproduced in the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan, which had been colonies of the Empire of Japan. Early that January, a group of former Japanese military officers organized the White Group to oppose the "red devils" of Asia and departed from the Port of Yokohama for Taiwan. On January 22, Mao Zedong made the decision to "repatriate" some of the 16,000 Korean soldiers under the command of Lin Biao to Korea. They had the perception that they were completing the Korean revolution as an extension of the War of Resistance against Japan.

The Rodong Sinmun dated January 16 published an article with the analysis that the United States was promoting a separate peace with Japan, turning Japan into its military base, and preparing for war against North Korea and China. In Japan, after the League of Koreans in Japan was dissolved by GHQ in September 1949, top Korean officials in the Japanese Communist Party such as Kim Chon-hae, who had been hiding underground, entered the country secretly in June immediately before the outbreak of the Korean War. It cannot be denied that their analysis of the situation in Japan was utilized as the basis for the commencement of the war in June.

The conclusion of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance on February 1, 1950 was the starting point for the Cold War in Northeast Asia to move toward war. The U.S. Army Forces in the Far East interpreted this treaty to be aimed at "Japan and the United States" so it planned joint exercises and on March 17 the General Headquarters, Far East Command decided on drills with a scenario of a "full-scale state of emergency." Moreover, on June 13, they added Asian elements to the conventional operational concept, and adopted a revised version of "Gunpowder" with a scenario in which Asian communist nations such as North Korea, China, and others are the enemies in addition to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile,

in addition to the Gunpowder operational concept to prepare for a full-scale invasion of Japan from the outside, the United States had established the Tollbooth operational concept to prepare for an indirect invasion, but its revision was delayed, and on July 8, 1950, two weeks after the start of the Korean War, a National Police Reserve of 78,000 people was hastily created to provide security inside Japan after the mobilization of U.S. forces.<sup>1</sup> This is the origin of the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

It was natural for the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and the United States to consider a war on the Korean Peninsula to be at the Northeast Asia level “including Japan” in light of the developments in Northeast Asian international politics at the time. Despite this, historians made the mistake of limiting the scope of the war to the Korean Peninsula, in the sense that the Korean War had the character of “a limited war.”

Japan was connected to the front line of Korea as a “rear base” and was integrated into the Korean War. Throughout the entire course of the Korean War, Japan played the role of a “rear base” for the United Nations forces, mainly comprised of U.S. forces, so they could engage in combat on the Korean Peninsula. In some cases Japan was an advance base for sorties and attacks, a staging base for transporting soldiers and supplies, a supply base for repairs and procurement, or a rear base for training and rest and recuperation. Japan played the role of a “logistic base” in the Korean War.

The International Military and Defense Encyclopedia points out regarding the significance of the Korean War seen from the perspective of “logistics” and “supply” that “the Korean War was the first war waged by the United Nations and the war in which jet fighters fought against each other for the first time, and at the same time it was a war of logistics from start to finish.” The official war history of the United States also acknowledges that the Korean War was “the first war waged by the United States in which the mobilization of military supplies was practically emphasized,” and states that “Japan was a logistic fortress.” We can conclude that the presence of Japan, which was a “base” and a “fortress,” was a largely decisive element in the outcome of the Korean War.

Moreover, as seen by the United States, the logistics of Japan were evaluated as being extremely smooth. The reasons for this included the occupying forces’ indirect rule system, the adaptability of the Japanese people, the promotion of large and small military bases by the U.S. forces, and geographical advantages, among others.

Throughout the entire period of the Korean War, more than 730 U.S. military bases throughout Japan, including sortie bases, were embedded in the war on the Korean Peninsula. “Base-State” Japan did not need to “participate” separately; its presence in itself was an actor which played a decisive role in the war. “Base-State” indicates the system of the postwar Japanese nation formed while being involved in the Korean War in a unique way as a “state which does not have an army as a national defense force, but fulfills its obligation to collective

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<sup>1</sup> Ara, Takashi, Chosen senso zengo no zainichi bei kyokuto gun [The U.S. Far East Army Forces in Japan Before and After the Korean War] *Yearbook: Modern History of Japan — Dramatic Changes in Asia and Postwar Japan* No. 4, Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 1998, pp. 5-10; Ara, Takashi, Nihon senryōshi kenkyū jyōsetsu [Introduction to Studies of the History of the Occupation of Japan] Kashiwa Shobo, 1994, pp. 72-74, pp. 155-161.

security by thoroughly carrying out the role of a base which is in a key position for the security of its allies, thereby resolving security issues.”<sup>2</sup>

During the Korean War, Japan still retained its rear bases for the war while concluding the San Francisco Peace Treaty and returning to the international community. In the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty concluded on the same day, the United States guaranteed the security of Japan in exchange for Japan providing bases to the United States. The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty established against the backdrop of the Korean War and establishing the Cold War of Northeast Asia was a treaty in which the United States would shed blood in exchange for Japan providing land. The exchange of blood and land structuralized an unequal Japan-U.S. relationship. This was the Japan-U.S. relationship with the dual structure of the armistice and Cold War in Northeast Asia.

### **The progress of the Korean War and Japan: perception of the “Japan/Korea Area”**

For the Japanese people the outbreak of the Korean War was a “difficult to understand” and “uncivilized” situation and it was a “completely different war in which Japan could not be involved” (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1950.6.26.). However, as the war unfolded, the Japanese people discovered that Japan was deeply involved in this war. Japan, which had returned to the international community through the San Francisco Peace Treaty, faced the reality that “Japan and the Korean Peninsula are as close as if there was no sea between them” and keenly felt the fact that the “Japan/Korea Area” situation, with the “United Nations Command in Tokyo, supply bases and aircraft also in Japan, and combat units on the peninsula,” was the “reality of Asia” (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1952.11.16.).

