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Committee of 100
POLICY POSITION 05- __

The Committee of 100 (C100) is a New York-based nonprofit organization of outstanding Chinese Americans focused on the civil and social rights of Chinese Americans and on the improvement of U.S.- China relations. In this policy statement, C100 sets forth its position with respect to Japan's current bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council if that body is expanded beyond the current five permanent members (China, England, France, Russia and the United States).

Wide Support Needed. The U.N. is the one organization to which virtually all nations look for authoritative judgments about security, peace and justice. The Security Council is the ultimate decision-making body for the U.N., and, as such, all its permanent members need to have worldwide support and respect, as do the current permanent members who have essentially held their seats since 1949. Those Security Council members must make vital decisions about war and peace, as in the authorization of U.N. sanctions or the employment of U.N. peacekeeping forces, and so it is essential those nations command genuine global respect and trust. C100 observes that, today, as much as Japan is respected and admired for its economic activity and its generous assistance to many developing nations, Japan appears not to have the widespread support of its own neighbors in Asia for this U.N. Security Council bid. Much of that reluctance by key nations such as China and Korea stems from perceived refusal by the Japanese government to come to terms with its militaristic past, especially atrocities committed by its armed forces in those countries during World War II. Such a lack of accountability and historical accuracy seem to be demonstrated by officially approved Japanese history books that downplay Japan's aggression in the war, by recurring insensitive comments from certain political and governmental leaders, and by high level government activities that appear to honor convicted war criminals indiscriminately with the other fallen soldiers, airmen and sailors of Japan and Japanese civilian victims of the war.

If Japan is unable to secure the confidence and trust of its own Asian neighbors, then it seems counterproductive for Japan and for the U.N. itself to force this issue, as this would only undercut the moral authority of the U.N. generally and of the Security Council in particular. C100 notes the U.S government, nevertheless opposes putting this divisive issue to a vote now because it could split the United Nations. C100 therefore believes the wiser course for all concerned parties is to attain a widespread consensus among all members of the U.N.- but especially among Japan's own neighbors- before Japan's candidacy for the Security Council is put to a vote. How and when such a broad consensus can be forged is a matter for candid and open bilateral communications and commitments between Japan and those other countries.

Many Victims of War. C100 acknowledges that Japan's actions in World War II occurred more than a half century ago and that many ordinary Japanese citizens today

who are active in social, economic and political life were not even born at the time of the war. Nevertheless, Japan's military aggression did kill or injure tens of millions of people across Asia and, to the lesser extent, the United States. C100 notes that many Asian Americans (particularly Chinese Americans) were themselves victims, or had close relatives or friends who were victims, of Japanese brutality in Asia and the Pacific during World War II.

C100 also observes that, in the case of Germany and the Holocaust, official German words and actions since World War II- based on an honest and unvarnished recognition of Germany's responsibility for its Nazi era- have led to progressive healing of many comparably deep emotional wounds. Americans of many different ethnic backgrounds have played an important role in ensuring that the world does not forget what happened to so many innocent lives in the war, moved by the deeply held and common belief that such historical honesty is the best chance to prevent a recurrence of such atrocities in the future. C100 believes this broad American view is itself an independent reason to question the current Japanese bid for a U.N. Security Council seat, because, morally speaking, forgiveness of such war crimes cannot be based on forgetting the grievous losses inflicted by Japan upon countless millions of innocent victims of many nationalities. The German example demonstrates that it is possible to achieve moral and political closure on the results of the war, but only if the responsible nation demonstrates the maturity and character to face its own past squarely and does not equivocate about the historical record.