Russia’s Aggression Against Ukraine and Japan’s Response

A residential building in Kyiv destroyed by fire after an attack (Photo: AFP-Jiji)
(1) Main Events
On February 24, Russia launched its aggression against Ukraine, and began to attack the northern, eastern, and southern parts of Ukraine, including the capital city of Kyiv (Russia called this a “special military operation”). In a televised speech on the same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that the purpose was to protect people who had been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime for eight years, and that Russia would seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine to that end.

Intermittent negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were conducted from the end of February, but failed to lead to any concrete agreement. At the end of March, the Russian side announced gradual military de-escalation in the Kyiv area and elsewhere. It withdrew from the north, including Kyiv, but subsequently reorganized its forces and concentrated them in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine. After the withdrawal of Russian troops, signs of atrocities, including the massacre of civilians, were discovered in Bucha and other areas near Kyiv, which greatly shocked international public opinion.

Moreover, the Russian side has been making claims for total control of almost all of Kherson Oblast in the south and Luhansk Oblast in the east; Zaporizhzhia Oblast in the southeast, including Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant which is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe; and parts of Kharkiv Oblast and Donetsk Oblast in the east.

This impacted food exports through the Black Sea, which remained stagnant. However, on July 22, an agreement on the “Black Sea Grain Initiative” was reached between the United Nations (UN), Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia. Since then, ships carrying grain have been sailing from southern Ukrainian ports.

After the summer, the Ukrainian side launched a counter offensive against Russia. On September 12, it announced the liberation of almost the entire Kharkiv Oblast in the northeast from Russia. On September 21, President Putin announced an order on partial mobilization, which, according to the authorities, mobilized some 300,000 people. In order to escape the mobilization, many people fled from Russia. In late September, so-called “referenda” on “incorporation” into Russia were held in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson in Ukraine, and Russia illegally “annexed” these regions under the pretext of the results of the referenda. Meanwhile, in early October, the Ukrainian side announced that it had retaken Lyman in Donetsk Oblast.

On October 8, when an explosion occurred on the Russian-built bridge connecting the Crimean Peninsula and Russia, the Russian side declared it an act of terrorism by the Ukrainian authorities. Since then, the Russian side has been carrying out large-scale missile and drone attacks mainly on energy and other infrastructure facilities in Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine, causing significant damage. Russia’s attacks on civilian infrastructure and others have continued to this day.

In November, the Russian side withdrew from some parts of Kherson Oblast in the south, including the oblast capital Kherson City, but subsequently continued its attacks in the region. Entering December, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that the Ukrainian side had attempted a drone strike on a military airfield within Russia, and that debris from the drone fell and exploded during the intercept, causing casualties. On December 21, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine visited the United States on his first overseas visit since Russia’s aggression began, requesting further military assistance. The United States announced additional military assistance, including “Patriot” surface-to-air missiles.

The year-end and new year holidays also saw intermittent missile, drone, and other attacks against various parts of Ukraine. As it has been pointed out that Russia could implement further large-scale attacks, Western countries are stepping up their military assistance to Ukraine, including the provision of main battle tanks, at the request of Ukraine. As of the end of February 2023, no movements have been seen toward the start of cease-fire negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, and the situation continues to be highly unpredictable, with concerns that it may become protracted and escalate further.
Russia's aggression against Ukraine has not only deprived Ukrainian citizens of their lives and peaceful livelihoods, but also directly impacted neighboring countries affected by the conflict and triggered obstacles and restrictions of grain exports and other goods from both Ukraine and Russia, which are the world's leading grain exporters. Russia has also used its energy resources to exert pressure on countries that depend on imports for their energy supplies. Such Russian attempts to use food and energy as a means of geopolitical coercion have led to global food and energy supply shortages and soaring prices.

(2) Japan's Basic Position

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine threatens the very foundation of the international order that the international community has built up over a long period of hard work and sacrifice. No country or region in the world can shrug this off as “someone else’s problem.” Under the strong determination that unilateral changes to the status quo by force must not be tolerated anywhere in the world, be it in Europe or East Asia, Japan has strongly urged Russia over the past year to immediately cease its aggression and withdraw its troops back to Russia. Japan has also closely cooperated with the international community, including the G7, to implement severe sanctions against Russia and provide strong support for Ukraine. Furthermore, Japan has been actively working to resolve global issues, such as soaring food and energy prices, due to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine that have been causing difficulties especially for many developing countries.