At the same time as the outbreak of the Korean War, Japan became a sortie base for the U.S. forces to launch counterattacks. The aerial attacks which had developed in the Korean War relied mainly on bombers and fighters taking off from 15 air force bases in Japan. Looking at the geographical situation, Japan’s airfields were in optimal position for carrying out air combat in the R.O.K. taking into consideration their distance and defensive conditions and moreover in terms of airfield maintenance, rest and recuperation and medical care for the crews, and supplies of bombs, fuel, and other items.

Throughout the Korean War, U.S. military aircraft flew 720,980 Air Force sorties, 107,303 Marine sorties, and 167,552 Navy (aircraft carrier-launched) sorties; the Air Force aircraft dropped 476,000 tons of bombs, napalm, and rockets, and the Marines and Navy aircraft dropped 220,000 tons.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the outbreak of the war, there were approximately 125,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan, but during the Korean War this reached a peak of 350,000. The additional troops passed through Japan to be deployed to the front line on the Korean Peninsula. Rail transportation for this purpose increased rapidly in the four months immediately after the

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<sup>2</sup> Nam, Kijeong, *Kichi kokka no tanjo — Chosen senso to Nihon/Amerika* [The Birth of a Base-State: Japan’s Korean War] Tokyodo Shuppan, 2023, p. 33. Most of the remainder of this paper consists of extracts from and reconstructions of the related parts and supplementary essays in this book by this author.

<sup>3</sup> Hayashi, Shigeo and Hata, Minoru, *1970 nen to Nihon no gunji kichi* [1970 and Japanese Military Bases] Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1969, p. 25.

outbreak of the war, with 894 arrivals and 378 departures of military special trains operating within the jurisdiction of Moji Railway Bureau.<sup>4</sup>

The well-developed industry, railways, ports, and other facilities formed the foundation for Japan to play an optimal role as a rear base. Throughout the Korean War, Japan played the role of a logistics base, including as a staging base for supplies and transportation, a military supplies repair and production base, a drills and rest and recuperation base, and so on.

Japanese people were mobilized in the process of these kinds of logistics. In particular in the early stages of the Korean War, a large number of Japanese cargo handlers and sailors, and others, were mobilized for the war, and many of them were killed or injured. According to *History of Procurement by the Occupation Forces* by the Special Procurement Board, by January 1951, six months after the start of the war, the situation regarding the harm suffered by port cargo handlers and sailors, and others, was as follows: There were 101 fatalities and injuries among specialty port cargo handlers including one work-related fatality, 79 work-related illnesses, and 21 other fatalities and injuries (including three fatalities). In the case of specialty sailors, there were 254 fatalities and injuries including 22 work-related fatalities, 20 work-related illnesses, four other fatalities, and 208 other injuries and illnesses. In addition, 26 people died during specialty transportation work in the R.O.K.'s ports and territorial waters, including four port cargo handlers and 22 sailors.<sup>5</sup>

“War participation” by these Japanese workers was on the scale of a total of approximately 8,000 people, of whom 49 became casualties. If we add to this number Sakataro Nakatani, the “first death in war” after WWII who died while engaged in minesweeping work, and seven fatalities which were not work-related fatalities but rather due to personal injuries outside of official duties or other causes, the total known number of fatalities of Japanese sailors and workers mobilized in the Korean War was 57 people.<sup>6</sup> This was from the records up until January 1951, so we can conclude that just in the six months from the start of the war the actual scale of Japan’s “war participation” centered on workers who crossed the sea, including sailors, was ranked in the top six among the 16 countries participating in the war. Of the 16 countries participating in the Korean War, those which sent 8,000 or more personnel to participate in the war include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Turkey. In addition, New Zealand sent 4,500, France sent 4,000, South Africa sent 811, and Luxembourg sent 89, among others.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Japanese National Railways (ed.), *Tetsudo shusen shorishi* [Postwar History of the Railroads] Taisho Shuppan, 1981, p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> *History of Procurement by the Occupation Forces* Editorial Committee (ed.), *Senryo gun chotatsushi — senryo chotasu no kicho* [History of Procurement by the Occupation Forces — The Keynote of Occupation Procurement] 1956, p. 576.

<sup>6</sup> Ishimaru, Yasuzo, *Chosen senso to Nihon no kakawari — wasure sarareta kaijo yuso* [Japanese Involvement in the Korean War: The Forgotten Marine Transportation] *NIDS Military History Studies Annual* No. 11, March 2008; Ishimaru, Yasuzo, *Chosen senso to Nihon no kakawari — wasure sarareta kaijo yuso* [Japanese Involvement in the Korean War: The Forgotten Marine Transportation] *Hato* Vol. 34, No. 2, July 2008; Nishimura, Hideki, *Chosen senso ni ‘sansen’ shita Nihon* [Japan’s “War Participation” in the Korean War] San-Ichi Shobo, 2019, pp. 106-114.

<sup>7</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Japan and the Korean War: A Cross-Border Perspective,” *Asian Studies* Vol. 61, No. 2, June 2015, p.8.

The above war cooperation was possible under the condition that Japan was under the occupation of the United States, and since Japan was not yet a “state” under international law Japan was neither a “war participant” nor a “belligerent.” It simply played a logistics role while in the position of having its security guaranteed by the United States. This point explains the unique status which Japan had in the composition of the United Nations Command.

