

# The Grief Caused by Russia's Invasion: Ukraine's Devastation Can Occur in Japan

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So many Ukrainians have died since the Russian military invasion began on February 24th. Russia massacred civilians in Bucha and even attacked a humanitarian corridor that was in place for civilian evacuation according to the ceasefire agreement with the United Nations. Indiscriminate slaughter is a violation of international law. Acts of aggression occur suddenly with no prior warning, and aggressor nations care nothing about rules set by the UN or international law. The ones who must lament and suffer are the powerless citizens who previously lived peaceful lives with their families. Aggressors do not spare any thoughts for women and children, either. I earnestly wish that the citizens of Japan will never have to experience this type of tragedy.

We cannot be indifferent to the Ukraine conflict. Because Ukraine and Japan are in similar situations, we must realize the same thing could happen in Japan.

The Constitution of Japan was imposed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ). In line with the preamble that states Japan is “resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government,” Japanese citizens are taught that no wars will occur unless the Japanese government starts them. Furthermore, the Japan-U.S. Alliance and Japan-U.S. Security Treaty have led to the persistent delusion that the U.S. will unquestionably help Japan whenever assistance is necessary. This is why the government and citizens alike hold the view that minimal defense capability is sufficient for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). However, is this actually true?

Japan relies upon security guarantees and alliances with other countries. Based on its policy of alignment with the UN, Japan believes it will never be invaded by a foreign country. Should we continue placing our faith in this type of fantasy? The Ukraine situation is a lesson that we must learn from.

## Safety based on the security treaty is a myth that has crumbled

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. When Ukraine became independent soon after, it was the world's number-three military power with 1,240 nuclear warheads and 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). In 1994, the U.S., United Kingdom, and Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, promising to assure Ukraine's security in exchange for relinquishing its nuclear weapons. The present tragedy is occurring in Ukraine because it gave up its nuclear weapons according to that agreement.

Ukraine curtailed its military force due to its trust in the Budapest Memorandum. It thought there was nothing to worry about because its security was guaranteed by the three military powers of the U.S., UK, and Russia. In this way Ukraine is seemingly the twin of postwar Japan, which does not see its minimal military strength as problematic because of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and which feels peace of mind underneath the American nuclear umbrella.

Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula in southern Ukraine in March 2014. The people living there were divided into two factions, one in favor of Russia and one friendly to Western Europe. A local referendum took place while surrounded by Russian forces, and citizens voted for integration into Russia.

Ukraine was helpless after relinquishing its military strength. Crimea was annexed in line with Russia's unliteral assertions. Today, the Russian forces are directly waging a military invasion in Ukraine. Due to indirect hints from Russia about the use of nuclear weapons, the U.S. and UK – countries that concluded the security pact with Ukraine – avoid direct military intervention while providing only weapons and other types of logistical support. The Budapest Memorandum has effectively been made null

and void.

This testifies that nations must have armed forces to protect themselves.

Japan believes in the myth that it is completely safe thanks to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. However, we must actually understand what is written in this treaty.

If Japan is the target of a military invasion, the security treaty does not state that the U.S. will fight on Japan's behalf without exception. Article V stipulates what measures will be taken in the case of a common enemy, but it has an entirely different tone than what Japanese people assume.

Article V reads, "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes."

This text simply declares that, if either country was the target of an armed attack, the other would act according to its own procedures in the event of a common danger. The security treaty would not be invoked if a threat to Japan did not pose a threat to the U.S. Even if the treaty was put into operation, the U.S. Congress would have to approve sending armed forces to a foreign country. Without this Congressional approval, the forces would be immediately withdrawn. It is not an inevitability that the U.S. Armed Forces would fight to save Japan from a crisis.

Although people have constantly sung the praises of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, it is clear to see how fragile and unworthy of trust this treaty really is.

It is also extremely self-serving to assume that another nation's soldiers would risk their lives to fight for a foreign country.

### **The results of defense without the ability to retaliate**

Ukraine had nuclear weapons and was the number-three military power, yet it lacked the economic strength to maintain the forces of the former Soviet army. The Soviet army remained in Ukraine right after the fall of the Soviet Union. It wanted to become part of the Ukrainian military but was dismantled and rendered powerless.

Because it trusted the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, the Ukrainian military relinquished all its nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles to Russia. I imagine Ukraine would not have been invaded if it still possessed even 10 of these nuclear warheads. Moreover, Ukraine reduced its military force and today has practically no ability to strike enemy territories. Its beautiful towns have been reduced to scorched earth because it gave in to the cajolery of military superpowers and lost sight of the overriding principle that a country must be able to defend itself.