President Putin shifted the Russian deterrence forces to high combat alert immediately after the start of Russia's aggression, and nuclear threats have been made through various forms of transmissions from Russia. Thus, the possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons continues to be a concern in the international community. Under these circumstances, Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, has grave concerns about the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, and has made strong appeals in international fora such as the UN and the G7, as well as in bilateral meetings with other countries, that Russia’s threat of use of nuclear weapons, let alone the use of nuclear weapons, must not be tolerated. Russia's military actions at and near Ukraine's nuclear facilities are absolutely unacceptable, and Japan condemns Russia's actions in the strongest terms. Furthermore, based on the experience of the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, Japan has supported efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure the safety and nuclear security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

The international order based on the rule of law, which is under threat by Russia's outrageous acts, is a public good that supports the peace and prosperity of not only the G7, but also the international community as a whole. Over the past year, in addition to the G7, Japan has deepened its relations with countries in ASEAN, South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Oceania, the Middle East, Africa, and the Latin American and the Caribbean region, and worked together with them to defend the international order. As a result of these efforts, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on October 12 condemning the illegal so-called “referendum” within Ukraine and Russia's attempted illegal “annexation,” as well as a resolution calling for peace in Ukraine on February 23, 2023. These resolutions respectively received the support of 143 and 141 countries, more than 70% of all UN member states. This clearly shows the will of the international community. Japan will strengthen its solidarity with the international community, including by urging countries that are not participating in sanctions against Russia, in order to show Russia that outrageous acts come at a high price and make it stop its aggression as soon as possible.

Based on this basic position, on March 21, 2023, Prime Minister Kishida made his first visit to Ukraine since the start of full-scale aggression by Russia and held a summit meeting with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine. Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Ukraine under wartime conditions embodied Japan’s belief that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific are inseparable, and sent a strong message to all the countries concerned. During the summit meeting, Prime Minister Kishida expressed respect for the courage
and perseverance of the Ukrainian people for standing up to defend their homeland and freedom under the leadership of President Zelensky. He also conveyed Japan’s unwavering support for and solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and Japan’s determination to defend the international order based on the rule of law as the country holding the G7 Presidency. The two leaders then agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation more than ever before, and released the “Joint Statement on Special Global Partnership Between Japan and Ukraine.” Prime Minister Kishida also directly observed the situation in Ukraine, including the damage suffered as a result of Russia’s aggression.¹

This Special Feature looks back on Japan’s position and efforts over the past year in response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and its influences.

## Japan’s Response

### (1) Change in Policy toward Russia and Sanctions against Russia

Amid the drastically changing strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region, Japan had been engaged in diplomacy with Russia based on the belief that building stable relations with Russia is extremely important not only for Japan’s national interests but also for the stability and development of the region. However, with the start of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, it has become impossible for the international community to maintain relations with Russia as business as usual, and Japan has made a major shift in its conventional diplomacy toward Russia, taking resolute actions such as implementing severe sanctions against Russia in cooperation with the international community, including the G7.

On February 21, in response to Russia’s recognition of the “Donetsk People’s Republic” and the “Luhansk People’s Republic” as “independent states” and ratification of treaties with both “republics”, Japan announced an import and export ban with both republics, an asset freeze against 24 relevant individuals, and a ban on the issuance and circulation in Japan of new sovereign bonds by the Russian government.

Furthermore, on February 24, in response to the start of Russia’s military actions against Ukraine, Foreign Minister Hayashi summoned Russian Ambassador to Japan Mikhail Y. Galuzin, conveyed strong condemnation of Russia’s aggression, and demanded that Russia immediately stop its aggression and withdraw its forces back to Russia. On February 25 the following day, in cooperation with the international community including the G7, Japan announced (a) asset freeze measures against six relevant Russian individuals, (b) asset freeze measures against three Russian financial institutions (Bank Rossiya, Promsvyazbank, and VEB.RF), and (c) sanctions on exports to Russian military-related entities (49 entities) and on exports to Russia of controlled items listed on the internationally agreed list as well as dual-use items such as semiconductors. On February 27, Japan also decided on measures such as freezing the assets of Russian government officials, including President Putin, and announced that it would participate in measures to exclude certain Russian banks from SWIFT² based on requests from various Western countries.

Subsequently, Japan continued to closely cooperate with various countries, including the G7, to implement measures such as asset freezes against Russian government officials, military personnel, members of the State Duma, oligarchs, and others. Japan also

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¹ For more information on Prime Minister Kishida’s visit to Ukraine in March 2023, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ website: [https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/c_see/page1e_000591.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/c_see/page1e_000591.html)

² Overview of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT):
- An association (cooperative) that serves as an intermediary and executor of financial transactions between banks around the world. Headquartered in Belgium.
- More than 11,000 banks and other financial institutions in more than 200 countries are connected to it, sending an average of more than 42 million messages related to international financial transactions per day.
- The association was established under Belgian law and is subject to the EU regulatory framework.
implemented other financial measures such as asset freezes against banks including Russia's largest bank Sberbank, restrictions on transactions with the Russian central bank, responses to address use of digital assets to evade sanctions by Russia, a ban on new investment in Russia, and a ban on the provision of services to Russia (trust, accounting and auditing, and management consulting services).

