Take every measure to deter terrorism

Dialogue, as defined in general terms, cannot eradicate this scourge

On the French weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris and most recently in the continuous bombings in Brussels on March 22. When multiple targets in Paris came under terrorist attack on Nov. 13, French President Francois Hollande declared, "We are at war." In the wake of the Brussels suicide bombings, leaders of the 28 member states of the European Union issued a rare joint statement denouncing them as "an attack on our open democratic society."

However, while nuclear weapons and state-of-the-art weaponry obviously remain effective as a deterrent to war between nation-states, the world has no quick and flawless remedy to prevent terrorists from stealing small amounts of nuclear materials, for instance, to be used in their attacks or to end the postmodern "war" between ISIS, which adheres itself to a series of precedent doctrines, and modern nation-states. In short, it is intolerable that there exists no absolute deterrent to inhibit terrorism.

People in Japan and the rest of the world need to recognize that the new global crisis we face is deepening because the multiple Middle East crises exacerbated by the civil war in Syria has been compounded by homegrown terrorism in Europe.

Border controls within the European Union. However, under the development of democracy, the EU has made itself extremely vulnerable to the infiltration of terrorism into its ranks.

There is nothing wrong with Europe's cultural relativism as the region maintains its tolerance toward the belief that all forms of religion, even Islam, is one and the same entity. However, made European society lenient to political extremism, terrorists, such as ISIS, that deludes young people into works they do not really understand the truth, then forces them to submit to a dogmatic and biased interpretation of Islam. This means that Europe's virtue of encouraging respect for cultural and religious diversity was confronted, from the very beginning, with the "vice" of spawning terrorism that took advantage of Europe's liberalism and cultural relativism.

What can then be done to deter terrorism? Dialogue, as defined in general terms, cannot eradicate this scourge. The people victimized by terrorism and conflict triggered by ISIS are mostly Muslims.

In the early 2000s, I headed the Japanese government's Cultural and Dialogue Mission to the Middle East on three occasions. I visited various countries including Japan and the United States, while also serving as a member of the Japan-Arab Dialogue Forum — which was formed to promote dialogue and understanding in cooperation with Egypt and Saudi Arabia — and took an active part in dialogues and exchanges with such prominent world figures as Yousef al-Osma, the ambassador to the UAE, and Rashid al-Sabagh, the Jordanian minister of foreign affairs, as well as collecting such data. It is worrisome that once a major terrorist attack takes place, society as a whole may feel so powerless in preventing such attacks. Most of the efforts to deal with terrorism. Utopian pacifism that maintains terrorism can be eradicated if we strengthen dialogue with Muslims and make further efforts to reduce poverty can never be a determining factor.

"Enemies of all humankind"

It should be noted that both ISIL members and "European terrorists" are the kind of people characteristically defined in Roman law as "hostis humani generis," or "enemies of all humankind," as Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero defined pirates more than 2000 years ago. Later on, the Latin term for maritime caitiff was also used as a definition for slavers and, in the 20th century, for those responsible for atrocities. Indeed, ISIL members and "European terrorists" defined as the group of "enemies of all humankind," including Muslims and all other people irrespective of their racial and religious backgrounds. The Islamic world uses "muḥāṣṣil-fit al-ard," an Arabic phrase that means "corruptor on Earth."

From the perspective of Japan, which will host the Group of Seven summit meeting, popularly known as the Ise-Shima Summit, next month, and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, it is important to take every possible measure to deter terrorism.

There are three immediate measures Japan should take. First, the government should ensure that border controls are in place to block terrorists from entering the country by bolstering its security and intelligence network to prevent a repeat of the fiascos in France and Belgium to share information about terrorists internationally. Second, the government should prevail on the Japanese public to understand the gravity of the battle to prevent ruthless terrorists from spreading their aims to civil society. In this connection, there should be a consensus that ISIL terrorism is a new form of asymmetry and hybrid warfare between a nonstate organization and nation-states. Third, Japanese citizens should be asked to be patient and willing to endure the inconvenience of walking through metal detectors or cooperating in the search of personal belongings at public facilities and hotels. These steps should be carried out to ensure the safety of individuals and that of our free society.

The lesson Japan should learn from the crises in the Middle East and Europe is to shift the emphasis of its anti-terrorism policy from response to prevention to safeguard the freedom and order of Japanese society. But, in democracy, it is not enough to develop a preventive system of terrorism. It is necessary to tell people the importance of not being a victim of terrorism, which is also important in Japan. If the multiple crises spread beyond the Middle East and Europe to become a global threat, we may see the emergence of totalitarian regimes adhering to fascist or Stalin-era communism. It is time for Japan to widely and thoroughly discuss an approach to safeguard democracy and the need to strengthen the deterrent to terrorism as a crucial issue that Japan should seriously address. The lessons of history we learned from the two world wars and the Cold War, nor turn its back on the victims of past wars.

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