

# A Concrete Path to Nuclear Weapon

On May 3, representatives from NGOs addressed the Conference for the first time. Facing 300 government officials from roughly 80 countries, Nagasaki Mayor Iccho Itoh gave a speech representing the Mayors Conference. The speech is reprinted here, along with the appeal by the Mayor of Hiroshima that was distributed at the same time.



**Iccho Itoh**  
**Mayor of Nagasaki**  
**Vice President**  
**World Conference of Mayors for**  
**Peace through Inter-city Solidarity**

Honorable Chairman Abdalah Baali, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor as a representative of the U.N.-registered NGO "World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity" to have this opportunity to speak on the occasion of the NPT Review Conference.

The World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity is an international network of 487 cities in 102 countries and regions. It was established in 1982 in response to a worldwide call from the atomic-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the promotion of international opinion in favor of the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In the event of war, and especially nuclear war, the first targets of attack are cities and the first victims of destruction are their residents, particularly noncombatants such as the elderly, women and children. Not only the atomic bombings but also the devastation repeated innumerable times in wars and local conflicts clearly attest to this fact.

As a result of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, more than 210,000 people were either killed instantly or died of injuries during the ensuing months. The vast majority of these people were not soldiers but non-combatant citizens. Dropped from an altitude of about 9,000 meters, the atomic bombs exploded 500 meters above the ground, causing a heat flash of several thousand degrees Centigrade, showering the cities below with deadly radiation, and crushing and burning everything under the tremendous force of the blast. Even today, 55 years later, about 300,000 atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue to live in fear of death and to suffer from late effects.

In November 1995, I spoke to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Netherlands as mayor of Nagasaki

and made the following appeal concerning the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons: "It is my understanding that the free and unlimited selection of weapons is unacceptable in terms of international law concerning warfare, and that 1) attacks on civilian communities, 2) the infliction of unnecessary suffering and 3) the destruction of the natural environment are prohibited, even with regard to weapons that are not expressly banned. The use of nuclear weapons obviously falls under the scope of this prohibition and therefore is a manifest infraction of international law."

In July the following year, as you know, the International Court of Justice stated in its advisory opinions that the "threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law."

This advisory opinion brought a bright ray of encouragement not only to the atomic-bombed cities but to all the individuals and organizations throughout the world struggling to eliminate nuclear weapons. Moreover, as though inspired by the ICJ opinion, world-renowned scientists and politicians as well as former key military personnel came forward with concrete proposals for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The citizens of Nagasaki, worried for so long about the future of nuclear disarmament, felt as though they were seeing a light at the end of a dark tunnel.

In May 1998, however, India and Pakistan conducted successive underground nuclear tests, making our worst fears about the proliferation of nuclear weapons a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, both India and Pakistan conducted these nuclear tests on the pretext of protecting their national safety. But are the two countries really safer than they were before? Is it not a fact that the people of both countries are now trembling in fear of a nuclear attack?

In the Nagasaki Peace Declaration, which I deliver every year at the Peace Ceremony on the August 9 anniversary of the atomic bombing, I have repeatedly criticized the nuclear states for clinging to the theory of "nuclear deterrence," that is, reliance on nuclear weapons as a means to maintain peace and security. Nuclear weapons will bring about the annihilation of

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the human race; there can be no lasting peace for humanity as long as nuclear weapons exist in our midst.

Today, we are questioning the extent to which the nuclear states are fulfilling Article VI of the NPT, namely their duty to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race. . .”

Today, the Russian Federation ratified the second Strategic Arms Treaty (START II), seven years after the signing of this agreement, and is preparing to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which was passed with the agreement of 158 countries around the world. These actions should be applauded, but it is also a fact that the Russian Federation acknowledged the first use of nuclear weapons in its new military doctrine.

The Senate of the United States of America, meanwhile, rejected a resolution for the ratification of the CTBT, and there is no hope for a ratification during the present administration. In addition, the United States has conducted 11 sub-critical nuclear tests on the premise that these tests do not violate the CTBT, and both the United States and the Russian Federation have announced their intention to proceed with further tests. It can only be said that the United States, the world superpower that has steered the course of international politics since World War II and promoted the expansion of nuclear weapons, bears a heavy burden of responsibility.

I was born on August 23, 1945 and so am a member of the first postwar generation. I am well aware of the fact that the United States supported the postwar restoration of Japan and the introduction of a splendid system of democracy. Most Japanese people including myself are deeply grateful for these favors. With regard to the issue of nuclear weapons, however, we feel that the United States should be severely condemned for its present policies.

