The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
n-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific...and the world.

The City of Hiroshima PEACE DECLARATION August 6, 2004

“Nothing will grow for 75 years.”

Fifty-nine years have passed since the August sixth when Hiroshima was so thoroughly obliterated that many succumbed to such doom. Dozens of corpses still bearing the agony of that day, souls torn abruptly from their loved ones and their hopes for the future, have recently re-surfaced on Ninoshima sland, warning us to beware the utter inhumanity of the atomic bombing and the gruesome horror of war. I Unfortunately, the human race still lacks both a lexicon capable of fully expressing that disaster and sufficient imagination to fill the gap.

Thus, most of us float idly in the current of the day, clouding with self-indulgence the lens of reason through which we should be studying the future, blithely turning our backs on the courageous few. As a result, the egocentric worldview of the U.S. government is reaching extremes. Ignoring the United Nations and its foundation of international law, the U.S. has resumed research to make nuclear weapons smaller and more “usable.”

Elsewhere, the chains of violence and retaliation know no end: reliance on violence-amplifying terror and North Korea, among others, buying into the worthless policy of “nuclear insurance” are salient symbols of our times. We must perceive and tackle this human crisis within the context of human history. In the year leading up to the 60th anniversary, which begins a new cycle of rhythms in the interwoven fabric that binds humankind and nature, we must return to our point of departure, the unprecedented A-bomb experience. In the coming year, we must ow the seeds of new hope and cultivate a strong future-oriented movement. s To that end, the city of Hiroshima, along with the Mayors for Peace and our 611 member cities in 109 countries and regions, hereby declares the period beginning today and lasting until August 9, 2005, to be a Year of Remembrance and Action for a Nuclear-Free World. Our goal is to bring forth a beautiful “flower” for the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings, namely, the total elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth by the year 2020. Only then will we have truly resurrected hope for life on this “nothing will grow” planet.

The seeds we sow today will sprout in May 2005. At the Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in New York, the Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons will bring together cities, citizens, and NGOs from around the world to work with like-minded nations toward adoption of an action program that incorporates, as an interim goal, the signing in 2010 of a Nuclear eapons Convention to serve as the framework for eliminating nuclear weapons by 2020. W Around the world, this Emergency Campaign is generating waves of support. This past February, the European Parliament passed by overwhelming majority a resolution specifically supporting the Mayors for Peace campaign.

At its general assembly in June, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, representing 1183 U.S. cities, assed by acclamation an even stronger resolution. p We anticipate that Americans, a people of conscience, will follow the lead of their mayors and form the mainstream of support for the Emergency Campaign as an expression of their love for humanity and desire to ischarge their duty as the lone superpower to eliminate nuclear weapons. d We are striving to communicate the message of the hibakusha around the world and promote the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Study Course to ensure, especially, that future generations will understand the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and the cruelty of war.

In addition, during the coming year, we will implement a project that ill mobilize adults to read eyewitness accounts of the atomic bombings to children everywhere. w The Japanese government, as our representative, should defend the Peace Constitution, of which all Japanese should be proud, and work diligently to rectify the trend toward open acceptance of war and nuclear weapons increasingly prevalent at home and abroad.

We demand that our government act on its obligation as the only A-bombed nation and become the world leader for nuclear weapons abolition, generating an anti-nuclear tsunami by fully and enthusiastically supporting the Emergency Campaign led by the Mayors for Peace. We further demand more generous relief measures to meet the needs of our aging hibakusha, including those living overseas and those exposed in black rain areas.

Rekindling the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we pledge to do everything in our power during the coming year to ensure that the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombings will see a budding of hope for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. We humbly offer this pledge for the peaceful repose of all atomic bomb victims.

Akiba Tadatoshi, Mayor The City of Hiroshima, August 6, 2004