

【講演】

“Peace and Democracy in the Nuclear Age: What the War in Ukraine Should Teach the American and Japanese People”

「核時代における平和と民主主義：日米の市民はウクライナ戦争から何を学び取るべきか」

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OHAYO-GOZAIMASU, thank you for inviting me. Normally, before COVID19, I would be packing my suitcase tonight in order to leave tomorrow morning to join Professor Takahara and my students on our peace tour in Yokohama, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But this year, unfortunately, we won't be able to do that. What I do wanna do is talk to you about the world situation with special focus on the war in Ukraine. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that “in individuals, insanity is rare; but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule.” That is how I see the world today. As a species, we are on a suicide path to extinction.

If we look at the present crisis, it's almost a cliché by now to say that this is the closest the world has been to world war three and nuclear annihilation than in any time since the Cuban missile crisis.

It feels like we're watching one of the 20th century nuclear war movies like *The Day After*, a 1982 American film, or the British film *Threads*. With the news of the global crisis plays in the background while people go about their daily routines uninterrupted thinking that the leaders are reasonable and responsible and nothing terrible is going to happen and then, all of a sudden, the unthinkable does happen and people are totally unprepared.

Just like the people in those movies, we've had plenty of warnings, and we still go on blindly as if this can't happen. It was in 2018 that the United States security strategy said that the main threat to US national security was no longer global terrorism, it was now Russia and China.

It was also in 2018 in the aftermath of the near-war between the United States and North Korea that the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* moved the hands of the

doomsday clock to two minutes before midnight. The closest it had been since the early 1950s after the United States and Soviet Union tested their hydrogen bombs.

Then in 2020, the experts of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* moved the hands of the doomsday clock to 100 seconds before midnight. The closest it had ever been since they started the doomsday clock back in 1947.

Now, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Biden's hawkish policies towards China, we should be even closer than 100 seconds to midnight because the world is far more dangerous now than it's been, certainly since the Cuban missile crisis, and possibly the closest it's ever been to this kind of precarious and dangerous, life-threatening situation.

We could begin our discussion today of the current crisis back in August 1945 with the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was a major factor in promoting the cold war because the real target was not just Japan but was also the Soviet Union, which was exactly the way the Soviet leaders interpreted it at the time

But I'm going to begin tonight with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. I want to start in 1990 when the leading neo-Conservative thinker Charles Krauthammer wrote an article saying this is the unipolar moment. The United States is the dominant force in the world and nobody can challenge us and this is going to last for thirty to forty years.

It was also in 1990 that Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to the unification of Germany and was promised in return that NATO would not expand one inch, one thumb's width to the East. He was promised by President Bush, by Baker, by the leaders in the United States and Germany and Britain.

Then with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia became a basket case. Boris Yeltsin foolishly allowed US economists to convince the Russians to undergo shock therapy. Male life expectancy dropped from 66 to 57. The economy shrank to the size of the Netherlands. Russia was in terrible condition in the 1990s under Yeltsin.

It was also during this time during the early 1990s that the American neo-cons, the neo-conservatives, began asserting themselves. In 1992, they proposed what was called the “defense planning guidance”.

It was overseen by neo-conservative thinker Paul Wolfowitz and it especially established that the US was strong enough now that no nation would be allowed to emerge anywhere that could challenge the United States in any region of the world.

But there was such a strong reaction from people like Senator Joseph Biden who called this a Pax Americana. He said this is an old notion of the United States as the world’s policeman and so they rejected this and the neo-conservatives were forced to retreat.

But then in 1997 they formed the Project for the New American Century.

In 2000, George W. Bush, along with the support of the supreme court, staged a political coup in the United States, and he came to power, and he put the members of the Project for the New American Century into key positions throughout his administration.

Then the United States was hit on 9-11 and everything changed after that.

It began with the invasion of Afghanistan.

Charles Krauthammer who in 1990 had said this is a unipolar moment wrote another piece in which he said “I was wrong in 1990”. He said nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power. Nothing. He said this is not the unipolar moment: it’s the unipolar era. And it’s gonna last indefinitely.

The neo-conservatives began to celebrate the American empire. The New York Times, on January 5th, 2003, headlined its Sunday magazine section “American Empire: Get Used to it”.

And the neo-conservatives came up with a list of countries where there was gonna be regime change. It included Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan.

Then in 2003 the US invaded Iraq, pretty soon the US special forces were deployed all over the globe. By 2013, they were in 134 countries.