The human race achieved an unprecedented level of prosperity during the 20th century. At the same time, however, the century was marred by conflict and destruction and rocked by two world wars. Now the 20th century is coming to a close, and we are about to greet the arrival of the 21st century.

The Russell - Einstein Manifesto issued in 1955 delivers the following warning about the threat of nuclear weapons : “It is stated on very good authority that a bomb can now be manufactured which will be 2,500 times as powerful as that which destroyed Hiroshima. . . But the best authorities are unanimous in saying that a war with H-bombs might quite possibly put an end to the human race. It is feared that if many H-bombs are used there will be universal death.”

Forty-five years have passed, but we have still not escaped from the danger of human annihilation that Russell and

Einstein pointed out in their joint statement. The nuclear states continue to possess nuclear weapons, hailing them as essential to the protection of peace, but, on the contrary, this only perpetuates the danger of global destruction because it casts an unbreakable “ nuclear spell.”

Ladies and gentlemen, the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima are not appealing for the abolition of nuclear weapons out of hatred or resentment over events of the past. Our only reason is our clear knowledge, gained from the miserable experience of the atomic bombings 55 years ago, that nuclear weapons are inhuman tools of indiscriminate, mass destruction that violate all rules of international law.

Now is the time for the nuclear states to announce their political commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons from the Earth and to begin negotiations for the swift conclusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty that will ban the development, manufacture, testing, deployment and use of all nuclear weapons.

I look forward to your intensive and constructive discussions, and I ardently hope that the present NPT Review Conference will blaze a trail straight to the abolition of nuclear weapons and assure that these weapons are not carried into the 21st century.

Nagasaki will continue to join with Hiroshima in deepening solidarity with world cities and in amplifying the cry for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In November this year, we will be inviting NGO from around the world to participate in the Global Citizens’ Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in Nagasaki.

I believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons can be accomplished by consolidating the efforts of world citizens and NGO and mobilizing the conscience of humanity. Let us focus all our efforts on realizing a 21st century free from nuclear weapons and building a world in which our children can live in peace.

Thank you very much.



Nagasaki Mayor Itoh giving an address.  
In the center is UN Under-Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala.  
On the right is NPT Review Conference President Baali.

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**Tadatoshi Akiba**  
**Mayor of Hiroshima**  
**President**  
**World Conference of Mayors for**  
**Peace through Inter-city Solidarity**

We are in the final year of the 20th century. Last year, the world's media voted to select the most important news event of the 20th century, and this dubious distinction went to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whatever else it may mean, this vote demonstrates that the atomic bombings are defining symbols of the 20th century, a "century of war."

The latter half of this century, beginning on August 6, 1945, with humankind's first use of a nuclear weapon, has witnessed a continuous struggle between those instruments of evil, threatening to destroy us all, and people of conscience, seeking a genuinely peaceful world free from nuclear weapons. And all along, A-bomb survivors (hibakusha) have been in the lead on the side peace. Now, with the 20th century coming to an end, I would like to briefly review what those hibakusha have accomplished in their battle against nuclear weapons.

I believe the hibakusha have made three major contributions. The first involved transcending the hellish pain and despair the bombings wrought and returning to decent lives as human beings. In doing so, they proved that the human spirit is capable of rising above even the unspeakable evil of nuclear weapons. I see no need to repeat here the gruesome details of the cruel tragedy inflicted by the A-bomb. The hibakusha have already done so. It is from them that we have learned about the living hell.

Families, neighborhoods, cities—all gone in a flash. Then, hovering for days, weeks, months, even years between life and death in a corpse-strewn sea of rubble and ruin—none would have blamed them had they chosen death or insanity. Yet they chose life. They insisted on remaining human.

The hibakusha's second contribution is preventing a third use of nuclear weapons. Whenever conflict and war break out, there are those who advocate nuclear weapons. This was true even in the conflict over Kosovo. By relating their own experience to the world, however, the hibakusha have argued effectively that using nuclear weapons means annihilating the human race. They have continuously asserted that such weapons represent the ultimate evil, and they have solemnly pledged never to allow a repetition of such evil. It is largely through the power of that pledge that the human race, thus far, has refrained from committing a third act of nuclear lunacy.

The hibakusha's third contribution is their articulation and modelling of a new world view. The hibakusha rejected the path of revenge and enmity that leads to human extinction. Taking onto their own shoulders not only the sins of Japan as a nation but the evil of war itself, they have, with their eyes fixed firmly on the future, selected a path that relies on the virtue and trustworthiness of the human race as a whole.

