

Mayor Akiba to the ICNND, Moscow, June 2009

Commissioners, co-chairs, friends,

Before anything else I would like to thank Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Gareth Evans, Yoriko Kawaguchi, and all of you who are serving as commissioners. This commission has generated tremendous interest in and momentum toward a nuclear-weapon-free world and helped create the climate that allowed President Obama to make his historic speech in Prague.

It is gratifying to note that President Obama's speech is firmly anchored in **moral responsibility**. Cities concluded a long time ago that they have suffered for centuries due to the lack of an effective moral foundation.

The speech was a clarion echo of the most cherished appeal of the hibakusha, survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: "No one else should ever suffer as we did!"

Mayors for Peace, which was created to spread this message and accomplish its goal, has grown almost 6-fold over these 6 years to include 2,946 cities round the world because mayors are determined to rid the world of nuclear weapons. There are 119 Iraqi cities among them and just last month 25 Israeli cities have newly joined us. I will tell you the implications of this fact later if I have time.

We also speak for a majority of humanity, who now lives in cities, represented by the United Cities and Local Governments. I believe that I have the largest constituency of any person who will appear before this Commission.

I am not sure if Prime Minister Rudd intended the timeframe to be a critical factor for this Commission, but for many of us it is the issue.

First, the average age of living hibakusha is now over 75.

When Mayors for Peace launched the 2020 Vision Campaign to eliminate all nuclear weapons by 2020, the only request we received from the hibakusha was that the target year should be much sooner. "We may not be alive by 2020." was their reason.

I believe that the world owes them at least this much to our hibakusha: that is, some of them can carry the news that the world has finally abolished nuclear weapons to those who did not have the chance to see their dreams come true.

In the minds of my generation who saw Stanley Kramers movie, *On the Beach*, set in Melbourne, the final scene says it all: it is a banner fluttering in a humanless world, reading “There is still time, brother.”

I have told you these stories because I believe that they represent the dilemma you face. Stated bluntly, you want to issue a set of recommendations that will be seen as realistic and acceptable by the nuclear-weapon states while simultaneously giving hope to those states that are near the end of their patience with the two-tiered structure of nuclear haves and have-nots.

And the critical factor is the timeframe you choose as you finalize your report.

Fortunately for all of us, world citizens, this Commission consists of the best and the brightest who can resolve even the most difficult of dilemmas.

Your stature in the world, passion for and commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world, rich experiences in politics and international affairs, and skills of persuasion to engage even the incurable skeptics in a dialogue, are enough proof that together we can eliminate all nuclear weapons from the surface of the earth by 2020.

However, your job is not an easy one. In such a difficult situation, one can and should always go back to basics.

First of all, we have the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Its Article VI, which has been endorsed by the International Court of Justice, legally obligates all governments to adhere to it diligently and faithfully.

And the Court clearly stated that the emphasis must be on the **outcome**, not on how hard you try.

I cannot overemphasize the fact that this is the majority opinion of the world. That is why 190 countries are members of the NPT, which binds them to do their utmost to abolish nuclear weapons. More than 110 countries, a clear majority of the 192 members of the UN, have taken the trouble to sign nuclear-free zone treaties. And every year, approximately 170 countries vote for the Japanese resolution calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

President Obama, standing on a solid moral foundation of the majority, has promised to conclude negotiations between the US and Russia on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty by the end of this year that will be “legally binding and sufficiently bold.” And I quote “And this will set the stage for further cuts, and we will seek to include all nuclear weapons states in this endeavor.”

I would also like to applaud President Medvedev for his outstanding efforts in the same direction.

We have leaders in other countries with strong commitment to a nuclear-free world. We have other prominent leaders everywhere and devoted NGO's working for the common goal in addition to this Commission. So what else is necessary?

One is technical consideration. As you may know nuclear weapon states disassemble their weapons on a regular basis. If they continue disassembly at the current rate, all nuclear weapons will be eliminated by 2019. Unfortunately, they also reassemble these disassembled weapons or manufacture new ones to replace them. Technically speaking, if the nuclear weapon states are persuaded to abandon this practice of refurbishing their nuclear arsenal, the job is done. That means that 2020 is a realistic goal.