On the other hand, Japan was not a direct war participant, so there were operations which Japanese people could execute. Some of these are introduced in research by Kanji Akagi.<sup>8</sup> There is indirect testimony that intelligence personnel and language experts from the former Imperial Japanese Army participated in the military intelligence activities of the U.S. forces. It is reported that there were no operatives who could understand Chinese in the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East at that time, so Japanese people who were mainly engaged in Chinese communications and information cooperated with the U.S. forces after China entered the war.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, there is testimony that civilian pilots from Japan working in commercial aviation in Asia during the war were active in clandestine air transport operations which dispatched secret agents (spies) to all areas of Asia until 1954 under the command of U.S. Far East Air Forces.<sup>10</sup> They were active in the intelligence war, but these people whose existence and names have disappeared from the public record were the “forgotten faces of postwar Japan.”<sup>11</sup>

Considering the presence of Okinawa in the Korean War period, the scope of the war had expanded beyond Northeast Asia and broadly to the East Asian level. It was due to the Korean War that early in the 1950s the U.S. military bases which the United States began to construct during the Battle of Okinawa were transformed into “permanent bases.”

From early 1950, just before the outbreak of the Korean War, U.S. forces commenced the full-scale construction of bases in accordance with the U.S. policy of long-term possession of Okinawa. The core of the construction was the improvement of living spaces for the garrisoned forces and their families. However, when the Korean War broke out, the initial plan which went no further than “minimum parking apron repairs” was changed and the construction of military facilities was expanded. For example, in that July additional construction of hangars was commenced.

When the Korean War broke out, airplanes belonging to the Okinawa 5th Army and 20th Air Force, including F80 jet fighters, F82 Mustangs, B26 light bombers, C47s, C46s, and C54 transport aircraft, and others began sorties from bases in Okinawa to carry out missions

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<sup>8</sup> Akagi, Kanji, *Chosen senso — Nihon he no shogeki to yoha* [The Korean War — Its Impact on Japan and the Aftermath] The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, *Chosen senso to Nihon [The Korean War and Japan]* 2013, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Aid, Matthew M., “US Humint and Comint in the Korean War: From the Approach of War to the Chinese Intervention,” *Intelligence and National Security* 14, No. 4 (Winter 1999); Matthew M. Aid, “US Humint and Comint in the Korean War (Part II): From Chinese Intervention to the Armistice,” *Intelligence and National Security* 15, No. 1 (Spring 2000), Kita, Morio, Fuhyo [Buoy] (1958) (Included in *Yoru to kiri no sumi de [In The Corner Of Night And Fog]* Shinchosha, 1960); re-cited from Akagi, Kanji (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Takayama, Masayuki, *Abakareta kokukai kanbu no supai kuyu* [The Spy Missions of Aviation Executives are Exposed] *Bungeishunju* January 1989 Issue, pp. 360-379. Re-cited from Akagi, Kanji (2013).

<sup>11</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “The United States, Japan, and the Undercover War in Korea,” Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (ed.), *The Korean War in Asia: A Hidden History*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018.2, Kindle Book, Location 3896.

involving participation in operations in the R.O.K. from June 30. On June 27 the bomber units stationed at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam were ordered to move to Kadena, and the move was largely completed by July 1. Moreover, bomber units were moved from the U.S. mainland to Okinawa, and 47 B29s went on a sortie from Kadena Air Base for the bombing of Seoul on July 16. In the middle of August a total of 98 B29s were concentrated in Yokota Air Base and Kadena Air Base, and the additional hangars were constructed in order to accommodate the increased number of B29 units. From November expansion and repairs of auxiliary airfields built in Yomitan, Bolo Point, Futenma, and other places was commenced.

Meanwhile, in response to the outbreak of war, new and full-scale acceptance of military land for the construction of bases commenced in Okinawa. From September to November 1950 the requisition of facilities and land called “clearance” progressed in areas throughout Okinawa including Yomitan, Kadena, Ginowan, Urasoe, Mawashi, and other places. The Korean War is the origin of the Okinawa base problem.

### **The Korean War armistice and Japan**

Immediately after the armistice on the Korean Peninsula was established, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan saw that even if the Korean problem was resolved peacefully, the emergence of a reunified administration would not be easy. This was the conclusion of a confidential document prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Japan saw that the United States and the Soviet Union had no intention to continue a war on the Korean Peninsula, so “peaceful resolution of the Korean problem” was essential. However, there was also no “precedent of a civil war leading to reunification through compromise” so Japan predicted that “two administrations would be established in the north and south and the guarantee of peace in that situation” would continue. The above is the conclusion that Japan produced ahead of the international conference concerning peace on the Korean Peninsula after the establishment of the armistice. Simply summarized, “continuation of the separation without war and without reunification” would be the future of the Korean Peninsula and Japan’s diplomacy would be conceived based on that premise.

This kind of perception and policy emerged from the context of Japanese diplomacy exploring responses to the new reality of the armistice as the armistice negotiations were ongoing. When the peace treaty was concluded in San Francisco and Japan recovered its diplomatic rights, the issue which it tackled first was to gather information on the prospects for the armistice and consult on the measures to take. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan mobilized all of its embassies, which had commenced their operations in regions around the world, to meet with influential people in those countries and analyze the impact of the armistice on the politics and economy of Japan, while exploring the possibility of Japan participating in international conferences concerning the Korean Peninsula problem after the armistice.