In addition, trade measures included amending the Act on Temporary Measures concerning Customs and withdrawing Russia's most favored nation status. Furthermore, Japan implemented severe sanctions such as expanding the scope of measures to include a ban on exports to Russia of luxury goods, advanced goods, goods that contribute to the enhancement of industrial capabilities, and chemical weapons and other related goods as well as introducing a ban on the import of certain goods (machinery, some wood, vodka, etc.) and gold from Russia.

Besides the above economic sanctions, Japan has also suspended issuance of visas to Japan for some Russian individuals.

In response to these moves, on March 21, the Russian side issued a statement that it does not intend to continue negotiations on a peace treaty, suspends the Four-Island exchange program and free visits, and withdraws from the dialogue on the joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands. On September 5, Russia issued a government decree suspending the validity of the agreement on the Four-Island exchange program and free visits. Furthermore, on May 4, the Russian side announced a ban on entry into Russia for 63 people, including Prime Minister Kishida, and on July 15, another ban was announced for 384 members of the House of Representatives.

Furthermore, on April 8, as a result of Japan's comprehensive judgment based on the situation of the aggression against Ukraine among others, Japan demanded the expulsion of eight diplomats of the Embassy of Russia and personnel of the Russian Trade Representation in Japan. In response, on April 27, the Russian side demanded the expulsion of eight diplomats of the Embassy of Japan in Russia.

With regard to the series of measures taken by the Russian side against Japan, it is absolutely unacceptable that the Russian side is making extremely unjustified claims as if to shift the responsibility to the Japanese side, despite the fact that it was the Russian side that resorted to military means to conduct aggression against Ukraine and caused the current situation. The Government of Japan has communicated this to the Russian side and has strongly protested.

As for measures in the energy field, the Government of Japan's policy is to phase out dependence on Russian energy, including coal and oil, and will take steps over time to do so in a manner that minimizes adverse effects on people's lives and business activities. Meanwhile, it is Japan's policy to maintain our interests in the oil and natural gas development projects “Sakhalin-1” and “Sakhalin-2” in Russia, as these projects are important for Japan's energy security from the perspective of ensuring stable supply over the medium to long term. Furthermore, the G7 and Australia, together with the EU, have introduced a price cap on Russian oil and oil products with the aim of stabilizing international oil prices while reducing Russia's revenue from energy.

(2) Assistance to Ukraine

Since the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan has promptly provided Ukraine with assistance in close contact with the Ukrainian people while accurately grasping local needs, ranging from financial, humanitarian, and defense equipment assistance to the acceptance of displaced persons. Specifically, Japan has been providing approximately 1.6 billion US dollars in financial, humanitarian, food, and recovery and reconstruction assistance to Ukraine, neighboring countries, and others.

In order to once again show solidarity with Ukraine upon marking one year since the start of Russia's
aggression, Japan decided to provide additional financial assistance of approximately 5.5 billion US dollars, subject to the passage of the relevant budget and laws by the Diet. Furthermore, on March 21, 2023 at the Japan-Ukraine Summit Meeting in Kiev, Prime Minister Kishida, who was visiting Ukraine, stated that Japan would steadily implement the total of 7.1 billion US dollars in assistance, and support Ukraine in various fields including electricity, mine clearance, and agriculture. Prime Minister Kishida also stated that the Government of Japan had recently decided to provide the assistance including new bilateral grant aid amounting to 470 million US dollars to various areas including the energy sector, and to contribute to support non-lethal defense equipment assistance amounting to 30 million US dollars through the NATO trust fund.

A Financial Assistance
Prime Minister Kishida announced to President Zelensky of Ukraine at the Japan-Ukraine Summit Telephone Talk on February 15 that Japan was prepared to urgently provide assistance through loans. He also announced at the G7 Leaders’ Meeting on March 24 that Japan would provide 100 million US dollars in emergency financial assistance through co-financing with the World Bank. Following this, at the April 19 Summit-Level Video Conference on the Situation in Ukraine, Japan announced the increase of its financial assistance from 100 million US dollars to 300 million US dollars, and a further doubling of the total to 600 million US dollars on May 20. In order to meet Ukraine’s urgent and short-term financial requests as it faces an economic crisis, Japan encouraged the Government of Ukraine to advance the procedures quickly. Japan signed exchanges of notes in Tokyo with the Ukrainian side for loan aid on April 28 for the 100 million US dollars (13 billion Japanese yen) that was initially announced, and on June 7 for the additional provision of 500 million US dollars (65 billion Japanese yen).

This financial assistance is used to maintain and continue essential public services by the Government of Ukraine and to promote economic reforms and capacity building of government officials. This is expected to underpin the economy of Ukraine, which is facing an economic crisis due to Russia’s aggression.

