

# **Legacies of the Greater East Asia War support postwar Japan**

**By Ezaki Michio, political analyst**

## **Asia invaded by the Allied Nations after World War II**

Did peace come true in Asia in August, 1945, after Japan's losing in the Greater East Asia War? A junior high school history textbook in use in Japan reads:

“World War II ... was over in August, 1945 by Japan's surrender. Peoples of Korea and Taiwan formerly colonized by Japan, in addition to China and other Southeast Asian nations occupied by the Japanese Army were greatly jubilant, celebrating liberty.” (*History for Junior High School Students*, published by Teikoku Shoin in January, 2007)

“Japan decided to surrender, accepting the Potsdam Declaration ..., World War II was over. Southeast Asian nations occupied by Japan and former Japanese colonies like Korea and Taiwan were liberated and headed for independence.” (*New Social Study; History*, published by Tokyo Shoseki in February, 2006)

These descriptions, however, do not refer to the vital historical facts. What were the Allied Nations, while condemning Japan for the “crime against peace” (crime of waging an aggressive war) in the Tokyo Trials (formally, the IMTFE or International Military Tribunal for the Far East) doing? Did they help Asia in the postwar recovery efforts? The answer is “No”. They waged “wars of aggression” against Asian nations and crushed their independence. Taiwan was occupied by the Chiang Kai-shek led Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang Party) and tens of thousands of people were massacred (the 2-28 Incident). On the Chinese mainland, civil war between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party (the CCP) continued to rage and eventually resulted in the establishment of a dictatorship by the Chinese Communist Party. Even now, the Chinese people are still suffering from oppression. As for the rest of the Asian countries, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia were invaded once again by French forces. Worst of all, Vietnam was obliged to fight a war for independence for nearly 15 years, totally wrecking the land totally ruined. Indonesia was unilaterally attacked by the British Army and then by Dutch forces. The three and a

half year-long war for independence cost the lives of about eight hundred thousand people. Tibet and Uyghur were invaded after the end of the War by the Chinese Communist government and lose their independence. Mongolia was effectively put under Soviet rule. Korea was divided into north and south by the U.S. and USSR, and the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950.

This is the reality that took place in Asia during the postwar years while the Tokyo Trials were held.

Why, then, did many Asian nations have to suffer from invasions by the Allied Nations after Japan's defeat? The reason is clear. The Japanese Army was no longer there, which had been functioning as a shield against invasions by European and American colonial governments.

During the Greater East Asia War, Japan defeated European and American colonial governments then ruling Asia, one after another. Seeing genuine window of opportunity, one Asian leader after another declared independence.

On August 1, 1943, Ba Maw of Burma (presently Myanmar) declared independence. On October 14, President Jose Laurel proclaimed an independent Republic of the Philippines. On October 21, Chandra Bose established an interim liberated Indian government. On August 17, 1945, Sukarno proclaimed an independent Indonesia.

However, after the Japanese Army was defeated, these newborn independent nations had to cope on their own with renewed invasive attempts by Europe and America. Victorious Allied Nations—Britain, the Netherlands and France—had no intension whatsoever of abandoning their former colonies. The European and American Allied Nations took it for granted that Asian nations would eventually fall under the control of Western military powers once the Japanese Army, a powerful supporter of their independence, was defeated.

Quite contrary to Western expectation, new Asian nations had no intention of simply abandoning their hard-won independence. Consequently, wars broke out between the Allied Nations and Asian peoples.

The Allied Nations adopted logical reasoning to justify their aggressive wars against Asia in the postwar years, which formed the basis of their historical overview which, in turn, was presented at the Tokyo Trials. The Western Allied Nations maintained that Asian leaders proclaimed independence in cooperation with Japan, the aggressor, and so they were also militarists like Japan and, therefore, their “independence” was unacceptable.

In fact, using the Tokyo Trials' historical view, the Allied Nations crushed the Wang Jing-wei government in China and the Laurel government in the Philippines.

However, there were nations that did not succumb to the Allied logic: They were India and Indonesia.