On June 11, 1953, as the armistice negotiations were nearing their closing stage, Foreign Minister Katsuo Okazaki met with U.S. Ambassador to Japan John M. Allison, stated that “Japan has provided major cooperation to the United Nations forces, provided facilities and other items to the British and Australian forces, and has a great interest in the future fate of Korea as a neighboring country” and stated that “I think it is natural that Japan should



participate in some form in political conferences that will decide the fate of Korea.” In response to this, Ambassador Allison kept some distance, saying “I see, I think that is true, but I have heard that for the time being the participating countries are limited to the major countries that were actually engaged in the war in Korea together with North Korea, the Chinese Communist Party, and other interested parties,” while also replying that he intended to carefully study the position of the Japanese government and state the opinion of the United States.<sup>12</sup>

On June 18, Ambassador to the United Nations Renzo Sawada, who was stationed in New York, gave a response as follows to an Indian ambassador who questioned the attitude of Japan with respect to political talks concerning the R.O.K. problem: “as long as political conferences are only concerned with measures to deal with the aftermath of the Korean War in the broad sense, there should be no need for Japan to proactively request its own participation. However, if the conference’s discussions are expanded to include broader East Asian problems which may be related to the future of our country, Japan will have to consider participation again.” While acknowledging that Japan had no right to speak on military topics for discussion, he expressed the perception that Japan should also be allowed to participate if topics for discussion pertaining to the political situation were included in the conferences.<sup>13</sup>

These efforts by the Japanese government were bearing fruit. On July 23, immediately before the armistice, Ambassador to the United States in Washington, Eikichi Araki, reported that, in a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Robertson, a consensus had been formed regarding the need for cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in the process of debating the problems of the Far East in general. Namely, Assistant Secretary of State Robertson communicated to Ambassador Araki that “nothing concrete has been decided yet regarding future political talks, but we believe that negotiations will be conducted by only a small number of relevant countries. If the problems of the Far East in general are debated, Japan will naturally be consulted as well” and in response to this Ambassador Araki replied that “Japan has a close relationship to the Korean problem, so we would like to be informed of developments in the “situation” going forward.”<sup>14</sup>

During this period the armistice agreement was concluded at Panmunjom. On July 29, two days after the conclusion of the armistice agreement on July 27, *the New York Times* reported the moves of the Japanese government which wished to participate in political conferences regarding the R.O.K. problem. Ambassador Sawada inquired about the position

<sup>12</sup> Okazaki daijin hatsu, Araki taishi ate, dai 557 go, Chosen kyusen seiji kaigi sankakoku ni kansuru ken (an) [From Minister Okazaki to Ambassador Araki, No. 557, The Matter concerning the Countries Participating in the Korean Ceasefire Political Conference (Confidential)] June 20, 1953, Gaiko kiroku dai 10 kai kokaibun [*10th Disclosure of Diplomatic Records*] (A'.7.1.0.5-2-1), 0010-0012.

<sup>13</sup> Zai nyuyoku Sawada taishi hatsu, Okazaki daijin ate, dai 94 go, Chosen kyusengo no seiji kaidan ni kansuru Indo taishi no naiwa ni kansuru ken (an/gokuhi) [From Ambassador Sawada in New York to Minister Okazaki, No. 94, The Matter concerning the Private Talks of the Indian Ambassador concerning Political Talks after the Korean Ceasefire (Confidential and Top Secret)] June 18, 1953, Ibid, 0008-0009.

<sup>14</sup> Zai washinton Araki taishi hatsu, Okazaki daijin ate, dai 823 go, Chosen kyusen ni kansuru “Ro” kokumu jikanho naiwa no ken (an/gokuhi) [From Ambassador Araki in Washington to Minister Okazaki, No. 823, The Matter of Private Talks with Assistant Secretary of State Robertson concerning the Korean Ceasefire (Confidential and Top Secret)] July 23, 1953, Gaiko kiroku dai 10 kai kokaibun [*10th Disclosure of Diplomatic Records*] (A'.7.1.0.5-2\_001), 0103-0104.

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan regarding the response to this media report, and the reply of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan on July 31 was as follows: “regardless of whether we participate in the conferences or not, we hope to be provided with sufficient information. Note that since it goes without saying that various difficulties are expected in practice regarding our participation in “political conferences”, we intend to wait and see how the situation develops for a while and not press for participation too strongly.”<sup>15</sup>

Subsequently, establishing political talks separately from talks handling the military problems in Korea ceased to be an option, and at the same time the participation of Japan in political talks was no longer allowed. It is thought that the background to this was probably that the Soviet Union had requested participation in the talks. On August 17, a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly was held, there were discussions concerning the establishment of a “separate conference” to handle the “broad political problems of Asia,” and in that context on August 20 Soviet Union representative Vyshinsky gave a speech in a committee, stating that all of the countries in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula were interested in which participating countries would comprise the political conferences, and made it clear that this was also a matter of concern for his own country. In response to this, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Lodge opposed expanding the number of countries participating in the political talks and mentioned that in the unlikely event that the countries in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula participated as the Soviet Union representative insisted, the representatives of Japan and the Republic of China would have to be included.<sup>16</sup> The R.O.K. also declared interest in this problem and attempted to make contact with the Japanese representative. The R.O.K. side clearly stated that if India was included in the member countries of the political talks, the R.O.K. would definitely boycott the conference, but it did not show any clear intentions regarding Japan.

In the context of this kind of situation, the Second Division of the Asian Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan prepared a report titled “Prospects for a High-Level Political Conference Concerning Korea: a Delicate Balance.” Its conclusion was as follows. Namely, in response to the Korean armistice the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan considered that “a peaceful resolution of the Korean problem is inevitable;” however even if this happened “a reunified administration could not be achieved easily” and it was highly likely that “administrations in both the north and south would be established and peace would be guaranteed.”<sup>17</sup> In addition, the Second Division of the Asian Bureau prepared a report titled

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<sup>15</sup> Zai nyuyoku Sawada taishi hatsu, Okazaki daijin ate, dai 107 go, wagakuni no Chosen seiji kaigi shusseki hodo ni kansuru ken (an/gokuhi) [From Ambassador Sawada in New York to Minister Okazaki, No. 107, The Matter concerning Media Reports of the Attendance of Japan at Korean Political Conferences (Confidential and Top Secret)] July 29, 1953, Gaiko kiroku dai 10 kai kokaibun [*10th Disclosure of Diplomatic Records*] (A.7.1.0.5-2-1), 0014.