Furthermore, on January 16, 2023, Japan, as a member of the Group of Creditors of Ukraine, supported Ukraine’s request to defer debt payments due to bondholders, and signed and exchanged notes concerning debt relief (debt service suspension) for Ukraine with the aim of encouraging bondholders to agree to this request.

Furthermore, at the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors’ Meeting and the G7 Leaders’ Video Conference in February 2023, Japan announced additional financial assistance of approximately 5.5 billion US dollars to address Ukraine’s financial gap, which has become a major challenge, on the condition of passage of the relevant budget and laws by the Diet.

B Humanitarian Assistance
In response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, on February 27, Japan announced, ahead of other countries, 100 million US dollars in emergency humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and neighboring countries. Through international organizations and Japanese NGOs, Japan has been conducting activities in the most urgent fields, including health and medical care, and food. Furthermore, given that many of the displaced persons are women and children, Japan has

3 For more information on the March 21, 2023 Japan-Ukraine Summit Meeting, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/c_see/as/page4e_001361.html
also provided assistance that takes into consideration the needs of women and children.

One example is Japan’s assistance provided through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to “Blue Dot” Hubs that offer safe spaces to support displaced Ukrainian children and their families. Furthermore, through the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Japan also provides temporary evacuation facilities where women and children can safely take shelter, and is working to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. Japan has also provided support for the provision of hot meals through the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

On March 24, Japan announced an additional 100 million US dollars in emergency humanitarian assistance in light of further humanitarian needs. Specifically, in addition to assistance related to capacity building for human trafficking countermeasures, including for border control authorities and others in Ukraine and neighboring countries, Japan will contribute to ensuring the safe movement of displaced persons through humanitarian activities, including the disposal and handling of landmines and unexploded ordnance in connection with emergency debris clearance. Japan also extended assistance to Moldova, which is accepting the largest number of displaced persons compared to its population.

On April 1, the Government of Japan made a Cabinet decision to provide UNHCR with blankets, plastic sheets, and sleeping mats stockpiled in the Government’s warehouse in accordance with the International Peace Cooperation Act. These items were transferred to UNHCR on April 19. On April 28, the Government of Japan made another Cabinet decision on the “Implementation Plan for the International Peace Cooperation Assignments for Afflicted People of Ukraine” based on the aforementioned Act. Following the Plan, the Government of Japan transported UNHCR’s humanitarian relief items from Dubai (the United Arab Emirates) to Poland or Romania using Self-Defense Force (SDF) aircraft eight times from May 1 to June 26.

Furthermore, as Ukraine is one of the world’s leading agricultural countries but Russia’s aggression has made it difficult to plant crops on farmland, Japan distributed seeds and fertilizers for grain production through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to help restore agricultural production in Ukraine at an early stage and contribute to ensuring food security not only in Ukraine but also around the world. (See 4(1) for details on Japan’s support to contribute to ensuring global food security.)

Following this, many energy and infrastructure facilities were destroyed by Russian attacks. As the winter got colder and the days got shorter every day, Japan decided on November 22 to implement winterization assistance by providing generators and solar lanterns through UNHCR to people who were unable to use heating and lighting equipment due to power outages. Since December, Japan has also provided generators through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and has provided approximately 300 generators thus far. Furthermore, in February 2023, Japan decided to implement additional winterization assistance with provision of reflective materials and heat packs to the National Police of Ukraine through the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).
** Provision of Defense Equipment and Other Supplies**

It is extremely important for the international community to unite in a resolute response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, an act that shakes the very foundation of the international order, not only in Europe but also in Asia, in order to protect the rules-based international order, and from the perspective of Japan's security.

From this perspective, in response to Ukraine's request for the provision of defense equipment and other goods, Japan partially revised the implementation guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology at the National Security Council meeting on March 8, in order to provide non-lethal equipment in accordance with the Self-Defense Forces Act within the scope of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. Since that month, Japan has used SDF aircraft and other means to transport and provide bulletproof vests, helmets, winter battle dress uniform, medical supply, protective masks and clothing for use against chemical weapons and the like, small drones, and civilian vehicles (vans).

In this context, on March 8, Foreign Minister Hayashi and Ukrainian Ambassador to Japan Sergiy Korsunsky signed and exchanged notes, which took effect on the same day, as an international agreement required under the Self-Defense Forces Act as well as the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. Since then, Japan has used SDF aircraft and other means to transport and provide bulletproof vests, helmets, winter battle dress uniform, medical supply, protective masks and clothing for use against chemical weapons and the like, small drones, and civilian vehicles (vans).