But things went to hell in Afghanistan and Iraq, and by 2006 even Charles Krauthammer acknowledged that the unipolar era was over, and the US was past the high point of its power and influence.

Meanwhile, despite the promise given to Gorbachev, NATO was expanding.

The first expansion occurred with three countries in 1999, then more countries in 2004, and that was just the beginning.

American statesmen warned that this was a terrible mistake. Even George Kennan, the architect of the cold war, said this was an enormous and historic strategic error.

But George W. Bush wanted to expand further, and in 2008 he announced that NATO was going to expand to include Ukraine and Georgia.

The US ambassador to Russia at the time was William Burns, the same William Burns who was now the director of the CIA. And Burns wrote a secret memo back to Washington titled “Nyet Means Nyet”. Don’t cross Russia’s red lines. Don’t talk about expanding to Ukraine.

But American policymakers understood the importance of Ukraine. *Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to Jimmy Carter, laid it out clearly in his book Grand Chessboard in 1997.*

He said if we can wrest Ukraine away from Russia then Russia will never be a major Eurasian power again that can threaten the United States. The same thing was said by Hadley and Libby and other neocons throughout the 1990s.

The neoconservatives began planning to break Russia away from Ukraine. They did so through a number of means. The National Endowment for Democracy supported sixty-five pro-democracy projects. The US spent 5 billion dollars creating this pro-democracy or anti-Russian movement in Ukraine.

In 2013, when Ukraine signed the economic deal with the EU, the British Financial Times journal said this is the culmination of years and years of US effort to win Ukraine away from Russia.

The Financial Times made it clear that the deal that the West had secured with Ukraine was going to be exclusive and was not going to include Russia. That they would have to sign on to all these agreements with the EU, but Putin responded with an alternative economic deal that was actually better for Ukraine, and it was at that point that the uprising began.

I won't go into all the details about the [Ph: roleplay] by Victoria Nuland and Biden himself, but there was the coup inside of Ukraine in early 2014. Yanukovych was ousted; he fled from Ukraine and then anti-Russian government was set up.

The thing to understand is that this American vision of this global hegemony meant that any power that could threaten US interests in any part of the world had to be eliminated. By taking Ukraine away from Russia, they thought they had fundamentally weakened Russia, so it could no longer pose a real threat to the American empire.

And then the civil war in Ukraine began. First the Russians took back Crimea. Crimea had always been part of Russia, but in 1954 Nikita Khrushchev decided he was going to give Crimea to Ukraine as a gift. Well, now the Russians took that gift back, and they also supported the independence movements in the Donbas, Luhansk and Donetsk.

And in 2015, France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine signed the Minsk II agreement to try to stop the fighting. That would call for an armistice in the Donbas, and would recognize the independence, or create a federal system in which Luhansk and Donetsk had autonomy as part of Ukraine.

That would effectively give them veto power, making sure that Ukraine would never join NATO.

When Biden was elected in 2020, most Americans were relieved that Donald Trump, who was philosophically a fascist and a militarist was no longer in power.

Biden came to power committed to restoring American leadership in the world. He believed in American exceptionalism and he said the United States was gonna lead again.

And he put in power, in top positions in the administration, [Ph: 18] members from the CNAS, the Center for New American Security.

These included people like Campbell in charge of Asia policy, people like Sullivan, the national security advisor who was one of the ones who crafted Hillary Clinton's Asia pivot in 2011.

Antony Blinken became secretary of state. Who was Blinken? Blinken supported the invasion of Afghanistan, supported the invasion of Iraq, supported the invasion of Libya, supported the bombing of Syria. These are the kind of people Biden surrounded himself with.

But the world was changing. Biden might have thought in terms of the old cold war. Biden may have thought in terms of American exceptionalism and American hegemony. But the rest of the world was not thinking in those terms.

The world had changed. Russia was back as a military power with more nuclear weapons than the United States. China's economy was booming. Fastest growth in the history of any economy, now second only to the United States. And China was also building its military.

The change was obvious in March of 2021 when Sullivan and Blinken met with Wang Yi and Yang Jiechi in Anchorage Alaska.

At that meeting the Americans spoke for two and a half minutes and went through their list of all their criticisms of China.

And Yang Jiechi responded with a tirade that went on for 18 minutes, lecturing the Americans. “You can no longer speak to China from a position of strength. You can no longer dictate to us.

But the United States was not yet ready to accept a multi-polar world.

Meanwhile in Ukraine, the war fever was building.