Chandra Bose of India founded the Indian National Army (INA) in Singapore and then established the Provisional Government of Free India, fighting together with the Japanese Army for the liberation of India at Imphal, India, against the British Army. For this reason, after the War, following the Tokyo Trials, Britain attempted to try twenty thousand officers and soldiers of the Indian National Army for treason against their colonial master, the King of Great Britain. The Indian people resented such a trial and ardently protested, claiming that the Indian National Army were not “war criminals who committed treason against Britain, in cooperation with the aggressor Japan,” but rather “heroes of Indian independence.” Succumbing to the surge of protests, Britain abandoned the trial for war criminals, and India won independence on August 15, 1947.

### **The Netherlands denied Indonesian Independence**

The country that suffered a harder time than India was Indonesia. It was in 1602 that Holland began a full-scale invasion of Indonesia. At that time, eastern Indonesia was called the “Spice Islands” and the biggest supplier of pepper and spices, which Europe most dearly coveted. In order to monopolize the precious spices, the Netherlands invaded and subdued one sultan after another throughout Indonesia and put them under Dutch rule. In conquered lands, the Netherlands forced the indigenous rice farmers to raise coffee and sugar. As a result, the inhabitants were unable to produce enough food stuff for themselves and had to buy expensive food from the Dutch, which rendered them deeply in debt--eventually their meager estates and lands were totally usurped by the Dutch.

The method of exploitation became more and more ingenious as time moved into the 19th century, and it is said that profits from Indonesia accounted for one-third of the total Dutch national budget. On the other hand, according to one source, the average life-span of the poverty-stricken Indonesian population dropped to 35 years.

Against rigorous Dutch rule, Indonesia continuously endeavored to struggle for independence, only to be subdued each time. So, expectation for the Japanese Army, after it had defeated their long-held enemy, the Dutch, in just over seven days during the Greater East Asia War, was high among the frantic Indonesians. Not a few Indonesians expected to achieve their independence in no time at all, but for the Japanese Army, it was not so easy to grant Indonesia immediate independence amid the on-going, strenuous fighting against the powerful European nations and America.

General Imamura Hitoshi, commander of the Japanese 16th Army, asked independence movement leader Sukarno for his cooperation in the war effort, in exchange for help in preparing for future independence. After deliberation, Sukarno accepted the offer. He actually provided logistics and labor for the Japanese Army, and in exchange for services, and with the assistance of the Japanese Army, sure and steady progress was made in founding an army consisting of Indonesians (PETA), training government officials and implementing laws and an educational system. Finally, on August 17, 1945, just two days after the Japanese Army was defeated, first Indonesian President Sukarno declared independence.

However, at the end of September, Acting Governor-General Hubertus Johannes van Mook of the Royal Dutch East Indies Government landed in the Indonesian port of Surabaya with the British Army, ignoring the “Declaration of Independence.” He thought, “The Indonesians are an extremely obedient people. Now that the Japanese Army has surrendered, if we land in Indonesia, the Indonesians are sure to immediately be as submissive as before.”

On the contrary, the people waiting for the arrival of the British Army were not at all obedient Indonesians. Trained by the Japanese Army and equipped with Japanese Army weapons, the Indonesian people’s army attacked the British Army and immediately destroyed an entire British division. The Dutch were horrified at the changes the Indonesians had achieved, thinking “Thanks to the Japanese Army, sheep have turned into tigers.” In the end, the British Army took one hundred days to occupy City of Surabaya alone and had to give up subduing Indonesia by force of arms, obliging them to turn to peaceful negotiations. As soon as a temporary agreement was reached between the Netherlands and Indonesia in November 1946, the British withdrew its Army from the country. For that matter, Britain gave neither an apology nor compensation for torching the city of Surabaya and depriving nearly twenty thousand Indonesians of their lives in the Surabaya war.

Although the British Army had withdrawn, the Netherlands did not give up its attempt to colonize Indonesia once again. Loudly claiming that “Sukarno, who declared Indonesian independence, is nothing but a puppet of the Japanese Army (therefore, the authentic government of Indonesia is the Dutch East Indies Government), the Netherlands launched full-scale military assaults, calling them “police actions,” on July 20, 1947. At that time, at the Tokyo Trials, the Netherlands, one of the winners of the war, was in the midst of judging Japanese leaders, who had supported Indonesian independence, for the crime of waging an aggressive war.