** Acceptance of Displaced Persons**

In response to the displaced persons from Ukraine, which has been described as the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II (statement by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi), Japan has been proactively conducting efforts to accept displaced persons. On March 2, soon after Russia's aggression began, Prime Minister Kishida announced the intention to promote the acceptance of Ukrainian displaced persons, and on March 16, he established the Liaison and Coordination Council on Measures for Ukrainian Displaced Persons as a command post. On March 18, the Council decided to provide assistance for the acceptance of Ukrainian people who have been forced to flee Ukraine and wish to evacuate to Japan. On March 25, the Embassy of Japan in Poland and the Rzeszów liaison office were strengthened and the “Ukrainian Displaced Persons Support Teams” were established to study and grasp the needs of the displaced persons for travel assistance to Japan.

Furthermore, in early April, Foreign Minister Hayashi and State Minister of Justice TSUSHIMA Jun visited Poland, where they met with Polish government officials, inspected facilities for displaced persons, and visited the Ukrainian border region to confirm the situation of displaced persons in Ukraine, as well as the needs and challenges for accepting them. When Foreign Minister Hayashi returned to Japan, a reserve government airplane also transported 20 displaced persons who were eagerly seeking to evacuate to Japan but had difficulty in securing means of travel on their own.

Moreover, in order to facilitate smooth travel to Japan, from April 8 to now (the end of February 2023), the Government of Japan has been securing seats on weekly direct flights to Poland for Ukrainian displaced persons who eagerly wish to evacuate to Japan but have difficulty in securing means of travel on their own, providing travel assistance from a humanitarian perspective. The Government plans to continue to support travel to Japan for the time being.

In accepting displaced persons, it is important to first of all provide places where Ukrainian displaced persons can evacuate to with peace of mind. Japan will continue to provide support for Ukrainian people facing difficulties in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies.

** Support for Recovery**

While the outlook for the situation remains uncertain, the international community is also moving toward the recovery of Ukraine.

On July 4 and 5, the Ukraine Recovery Conference was held in Lugano, Switzerland. State Minister for Foreign Affairs SUZUKI Takako attended the Conference from the Government of Japan. She emphasized Japan's intention to actively contribute to Ukraine's recovery while leveraging its experience...
in recovering from various natural disasters and the like. She also expressed the expectation that Ukraine’s recovery plan will give the Ukrainian people hope for a bright future. As an outcome of the Conference, the “Lugano Declaration” was issued, which outlines the guiding principles for Ukraine’s recovery as confirmed by the participating countries and institutions.

On October 25, the International Expert Conference on the Recovery, Reconstruction and Modernisation of Ukraine was held in Berlin. Prime Minister Kishida participated in the Conference by sending a video message. He stated that the recovery of Ukraine must firstly be based on Ukrainian ownership of the process. Secondly, all countries, institutions, and companies engaged in assistance must share the overall picture of recovery. And thirdly, they must operate in a transparent and fair manner in line with international rules and standards. Moreover, recovery requires a framework that will enable it to gain the support of the broader international community, including the EU and the countries participating in the Conference. He also stated that Japan, as it would assume the G7 Presidency in 2023, intended to actively lead the international community’s discussions toward the speedy restoration of peace and recovery in Ukraine.

On December 13, the International Conference in Support of Ukraine’s Civil Resilience was held in Paris, and was attended by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs YOSHIKAWA Yuumi. She introduced the approval of the supplementary budget, including the budget for Ukraine and its neighboring countries, and expressed that Japan will provide necessary humanitarian assistance as well as recovery and reconstruction assistance, focusing on urgent humanitarian assistance and recovery of the daily lives of Ukrainian people, along with energy-related fields such as generators. She also stated that as Japan assumed the G7 Presidency in 2023, it would actively provide support tailored to the people of Ukraine in close cooperation with the international community, including the G7, and leverage the knowledge and experience that Japan has accumulated in the recovery of other countries.

For the reconstruction of Ukraine, while taking into account the discussions at the above conferences, it is important to enable the Ukrainian people to envision their short-, medium-, and long-term future under Ukraine’s own ownership and with strong support from the international community. It is also essential that all countries, institutions, and companies engaged in assistance share the overall picture of recovery and that activities are carried out in a transparent and fair manner in accordance with international rules and standards. Japan will consider and implement reconstruction assistance in close contact with the Ukrainian people, while accurately grasping local needs and making use of the knowledge and experience it has accumulated to date.

As a specific example, in January 2023, in cooperation with Cambodia, where Japan has been supporting mine and unexploded ordnance clearance efforts for more than 20 years, Japan conducted drills and training for Ukrainian government officials in the use of mine detection equipment that Japan plans to provide to Ukraine. In February, Japan provided broadcasting equipment through JICA to the Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine (PBC), in order to contribute to strengthening Ukraine’s democracy through the establishment of an accurate and impartial reporting system. The Government of Japan has been supporting PBC since 2017 in establishing a reporting system for disasters and emergencies, strengthening its TV-program production capacity, and enhancing its ability to operate and maintain its broadcasting equipment.

