

**Statement by Mayor of Hiroshima
at the Third Special Session of the United Nations
General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament**

June 9, 1988

Takeshi Araki Mayor of Hiroshima

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

My name is Takeshi Araki - Mayor of the City of Hiroshima and President of the World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity.

I would like, before I begin, to introduce the eight Vice Presidents of the World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity who are also here with me today:

the Mayor of Nagasaki, Japan;

the Mayor of Berlin, German Democratic Republic;

the Mayor of Como, Italy;

the Lord Mayor of Hannover, Federal Republic of Germany;

the Mayor of Lusaka, Zambia;

the Mayor of Sacramento, United States of America;

the Mayor of Vancouver, Canada; and

the Mayor of Volgograd, Soviet Union.

Mr. President:

In August 1945, mankind made a terrible mistake -- the dropping of atomic bombs on the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, I have not come before you to rail against the dropping of these atomic bombs.

Rather, I come before you in the spirit of the epitaph carved on the Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima: " Let all the souls here rest in peace; For we shall not repeat the evil." This epitaph is at once a prayer for the repose of the bomb's victims' souls and a powerful pledge on behalf of all mankind, past, present, and future. It is, in short, the spirit of Hiroshima. Hiroshima has undergone great tragedy, but it has also transcended the hatreds and overcome countless difficulties to be reborn as a City of International Peace and Culture. With a population of over one million, Hiroshima has dedicated itself to working for the abolition of all nuclear weapons and the establishment of true world peace.

Mr. President:

Nuclear weapons were still in their infancy when those early prototypes were

dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the devastation was total. The single toy-like weapon snuffed out the lives of 140,000 people and laid waste to our city. In Hiroshima myself that fateful day, I can never forget the gruesome scenes that awaited me everywhere I turned. Those victims who were not killed outright suffer the aftereffects even today. Aside from the direct hibakusha, there are about 360,000 people living lives of torture, their health destroyed by secondary radiation and other bomb-related causes. It is this message that I would like to impress upon the world's politicians as eloquently and as vividly as I possibly can.

For if they will recognize this truth, they may also come to realize what barbarity the development and possession of nuclear weapons is and what an unpardonable evil it is.

Mr. President:

I have the highest regard for the Treaty to Abolish Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces that was signed by the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union last December as the first agreement ever to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons and for the recent exchange of ratification documents in Moscow. I am hopeful that this agreement will prove the starting point for a comprehensive disarmament process. Yet at the same time, I find it most frustrating that these leaders were unable to agree on the much-wanted 50% reduction in strategic weapons. It is essential that we continue pressing for ongoing and uninterrupted negotiations among all of the nuclear powers for thinning their nuclear stockpiles and ultimately abolishing all nuclear weapons.

Mr. President:

At SSOD-II, the United Nations proposed a global disarmament campaign. Agreeing most strongly with the spirit of that appeal, I have participated in a wide range of peace-advocacy activities, including welcoming United Nations Peace Fellows, hosting the Peace Summit of Nobel Peace Prize winners and the symposium of leading journalists from the nuclear powers, and sponsoring atomic bomb exhibits in Japan and overseas. Many more activities are planned.

At the same time, seeking to encourage the formulation of a worldwide public opinion constituency for nuclear disarmament, I felt the need for solidarity

among the world's cities and this led me to call for the formation of a World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity. Happily, this call has been well received, and the World Conference today counts among its members the mayors of 219 cities in 39 countries -- capitalist, communist, and non-aligned alike -- representing a total population of over 100 million. It is on behalf of these people that we issue our fervent appeal to you today. Believing firmly that peace is fundamental to municipal administration, we are determined to work all the more energetically to broaden the Conference's membership.

Mr. President:

In closing, I would like to emphasize three points.

The first is that nuclear testing is inherently intended for the development of ever-more deadly weapons in a satanic demonstration of man's depravity. Accordingly, I hereby appeal most strongly for the prompt conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

My second point is to invite all of the world's leaders, and especially the leaders of the future, to come to Hiroshima and to see for themselves what horrors even primitive nuclear weapons wrought. More than 30 million people have visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum since its founding. In Hiroshima, seeing can open your eyes to the nuclear nightmare and instill a determination to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

And third is my fervent hope that an international research institute to study the issues of peace and disarmament can be established in Hiroshima, where the first atomic bomb fell.

Mr. President:

Hiroshima is more than a witness to history. It is also a powerful warning about the future of our world.

It is this message that I bring to this SSOD-III in the hope that this Special Session will achieve its ambitious agenda and mark a major turning toward peace.

My prayers are with you.