<sup>16</sup> Zai nyuyoku Sawada taishi hatsu, Okazaki daijin ate, dai 382 go, wagakuni no seiji kaigi sanko mondai rongi ni kansuru ken [From Ambassador Sawada in New York to Minister Okazaki, No. 382, The Matter concerning Discussions on the Problem of Japan’s Participation in Political Conferences] August 26, 1953, Ibid, 0031-0032.

<sup>17</sup> First Division of the Asian Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Chosen ni kansuru kokyu seiji kaigi no mitoshi ni tsuite — deriketo na baransu (hi) [Prospects for a High-Level Political Conference Concerning Korea: a Delicate Balance (Secret)] August 4, 1953, Gaiko kiroku dai 10 kai kokaibun [*10th*

“The International Situation Ahead of the Korean Political Conference: Points to Note for the Japanese Side.” Summarizing its conclusions, it said that the international situation going forward would probably change from a simple structure of confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union to a more multifaceted and complex pattern as the emergence of Germany and China caused differentiation within the poles.<sup>18</sup> The 1956 Japan-Soviet Union Joint Declaration and Japan’s accession to the United Nations were advanced based on these prospects.

This speaks to the fact that at a time when the armistice system was being created in Korea, Japan was conversely exploring moves to get away from that magnetic field. While Japan was drawn to the centripetal force of the armistice system that was being formed in the Korean Peninsula, it was also paying attention to and trying to ride the centrifugal force of the armistice system in order to maintain a distance from it. This became the reason for the uniqueness of Japan’s status inside the Korean Peninsula armistice system. As stated below, this is the origin of Abe diplomacy, which has persistently tried to get involved in the situation on the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy with the United States from “outside the loop” as the Korean Peninsula peace process which began in 2018 progresses with the aim of dismantling the armistice system.

#### **A rear base for “hand-to-hand combat” and a forward base for “ideological warfare”**

Immediately after the outbreak of the Korean War, the Japanese government’s reaction was slow. It was not until July 14, three weeks after the outbreak of the war, that Prime Minister Yoshida declared his perception that “it is entirely natural to cooperate with the United Nations to the extent possible” in a policy speech, declaring his policy of cooperation with the United Nations. Two days later, in the House of Representatives Budget Committee, when asked about the substantial content of the U.N. cooperation policy, Prime Minister Yoshida emphasized that Japan would provide as much cooperation as possible, on the assumption that the cooperation would be moral in nature.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan’s statement, “The Korean Conflict and Our Position,” which was the first announcement of the Japanese government’s position after the Korean War, reflected Prime Minister Yoshida’s thinking. For Yoshida, the biggest issue was to resolve security issues and achieve peace with the understanding of the international community while isolating and protecting the policies of being lightly armed and prioritizing the economy from the impact of the Korean War. Cooperating with the United Nations was considered the minimum obligation. The concept mobilized as the basis for this was termed “ideological warfare,” and it was perceived that Japan’s role was given in “ideological warfare.” “Ideological warfare” is a war waged without actually participating in combat. Here, Yoshida’s image as a pragmatist who believed in being lightly armed and prioritized the economy

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*Disclosure of Diplomatic Records*] (A.7.1.0.5-3-1), 0148-0166.

<sup>18</sup> Second Division of the Asian Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Chosen seiji kaigi wo hikaete no kokusai josei — wagaho toshite Chui subeki ten (hi) [The International Situation Ahead of the Korean Political Conference: Points to Note for the Japanese Side (Secret)] August 21, 1953, Ibid, 0168-0174.

coexisted exquisitely with his image as an anti-communist ideological fighter.

Yoshida saw the Korean War as a “proxy war for a war of self-defense.” This is what “ideological warfare” meant. He later reflected, “It goes without saying that the Korean Peninsula has a significant relationship to Japan’s national security. It is no exaggeration to say that foreign threats to Japan have passed through the Korean Peninsula since the dawn of history. Both the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War had their origins on the Korean Peninsula. However, what is the current situation? (Omitted) The communist forces have taken possession of the northern half of the peninsula and have reached the 38th parallel. (Omitted) Our country’s security is maintained because we are under the protection of the United States under the Security Treaty, and the front line on the Korean Peninsula is being maintained because its defense is being entrusted to the United Nations forces. For that reason, our military burden is light, which has allowed for astonishing economic development.”<sup>19</sup> Considering these matters, the subsequent astonishing economic development was the result of “ideological warfare,” and the concept of “ideological warfare” was not born out of the policies of being lightly armed and prioritizing the economy.

The perception that the Korean War would be fought throughout as a war for Japan’s self-defense was also expressed by Prime Minister Yoshida in a letter sent to MacArthur on August 29, 1950. In the letter, Yoshida assured MacArthur that “the Japanese government and people are ever ready and anxious to furnish whatever facilities and services that you may require (for the Korean War)” and promised maximum cooperation other than combat actions, saying that “I only regret that we cannot do more by way of cooperating with the U.N. in its crusade against Communist aggression.”<sup>20</sup>

The Japanese government’s policy of cooperation with the United Nations was not very different from the position of the Japan Socialist Party. In a July 8 document titled “The Korean problem and the Attitude of the Socialist Party,” the Japan Socialist Party criticized the government for deciding in a Cabinet meeting a policy of active cooperation with the police action of the United Nations while at the same time it criticized the Communist Party for fomenting anti-American resistance among the people and placed emphasis on giving consideration to the Japanese workers who had been mobilized for logistics activities in U.S. military bases in Japan and placed in a dangerous working environment. Furthermore, in its statement it indicated that the attempt of “the People’s Republic of North Korea (sic) to achieve Korean reunification by resorting to force” was the direct cause of the war breaking out, and declared the position that “the Japan Socialist Party opposes the invasion through the use of force and morally supports the maintenance of law and order by the United Nations.” This attitude gave birth to the policy of Sohyo (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan) cooperating with the United States.<sup>21</sup> The 55-year system, expressed as confrontation between

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<sup>19</sup> Yoshida, Shigeru, *Sekai to Nihon* [The World and Japan] Chuo Bunkosha, 1991 (Bancho Shobo, 1963), p. 147.

