

Japan Restoration Party: Hashimoto claims nuclear arms abolition is impossible

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HIROSHIMA – Outspoken Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto said Saturday in Hiroshima that it is impossible to abolish nuclear weapons and that Japan is “peace-addicted.”

“It would impossible, given the current international political situation” to abolish nuclear weapons, Hashimoto, also head of Nippon Ishin no Kai (Japan Restoration Party), said. “Japan is a little bit peace-addicted. Who can abolish nuclear weapons even if Japan is eager to achieve it?”

He was visiting the city as part of campaigning for his party, which is seeking to form a “third force” to take on the ruling Democratic Party of Japan and main opposition Liberal Democratic Party in the run-up to the next lower house election in cooperation with hawkish former Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara.

Hashimoto also indicated to reporters that he would accept the entry of nuclear weapons into Japan, currently banned under the country’s “three non-nuclear principles,” saying, “It could be possible as Japan is protected under the nuclear power of the United States.”

If nuclear weapons are actually being brought in, “we need to open it up to the public for debate,” he said.

The three principles prohibit Japan from possessing, producing or introducing any nuclear arms into its territory.

“We basically need to adhere to the principles, but we should not lie about the entry of nuclear arms in terms of security,” Hashimoto said.

Earlier this month, Hashimoto said his party would not allow Japan to possess nuclear arms, while accepting debate about it.

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121112a2.html>

Hashimoto stuns ‘addled’ nuke foes

OSAKA – Hiroshima municipal officials and the Japan Congress Against A and H Bombs (Gensuikin) were mum Monday over Saturday’s comment by Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto calling for a reality check on the nation’s three nonnuclear principles.

The two sides said they have no plans to issue an official comment against Hashimoto’s remark

because of his low official status compared with prominent Diet members.

During a stop in Hiroshima on Saturday to drum up support for the party he heads, Nippon Ishin no Kai (Japan Restoration Party), Hashimoto said that while he would stick to the basics of the three nonnuclear principles, he questioned if it was really possible to prevent nuclear weapons from being brought into Japan.

The remark apparently reflects Hashimoto's long-held personal belief that Japan should possess atomic weapons.

"The U.S. 7th Fleet is guarding the Pacific from its base in Japan. It's impossible (for them) not to have nuclear weapons. So it's possible to bring them in, isn't it? If it's necessary to do so, then the understanding of the people should be sought," Hashimoto told reporters, indicating he wants to rethink the three principles of Japan not making, possessing or allowing entry of nuclear arms.

It has been revealed that U.S. ships during the Cold War carried nuclear arms when they visited the nation's ports, as Tokyo and Washington had a secret agreement that tacitly allowed this. There was often local opposition to U.S. warship port calls, apparently due to suspicions about such weapons.

In 1991, the U.S. adopted a general policy of not deploying nuclear weapons aboard surface ships, attack submarines and naval aircraft. In 1994, it was decided that surface ships and aircraft carriers should no longer carry nuclear weapons, but attack submarines would continue to train and plan missions with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.

However, U.S. policy is to neither confirm nor deny the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on specific ships, submarines or aircraft.

Hashimoto was also dismissive about the possibility of banning nuclear weapons entirely.

"As an idealistic argument, a world without nuclear weapons is good. However, international society is not like that. No matter how much Japan professes to have put distance between itself and nuclear weapons with the three nonnuclear principles, America has nuclear weapons, and nuclear submarines are protecting the Pacific region, including Japan," Hashimoto said.

"The reality is that it's impossible (to abolish nuclear weapons). In international politics today, Japan is a bit peace-addled."

Revision of the nonnuclear principles has long been backed by many officials in the U.S. government, and especially America's defense industry, as well as conservative and nationalistic - but pro-U.S. alliance - Japanese politicians and business leaders.

ERIC JOHNSTON, *Japan Times* staff writer, November 13, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121113a7.html>
