

STATEMENT BY
TAKESHI ARAKI, MAYOR OF HIROSHIMA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

24 June 1982

Mr. President,

My name is Takeshi Araki, President of Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation and Mayor of Hiroshima City.

As Mayor of Hiroshima, the city which thirty-seven years ago endured the catastrophe caused by the first atomic bomb ever used in human history, as well as an A-bomb survivor myself, I wish to make the following appeal directed toward all the nations and people of the world.

Mr. President,

At 8:15 a.m., on Monday August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb exploded without warning and instantly devastated the City of Hiroshima. Wounded children trying to rescue their parents caught under a crushed house; a mother and a child dazedly squatting, naked, with the skin peeling off all over their bodies; a girl with a bloody face whose eyeballs were starting out of her head; numerous dead bodies floating one on top of another on the surface of a river; languishing voices calling, "Water, water..." An inferno became a reality on earth, which one can hardly imagine. Even today, those hellish scenes remain printed on my memory and come home aching to my heart. I find myself haunted by a feeling of deep sorrow and regret.

350,000 people were exposed to the atomic radiation in Hiroshima. More than 140,000 people died over the following four months, including those killed instantly. Not a few people among those who were barely able to survive died later from the aftereffects of radiation. And there are still many people who are suffering both physically and mentally from keloids, leukemia, malignant tumors, and many other diseases.

The central characteristic of the damage due to nuclear weapons, which is far beyond one's imagination of conventional war damage, is that massive destruction takes place instantly as well as uniformly over a huge area, and that an indiscriminate massacre is perpetrated on people without distinction of age and sex, including noncombatants, which implies a complete negation of the possibility of human survival and would lead to the destruction of the earth itself.

Dr. Olof Palme, Chairman of the Independent commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, made an appeal in Hiroshima, saying: "A man vanished in a thermal wave with a temperature of several thousand degrees centigrade, only leaving a human shadow imprinted on the stone step of a building. Once nuclear war takes place, whatever would be left on the earth but human shadows? We cannot be so irresponsible as to say that victory is possible in a limited nuclear war. We must now learn a lesson from Hiroshima.

Mr. President,

The citizens of Hiroshima are firmly determined that nuclear weapons shall not be used again no matter what the reasons.

And, we, the citizens, bearing in mind the spirit of the Constitution of our country in which the renunciation of war is stipulated in response to the last war, called successfully on the Japanese Government for the enactment of the "Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law" with the purpose of rebuilding the city as a symbol of the aim of realizing an eternal peace with sincerity. The idea of this law has underlain our strenuous efforts.

"Let all the souls here rest in peace; For we shall not repeat the evil." The words on the epitaph of the A-bomb Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima compose the pledge that each and all standing before the Cenotaph share for peace, and are the "Heart of Hiroshima" itself. The "Heart of Hiroshima" is based on humanism in a true sense, by which the hatred and sorrow of the past are transcended and the co-existence and prosperity of all humankind are genuinely sought.

Mr. President,

On behalf of the citizens of Hiroshima, I wish to call, in particular, for the immediate and complete banning of nuclear tests, and the freezing of all nuclear weapons stocks, which should ultimately be eliminated.

In this context, I sincerely hope that the heads of nuclear powers including those of the United States and the Soviet Union, those in leading positions in the countries of the world, and especially their young people, representing the next generation, will come to Hiroshima, as we believe that seeing at first hand the actual nature of the damages in the A-bomb city Hiroshima will become a starting point for this action on disarmament.

I propose that a Summit Conference on peace and disarmament be held in Hiroshima, and that an international institute for research on peace and disarmament be established in Hiroshima.

Furthermore, Hiroshima calls for the solidarity of cities throughout the world which share a common cause with Hiroshima. This inter-city solidarity which will be formed, regardless of national boundaries and racial differences, to share efforts in paving the road to nuclear abolition, will give a great momentum to the building of a new order of peace in the nuclear age.

Mr. President,

Hiroshima is not merely a witness of history. Hiroshima is an endless warning for the future of mankind. If Hiroshima is ever forgotten, it is evident that the mistake will be repeated and bring human history to an end.

I cannot stress too strongly my hope that you will weigh carefully the words of my appeal.

Thank you.