The Royal Dutch Army had roughly one hundred thousand men equipped with modern tanks, airplanes

and heavy machine guns. Up against wide-ranging air and ground campaigns, the Indonesian Republican Army had two million or so soldiers with weapons which had been secretly delivered by the Japanese Army—about forty thousand small arms. Thus, most were armed with nothing more than bamboo spears. Indonesians were obliged to beat one retreat after another, while the Royal Dutch Army promptly captured most of Java and the vital industrial areas including the Sumatra oil fields.

However, this “war of aggression” by the Netherlands became the target of harsh criticism from all over the world and on August 1, 1947, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution demanding “an immediate cessation of belligerent actions on the part of the Dutch” and “a solution through peaceful measures.” Accepting this resolution, the Netherlands appeared to agree to a cease-fire, but Dutch forces refused to retreat from the occupied areas.

As the diplomatic negotiations came to a deadlock and regional battles went on, in the early hours of December 20, 1948, the Netherlands launched a second “police action.” Under attacks by Dutch airborne troops, Indonesian could do nothing and militarily, Holland scored a victory. Once again, however, international opinions were fiercely against the Netherlands for indiscriminately bombarding Indonesian cities. Above all, India and other Asian countries criticized the Dutch, and the UN Security Council adopted a resolution on January 28, 1949, demanding that the Netherlands remove its army from Indonesia. The most decisive of all were voices raised in the US Congress, suggesting that the Marshall Plan (US economic aid for the recovery of Europe) as applied to the Netherlands be cut off if Dutch forces continued in its military actions. Finally, the Netherlands succumbed to international pressure and agreed to hold the Round-Table Conference in The Hague, beginning in August 1949, and lasting for two months, and to participate in peaceful negotiations on the premise of granting Indonesia total independence.

### **The Netherlands did not apologize**

During the three and a half years of the war for independence against the Netherlands, Indonesia paid a dear, steep price. The lives of eight hundred thousand people, including children and women, were lost and over ten million were injured. The total loss, of property, valuables and homes, due to indiscriminate bombardment was too huge to calculate. Much to everyone’s consternation, at The Hague Round-Table Conference, far from apologizing to Indonesian victims, the Netherlands raised an astounding demand to Indonesia.

After the war of independence, it was in 1949 that the final peace treaty was reached between the Netherlands and our country. At that time, Indonesia did not ask for either an apology or compensation. That was because we were still in danger. It was the Netherlands that asked for money during the talks concerning the four years. Speaking of the huge sum of military scrip issued by the Dutch East Indies Government, the Netherlands demanded that if we want independence, we should settle in hard currency the scrip that was issued during that time. We had no choice but to promise to pay the sum.

Thus testified Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, Senior Ambassador of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the time. Military scrip was issued to pay for war expenses and other expenditures spent by the Dutch East Indies government in their efforts to extinguish the Republic of Indonesia. The total amount was said to reach six billion dollars. Far from paying compensation, the Netherlands asked instead to be compensated for war expenses. No words can express the dismay evoked by the Netherlands' imprudent demand.

It was not war expenses alone that the Netherlands demanded during the peace talks. Their demands ranged far and wide, from the payment of pensions for Dutch officials of the Dutch East Indies government, recognition of property rights of Indonesian real estate owned by the Dutch to payment of the cost of developing the North Sumatra oil field. In order to have their independence granted, the Indonesians had to accept all these unreasonable requests from the Dutch, albeit most unwillingly and reluctantly. It was not until 1963 that Indonesia publicly denounced the Dutch demands, after they had acquired complete independence and fear of another Dutch invasion had dissipated. Then Foreign Minister Ruslan Abdulgani said in an interview with this author in 1994 as follows:

Finally, after we acquired sufficient national power as a state, we tore to pieces all the promises we had had to make with the Netherlands, in the light of day with the whole world watching. In order to fight against colonialism, you have to be strong enough. Strength to fight against the Dutch, in other words, military ability was given to us by Japan during the War. We owe Japan so much for achieving our independence.

It was in 2005 that the Dutch government officially recognized the Declaration of Independence by Sukarno. It took as long as sixty years for Indonesia to persuade the Netherlands to finally come around, which previously insisted that they would never recognize independence declared by Sukarno, who

cooperated with Japan.

