



November 4, 2008

To:

Prime Minister Aso Taro

Minister of Defense Hamada Yasukazu

Protest Against the Offensive Statements of Former Air Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff Tamogami Toshio and the Position Taken by the Japanese Government

According to the reports in mass media on November 1, ASDF chief of staff Tamogami Toshio justified Japan's past colonial rule and war of aggression, in a paper submitted to a contest by a private company, Apa Group, that "it is a false charge that this country was an invading state" and arguing that through Japan's colonial rule and the war "people were liberated from oppression and noticeably improved their standard of living," and that he furthermore virtually called for "exercise of the right of collective self-defense" and "an end to the ban on possession of aggressive weapons."

The YWCA of Japan strongly protests, firstly against former ASDF chief of staff Tamogami Toshio, for entire lack of accurate historical perspective, secondly against the Ministry of Defense, which blithely announced to the mass media the paper's winning of the award with no understanding whatsoever of the problem it posed, and also against the Government which appointed a person with inaccurate view of history to a official post.

The YWCA of Japan, an international NGO with a network of women in 125 countries throughout the world, is working together with the YWCAs of Korea and China, to bring about peace in Northeast Asia. Young people in Japan-Korea and Japan-China programs are particularly facing up to the history of colonial rule and the Asia-Pacific war, and are carrying on dialogues to open up a peaceful future. The YWCA of Japan, together with many NGOs working on the grass roots level to build peace in Asia, is deeply indignant that the offensive remarks so frequently repeated by high officials of Japanese Government is causing distrust of Asia people, as well as obstacles to peace.

Japanese Government, by making Tamogami quit the job by retiring age, avoided to take adequate steps to settle this issue. This shows that Japanese Government is not serious in official apology, nor compensation the victims of past colonial rule and the Asia Pacific War, which leads, by violating the Peace Constitution, to waging war. The logic of the former ASDF chief of staff is, we believe, common stealthy with the political line of Japanese Government.

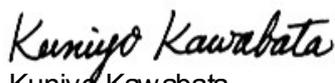
We, the YWCA of Japan, along with protesting the problematic paper by former ASDF chief of staff Tamogami Toshio, strongly demand of the Japanese Government the following:

1. Admit that the Asia-Pacific War was a war of aggression and the unjust nature of the colonial rule, and make an official apology as a state, to the victim countries and the region.

2. Reject the new law on anti-terrorism special measures (the new law on the MSDF refueling mission in the Indian Ocean).



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Kuniyo Kawabata
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