The Russian forces are able to launch ballistic missiles from safe locations to hit military sites, infrastructure, and key facilities. It can chip away at Ukraine's ability to retaliate by destroying ammunition and fuel depots. The Ukrainian armed forces, on the other hand, lack this capability, and Russian military and ammunition production bases remain unharmed. Day by day there is a growing disparity between Ukraine, which has lost its weapon production sites and transport infrastructure, and Russia, which is maintaining its ability to continue waging war. It is clear to see that Ukraine cannot win this conflict. It is being continually devastated and will eventually have to surrender without support from and direct participation by multiple military powers.

If a nation cannot attack enemy territories and is limited solely to counterattacks, it cannot lay waste to its enemy, meaning that victory is impossible.

This is another way in which Ukraine and Japan closely resemble each other.

Japan does not have the ability to strike enemy bases. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has spoken about the possibility of gaining this capability, calling it the "ability to retaliate," but I cannot tell how serious he is about this topic.

In the past Japan has touted its missile defense strategy, but today there are new weapons that cannot be intercepted with this system. Russia developed the Kinzhal hypersonic missile that is said to fly at speeds of up to Mach 10 with a range of 2,000 kilometers. In addition to its speed and distance, this hypersonic glide missile travels at low altitudes. Japan only has methods for intercepting ballistic missiles outside the Earth's atmosphere or in the final phase when they approach the planet's surface.

If we are incapable of intercepting missiles, our only preventative option is to destroy enemy missile attack systems before they are launched – in other words, the ability to strike enemy bases. Japan cannot protect itself because it lacks this capability. Major suffering would be inevitable if missiles fell on Japan, the people had nowhere to run, and the land was destroyed.

Besides missile defense, the JSDF has almost no long-range bombers, cruise missiles, ground offensive weapons, or other attack weapons. Japan holds to the defense principle of not striking enemy territories. The aim is to meticulously destroy missiles as they rain on Japan, but breaking apart a missile directly overhead would cause fragments to fall down from the sky. This would result in less damage than if a missile detonated on the ground, but there would still be many casualties. The only way to protect our people from hostile invasions and assaults – and to prevent strikes from reaching Japan – is to destroy the enemy's offensive abilities before it attacks.

Most of the JSDF's abilities are merely for intercepting attacks. We must comprehend the severity of this situation, in which the only result will be Japan's exhaustion.

## The principle followed by the aggressor nation Russia

Using the Russian invasion as an example, I have elucidated how Ukraine and Japan resemble each other in their ways of thinking about treaties and unbalanced military forces. They are also similar because Russia has territorial ambitions towards both these countries. Regretfully, I must point out that Russia already sees Japan as a target.

It seems like Japanese people view the invasion of far-away Ukraine as a matter of little concern. However, Ukraine and Japan are both Russia's neighbors. Ukraine adjoins it to the west, while Japan is located next to Russia on its eastern side. Both Ukraine and Japan are also involved in territorial disputes with Russia.

After the invasion of Ukraine started, on April 1st Russian State Duma Deputy Sergey Mironov Tweeted that while Japan continually claims the Kuril Islands (author's note: the Northern Territories and Chishima Islands), some experts say Russia has full authority over all of Hokkaido. The Russian REGNUM News Agency published an article on this as well. Russia does not only desire Ukraine; it has naked ambitions towards its eastern neighbor of Japan.

Russia employs a certain principle when starting an invasion: the pretense of a war of "self-defense," which is recognized by international law. Russia justifies military invasions based on requests from pro-Russian residents in its target country and their appeals for protection.

Many people with pro-Russian sentiments live in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts of Ukraine. There, militias unilaterally proclaimed independence in 2014. Armed groups continued waging a civil war with support from Russia and gained practical control over portions of these oblasts. Five days before the invasion, these groups announced that Ukraine was planning to use military force to retake areas ruled by the pro-Russian faction. Ukrainian authorities denied this claim as a fabrication. Russia unexpectedly recognized Donetsk and Luhansk as independent nations the following day.

Russia launched its armed invasion of the entire nation of Ukraine on February 24th. The Russian forces' nominal objective was fighting to maintain peace in these areas it recognized as independent states. Russia justified the invasion by saying it had received requests for protection from Russians living in Ukraine and pro-Russian Ukrainians.

According to international law, some wars are righteous and some are not. Although wars of aggression are violations of international law, countries are allowed to utilize the right of self-defense to protect their citizens. Russia insisted that this invasion is an exercise of its right of self-defense, which is permitted by international law.