<sup>20</sup> Wada, Haruki, *Chosen senso zenshi* [The Korean War: An International History] Iwanami Shoten, 2002, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup> *The Shakai Shimpo*, July 15, 1950. Re-cited from Durana, Peter, *Chosen senso ni taisuru Nihon shakaito no dojidaiteki taio* [Response of the Japanese Socialist Party to the Korean War] *Komaba Journal of Asian Studies* No. 5, 2008, pp. 44-45.

the Liberal Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, had a structure in which no distinction was drawn concerning cooperation in the Korean War as a rear base.

Against the background of the reality that Shigeru Yoshida and the Japan Socialist Party were in alignment regarding the policy of cooperation with the United Nations forces, Japanese society shifted to the right politically. Former military personnel and right-wingers who bore responsibility for the war and were expelled from public offices under the Occupation reform by GHQ returned during the Korean War.<sup>22</sup> It was the judgment of the U.S. forces that their help was necessary for waging the Korean War. On the other hand, the Japanese Communist Party and Korean residents in Japan, who stood at the vanguard of democratic reforms together with the occupation forces, were suppressed.

In his Akutagawa Prize-winning work *Hiroba no Kodoku* [Solitude in the Public Square] (1951), Yoshie Hotta describes the reality of Japan's shift to the right as follows. "Japan ... has been shaking at the bottom until now, but this summer it is rapidly tilting, in particular due to the war in Korea." "That's right, we must stop Japan being swept away like this. We must fight properly. If we continue to be swept away like this and a comprehensive peace cannot be achieved, it will be like living together without holding a wedding ceremony. We are the trouble-maker of Asia. Who knows how many worthless illegitimate children will be born?"

Meanwhile, in his 1965 work *Kohai no Natsu* [Summer of Desolation] (1965), Mitsuharu Inoue highlights the lack of awareness of Japanese people mobilized for war. The following is a scene in the book in which the U.S. forces interrogate a Japanese person who was in charge of disposal of corpses on a U.S. forces transportation ship. "I was just following orders and doing as I was told. And I was in a situation in which I could not refuse." These words are the response of the Japanese person to the interrogation by the U.S. forces, which was examining the problem of the process for disposing of the corpses. It can be seen that postwar Japan, which had a peace constitution, had the stance of refusing to consciously systematize the reality of the war cooperation which was forced on it in the context of the Korean War. That is the structure of forgetfulness regarding the Korean War.

The people who demonstrated a stance of fighting against this were the Korean residents in Japan, as the vanguard of the Japanese Communist Party. The Japanese Communist Party held its 5th National Party Congress underground in October 1951 and adopted the so-called 1951 Platform. This aimed for a violent revolution in Japan and to launch an armed struggle. The people who were most in the vanguard of responding with the armed action of this militaristic policy were Korean residents in Japan. The Japanese Communist Party held its 6th National Party Congress in 1955 and changed direction, pointing out that the militaristic policy of the 1951 Platform was extreme-left adventurism. However, it did not clearly review the 1951 Platform itself and at the same time did not review the problem of the Korean residents in Japan mobilized for the militaristic policy at all. They also became "forgotten faces of postwar

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to Nam, Kijeong, *Chosen senso to sengo uyoku no saihen — "Kichi kokka" no genjitsu to taisei uyoku no tojo* [The Korean War and the Reorganization of the Postwar Right Wing: The Reality of the "Base-State" and the Emergence of the Establishment Right Wing] in Choi, Eunhee (ed.), *Higashi Ajia to Chosen senso 70 nen — medeia/shiso/Nihon* [East Asia and the Korean War 70-Year: Media, Idea, Japan] Akashi Shoten, 2022, pp. 369-404.

Japan.”

### **The Korean War and the Japanese people**

The fact that dispatch of the minesweeping unit was carried out in secret and that personnel from Japan’s Coast Guard “participated in the war” as minesweeping unit members is now extremely well-known, so it is not necessary to mention it separately. Despite that, new facts regarding the fact of Japanese people’s “war participation” are being revealed. It developed against the background of the end of the Cold War and globalism, when the boundaries between nations became looser. Against the background of globalism and the borderless phenomenon, wars of individuals, rather than wars between nations, began to be seen.<sup>23</sup>

Although it is not possible to confirm the “war participation of Japanese people as an organization,” the “war participation of Japanese people as individuals” is already a well-known public fact. Shigeharu Hiratsuka (who was 29 years old at the time of his death) is reported to have been “killed in action” in the initial combat in the Korean War after being called up as a painter, a civilian employee of the U.S. forces in the 1st Cavalry Division, E8 Company, on January 20, 1950. Many similar cases were confirmed in materials obtained by the investigative reporting team for an NHK documentary called “BS1 Special: Hidden “War Cooperation”: Korean War and Japanese” which was broadcast last year (August 18, 2019).