The Minsk II agreement, which offered a basis for resolving the crisis, was never put into effect by Ukraine, and France and Germany and the United States did not pressure Ukraine to go along with that agreement that they had signed.

When Zelensky was elected president in 2019, he promised he was gonna peacefully resolve the conflict with Russia.

And when he did so, Ukrainian nationalists and right-wingers threatened to hang him.

The United States and Britain encouraged him not to back down. Not to compromise with the Russians.

And by 2020, he was pushing for Ukraine to join NATO. Also at that time, NATO arms and trainers were flooding into Ukraine. Ukrainian troops were building up in the Donbas.

And Russian troops were building up on the border and in Belarus. More than a hundred thousand Russian troops also threatening to invade if Ukraine did not compromise with them and reach some resolution.

US intelligence said it was certain that Russia was going to invade even though most of the experts did not believe that that was going to happen.

The interesting questions is why were the Americans so sure the invasion was going to take place.

I think they understood that they were going to take certain provocative actions and refuse to negotiate. That was going to push Russia into a corner where it would have no alternative, it believed, other than to invade.

Russia recognized the independence of the two break-away states: Luhansk and Donetsk.

Putin made certain demands. that means no, Ukraine not joining NATO. Ukraine being permanently neutral. Accepting the independence of the Donbas region and Crimea's recognition and denazification.

But the US ignored Russia's demands and besides that the Ukrainian troops drastically increased the missile attacks in the Donbas in the two weeks prior to the invasion.

The Russian invasion was not justified, but it was very much provoked.

The West did not appreciate that Russia saw what was happening in Ukraine as an existential threat.

A lot of what Putin said was equally delusional. He said that Ukraine was controlled by neo-Nazis and drug dealers, which is not true.

But the invasion was very much provoked. And I think it was very consciously provoked. Because as historians we studied the Russian, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and there are a lot of parallels and lessons.

National security Advisor *Zbigniew Brzezinski convinced Carter to send arms to the Mujahadeen, the Islamic extremists inside Afghanistan.*

And he wrote a memo on July 4th of 1979 saying that sending arms and training the *Mujahadeen, the Islamic extremists inside Afghanistan, is gonna provoke the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.*

And on Christmas day 1979, Russia did invade.

Publicly, Carter and *Brzeziński* said *this is a terrible thing and Russia has to be punished.*

But privately they celebrated, *Brzeziński* said now we've given Russia its own Vietnam.

Brezhnev said this would take one month and we'll win the fight in Afghanistan and we'll be out of there. The war went on for ten years.

The same thing happened this time. The Russians thought they would have an easy military victory. That did not happen. Their forces were defeated trying to capture Kharkiv and Kiev.

The Russians miscalculated. They thought that Europe would be divided. This has, if anything, unified and strengthened the EU.

The Russians were opposed to NATO expansion and now NATO has been strengthened and Sweden and Finland have joined.

Country after country is increasing its defense spending, and the Europeans are sending lots of arms and aid to Ukraine.

But the global response has been much more mixed. Whereas the Europeans and a few Asian allies have been supporting the sanctions that the West led by the United States has been imposing, much of the world refuses to go along with these sanctions against Russia.

Much of Asia, Africa, Latin America refuses to join the sanctions. Even countries like China and India, Saudi Arabia, the Emiratis and Israel are refusing to go along with these sanctions.

We can go into some of the causes of that, but a lot of it has to do with recognizing the hypocrisy of the United States which itself denounces the Russian invasion, but the world did not have sanctions against the US for invading Afghanistan, invading Iraq, invading Libya, or all the damage the United States has done over these decades.

What makes this so dangerous is that many leading American policymakers are going along with what secretary of defense Lloyd Austin said that our goal is to weaken Russia. Our goal is to make sure Russia can never do anything like this again. And so the strategy revolves around everything they can do to economically and militarily weaken Russia in response to the invasion.

So more and more arms have been flooding into Ukraine. The US has pledged about 24 billion dollars in aid to Ukraine. The Europeans have pledged an additional 12 billion dollars.

But this has not destroyed Russia's economy the way the West had hoped. According to the latest report from the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, they initially said that Russia's economy would decline by 8.5% this year. Their new estimate is that it's only going to decline by 6%. Russia's central bank's figures have cut that down to maybe 4%.

So Russia's economy is doing better than expected. Ukraine's economy is projected to decline by 45% this year. A 45% to 50% drop in Ukraine's GDP.

