

Japan's UN Resolution to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Passes with Highest Number Ever

On December 6, the Japanese government proposed a resolution at the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, entitled, "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons." The resolution passed overwhelmingly, with 170 nations in favor, three nations against, and nine nations abstaining. Every year since 1994, Japan has proposed the same resolution, but this was the first time that it had gained as many as 170 votes in favor.

This year's resolution not only emphasized the importance of adhering to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT), but also called for the early establishment of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Also, it stressed the need to begin negotiations on the treaty to cut production of fissile materials for weapons use (the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, or FMCT), and for its quick conclusion. The resolution also called upon the international community to cooperate in the period leading up to the NPT Review Conference of 2010, just three years away.

The nations opposed to the resolution were the United States, India, and North Korea, and abstaining were China, France, Iran, Israel, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Cuba, Bhutan, and Nicaragua. Nuclear weapons states in favor the resolution were the United Kingdom and Russia. Incidentally, the previous year's resolution saw 167 in favor, 3 against, and 8 abstaining.

The Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with respect to Japan's having received the highest number of votes ever for the resolution, said, "This is proof of the broad support Japan has in the international community for its resolve toward nuclear arms disarmament and its message thereof. ... In the future, we will make further efforts to maintain and reinforce international disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation, with the NPT framework at its foundation."

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