

February 22, 2007

His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
President
Priem Pochty
Kutafiya Bashnya, Aleksandrovsky Sad
Kremlen
Moscow
RUSSIA

Your Excellency,

In August 1945, the city of Hiroshima was reduced to a burnt plain by a single atomic bomb that, by the end of that year, had taken approximately 140,000 precious lives. Subsequently, hundreds of thousands of survivors suffered and died from the aftereffects of radiation, and many still suffer today, more than 60 years after the bombing. The people of Hiroshima know the horror of nuclear weapons. That is why we have transcended our pain and grief to reject the path of revenge and animosity that will lead inevitably to the extinction of the human race. We choose instead the path of reconciliation in hopes that no one else will ever suffer what we did. We have consistently appealed for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of genuine and lasting world peace.

However, Russia and the other nuclear-weapon states have utterly failed to live up to your promise in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). You are developing new nuclear weapons and are increasing your nuclear capabilities. Nuclear weapons are proliferating and the NPT regime, the only international agreement for the abolition of nuclear weapons, is in danger of total collapse. Nuclear weapons were the ostensible reason for the war in Iraq and will be the pretext for an attack on Iran, should such an attack take place. More than a decade after the end of the Cold War, the human family faces the imminent possibility that the so-called "war on terror" will become a nuclear war.

Given this crisis, the city of Hiroshima, along with Mayors for Peace, an NGO currently with 1578 city members in 120 countries and regions, is conducting an Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons by the year 2020 (our 2020 Vision Campaign). Our 2020 Vision has thus far won endorsements from the US Conference of Mayors, the National Conference of Black Mayors, the European Parliament, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), and many other leading groups and individuals. The abolition of nuclear weapons is desired by most people in your country and the overwhelming majority of people around the world.

In 1996, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) handed down an advisory opinion declaring, "The threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international

law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” To mark the 10th anniversary of this landmark decision, Mayors for Peace issued a Good Faith Challenge to highlight another aspect of the ICJ finding: “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.” We are challenging all governments to engage constructively in such negotiations.

At the city level, we have launched a Cities Are Not Targets project that demands assurances from nuclear-weapon states that no city is targeted for annihilation. The tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki clearly demonstrated that when nuclear weapons are used, the burden of suffering falls on ordinary noncombatant citizens. As our A-bomb survivors have long been telling us, “Human beings cannot coexist indefinitely with nuclear weapons.”

Therefore, the city of Hiroshima makes the following demands of your nation.

1. Wholehearted participation in good-faith negotiations toward complete nuclear disarmament as stipulated by the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.
2. Assurance that you are not currently targeting and will not in the future target for nuclear attack any city or municipality inhabited by children and other noncombatants, nor expose cities to radioactive fallout.
3. Conscientious recognition that the overwhelming majority of nations and people on this planet desire liberation from the nuclear threat and fulfillment of your unequivocal undertaking to eliminate your nuclear arsenals.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,



Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima
President
Mayors for Peace