

A letter to Obama, submitted version

President Barack Obama  
of The United States of America

Please make your best efforts to democratize the United Nations  
toward the realization of world peace and poverty alleviation

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Dear Mr. Obama

I am a Japanese citizen.

Your inauguration as the new president of the United States was a truly historic event. This result was brought about by American democracy and idealism. I respect your fresh mind-set and sincere desire for the well-being of people.

However, I was very disappointed with the agenda posted on the White House website on Jan. 22, 2009, especially with regard to the diplomatic policy. The agenda states "Barack Obama and Joe Biden strongly support the U.S.-Israel relationship, and believe that our first and incontrovertible commitment in the Middle East must be to the security of Israel, America's strongest ally in the region". Do you consider what Israel has been doing to Palestinians are all incontrovertible? It implies that like most previous U.S. presidents you do not intend to change the Middle East policy.

Israeli experienced racial extermination by the Nazis in Germany. Now, ironically, they have been ignoring the human rights of Palestinians. The recent invasion of the Gaza strip was a disproportionate response from the part of Israel. As a result more than 1500 Palestinians were killed and those who survived are now more impoverished than ever. Dozens of Israel people were also killed. Compare, however, the death toll between the Israel and Palestinian people up to now. I think this is the racial or religious discrimination.

I am surprised that you have made no public comment about this attack. As long as you maintain "incontrovertible" support for Israel, there will always be people who oppose U.S. policy in the Middle East. Gaza is now spoken about as "a prison with an open roof". Abraham Lincoln is credited with the emancipation of black slaves. As you hold him in respect, the world hopes that you will free the Palestinians from their imprisonment.

Now, every nation in the world is greatly influenced by the impact of a worldwide trend. It is verified by the current occurrence of the U.S. financial crisis, which has spread out all over the world. Nevertheless, it seems to me that you keep on maintaining the U.S. supremacy by force, such as a preemptive strike, although you show a cooperative attitude toward other nations on the White House website.

It is a forecast that China and India will surpass the U.S. in GNP for the next ten and twenty years respectively.

As such, if those developing countries will follow the same path as the U.S., spending huge money for military forces without coping with the domestic poverty, and maintaining incontrovertible support to particular nations, it may bring social and political chaos in the world. How are you going to cope with these nations?

May I quote the article nine of Japan's constitution? It states that: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." As you are well aware, Japan enacted such an epoch-making constitution with the help of the U.S.

It is surely the time to consider alternative solutions to the problems of military conflict and the poverty. In my opinion we have no choice but to strengthen and restructure the United Nations (UN). But the U.S. has been consistently ignoring UN resolutions and thereby weakening the power of the UN. For example, when the UN proposed resolutions for the prohibition of landmines, for the reduction in emissions causing global warming, and for the Israeli invasions of Palestine etc., the U.S. used its veto to block such resolutions. It is disappointing that the White House website has nothing to say about the UN, so we assume that you will maintain the same stance as your predecessors towards this international forum.

Under the present UN system, only five countries have reserved for themselves the special right to reject resolutions (The permanent member of the UN Security Council). What an un-democratic system it is! This is the discrimination against small countries. As you are well realized, the basic principle of democracy is that each voter has one vote with no veto right. The UN should also adopt this democratic system that each nation is able to equally get one vote with no veto right. As well as the domestic policy, international policy should also be democratically managed.

I sincerely hope that you will take the initiative to democratize the UN system. Consequently, every other nation will comply with the UN resolutions and abide by the international law based on justice and order. Surely this is the only hope for the world peace and the alleviation of poverty among so many millions of people around the world.

I know that you do respect and admire Martin Luther King who said: "I have a dream that people will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character". He fought against the racism in the U.S. You sir have realized half of that dream by becoming the president of your country. Now you are going to fight against poverty. But realization of your dream seems to be restricted to the U.S. and not to the world at large. As long as the supremacy of the U.S. remains a primary goal, you will not be loved and respected by the people of the wider world. I have a dream that a nation will not be judged by its economic and military power, but by its sincere desire for world peace and poverty alleviation.

YOU should also fight against racism, poverty in the world, and un-democratic UN system.

I hope that you will work unflinchingly on these difficult tasks. The world is eager for change, Mr. Obama-san. Yes, you can! Yes, we can!

May I have the honor to receive your feedback if at all possible.

Yours respectfully,  
Kiyoshi Yasuda

Revised by Tad.Saito