The inflation is very high in the United States and in Europe. Europe is very much dependent on Russian energy, and it's already having a very big impact as the price of food, the price of fertilizer, the price of oil and gas is skyrocketing.

But the big picture, since we're running out of time let me cut to the most important points. The US strategy of weakening Russia economically and defeating Russia militarily has created a very, very dangerous situation.

From the very beginning of the invasion, Putin has been warning about nuclear war. He said, I'll quote him quickly, "whoever tries to impede us, let alone create alone threats for our country and its people, must know that the Russian response will be immediate and lead to consequences you have never seen in history."

The West is filled with articles, Europe and the United States, articles saying the Russian invasion has been stalled. That because of all the heavy weapons that they've been sending in there. These HIMARs are the latest, all the artillery and all the tanks and all the other equipment, that Russia's advance has stalled.

That's partly propaganda to convince the West to keep on sending more arms and more training, just as Zelensky has been calling for.

The RAND Corporation recently said there are four different scenarios that can lead to World War Three.

The most immediate threat is if Russia is losing on the battlefield, Vladimir Putin is not going to accept defeat, and he's not going to accept a stalemate. He needs to win in his own mind, or at least be able to tell the Russian people that this invasion was worthwhile, and they've achieved their goals.

So if the US succeeds in its strategy of weakening Russia, effectively defeating Russia, teaching Russia a lesson. That's going to be a meaningless victory because it would very likely lead to World War Three. Russian desperation, full Russian mobilization and possibly the use of Russian nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile we don't have time to talk about it. I'll mention it very briefly, but what else is going on that's posing a threat is the situation over China and especially over Taiwan

Nancy Pelosi, who's number three in succession to the presidency, now has just begun her Asia trip.

It is not yet clear if she will be visiting Taiwan or not.

But the Chinese have made clear that they don't want her to come there. They will use some kind of strong response if Pelosi does go there.

China was the real goal of the Biden administration when they came to power. They said China is the pacing threat, that is dealing with China is the main challenge to American security. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has gotten them sidetracked, but the Asia pivot and defeating China is still goal number one in the minds of most of the people in the Biden administration.

US policymakers from the Center for New American Security, including Campbell, many of them believe the US can win a war with China, and they believe Japan and South Korea will play a crucial role in that effort.

NATO just announced its new strategic concept which includes targeting China and Russia as major threats. The first time NATO has talked about the threat posed by China.

A parliamentary delegation of Japanese leaders from parliament including two former defense ministers lead by Shigeru Ishiba met with the Taiwanese president and representatives from the Taiwanese defense ministry, I guess two days ago in Japan, to discuss preparation for the conflict with China.

The pentagon has run 18 war games studying a war between the United States and China over Taiwan. China has won all 18 war games.

Japan is in a crucial position here. We can talk about that also. We can talk about Abe's call for the US to position nuclear weapons in Japan. As you know better than I do the hawkish sentiment in the Kishida administration is quite extensive.

There is so much more to talk about. Unfortunately, we're running out of time and I'd like to leave some time for questions and comments, but the point that I'm trying to emphasize is that we're in a more dangerous situation now than we've ever been on this planet. And there is no leadership, nobody speaking or thinking for the planet right now.

Biden wants to make America great again. Putin wants to make Russia great again. Xi Jinping wants to make China great again. Modi wants to make India great again. Kishida wants to make Japan great again. We've got all of these leaders who are not thinking about what's good for the planet, and have these narrow, myopic views and see military solutions as the alternative.

And when it comes to Ukraine, nobody in the United States is talking about diplomacy. Nobody is talking about negotiations. What they're talking about is more weapons, more military aid, defeating Russia, that's a formula for World War Three. That is insane. And that's why I began with that quote from Nietzsche, about

individuals rarely being insane but nations and periods are insane. And a policy that's going to lead to nuclear annihilation, ending life on the planet, is insane. Which is why we have to build up a peace movement globally. We've got to negotiate as quickly as possible before it's too late.

So, I'm sorry to be so negative and pessimistic, but I think unless we look clear-eyed and realistically at the situation as it exists, we're not going to be able to resolve this peacefully in a way that's in the interests of everybody, so we can begin to deal with the other problems we face, like global warming. Like the fact that the richest eight people in the world have more wealth than the poorest four billion people. The fact that the pandemic and health care is disastrous globally. These are all horrible problems that we need to face as a global community. But first we have to eliminate this most immediate threat to future existence of life on our planet. Thank you for listening.

(Proofreading/校正 : Hiroko Takahashi/高橋博子)