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Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Declarations, 2006

Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

In 2006 the spectre of nuclear war was repeatedly evoked in headline news: the US led the charge demanding that Iran and North Korea abandon nuclear development programs, both those designed for weapons development and for generating power. At the same time, the US moved to sanction and support India's nuclear development program in a bid to encircle China. Yet one year after the abortive Non-Proliferation Treaty meeting in May 2005, there was little attention to the most critical nuclear issues: the existence of 30,000 nuclear weapons, mainly in the hands of the US and Russia; the continued US nuclear development and testing program; and the apparent US provision of Bunker Buster mini nukes for Israeli use in Lebanon. In these circumstances, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Declarations call on the powers to recall the human price of nuclear war and to listen to the voices of the hibakusha. But is anyone listening? MS

Hiroshima Peace Declaration 2006

By Akiba Tadatoshi, Mayor of Hiroshima

Radiation, heat, blast and their synergetic effects created a hell on Earth. Sixty-one years later, the number of nations enamored of evil and enslaved by nuclear weapons is increasing. The human family stands at a crossroads. Will all nations be enslaved? Or will all nations be liberated? This choice poses another question. Is it acceptable for cities, and especially the innocent children who live in them, to be targeted by nuclear weapons?

The answer is crystal clear, and the past sixty-one years have shown us the path to liberation.

From a hell in which no one could have blamed them for choosing death, the hibakusha set forth toward life and the future. Living with injuries and illnesses eating away at body and mind, they have spoken persistently about their experiences. Refusing to bow before discrimination, slander, and scorn, they have warned continuously that "no one else should ever suffer as we did." Their voices, picked up by people of conscience the world over, are becoming a powerful mass chorus.

The keynote is, "The only role for nuclear weapons is to be abolished." And yet, the world's political leaders continue to ignore these voices. The International Court of Justice advisory opinion handed down ten years ago, born of the creative action of global civil society, should have been a highly effective tool for enlightening and guiding them toward the truth.

The Court found that "...the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law," and went on to declare, "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

If the nuclear-weapon states had taken the lead and sought in good faith to fulfill this obligation, nuclear weapons would have been abolished already. Unfortunately, during the past ten years, most nations and most people have failed to confront this obligation head-on. Regretting that we have not done more, the City of Hiroshima, along with Mayors for Peace, whose member cities have increased to 1,403, is launching Phase II of our 2020 Vision Campaign. This phase includes the Good Faith Challenge, a campaign to promote the good-faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament called for in the ICJ advisory opinion, and a Cities Are Not Targets project demanding that nuclear-weapon states stop targeting cities for nuclear attack.

Nuclear weapons are illegal, immoral weapons designed to obliterate cities. Our goals are to reveal the delusions behind "nuclear deterrence theory" and the "nuclear umbrella," which hold cities hostage, and to protect, from a legal and moral standpoint, our citizens' right to life.

Taking the lead in this effort is the US Conference of Mayors, representing 1,139 American cities. At its national meeting this past June, the USCM adopted a resolution demanding that all nuclear-weapon states, including the United States, immediately cease all targeting of cities with nuclear weapons.

Cities and citizens of the world have a duty to release the lost sheep from the spell and liberate the world from nuclear weapons. The time has come for all of us to awaken and arise with a will that can penetrate rock and a passion that burns like fire.

I call on the Japanese government to advocate for the hibakusha and all citizens by conducting a global campaign that will forcefully insist that the nuclear-weapon states "negotiate in good faith for nuclear disarmament." To that end, I demand that the government respect the Peace Constitution of which we should be proud. I further request more generous, people-oriented assistance appropriate to the actual situations of the aging hibakusha, including those living overseas and those exposed in "black rain areas."

To console the many victims whose names remain unknown, this year for the first time we added the words, "Many Unknown" to the ledger of victims' names placed in the cenotaph. We humbly pray for the peaceful repose of the souls of all atomic bomb victims and a future of peace and harmony for the human family.

August 6, 2006

Akiba Tadatoshi
Mayor, The City of Hiroshima

Nagasaki Peace Declaration 2006

By Itoh Iccho

"What can people possibly be thinking?"

At the close of the 61st year following the atomic bombings, voices of anger and frustration are echoing throughout the city of Nagasaki.

At 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, a single atomic bomb destroyed our city, instantly claiming the lives of 74,000 people and injuring 75,000 more. People were burned by the intense heat rays and flung through the air by the horrific blast winds. Their bodies bathed in mordant radiation, many of the survivors continue to suffer from the after-effects even today. How can we ever forget the anguished cries of those whose lives and dreams were so cruelly taken from them?

And yet, some 30,000 nuclear weapons stand ready nonetheless to annihilate humanity.

A decade ago, the International Court of Justice stated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law, strongly encouraging international society to strive for the elimination of nuclear armaments. Six years ago at the United Nations, the nuclear weapon states committed themselves not merely to prevent proliferation, but to an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Nuclear weapons are instruments of indiscriminate genocide, and their elimination is a task that mankind must realize without fail.

Last year, the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which 189 countries are signatories, ended without result, and no progress has been observed since.

The nuclear weapon states have not demonstrated sincerity in their efforts at disarmament; the United States of America in particular has issued tacit approval of nuclear weapons development by India, and is moving forward with the construction of cooperative arrangements for nuclear technology. At the same time, nuclear weapon declarant North Korea is threatening the peace and security of Japan and the world as a whole. In fact, the very structure of non-proliferation is facing a crisis due to nuclear ambitions by various nations including Pakistan, which has announced its possession of nuclear arms; Israel, which is widely considered to possess them; and Iran.

The time has come for those nations that rely on the force of nuclear armaments to respectfully heed the voices of peace-loving people, not least the atomic bomb survivors, to strive in good faith for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and to advance towards the complete abolishment of all such weapons.

It must also be said that nuclear weapons cannot be developed without the cooperation of scientists. We would urge scientists to realize their responsibility for the destiny of all mankind, not just for their own particular countries, and to abandon the development of nuclear arms.

Once again we call upon the Japanese government, representing as it does a nation that has experienced nuclear devastation firsthand, to ground itself in reflection upon history, uphold the peaceful intentions of the constitution, enact into the law the three non-nuclear principles, and work for establishment of a Northeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, that the tragedy of war may not occur again. We also urge the Japanese government to provide greater assistance to aging atomic bomb survivors, both within Japan and overseas.

For 61 years, the hibakusha atomic bomb survivors have recounted their tragic experiences to succeeding generations. Many have chosen not to hide the keloid scars on their skin, continuing to tell of things that they might rather not remember. Their efforts are indeed a starting point for peace. Their voices reverberate around the world, calling for the deepest compassion of those who are working to ensure that Nagasaki is the last place on our planet to have suffered nuclear destruction.

The 3rd Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons will be held in October of this year. We invite people working for peace to span generations and national boundaries, and gather together to communicate. Let us firmly join hands and foster an even stronger network for nuclear abolition and peace, extending from Nagasaki throughout the world.

We remain confident that the empathy and solidarity of all those who inherit the hopes of the hibakusha atomic bomb survivors will become an even more potent force, one that will surely serve to realize a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

In closing, we pray for the undisturbed repose of the souls of those who lost their lives in such misery, we resolve that 2006 should be a new year of departure, and we proclaim our commitment to continue to strive for the establishment of lasting world peace.

Iccho Itoh
Mayor of Nagasaki
August 9, 2006

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