As the G7 Presidency in 2023, Japan will actively lead the international community’s discussions toward the restoration of peace and recovery as soon as possible.
Japan has responded to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in close cooperation with like-minded countries, including the G7, as well as with the United Nations and other international organizations.

(1) Cooperation in the G7

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an act that undermines the very foundation of the international order, not only in Europe but also in Asia, making the unity of the G7 even more important. In 2022, the G7 led the international community’s efforts by closely cooperating with unprecedented frequency, such as by holding six leaders’ meetings and 11 foreign ministers’ meetings, including online.

Firstly, during the G7 Leaders’ Video Conference held on February 24 when the aggression began, the G7 condemned Russia's aggression, confirmed that this crisis is a grave threat to the rules-based international order, that its impact is not limited to Europe, and that changing internationally-recognized borders by force cannot be justified. The G7 Leaders’ Statement condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms was released.

On March 24, a G7 Leaders’ Meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium. The G7 countries confirmed they would work together with allies and partners around the world to hold President Putin and others accountable. They also emphasized bringing severe consequences to Russia, including by fully implementing economic and financial measures, and, if necessary, to be ready to take additional measures, and to remain united in their actions.

At the G7 Leaders’ Video Conference on May 8, the G7 leaders reaffirmed their determination to unite to ensure a democratic and prosperous future for Ukraine. They also expressed high appreciation for Japan’s urging of Asian countries, and broadly called on countries outside the G7 and partners in the international community, including international organizations, to cooperate and coordinate with the G7’s efforts.

The G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held at Weissenhaus, Germany from May 12 to 14, in which the ministers had an in-depth exchange of views on the situation in Ukraine. Foreign Minister Hayashi emphasized that the threat or use of nuclear weapons by Russia must not be tolerated, and that it is important to maintain and strengthen the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and called for cooperation among the G7.

At the G7 Elmau Summit held in Germany from June 26 to 28, the G7 again supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and confirmed continued provision of financial, humanitarian, military, and diplomatic assistance. Prime Minister Kishida called for the G7 to continue to lead the international community’s efforts, including sanctions.

During the G7 Leaders’ Video Conference on October 11, Prime Minister Kishida strongly condemned Russia for its attacks in various parts of Ukraine, stated that the so-called “referenda” in Ukraine and its illegal “annexation” by Russia would never be accepted, and confirmed that the G7 would continue to be united.

The G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Münster, Germany was held on November 3 and 4. The G7 strongly condemned Russia’s attacks on civilians and civilian facilities, and confirmed that it would continue to unite and support Ukraine, including through winterization assistance.

During the G7 Leaders’ Video Conference on December 12, Prime Minister Kishida strongly condemned Russia’s attacks on Ukrainian power plants and other facilities, raised the importance of continuing
support for Ukraine, and reaffirmed the G7’s unwavering support and solidarity for Ukraine.

In addition to the above leaders’ meetings, the G7 leaders issued the G7 Leaders’ Statements on the situation in Ukraine on March 11 (March 12 Japan time) and April 7, promptly issuing a message as the G7 leaders on strengthening sanctions against Russia in light of developments in the situation.

Since the beginning of 2023, Japan has been leading the G7 efforts as the G7 Presidency. On February 18, 2023, the first G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting under the Japanese G7 Presidency was held in Munich, Germany. Foreign Minister Hayashi expressed the G7’s firm determination to unite in support of Ukraine and to defend the international order based on the rule of law, as one year was about to pass since Russia began its aggression against Ukraine. He confirmed close cooperation among the G7.

On February 24, 2023, one year after the start of Russia’s aggression, Prime Minister Kishida held a G7 Leaders’ Video Conference. He reaffirmed the unwavering unity of the G7 in dealing with Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and other issues, and announced the G7 Leaders’ Statement that included new sanctions against Russia.

Furthermore, on January 24, Japan and the United States co-hosted the G7+ Foreign Ministers’ Meeting which included the G7 as well as Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba, like-minded countries, and international organizations in order to discuss support for Ukraine’s energy sector.

(2) Cooperation in the UN

The UN Security Council (UNSC) consists of 15 UN member states, including the five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). It holds primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and has the role of carrying out its duties on behalf of member states (Articles 23 and 24 of the UN Charter).

Approximately 50 relevant meetings of the UNSC were held during the period from February 2022, when Russia began its aggression against Ukraine, to the end of December 2022. Despite the continuing discussion on the situation in Ukraine, the UNSC has not been able to fulfill its role as specified by the Charter in response to the aggression by Russia.

In order for the UNSC to decide on matters other than procedural matters, it is necessary that all permanent members, including Russia, do not oppose the decision (Article 27.3 of the Charter). Russia has so far opposed the adoption of resolutions by the UNSC twice, in February and in September (by exercising its so-called “veto”). Through Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, it again became clear that the actions that the UNSC can take are extremely limited when a permanent member is a party to the conflict.

