

February , 2007

To the Japanese Government:

The situation today with respect to nuclear weapons is extremely dangerous. The nuclear superpower, the United States, is escalating its unilateralism and appears ready to use a nuclear weapon in a pre-emptive attack. At the same time, it is developing new types of nuclear weapons and is preparing to build new nuclear weapon production facilities. These actions run counter to the pursuit of nuclear abolition. As the US intensifies its "rule of power," Russia is following suit and can be expected to enhance its ability to fight a nuclear war. North Korea, ignoring all warnings from the international community, tested a nuclear weapon, and Iran's nuclear program is viewed with widespread suspicion. The NPT, the only international agreement for the control and elimination of nuclear weapons, is teetering on the brink of collapse.

Given this crisis, the world's first A-bombed city 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 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. I am writing to request that the Japanese government make a strong and public demand for assurances from the nuclear-weapon states that they are not targeting and will not in the future target any city for a nuclear attack.

Japan is the only A-bombed nation. The Japanese government is duty-bound to represent its *hibakusha* and all its citizens by taking the lead in demanding that nuclear-weapon states begin negotiating in good faith for nuclear abolition. It should also be demanding early effectuation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and an early start to negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We have tremendous political and economic leverage that could be applied to the United States and other nuclear-weapon states. If Japan were to forcefully use its influence, it could quickly mobilize the vast majority of nations to demand immediate, substantive negotiations on a framework agreement for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Hiroshima hereby requests that the Japanese government exert all its diplomatic influence and skill to this end.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima
President
Mayors for Peace