To Indonesia, burdened with such a severe history, the historical view presented at the Tokyo Trials is hardly worth supporting, for that view clearly regards the Allied Powers including the Netherlands as “just” and Japan as the “aggressor.”

### **Roosevelt’s blueprint for postwar peace came to nothing**

As we have seen the history of Asia, aggressions committed by the Allied powers so far, it is very clear that the historical view presented at the Tokyo Trials makes no sense at all, for it claims that only Japan is responsible as the aggressor who threatened the peace in Asia.

However, anti-Japanese powers of the former Allied Nations and left-wing liberals cooperating with the Chinese Communist Party invented political propaganda so that Japanese people would not notice the “senselessness of the view.”

Article 11 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which took effect in April 1952, states, “Japan accepts the judgments of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and of other Allied War Crimes Courts both within and outside Japan, and will carry out the sentences imposed thereby upon Japanese nationals imprisoned in Japan.” Based on Article 11, they asserted that Japan was able to re-enter the international community by accepting the judgment of the Tokyo Trials, namely, the historical view of the Tokyo Trials.

I will not re-argue the misconceptions that are apparent in Article 11 here, since Professor Sato Kazuo, a scholar of international laws, has fully discussed this issue with reference to global trends at the time in academic societies of international law in his book entitled *Tokyo Trials Judged by the World* (published by Meiseisha).

What I want to make clear here is whether the United States asked Japan to accept the Tokyo Trials’ historical view upon signing the peace treaty.

In fact, the Tokyo Trials were held as a part of U.S. global strategy.

Let’s go back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s concept of the postwar political process. What kind of international political scheme would be the best to prevent another world war? After much deliberation, President Roosevelt thought of establishing a system to manage international conflicts utilizing “global policemen,” composed of four countries, the U.S., Britain, the USSR and China (with France being added later). These countries are presently the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The gist of the idea is that America, militarily and economically the most powerful, should govern the entire

world in cooperation with the Soviets, China and Britain. In realizing this idea, it was essential to thoroughly weaken the three nations of Japan, Germany and Italy, which could pose a threat and challenge to the American-led international order.

In the background of Roosevelt's global strategy existed the view of Japan defined by the thinking that "Asian conflicts were caused by militarist Japan." The point is that "strong Japan kept breaking the peace in Asia," and so if Japan is made weak, then peace in Asia will be secured. This is called the "Weak Japan" policy. How, then, can Japan be weakened? President Roosevelt stated the following at the Casablanca Conference held in Morocco in January 1943:

The elimination of German, Japanese, and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender by Germany, Italy, and Japan. That means a reasonable assurance of future world peace. It does not mean the destruction of the population of Germany, Italy, or Japan, but it does mean the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and the subjugation of other people.

President Roosevelt thought that in order to weaken Japan, Japan should be made to surrender unconditionally, and not just simply disarmed, but also the Japanese national philosophy itself should be "annihilated." How was this to be achieved? By implementing a "war guilt information program," to insinuate the sins and evils of Japanese war crimes into the Japanese minds, thereby depriving the Japanese people of their national dignity and pride.

Further, in order to justify the "information plan," the Tokyo Trials were actually held. Moreover, to ensure that the political system will never again enable Japan to fight back against America, they changed the constitution and basic educational laws for the worse, purged approximately two hundred some thousand then-leaders of Japan from public offices, who were charged of being "militarists", and instead supported labor unions and recruited socialists and communists into the political and scholarly spheres. For the time being, President Truman's Democratic administration intended to put Japan unarmed under the surveillance of the Allied Nations for at least 25 years.

However, President Roosevelt's prospect of keeping peace in Asia through the cooperation of the three nations of the U.S., the Soviet Union and China by defeating and weakening Japan did not come true. In the postwar years, the U.S. and the Soviets were constantly in conflict over the issue of Eastern Europe and on the Chinese mainland, a violent civil war broke out between the Nationalist Party and the Communist



Party.