On the other hand, a mechanism exists to convene the UN General Assembly on an emergency basis if a veto is exercised in the UNSC. Following the rejection of the draft resolution in February, the UNSC requested the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to hold an emergency special session based on the UNGA resolution “Uniting for Peace” adopted in 1950. In response, the UNGA adopted with an overwhelming majority a resolution deploring Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and calling for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops in March. Subsequently, the UNGA adopted a resolution on the humanitarian consequences of aggression against Ukraine in the same month, a resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the defense of the principles of the UN Charter in April, a resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the defense of the principles of the UN Charter in October, and a resolution on furtherance of remedy and reparation for
aggression against Ukraine in November. The resolutions were all adopted with a majority. Furthermore, a resolution calling for peace in Ukraine was adopted by an overwhelming majority on February 23, 2023, marking one year since the start of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. The UNGA also adopted a resolution in April 2022 providing that a meeting of the UNGA shall be held when veto power is exercised, in cases where an emergency special session of the UNGA is not convened. This means that countries that exercise their veto power are in effect required to be accountable to the UNGA.

Through these mechanisms, the UNGA, in which all UN member states participate, plays a role of reflecting the voices of the international community in place of the UNSC, which has been unable to fulfill its role due to Russia’s exercise of its veto.

Viewed from the perspective of maintaining and promoting the international order based on the rule of law, it is also significant that through the series of UNGA resolutions, the international community has reaffirmed important principles stipulated in the UN Charter and the UN Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States, such as respect for territorial integrity and prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force.

In his address at the General Debate of the UNGA on September 20, Prime Minister Kishida called for a return to the vision and principles of the UN Charter and to ensure international order based on the rule of law in the international community. Japan has become a co-sponsor of all GA resolutions and has voted in favor of them, in cooperation with Ukraine and like-minded countries with a view to condemning Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and demonstrating UNGA’s determination to uphold the vision and principles of the UN Charter.

(3) Cooperation with International Judicial Institutions

Efforts are being made in international judicial institutions to address Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, and Japan has responded to these efforts from the perspective of emphasizing the rule of law. In February 2022, Ukraine filed a case with the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial body of the UN, against Russia for Russia’s military actions against Ukraine on the basis of false allegations that genocide had occurred in Luhansk and Donetsk. In March of the same year, the ICJ issued an order for provisional measures stating that Russia must immediately suspend the military operations it had initiated in Ukrainian territory and ensure that it would not take any action to further these military operations. This order for provisional measures is legally binding for the countries concerned. Japan has strongly urged Russia to comply with it through means such as issuing a Statement by Foreign Minister.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established as a permanent international criminal court to prosecute and punish individuals who commit the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole in accordance with international law. In March, Japan referred the situation in Ukraine to the ICC from the perspective of clarifying support for
Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and Japan’s Response

the ICC investigation of the said situation. By April, a total of 43 countries, including Japan, the only Asian country to do so, had referred the situation in Ukraine to the ICC.

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Response to Negative Effects on the International Community

Russia’s aggression has caused a global food and energy crisis, and its attacks on Ukraine’s nuclear power plant as well as nuclear threats have caused concerns not only in Ukraine and neighboring countries but also around the world.

(1) Food and Energy Crisis

The shortages and high prices of food and energy supplies caused by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine affect global economic activities. With regard to food, the disruption of grain exports from Ukraine through the Black Sea caused international prices of major grains to soar, and export restrictions by Russia on fertilizer materials also caused disorder in the international market, leading to a sharp rise in prices. In response to this situation, Russia has developed propaganda claiming that economic sanctions by Western countries are the cause of the soaring food prices, and is attempting to divide the international community. Furthermore, with regard to energy, Russia is using its energy resources to put pressure on countries that depend on imports for their energy supply. Access to
affordable food and energy forms the basis for people to live with dignity. However, food and energy security, especially for the vulnerables in the international community, are being threatened.

Amidst this situation, in the field of food, through international organizations such as the WFP and FAO as well as bilateral assistance and Japanese NGOs, Japan has been providing food assistance and assistance for strengthening production capacity to countries facing food shortages as well as emergency food aid as humanitarian assistance to countries in the Middle East and Africa. On July 5, Japan decided to provide approximately 200 million US dollars in assistance to countries in need in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere as a response to global food security, which has deteriorated due to the effects of the situation in Ukraine.

For Asia, Japan will provide support for the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) within the framework of ASEAN Plus Three (10 ASEAN countries plus Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)) toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on human security.

