



To: Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

Mr. Natsuo Yamaguchi, President of the New Komeito Party

**Protest Against Allowing Japan to Exercise Collective Self-Defense
Prohibited by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution**

Founded in 1905, the YWCA of Japan has experienced the Asia-Pacific War and regretted that its voice was not strong enough to stop Japan from becoming an aggressor and claiming the lives of thousands of people around the world. After 1945, we re-started our work upholding “Peace Constitution”, and especially have been focusing on grassroots human exchange programs among people in Northeast Asia in hope that Japan to become a truly peaceful nation.

Not only to our eyes but also to the majority of Japanese people, the Abe Cabinet’s mere decision allowing our nation to exercise collective self-defense is an outrage. It is prohibited by the Japanese Constitution and we never tolerate it.

First of all, such action is a negation of constitutionalism. Constitution exists in order to secure basic human rights and freedom of people, and civil servants have obligation to obey it. What you have to do first is to ask us people, the sovereignty, the pros and cons of the constitutional amendment if you think that Japan’s current security measure is not enough under the Constitution. Even if people decide an amendment, it is an absolute rule that implementation of any government policy has to meet the constitutional requirements.

Public surveys by various news agencies have shown that the majority voted against Japan’s exercising collective self-defense. Furthermore, supporters of the Abe administration state an expectation on its economic policy but not on the radical national security policy. You should have public hearings and should discuss this issue with us people to start with.

The true nature of the collective self-defense is “offense”. It allows Japan to join battles by other nations even if Japan has not been attacked. Once participated in a battle, your claimed “limited participation” will not mean anything. Japanese combatant men and women may take people’s life away in the battle field while they may also lose their lives. You have not explained to us enough about such basic but very important issue.

Your explanation so far is so vague. What is “at a case where Japan’s security will be severely threatened”, and how possible is the “limited participation” to an act of collective self-defense? Furthermore, comprehensive discussion over a possible result of the Japanese participating in a battle, including a possible retaliation, has not been held. Making a decision over such critical issue by mere cabinet discussion without people’s consensus not only denies pacifism but also the three constitutional principles.

Your private advisory meeting includes only one expert in constitutional law. It even includes members who supported the U.S.’s war against Iraq in 2003. Never to repeat such unforgiveable mistake by people in power, opinions by sufficient number of constitutional law experts and of various fields should be heard.

The image of post-war Japan as a “peace-loving nation” has been a diplomatic asset for decades, and its nonmilitary contributions has positively been received in the world. The peace policy helped Japan to re-develop relationships with neighboring states, and has also worked to prevent conflicts. The path Japan should take is to stay firm as a peace nation and to strengthen relationships with neighboring states in Northeast Asia.

Again, the YWCA of Japan protests against the Abe Cabinet’s decision to allow Japan to exercise collective self-defense with allies prohibited by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

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Naoko Matano, President,
Mikako Nishihara, General Secretary,
YWCA of Japan

YWCA of Japan : Tokyo YWCA Bldg. Rm#302, 1-8-11 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo 101-0062, Japan
tel: +81-3-3292-6121 /6122(fax) office-japan@ywca.or.jp