The fact that Japanese people participated in the war is also confirmed by the fact that Japanese people were among the prisoners of war who were repatriated. Based on the stories of British journalists and others who covered Panmunjom, there were a number of observations that more than ten Japanese prisoners of war were among the repatriated prisoners of war,<sup>24</sup> but after establishment of the ceasefire three people were repatriated to Japan as Japanese prisoners of war.<sup>25</sup>

According to the November 1, 1953, issue of *For Peace and Independence*, the Japanese Communist Party official newsletter, two repatriated Japanese prisoners of war, Kiyoto Tsutsui (from Yamaguchi Prefecture, 23 years old at the time) and Tatsufumi Yasui (from Osaka Prefecture, 25 years old at the time), gave testimony about their experiences serving with the U.S. forces and becoming prisoners of war on the front line of the R.O.K.. In the case of Yasui, he testified that just in the 11th Regiment to which he belonged, “several dozen Japanese people were employed in search parties, (omitted) and of the seven Japanese people who

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<sup>23</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Japan and the Korean War: A Cross-Border Perspective,” *Asian Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, June 2015 pp. 11-12; Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Prisoner Number 600,001: Rethinking Japan, China, and the Korean War 1950–1953,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 74, Issue 2, May 2015; Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, A War Across Borders, Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (ed.), *The Korean War in Asia: A Hidden History*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018.2; Umoreta kioku/Chosen senso 70 nen, Chosen senso — Nihon no minkanjin/Shonen mo sento sanku, boppatsu 70 nen, beigun gokuhi bunsho de akirakani [Buried Memories: 70th Anniversary of the Korean War, Korean War: Japanese Civilians and Boys Participated in Combat, 70 Years Since the War Broke Out, Revealed in Top Secret Documents of the U.S. Forces] (*Mainichi Shimbun*, June 21, 2020); Kakusareta “Senso kyoryoku” — Chosen senso to Nihonjin [Hidden “War Cooperation”: Korean War and Japanese] (*BS1 Special*, August 18, 2019).

<sup>24</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, April 11, 1953; *Asahi Shimbun*, April 19, 1953.

<sup>25</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, August 2, 1953; *Asahi Shimbun* (evening edition), August 17, 1953; *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1953.

belonged to the search party of the 2nd Battalion only one survived and all of the others were killed.”<sup>26</sup>

Even more unusual is the fate of Kazutoshi Matsushita who was mobilized as a soldier for the Empire of Japan, sent to the front line on the Chinese mainland, and after Japan’s defeat in the war served as a Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) soldier and Chinese People’s Army soldier before participating in combat together with the military of the R.O.K.<sup>27</sup> At that time, there were approximately 8,000 Japanese soldiers in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, and some of those people were dispatched to the front line of the Korean War. Kazutoshi Matsushita was a Japanese person who was incarcerated in Busan POW camp as a soldier of the Chinese People’s Army, and his existence shows that there were “mercenaries” who participated in the war across national borders at this time.

For the *people* of Asia, the Korean War was an Asian war across national borders. The scope of the Asia mentioned here is not limited to Northeast Asia. In the Korean War, the entire Asian region including Manchuria and Mongolia, Okinawa and Taiwan was involved directly or indirectly in the war. When focusing on nations, Japan’s national involvement was hesitant, passive, and ambiguous. However, if we shift our attention to individuals in East Asia, the involvement of Japanese people was more direct.

### **The durability of the Korean Peninsula ceasefire system and Japan**

Bolton’s memoir shows the position of Japan with respect to the Korean Peninsula peace process and its willingness to intervene.<sup>28</sup> Japan had already attempted to intervene in the initial stage of the Korean Peninsula peace process. However, on the other hand, that kind of diplomacy took place “outside” the so-called Korean Peninsula peace process. The busy diplomacy of the Japanese government ahead of the armistice looms up as *deja vu*.

As the Korean Peninsula peace process has progressed, Japan has once again begun to question the relationship between “The Korean War and Japan.” This question was raised in “The Korean War, Secret Records: Unknown Attack and Defense by People in Power” (NHK Special, 2019.2.3.), “Hidden “War Cooperation”: Korean War and Japanese” (BS1 Special, 2019.8.18.), “Buried Memories: 70th Anniversary of the Korean War, Korean War: Japanese Civilians and Boys Participated in Combat, 70 Years Since the War Broke Out, Revealed in Top Secret Documents of the U.S. Forces” (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 2020.6.21.), and other sources. Also, “Japan and the Korean War,” Responsible Editor Choi Seon-ae, in *Shukan Kinyobi* (No. 1237, 2019.6.21) and the special feature “70th Anniversary of the Korean War” in *Shukan Kinyobi* (No. 1285, 2020.6.19) had compositions and content which sounded the alarm

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<sup>26</sup> *For Peace and Independence* (Japanese Communist Party official newsletter, November 1, 1953); Pak, Kyong-sik (ed.), *Chosen mondai shiryō shōsho* [*Series of Primary Materials on the Korean Problem*] Vol. 15, *Nihon kyosanto to Chosen mondai* [The Japanese Communist Party and the Korean Problem] Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1991, p. 181.

<sup>27</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Japan and the Korean War: A Cross-Border Perspective,” *Asian Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 2, June 2015 pp.11-12; Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Prisoner Number 600,001: Rethinking Japan, China, and the Korean War 1950–1953,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 74, Issue 2, May 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Bolton, John R., *The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir*, Simon & Schuster, 2020.

regarding the crisis brought about by forgetting the Korean War.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, in 2020, books were published with content and compositions which had an awareness of the 70th anniversary of the Korean War.<sup>30</sup> Among them, it is necessary to pay attention to the problem awareness of Haruki Wada and Ukeru Magosaki. They assert that the Korean War was an East Asian war, that Japan was given a role to fulfill in the process of concluding that war, and that Japan must prepare to face this role.

The Korean War is sometimes called by a different name: “the forgotten war.” Japan is “the hidden existence” in “the forgotten war.” This is why the existence of Japan does not easily come to the surface in discussions regarding the end of the Korean War. However, the problem is that Japan is not merely “the hidden existence.” As discussed in this report, the role played by Japan was decisive, and it was “individuals” rather than a “state” which supported that fact.

Japan’s “war participation” poses extremely complex problems. It comprises the reality of complex systems as something we want to hide but also want to reveal, something we want to forget but must not forget, and something which is nothing but is decisive. In the process of ending the Korean War, the reality of complex systems has emerged again.