### **George Kennan, who criticized the Tokyo Trials, and the course reversal**

Other voices were raised in America, fearing that as the Cold War era dawned, the policy of disarming and weakening Japan then in progress might eventually fall Asia to communism. One of them was William H. Draper Jr., U.S. undersecretary of the Army, and he changed Japan's status from "hateful enemy" to "breakwater against communism" and started to shift toward the policy of "Strong Japan," meaning "strong Japan brings stability to Asia." This is the so called "course reversal."

The theoretical supporter of this course reversal was George Kennan, the first director of the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. State Department, who became famous for creating a plan to contain the Soviets. He came to Japan in 1948 and upon observing Japan under occupation with its demobilized Army and a malfunctioning Ministry of Home Affairs (the administrative organ in charge of the police and domestic security management), stated, "At first glance, the nature of the occupation policy implemented until now by General MacArthur's Headquarters looked like nothing but preparations solely on making Japanese society weaker so that communist may take over." Naturally, he harshly criticized the Tokyo Trials as well.

There is really no law on which such judicial procedure can be founded... there is no crime of an international nature involved in the services which an individual renders to his own state as a public servant. The state, as such, stands responsible for its own policies; the vicissitudes of peace or war are its trial.

And in the case of Japan, the judgment is now being enacted through the disaster which has befallen the entire country in consequence of the loss of the war. This is not to say that the victor does not have the right to punish individual leaders of the defeated nation. But the punishment should take place as an act of war, not of justice; and it should not be surrounded with the hocus-pocus of a judicial procedure.

Kennan pointed out: now that the global strategy of making Japan weak in order to secure peace in Asia is no longer appropriate with the occurrence of the Cold War and the Chinese Civil War, it makes no sense at all to continue the Tokyo Trials, fabricated as they were with dubious legal procedures, which was launched in the first place in order to make Japan weak. In only four months after Kennan made this statement, on February 24, 1949, the Allied Nations Far East Committee decided that the Tokyo Trials

would no longer take place, and the Tokyo Trials were closed.

And in October of the same year, the Chinese Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek retreated in defeat and Chinese Communist Party government established on mainland China. The United States had been enthusiastically supporting Chiang Kai-shek so that he might establish a democratic Christian nation on the Chinese continent; a witch-hunt began immediately for those who were to blame for Chiang Kai-shek's defeat.

Constantly opposing President Truman's Democratic administration, Republican Party leader Senator Robert F. Taft stated that the reason Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government lost in the civil war against the Communist Party was not due to a fault of the Nationalist government, but because the Truman administration did not give enough support to Chiang Kai-shek.

From the beginning, Senator Taft, "Mr. Republican" as he was called, was critical about President Roosevelt's pro-Soviet and anti-Japan diplomatic stance all along even before the War started.

President Roosevelt concluded a secret pact with Soviet leader Stalin at the Soviet city of Yalta in February 1945. (It is called the Yalta Agreement.) The agreement stated that: As a reward for the Soviets agreeing to the idea of founding the United Nations, it is acknowledged that Poland and the three Baltic States would be incorporated into the Soviet bloc and in exchange for the Soviet's entering the war with Japan, interests in Manchuria, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands should be given to the Soviets.

Learning of this, Senator Taft, in the mid-term election of 1946, stated: "President Roosevelt and President Truman], at Tehran, at Yalta, at Potsdam, and at Moscow pursued a policy of appeasing Russia, which has sacrificed throughout Eastern Europe and Asia the freedom of many nations and of millions of people." According to Senator Taft, the immediate crisis of Asia falling to communism should be attributed to the diplomatic mistakes made by President Roosevelt's administration as it acted hand-in-hand with the Soviets. (In May 2005, President George Bush, Jr. made the same accusation.)

As a natural consequence, Senator Taft was skeptical about trying Germany and Japan, which fought against Soviet Communism, in war crimes courts. On October 5, 1946, during a lecture given at Kenyon College, Taft flatly condemned the Tokyo Trials, confidently saying, "Trials of the loser by the winner can never be just, however judicially it may be dressed. The execution of the twelve German war criminals will forever remain a stigma in American history." He added, "I sincerely pray that the same mistake will be never again repeated. Unlike Germany, any pretext for vengeance to Japan will hardly be valid."