The UN Security Council passed a resolution in February calling for the prompt withdrawal of the Russian forces. Russia used its right of veto as a permanent member of the council to strike down the resolution. But if Russia were truly exercising its right of self-defense, it would have stayed in Donetsk and Luhansk without sending its army to the capital city of Kyiv. At that point the global community acknowledged this invasion as a clear breach of international law, and countries began taking individual measures such as economic sanctions. And while the UN General Assembly passed a resolution asking for civilians to be protected, there have been numerous reports of unarmed, nonresistant citizens being massacred. The UN is powerless to do anything about this. Neither the UN nor any other country had the ability to deter or stop these actions by Russia, a nuclear power and permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Russia used similar means to annex the Crimean Peninsula. It dispatched troops to exercise its right of self-defense and protect the autonomy of pro-Russian civilians, then held a local referendum approving the annexation of Crimea while suppressing information. Its classic approach is to send troops on the pretense of protecting civilians according to requests from pro-Russian residents of the areas it wants to invade.

Russia is already laying the groundwork for the same type of military invasion in Japan. I will describe several matters that I am particularly concerned about.

Hokkaido is home to the Ainu ethnic group. In April 2019, Japan enacted the Act Promoting Measures to Achieve a Society in which the Pride of Ainu People is Respected (Ainu Support Act), a new law that recognizes the Ainu as indigenous people of Hokkaido and clearly states they should not be subject to discrimination or have their rights infringed due to their ethnicity. I will not touch upon this historical background, but I have some misgivings about acknowledging that Ainu have been discriminated against by Japanese people.

At a human rights council in Moscow in December 2018, President Vladimir Putin shared his view that Russia would recognize the Ainu as an indigenous Russian ethnic group. We can regard this as a declaration that the Ainu are Russian people. As I mentioned before, Japan has already acknowledged its history of discriminating against the Ainu. What would happen if Ainu living in Japan asked Russia for protection? This would be a strategic move for Russia to launch a military operation for protecting its Ainu countrymen.

Seemingly acting in concert, an Ainu support group called the Citizens' Alliance For the Examination of Ainu Policy sent a letter to Putin in January 2019. This shocking missive asked Russia to make the Kuril Islands (Chishima Islands) and Hokkaido into the "Ainu people's autonomous region," and for Russia to administer it in an integrated fashion. In other words, the Ainu people are asking Russia for protection. The letter also requested that Russia protect the environment of the Shiretoko Peninsula.

Although this was just one letter from a single citizens' group, Putin has repeatedly employed similar methods in the past. Can we definitively state there is no possibility that he will use this letter to start a military operation to protect the Ainu as Russian

people?

Hokkaido is not sufficiently defended – Japan has prioritized missile defense against the Chinese threat and devoted less fighting power to protect Hokkaido from Russia. Russia has a military base in the Northern Territories and its territorial airspace is close to Japan's. Many scrambles take place as well. The Japanese-Russian relationship is growing increasingly hostile while the invasion of Ukraine stretches on. Russia and China held their joint Vostok 2022 military exercises in the Far East in September. Russia has already made the opening moves for launching a military operation to protect its people – the only question is when it will begin.

### **A Taiwan crisis poses further danger to Japan**

After American Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, China carried out large-scale military exercises in the seas adjacent to Taiwan. It launched five ballistic missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) on August 4th, which landed just about 60 to 80 kilometers from Yonaguni Island. This was the first time China has launched missiles to Japan's EEZ, and it inspired a keen sense of danger among the citizens of Japan. China has powerful armed forces and its military spending is about six times that of Japan's. I have kept a wary eye on China based on the belief that a Taiwan crisis would pose a danger to Japan. Still, China is not the only threat – the Vostok 2022 Far East military exercises were a joint effort by China and Russia.

The National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party will be held on October 16th to determine the next president. This congress takes place once every five years, and people are saying Xi Jinping will maintain his current post for a third term. After solidifying his standing, it is possible that Xi will invade Taiwan and that Russia will attack Hokkaido at the same time. The JSDF would have to fight on two fronts in that scenario.

The end of peace is approaching, and Japan must prepare to confront these circumstances. Our past methods have been too tepid. The Kishida Cabinet is saying it will increase military spending to equal 2% of the GDP within five years, but such a half-hearted measure will not be enough. Only the Japanese people can defend their own country.

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who took an active interest in preparing for life-and-death national crises and strengthening Japan's defense capability, was shot to death by an assassin. In May, Abe was planning to increase the defense budget to seven trillion yen. The Kishida Cabinet requested just 5.5 trillion yen of budgetary appropriations for defense, but could the JSDF fight on two fronts with that amount?

The government must be resolved to protect its people! It should revise the constitution and other laws, boost defense spending, and substantially increase the number of JSDF members. In addition, it should promptly build more JSDF bases, fuel depots, and ammunition depots to ensure sufficient defense capabilities for fighting on two fronts. This is the only path forward for Japan's survival.