April 27, 2018, when the Panmunjom Declaration was announced, was the day the Korean Peninsula came closest to dismantling the ceasefire system since the Korean War and the day the people living on the Korean Peninsula held the most certain hope for peace. In the multiple public opinion surveys carried out immediately after the announcement of the Panmunjom Declaration, the support for President Moon Jae-in regarding his performance of the affairs of state exceeded 70% and in particular more than 80% of the people supported the Panmunjom Declaration, including conservative groups. The surrounding countries also basically welcomed the Panmunjom Declaration. The background to this was that the sense of crisis and fatigue of the people had reached their breaking point as the threat of war became realistic the previous year and a structure under which the reoccurrence of war was not a matter which could be ignored by any country in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula. At this time, leaders in Northeast Asia shared the feeling that war must be avoided at all costs. However, there were differences in the strength of that feeling. That feeling was weakest in Japan.

Why was that? The reality of postwar Japan, in which it is incorporated in the East Asian armistice system as the state in charge of the “rear base,” provides the answer. If the Korean War comes to an end and the East Asian armistice system, which was established under the

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<sup>29</sup> Nishimura, Hideki, *Chosen senso ni ‘sansen’ shita Nihon* [Japan’s “War Participation” in the Korean War] San-Ichi Shobo, 2019; Abe, Keiji, *Nikkyo no buso toso to zainichi Chosenjin* [The Armed Struggle of the Japanese Communist Party and Korean Residents in Japan] Ronsosha, 2019; Ezaki, Michio, *Chosen senso to Nihon/Taiwan ‘shinryaku’ kosaku* [The Korean War and the “Invasion” Scheme of Japan and Taiwan] PHP Shinsho, 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Magosaki, Ukeru, *Chosen senso no shotai — naze senso kyoryoku no zenbo ha kakusaretanoka* [The True Nature of the Korean War: Why was the Full Picture of War Cooperation Hidden?] Shodensha, 2020; Mino, Masahiro, *Wakariyasui Chosen senso — minzoku o bundan saseta higeki no kozu* [Easy Introduction to the Korean War: Composition of a Tragedy which Divided a Nation] Kojinsha NF Bunko, 2020; Wada, Haruki, and Magosaki, Ukeru et al., *Chosen senso 70 nen — ‘Higashi ajia senso’ jidai o koete* [Seventieth Anniversary of the Korean War: Going Beyond the “East Asian War” Era] Kamogawa Shuppan, 2020.



state of a ceasefire, is dismantled, the presence of Japan incorporated as a “Base-State” in the Korean War loses its significance and Japan’s role also comes to an end. For example, the problem of the United Nations Command – Rear, which was a topic of discussion in the Korean Peninsula peace process, reflected this situation. While this kind of situation was anticipated, Prime Minister Abe and the Japanese government could not imagine the form that a “post-Base-State” would take and make preparations for the transition. In the Korean Peninsula peace process, Japan was depending on maintenance of the East Asian armistice system in order to survive as a “Base-State.”

Meanwhile, since the 2010s, fundamental questions have been raised with respect to the “war, ceasefire, and Cold War” on the Korean Peninsula. As the global Cold War progressed, the system of war and armistice became entrenched as a basic structure on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia surrounding it. Moreover, we can conclude that the frontline of that confrontation was basically between the United States and China, not between the United States and the Soviet Union. This situation changed dramatically in 1972 but U.S.-China relations suddenly became tense in line with the deterioration in Japan-China relations in around 2010. Subsequently, as U.S.-China strategic competition intensified, North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities became more advanced and the essence of the Korean Peninsula armistice system reemerged, resulting in a growing momentum towards war. In this reality, precise elucidation of the problems of war and peace on the Korean Peninsula became newly necessary as a practical issue.

Moreover, after overcoming the threat of war in 2017, the peace process was progressing at the Korean Peninsula level, while at the Northeast Asia level the extreme deterioration of R.O.K.-Japan relations raised new problems. The process in which the Korean Peninsula peace process has slowed down and stalled through Singapore and Hanoi since the Panmunjom Declaration, which was achieved mainly by R.O.K. and North Korea, was a process to confirm the durability of the Northeast Asian Cold War and Korean Peninsula armistice system. Furthermore, in that process, it was confirmed that Japan, which demands adjustments in the speed of the Korean Peninsula peace process, is deeply positioned in this system. Superficially, this progressed as an historical battle, but its content was geopolitical confrontation over security. The true nature of R.O.K.-Japan relations as a complex of history and geopolitics was revealed in that process.

Subsequently, in the context of the Korean Peninsula peace process slowing down as it stumbled over historical problems, anti-Moon Jae-in public opinion spread in the R.O.K. Then the Korean Peninsula peace process came to an end due to the change in presidential administration. The Yoon Suk Yeol administration which appeared in place of the Moon administration held a U.S.-R.O.K. Summit Meeting in Seoul on May 21, 2022, immediately after its inauguration and strengthened the U.S.-R.O.K. alliance to a “global comprehensive strategic alliance.” It is coincidental and extremely symbolic that a R.O.K.-U.S.-Japan Summit Meeting was held at the G7 in Hiroshima, Japan exactly one year later on the same day in 2023.

The diplomacy of the R.O.K. during the first year of the Yoon administration concentrated on “strengthening the trilateral alliance of the R.O.K., the U.S. and Japan,” a fact President

Yoon himself takes pride in, and was intended to “normalize” the alliance. That structure was completed at Camp David. It redefined R.O.K.-Japan relations as a security partnership and returned them to the 1965 Regime of integrating outposts and rear bases through the United States. In 2023 they emerged in an even more strengthened form. The Korean Peninsula peace process begun in 2018 has highlighted a mutually complementary relationship between the durability of the Korean Peninsula armistice system and that of the Base-State, contrary to the intentions of the peace process.