In October 1949, the birth of the Communist Chinese government made it widely known that

President Roosevelt's policy of "Weak Japan," the premise that a weak Japan would secure peace in Asia, was a sheer mistake. With the support of American public opinion, Senator Taft and others asked for a shift in the U.S. policy towards Japan. President Truman's Democratic administration accepted this request and in April 1950, it appointed Republican John Foster Dulles as top adviser to the State Department and on May 18, decided to assign Dulles to the task of concluding the peace treaty with Japan.

At that time the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist administration were against the rearmament of Japan. The Australian government also asked that some restrictions be imposed on Japan's rearmament. Some countries insisted that restricting Japanese commercial activities and maintaining plans for reform (namely, the "Weak Japan" policy) being prosecuted during the occupation period be clearly stated in the articles of the peace treaty. However, Dulles persuaded those countries with concerns that a peace treaty could be concluded in the direction of acknowledging Japan's rearmament, arguing "Under the present circumstances weak Japan might lead to Red Asia."

Thus, the punitive occupation policy was modified by Kennan, Taft and others, who criticized the Tokyo Trials, which were held as part of the "Weak Japan" policy. Under the peace treaty, which does not restrict the rearmament of Japan in any way, Japan came back to the international community.

### **Asian leaders who sympathized with the Greater East Asian War**

There is one more thing we should not overlook in the trend of international politics. That is the fact that those who ardently supported Japan's return to the international community were leaders of Asian countries who highly valued the Greater East Asia War.

In September 1951, at the San Francisco Peace Conference, Finance Minister J.R. Jayewardene, representing Ceylon (presently Sri Lanka), made the following speech:

Why is it that the peoples of Asia are anxious that Japan should be free ? It is because of our age-long connections with her, and because of the high regard the subject peoples of Asia have for Japan when she alone, among the Asian nations, was strong and free and we looked up to her as a guardian and friend. I can recall incidents that occurred during the last war, when the co-prosperity slogan for Asia had its appeal to subject peoples, and some of the leaders of Burma, India, and Indonesia joined the Japanese in the hope that thereby their beloved countries may be liberated.

Therefore, Ceylon did not ask for compensation from Japan, said Jayewardene.

India refused to participate in the San Francisco Peace Conference partly because India was against the article demanding compensation from Japan. On May 24, 1957, former “Class A war criminal” Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke was warmly welcomed by a mass rally on his visit to India. Amid crowds of nearly thirty thousand welcoming people, India’s founding hero Prime Minister Nehru mentioned how profoundly the Indian movement for independence was affected by the victories of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, then adding “India did not dare to join in the San Francisco Treaty. And we have rescinded the right to compensation. This is simply because India makes much more of friendship than monetary demand.”

Besides India, with the sentiment of comradeship that “Japan fought for Asia,” Laos and Cambodia also voluntarily rescinded the right to ask for compensation.

Even in the cases where Japan did pay compensation, leaders who deeply sympathized with the ideal of the Greater East Asia War put down sums that were at the very low end.

Foreign Minister U Nu of the Ba Maw Administration of Burma, which declared independence in August of 1943 with the help of Japan, became Prime Minister after the War and concluded, prior to any other countries, a peace treaty with Japan as well as an agreement for economic cooperation, holding out for only a paltry amount of compensation.

The Philippines was put under American influence after the War, and became strongly anti-Japanese. Though negotiations over compensation often came to a deadlock, it was President Jose Laurel, who declared Philippine independence on October 14, 1943, in cooperation with the Japanese Army, contributed greatly to solving this deadlock. He exiled himself to Japan after the Philippines was invaded by the U.S. Army toward the end of the War and immediately after the War, he was detained at Sugamo Prison by GHQ. Later on, he was sent back to the Philippines and was charged with treason. He was pardoned by the Amnesty Proclamation and was elected Senator in 1951. In 1954, he accepted the post of chief plenipotentiary in the negotiations dealing with the Japanese compensation issue.