In July 2022, the Black Sea Grain Initiative was agreed upon between the UN, Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia regarding the resumption of grain exports from Ukraine, a major grain exporting country. Japan has consistently supported this agreement and raised the importance of its implementation. On November 11, Japan decided to provide assistance to transport Ukrainian wheat donated by the Government of Ukraine to Somalia from the port of Odesa through the WFP for distribution in local areas. In December, the wheat was shipped from the port of Odesa via the Black Sea. Furthermore, from the perspective of promoting exports of grain produced in Ukraine, Japan provided support to Ukraine for simple grain storage facilities in order to expand grain storage capacity in the country, which had been in short supply due to the war.

Through such efforts, Japan has responded to resolve food insecurity around the world and to prevent food from being used for political purposes.

Toward stabilizing the energy market, Japan has urged resource-producing countries to increase their production and has cooperated with international organizations to release oil reserves. Furthermore, a portion of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) handled by Japanese companies was diverted to Europe in February and March 2022, taking into account the severe energy situation in Europe, including the situation in Ukraine. At the same time, in order to enable the international community to secure a stable energy supply while breaking away from its dependence on Russia, which is exerting pressure by using its energy resources, Japan is promoting and supporting efforts toward a realistic energy transition, including diversification of crude oil and natural gas supply sources, and utilization of hydrogen, ammonia, renewable energy and nuclear power.

Japan will continue to make various efforts toward ensuring global food and energy security, based on the belief that it is essential for food and energy to be available to each and every human being.

(2) Efforts for Safety of Nuclear Power

The seizure of nuclear facilities in Ukraine by Russian forces and other such activities are threatening the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes, significantly increasing the risk of nuclear accidents and extraordinary events, and putting people in Ukraine, neighboring countries, and the international community at risk. In particular, the Russian seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant poses a serious threat to the safety and nuclear security of the facility, its personnel, and the region. Furthermore, shelling has been confirmed intermittently in the vicinity of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant since August, and the severe
situation concerning nuclear safety in Ukraine is continuing.

Since the beginning of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, the IAEA has been vigorously gathering information on the safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine and has continuously disseminated the latest situation to the international community through means such as its website and social media. Moreover, the IAEA has dispatched missions consisting of its experts to Ukraine several times to assess the safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine and has published reports on the results of these investigations.

In particular, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi himself participated in the first mission of experts to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in September, following the Russian seizure of the plant, and published a report on Ukraine’s nuclear facilities, including the aforementioned plant. Based on the IAEA’s “Seven Pillars” for ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities, the report pointed out the physical damage to the facilities at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, and called for an immediate suspension to shelling at and in the vicinity of the plant, an agreement among the parties concerned to establish a “Nuclear Safety and Security Protection Zone” around the plant, and the reestablishment of an appropriate working environment for personnel. The IAEA also released its latest related report in November, announcing that it had dispatched a field inspection mission to Ukraine in response to Russian claims that Ukraine was preparing to use a “dirty bomb,” and that no undeclared nuclear activities or nuclear materials had been confirmed at Ukraine’s nuclear facilities. Furthermore, in January 2023, at Ukraine’s request, the IAEA began stationing of IAEA experts at all Ukraine’s nuclear power plants and the Chornobyl site. The IAEA’s information and assessments based on these efforts play an extremely important role in the international community’s coordinated response to the challenge of ensuring the safety and other aspects of nuclear facilities in war-torn Ukraine.

Japan’s position is that it is important that the IAEA’s mission be carried out unhindered and that the safety of Ukraine’s nuclear facilities and their personnel be ensured. Director General Grossi visited Japan in May upon invitation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Through his meetings with government officials and others as well as a visit to TEPCO’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, Japan promoted understanding of Japan’s nuclear safety and efforts for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Furthermore, as part of efforts to support Ukraine through the IAEA, Japan declared support totaling 2 million euros for the procurement of urgently-needed equipment and the dispatch of IAEA experts to the country. Furthermore, in November, Japan also decided to provide a contribution for special vehicles to be used by IAEA experts when they travel within Ukraine. Moreover, as further support for the IAEA’s efforts, Japan decided to contribute approximately 867 million Japanese yen (about 8 million US dollars) through the supplementary budget for FY2022. Japan will continue to support the IAEA’s efforts to ensure the safety of Ukraine’s nuclear facilities in close cooperation with the G7 countries.

5 1. The physical integrity of the facilities—whether it is reactors, fuel ponds, or radioactive waste stores—must be maintained;
2. All safety and security systems and equipment must be fully functional at all times;
3. The operating staff must be able to fulfill their safety and security duties and have the capacity to make decisions free of undue pressure;
4. There must be secure off-site power supply from the grid for all nuclear sites;
5. There must be uninterrupted logistical supply chains and transportation to and from the sites;
6. There must be effective on-site and off-site radiation monitoring systems and emergency preparedness and response measures; and
7. There must be reliable communications with the regulator and others.

(Source) Report by the Director General to the Board of Governors, document GOV/2022/52, issued 9 September 2022