Rather than "Remember Hiroshima," the cry of the hibakusha is "No more Hiroshimas." Rather than developing an even more destructive, even more lethal weapon with which to extract revenge from the nation that dropped the bomb, they have worked steadfastly to abolish nuclear weapons and build a world of genuine peace.

The philosophy of hibakusha is beautifully expressed on the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims in Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. Engraved on that symbolic stone coffin are the words, "Let all the souls here rest in peace; for we shall not repeat the evil."

This philosophy was dominant in 1946 when the Japanese constitution was written. That document clearly states that the world must be built on peace, trust, and justice, and, renouncing war forever, it prohibits Japan from ever again becoming a military power.

The same philosophy was incorporated in the Hague Appeal adopted by peace-loving people who gathered from all over the world for the international peace conference held in The Hague, Netherlands, last May. This committed rejection of war is precisely the path that human beings must choose if we are to make the 21st a century of peace.

However, we must admit that the precious message of the hibakusha has yet to be accepted by much of the world. This planet still bristles with vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and the survival of the human race is still at risk.



NGO's representatives making a speech at the meeting hall

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The NPT Review Conference now underway came about because of strong negative reaction and harsh criticism from many signatory countries that arose when the previous NPT Review and Extension Conference decided in 1995 to extend the NPT indefinitely. And generally, the international climate with respect to nuclear weapons has deteriorated since that 1995 Conference. The nuclear-weapon states have blatantly revealed their intention to cling to nuclear weapons and have refused to engage in any sincere effort toward nuclear disarmament. Just before the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), for example, France and China hastened to conduct a series of soon-to-be-banned nuclear tests. After the signing, the US and Russia have continued their rivalry through subcritical nuclear testing.

Such behavior by the nuclear powers has intensified the feeling among non-nuclear nations that the NPT regime is discriminatory and unfair. In May 1998, India and Pakistan shocked the world by conducting their nuclear tests and have brought the NPT regime to the brink of utter collapse. To make matters worse, the US Senate recently refused to ratify the CTBT, and Russia has publicly declared a military doctrine characterized by increased reliance on nuclear weapons. Clearly, the once-promising trend toward nuclear disarmament seems to have reversed.

I am gravely concerned that present attitudes and actions among nuclear-weapon states are exacerbating distrust among non-nuclear nations, thereby inviting a new round of nuclear proliferation and threatening to destroy the NPT regime. The key to breaking free from this cycle and moving again toward a world of peace free from nuclear weapons is the powerful will of the hibakusha. If all of us were to join the hibakusha in their absolute determination to abolish nuclear weapons—if this will were present in the leaders of the nuclear-weapon states—we could eliminate nuclear weapons tomorrow. A powerful will like that of the hibakusha is born of truth. The truth in this case is that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil that could destroy the entire human race.

To proceed steadily toward the abolition of these weapons, first, the nuclear-weapon states must present clear evidence to the international community that they intend “to pursue negotiations in good faith” to abolish nuclear weapons, as stipulated in Article 6 of the NPT. The advisory opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice in 1996 clarifies this obligation. “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.”

Standing on these legal obligations, Hiroshima demands that the nuclear-weapon states keep their promises under Article 6



Meeting between Government and NGO Representatives

of the NPT and commit themselves before the international community to a concrete, time-limited process by which they intend to abolish nuclear weapons.

We further demand that the United States and Russia immediately halt all subcritical nuclear testing, the premise of which is on-going possession of nuclear weapons, negotiate an early agreement in the Third Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START III), and begin making a genuine effort to drastically reduce their strategic nuclear warheads.

Finally, we request that the NPT signatory states take full advantage of this Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to exert a maximum effort toward early effectuation of the CTBT, early conclusion of a treaty to ban production of weapons-grade fissile materials (Cut Off Treaty), expansion of nuclear-free zone treaties to include the entire planet, and a treaty that bans possession of nuclear weapons entirely.

Scientific and technological progress in the 20th century has brought great prosperity. That progress has also given us nuclear weapons, instruments of evil that could ultimately cause the extinction of the human race. As a species and as a planet, we confront numerous urgent problems, from nuclear weapons and war to the population explosion, poverty, starvation, and environmental destruction and pollution. To make the 21st century one of genuine peace, we must move quickly to pay down these “negative assets” of the 20th century. This is our duty, a mission we must accomplish for our children, their children, and the generations to come.

Let me declare again my firm belief that, for the future of the human race, our most vital and pressing duty is to eliminate nuclear weapons. I hope you will take this opportunity to move boldly and unmistakably in that direction.