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The City of Nagasaki Peace Declaration

Mayor of Nagasaki

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How many people in the world now remember that fateful day? At 11:02 a.m. on August 9, fifty-nine years ago, the city of Nagasaki was instantly transformed into ruins by a single atomic bomb dropped from an American warplane, killing some 74,000 people and wounding 75,000. Today, Nagasaki's verdant cityscape attracts visitors from around the world, and its residents maintain a distinctive set of traditions and culture. Nevertheless, the city's increasingly elderly atomic bomb survivors continue to suffer from the after-effects of the bombing as well as from health problems induced by the stress of their experience. We the citizens of Nagasaki call upon the world with a renewed sense of urgency, even as we reflect upon the intense suffering of those who have already perished.

We call upon the citizens of the United States to look squarely at the reality of the tragedies that have unfolded in the wake of the atomic bombings 59 years ago. The International Court of Justice has clearly stated in an advisory opinion that the threat of nuclear weapons or their use is generally contrary to international law. Notwithstanding, the US government continues to possess and maintain approximately 10,000 nuclear weapons, and is conducting an ongoing program of subcritical nuclear testing. In addition, the so-called mini nuclear weapons that are the subject of new development efforts are intended to deliver truly horrific levels of force. In terms of the radioactivity that such weapons would release, there would be no difference compared to the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. So long as the world's leading superpower fails to change its posture of dependence on nuclear weapons, it is clear that the tide of nuclear proliferation cannot be stemmed. People of America: The path leading to the eventual survival of the human race unequivocally requires the elimination of nuclear arms. The time has come to join hands and embark upon this path.

We call upon the peoples of the world to recognize how scant is the value repeatedly being placed on human life, evidenced by events such as the war in Iraq and outbreaks of terrorism. Wisdom must prevail, and we must join together in enhancing and reinforcing the functions of the United Nations in order to resolve international conflicts, not by military force, but through concerted diplomatic efforts. Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombings, coinciding with the 2005 NPT Review Conference to be held at UN headquarters. With the approach of the coming year, let there be a convergence among the citizens of the world, NGOs, and all concerned parties who desire peace, so that the way may be opened for the elimination of those symbols of inhumanity known as nuclear weapons.

We call upon the government of Japan to safeguard the peaceful underpinnings of its constitution, and, as the only nation ever to have experienced nuclear attack, to enact into law the threefold non-nuclear principle. The combination of the threefold non-nuclear principle with nuclear disarmament on the Korean Peninsula will pave the road towards the creation of a Northeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. At the same time, the specifics of the Pyongyang Declaration must be agreed upon, while Japan itself must also pursue an independent security stance that does not rely on nuclear arms.

We call upon the world's youth to study the reality of the atomic bombings and to internalize a sense of respect for life, as our young people are doing in Nagasaki. The enthusiasm and hope manifested by youth who have considered the requirements of peace and are acting accordingly will serve to enlighten an increasingly confused world. Individuals who arise to take action close at hand can and will foster the realization of world peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

We in Nagasaki will continue to share our experiences of the atomic bombing of our city, and will work to make Nagasaki a center for peace studies and peace promotion. It is our hope that we will thus be able to form bonds of friendship and solidarity with people throughout the world.

Today, on the 59th anniversary of the atomic bombing, as we pray for the repose of those who died and recall to mind their suffering, we the citizens of Nagasaki pledge our commitment to the realization of true peace in the world, free from nuclear weapons.

Itoh Iccho, Mayor of Nagasaki