

Conditions towards Zero — “11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament”—

Today, I have the honor to talk about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, an issue that is critical to global peace and security. I would like to thank Mr. Yoshiji Nogami, president of the Japan Institute of International Affairs, and his distinguished staff. I renewed my resolve to contribute to global peace and security when I signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions last December.

Recently, I have been strongly feeling a momentum building toward nuclear disarmament for the first time in many years. This momentum has gradually grown since two years ago, when four senior U.S. statesmen, including Former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, contributed an op-ed entitled “A world free of nuclear weapons” to a newspaper.

For its part, Japan, which has proposed a resolution for the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the United Nations General Assembly every year for the past 15 years and has otherwise been engaged in active nuclear disarmament diplomacy, is striving hard to take advantage of the growing momentum. The establishment last September of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament is part of such efforts. My speech today also represents Japan’s strong resolve to play the leading role in promoting global nuclear disarmament.

The momentum toward nuclear disarmament grew further because of a speech that U.S. President Barack Obama made in Prague on April 5. I strongly support his clear commitment to taking realistic and concrete steps toward the realization of a peaceful, safe, nuclear-free world.

However, on April 5, the day when President Obama delivered that speech, North Korea, launched a missile. The launch, in contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718, is a serious challenge to our regional peace and stability, and it must never be condoned from the viewpoint of non-proliferation. In response to this provocative act, the United Nations Security Council, including Japan, has unanimously adopted and issued a very clearly- and strongly-worded statement read by the Council’s president. North Korea’s nuclear development, coupled with its missile development, is posing a serious threat not only to East Asia but to the entire international community. We strongly urge North Korea to take this message from the international community seriously, fully implement the obligations stipulated in relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and agreements reached at the Six-Party Talks and take concrete actions. We also call on all countries concerned to quickly implement measures included in these resolutions.

Although Japan developed into a major economic power after World War II, the country has maintained its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons, from the standpoint of being the only country to experience the nuclear devastation of, and has strictly committed itself to concentrating on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Realizing a world free of nuclear weapons is Japan’s long-cherished hope. To that end, Japan has been actively engaging in active nuclear disarmament diplomacy. Japan has every intention to help to build the growing momentum for global sustainable nuclear disarmament. By doing so, Japan also intends to improve its security environment.

Hoping to bring the 2010 NPT Review Conference to a successful conclusion by all means, I have decided to propose “11 benchmarks” that make clear Japan’s views on this issue both to Japanese people and to the world. Today, I will first mention the current situation surrounding nuclear weapons briefly and then propose 11 benchmarks for advancing global nuclear disarmament. These benchmarks are based on three major pillars, which are nuclear disarmament steps by all nuclear weapons-holding states, disarmament and non-proliferation measures by the entire international community, namely multilateral measures, and measures for states seeking peaceful uses of nuclear energy.