Asian countries also paid high regard in deciding how to spend the reparations each country had received from Japan. Ex-Foreign Minister of Malaysia Ghazali Shafie, who was awarded the United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Prize for his great contribution to the establishment of ASEAN said as follows:

Although the Japanese people may not be aware of this, some of the recipients of the compensation—newly independent countries who were once victims of the Japanese occupation—tried their best to avoid the payment of reparations stirring up anti-Japanese sentiment as money paid in exchange for the bloody cost and sacrifice and rather helped Japan by spending the compensation in ways so that the Japanese reparations might become worthy of admiration. For example, in Malaysia, the compensation was used to start up a jointly-undertaken international shipping company, which now results in spread of the business and has become a symbol of cooperation between Japan and Malaysia.

Moreover, ex-Foreign Minister Ghazali Shafie pointed out: “Soon after Malaysia became independent, a plan was discussed to impose traffic tax on tankers passing through the Straits of Malacca, but upon further consideration, if the taxation was implemented, Japanese trade would be hit hard and the plan was soon dropped.” Ex-Foreign Minister Ghazali Shafie deeply sympathized with the ideal of the Greater East Asia War.

### **Postwar Japan supported by the legacy of the Greater East Asia War**

Japan became independent following the conclusion of the Peace Treaty and in order to be economically prosperous, Japan needed a new economic market replacing the booming business of special procurements brought on by the Korean War. Japan could hardly expect to achieve economic prosperity with the loss of huge markets such as the Chinese Continent and the Korean Peninsula. Afraid of the situation, Secretary of State Dulles of the Republican Eisenhower Administration focused on the Southeast Asian market. Again, it was Asian leaders sympathizing with the “ideal of the Greater East Asia War” that supported Secretary Dulles’s economic policy and indirectly backed up Japanese enterprises entering Southeast Asia.

The Oil Shock broke out beginning in autumn of 1973 and continued to the following year. OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) reduced the supply of oil to oil-consuming countries in order to take advantage of the ongoing Middle East War, and Japanese industry, heavily dependent on oil, was hit hard by the incident. The Japanese government issued two oil-related decrees and asked enterprises to reduce use of oil and electricity by 20% as well as a reduction in energy use among the general public. Bright neon signs in cities were gone, gas stations were closed on Sundays and holidays. The price of goods in January of the following year frantically shot up by more than 20% over the same

month of the previous year.

When the Japanese government confidentially tried to ask King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, leader of OAPEC, to increase oil exports to Japan, those who mediated the negotiations with King Faisal were none other than Indonesian leaders such former Coordinating Minister for Public Welfare of Indonesia H. Alamsjah Ratu Perwiranegara and former Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir, who always held the opinion “Without the Greater East Asia War, there would not have been an independent and free Asia.” They ardently persuaded King Faisal, stating that “It was Japan that saved Islam (90% of the Indonesian population are Muslims who were subject to Christians (the Dutch)) through the Greater East Asia War and supported us in our independence. Japan is a true supporter of Islam.” (With gratitude for his efforts in this matter, the Japanese government presented Mr. H. Alamsjah with Grand Cordon of the Order.)

When then Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited Indonesia in January 1979, a large-scale anti-Japanese demonstration took place in the capital city of Jakarta. The people were repulsed by corruption, such as repeated bribery committed by Japanese enterprises entering Southeast Asia and teaming exclusively with Chinese merchants.

On the other hand, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir played a leading role as the flag-bearer, welcoming Japanese enterprises into Southeast Asia. Around 1980 and onwards, he adopted the policy of “Look East (Learn from Japan and Korea)” and launched a campaign of admiring Japan. One of the devisers of this policy was vice-president of Malaya University Unk Adis, who had studied in Japan during the War as a special foreign student from South Asia.

Thanks to leaders of many Asian countries who sympathized with the ideal of the Greater East Asia War, Japan was not only able to escape from the burdens of harsh postwar reparations, but also able to receive support from them in entering lucrative Southeast Asian markets, which laid the foundation for present-day economic prosperity. Indeed, Japan has been supported by the spiritual legacy of the Greater East Asia War.

In the broader perspective, while Japanese national interests have been constantly threatened by China, Russia, South and North Korea and their sympathizers who obstinately stick to the historical view as dictated by the Tokyo Trials, people who are critical about the Tokyo Trials view, including American conservatives and Asian leaders, have supported and helped Japan return to the international community and contributed in creating the prosperous Japan of today. It is very important that we should rightly understand the structure of the international politics surrounding the Tokyo Trials.