

Statement by Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
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First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for their interest in Mayors for Peace, and for giving me this opportunity to speak about our activities.

I serve as the President of Mayors for Peace, an international non-partisan, non-governmental organization. We have over 7,500 member cities around the world, including 213 U.S. members, and we are all united in working to achieve two key objectives: “Realization of a world without nuclear weapons” and “Realization of safe and resilient cities”, which we believe will lead us to our ultimate goal, that of lasting world peace.

Today, as the Mayor of an A-bombed city, I would like to begin by sharing with you the *hibakusha*’s earnest wish for peace. I brought some photos from Hiroshima to show you what nuclear weapons can do to ordinary people and their environment and why we call these weapons “absolute evil”. We would like everyone around the world to understand first and foremost these realities. Whatever the rationale attached, these are the solemn humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons.

We believe that by sharing these realities widely, people will come to understand the *hibakusha*’s fervent wish, expressed in their own words, that “no one else should ever suffer as we have”. People will also come to better understand that lasting world peace cannot be achieved without fostering respect for diversity and nurturing the vision of a common future rooted in a sense of belonging to one human family. We believe that cultivating such awareness among people will contribute to solving the diverse and complex problems we are facing today throughout the world community.

We also believe that as mayors, we have much to contribute in solving these problems, given that most of the world’s population today lives in cities. Our vision is global, but it is rooted in a deep understanding of the needs, wants, and fears of individual citizens. As mayors, we are practical problem solvers, and we wish to apply our skills to overcoming challenges facing an increasingly interdependent world, including the rise of nationalism, militarism, sectarianism, and xenophobia.

Considering current international tensions, we are faced with the situation in which nobody can predict how the US-North Korea Summit will affect Northeast Asia or how the uncertain future of the JCPOA will affect the Middle East.

While sincerely hoping for the world leaders to resolve these and other pressing global issues through peaceful means, and to demonstrate their leadership in creating a world without nuclear weapons, I would like to ask everyone here today to reaffirm the fervent message for peace that the *hibakusha* have been making for decades.

As the awareness of the inhumanity of nuclear weapons is spreading around the world, so does the global appeal for a world without nuclear weapons. However, we feel that we are not making sufficient progress in this field and we even fear that things could potentially regress. So now is the time to make a breakthrough and I am here to share this sense of urgency with you.

As the world commemorates the centenary of the end of the First World War, we need to ask ourselves if we are not forgetting the lessons learned at that time. WWI was followed by the even more gruesome WWII, but we must make sure not to let another world war happen again, because if it happens, it could mean the annihilation of the human race. Whether it's a relationship between persons or states, solely focusing on fulfilling one's own agendas should not be the right course of action. Let us recall the importance of seeking peaceful solutions through earnest dialogues among people with differing opinions and interests.

In pursuing a peaceful solution of the Korean peninsula's nuclear-weapons problem, we certainly and most obviously must prevent any use of nuclear weapons, as it can only cause devastating consequences. The Korean War, which began in 1950, has not technically ended, leaving the two countries in a state of ceasefire. Substantive peace efforts must be made to officially end the war without any armed conflicts through earnest dialogues among concerned states. Speaking about peace efforts to resolve armed conflicts, I would like to introduce to you a story in history in which diplomatic efforts resolved an armed conflict between Japan and Korea several hundred years ago, and thereby established a foundation for long-standing peaceful relations between the two countries.

More than 400 years ago, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a powerful Japanese feudal lord, sent troops to Korea with the intent of conquering the peninsula. The invasions, comprised of two massive operations, caused great damage to Korea, but Hideyoshi's administration also suffered major damage. Upon his death, the war ended, but the diplomatic relations of the two countries remained cut off.

Yujeong, a Korean Buddhist monk, led a righteous army of monks during the invasions, and contributed to defeating Hideyoshi's army. He is also known for getting into the enemy's territory to take the initiative in negotiating peace with the commander. He was appreciated for this experience and was appointed as an unofficial envoy to Japan on an order to forge a peace accord with Tokugawa Ieyasu, the then Shogun of Japan. While in Japan, Yujeong interacted with many high-ranking monks in Kyoto. These monks not only ruled the academic and cultural society of the time, but also served as strategists in policymaking and diplomacy, having close relationships with the Shogun. Yujeong gained the confidence of Ieyasu and his aides and successfully concluded the peace negotiations.

Yujeong was willing to engage in negotiations even in his enemy's territory and complete his mission to achieve lasting peace through diplomacy. In addition to repatriating 3,000 Korean civilians who had been held prisoner, he established a foundation for peaceful exchange through a series of Korean missions to Japan that lasted for more than 200 years even during the period of national isolation of Japan.

In the history of nuclear weapons, there are also good examples of bold initiatives by leaders of your country. We should recall historical facts that past nuclear disarmament measures were taken even at peaks of international tension through joint initiatives of political leaders who reached out, as shown in the case of the conclusion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963 by the leaders of two nuclear superpowers, Presidents Kennedy and Khrushchev, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987 between Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev. It is time for the policymakers of the world, especially those in nuclear-armed states, to follow these precedents and demonstrate their own leadership. Let us also remind ourselves that the united voices of wide ranging civil society members have always been the driving force behind past progress in nuclear disarmament. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan frequently referred to civil society as the “new Superpower”, one capable of having a profound influence in overcoming global challenges, including the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

What is most needed now is for world leaders to engage in earnest dialogue regardless of their political and ideological positions. They should break free from the doctrine of nuclear deterrence in the spirit of generosity and for the love of humanity. And they should seek a cooperative security policy without reliance on nuclear deterrence as a better long-term solution, one that not only serves one country’s own interest but all humanity. For our part, we in the civil society are committed to working together to create an environment that encourages world leaders to take decisive and insightful leadership towards nuclear abolition. And we will never rest until this great has been achieved, and the bounties of peace and security can be shared by all.

It is an honor indeed for me to conclude with this message here at the Carnegie Endowment, which has for many decades grappled with some of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Its work in non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control have helped to educate a younger generation, reminded their elders of the work that remains to be accomplished, inspired legislators to debate and to enact enlightened legislation, and encouraged broader media coverage of a full gamut of world challenges. We at Mayors for Peace fully support your past and ongoing efforts in these diverse fields and we wish you the very best in achieving the noble goals that we both share.

Let me say in closing that I hope all of you here today will one day visit the beautiful and historic city of Hiroshima. Our visitors leave our city as changed persons, more deeply aware of the horrors of nuclear weapons, but also more conscious of the sheer triumph of humanity in the face of utterly catastrophic events. Even our trees have been re-born and yielded cuttings and seedlings that are now growing in cities around the world. Our visitors know that this awareness of our common humanity, and our common bond with nature, give us the greatest hope for the future. There is a saying in Japan and number of other countries that it is darkest just before the dawn. Let us now get on with our important work, and light the way to a more peaceful, secure, and just world order for our own and future generations.