

## The Japan Economic Review Study Forum

# Collecting small arms after civil war is important for prevention of terrorism

Behind-the-scenes consensus-building practices common to Japan's village society applicable in the international community



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On September 10, Professor Kuniko Inoguchi of Sophia University, Faculty of Law, who served for two years as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and returned to Japan in May, addressed the Japan Economic Review Study Forum held in Tokyo, on the subject of "Disarmament Diplomacy and Anti-terrorism Strategies." Professor Inoguchi stressed the following points:

1) Collecting small arms after civil war is important for prevention of terrorism;  
2) Japan should perform a central role in disarmament activities. The practice of behind-the-scenes consensus-building, which is common to Japanese village society, can be successfully applied at the international level.

The outline of the lecture is as follows.

For many years disarmament negotiations have produced no results. I have chaired the Conference on Disarmament and the UN First Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, and I think those initiatives achieved certain results. As Chairperson, I do

not support the approach of pushing through decisions using the power of major countries to override opposition by other countries. It is important to give all members a sense of ownership. I have always stuck to the concept that negotiations fail when there is even one party in opposition, and I have explained this concept on many occasions. It is consistent with the philosophy of incorporating all parties as is common for Japanese village society.

Disarmament challenges include fissile material production cutoff, and bans on biological weapons and strengthening of bans on biological weapons and chemical weapons.

Of these, at the negotiation on the protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in particular, the United States took a passive approach, and negotiations were suspended for one year. The negotiations were chaired by the Ambassador of Hungary, but I was tasked to work with the US to find a more positive way to strengthen the Convention. The U.S. maintained the position that the BWC will contribute little to the prevention of terrorism, but later agreed to discuss the follow up process of Convention with non-aligned countries. However, the agreement came with two conditions: the talks must take place at the official residence of the Japanese Ambassador, and representatives of all non-aligned countries must be present at the talks. I contacted the representatives of the non-aligned countries, and they all agreed to attend the talks. This contributed to the process of strengthening the BWC. The strengthening process enhanced the domestic legislation of member states



Prof. Inoguchi addresses the Study Forum held in Tokyo on disarmament diplomacy and anti-terrorism strategies.

and certain results were achieved.

Ranking officials at the U.S. State Department have praised all our efforts, saying that no terror incidents involving biological weapons have occurred since then.

The UN First Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms that I chaired addressed the issue of combatting illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Some 500,000 people die in small arms-related incidents each year, and 70% of the victims are women and children. The inability to collect small weapons even after the end of armed conflict, such as civil wars, poses significant problems. Therefore, we agreed at the Meeting to strengthen domestic legislation to prevent illicit proliferation of such weapons and enhance capacity building to implement measures agreed in the process. Illicit proliferation

is carried out in linkage with illicit trade in small arms is no different from illicit trade in diamonds or drugs. Furthermore, places where illicit transactions of weapons are carried out serve as hotbeds for recruitment of terrorists.

On that occasion, I insisted that the voice of victims of illicit proliferation of small arms be heard at the Meeting. By directly speaking about what is going on in the hinterlands of Africa, the victims can help states representatives understand the gravity of the problems. All such efforts contributed to unanimously adopting the Report of the Conference with the Chair's Summary on strengthening the monitoring of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The attitude of the U.S. gun lobbyists towards the Meeting was rather passive, but I said to them, "You are one of the most powerful political con-

stituencies. Please come up with a constructive proposal to help me, and I will have the proposal presented at the Meeting."

As a result, the gun lobbyists came up with a very good proposal. They proposed to provide, free of charge, a technologies that will enable marking each manufactured gun with an indelible laser imprint. This indelible imprint will allow the manufacturer of each weapon to be easily traced. In the event that such weapons are subjected to illicit trade, the manufacturer can be held accountable.

This is a small success, but it is important to accumulate such small successes. Control on small arms may lose vigor unless the number of guns is reduced. The same goes for nuclear weapons. The absolute volume of nuclear weapons must be reduced to reduce the probability of proliferation to wrong hands.