And let me point out in passing by quoting what is known as Occam's razor: The simplest answer is usually the correct answer.

It is also necessary and practical to show solid and indisputable results quickly. That is why President Obama pledged that his "administration will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" as well as the conclusion of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty soon.

This is where mayors, especially mayors from the United States, can play a pivotal role in creating a surge of public opinion supporting ratification. As a matter of fact, US Conference of Mayors, consisting of 1,200 member cities with populations larger than 30,000 in the United States, has been batting for the CTBT since 1990.

But we need more. We need a plan, a plan of action that rallies all these entities into a single, unstoppable force. We also need a timeline for this plan. Just when we build a baseball stadium, as we have recently done in Hiroshima, we need a timeline so that the public knows for sure that it will be ready for the opening game.

In order to prove that the realistic goal of 2020 is indeed doable, Mayors for Peace has promulgated the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, a copy of which, I hope, has reached you by now.

Today, Mayors for Peace, and, I dare add the **obamajority**, meaning that the majority of citizens and nations are with President Obama, request your full and enthusiastic support for the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol.

This protocol is the plan that will get us to the unequivocal commitment that was promised by all the nuclear-weapon states at the review conference in 2000. It stipulates common-sense,

good-faith behavior to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020. It eliminates the provocative discrepancy between nuclear haves and have-nots by stipulating the immediate termination of all preparations to develop, acquire, deploy or use nuclear weapons. It also stipulates an immediate start to disarmament negotiations to continue until a nuclear weapon convention or comparable framework agreement is signed no later than 2015.

The Protocol will ensure that hundreds of days of collective planning are devoted to this world-saving project, instead of just a few hours or days during the Cold War and the 'absolute zero' days since its end.

That is the essence of the protocol. It fits on one page. It is not, however, written in stone. Indeed, in the course of private and group consultations with States Parties to the NPT, we reworked the protocol in the form of a decision to be proposed and hopefully adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. But it could just as well take the form of a resolution in the UN General Assembly.

As you investigate the time it will take to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, you may find that the 2015 and 2020 dates need to be adjusted. You may identify additional target dates. But at the VERY least you must be honest with us about what the minimum times are and exactly why you deviate from them wherever you feel you must.

I would like to offer just one proof that the scenario described in the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol represents the wishes of the citizens we serve by showing you a resolution, a copy of which I hope you have received, adopted just a week ago in the 77th Annual Meeting of the US Conference of Mayors.

It urges the ICNND, and I quote, "to adopt 2020 as the target date for the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world."

The resolution further urges President Obama to announce at the NPT Review Conference next year the initiation of negotiations to reach an agreement to abolish nuclear weapons by 2020.

The resolution also asks you to "recognize the importance of city and citizen level movements for the abolition of nuclear weapons." For your reference, I took the liberty of presenting you with a copy of Peace First by Honorable Uri Savir which explains this point in detail based on his direct experiences.

I know that American mayors had children in mind when they passed this resolution. I was there in Providence, Rhode Island.

I know your heart also goes out for the children of the world. After all, we all are making such gigantic efforts for all humanity, but especially, for the children of the world.

From these children of the world Hiroshima now receives approximately 10 million paper cranes every year. They weigh 10 tons. Each of those cranes is embodying the pure hope of a child begging us to save him or her from the horrors of war and, specifically, nuclear weapons.

This is a sincere response after these children learn what happened to Sadako Sasaki, who fell to leukemia ten years after her exposure to the A-bomb. Learning the Japanese legend that folding one thousand paper cranes will make one's wish come true, Sadako diligently used all available pieces of paper to fold more than one thousand. I have brought just one of them here to show you her fervent wish to live. Sadly she did not live to celebrate her 13th birthday.

If she were alive, she would be the same age as I am.

When you come to Hiroshima, I would like to personally take you to the old baseball stadium where one year's worth of these paper cranes are exhibited. They are beautiful and compelling.

It is time that we start seriously honoring the genuine wishes of children.

I would also like to ask you to listen again to the stories of hibakusha in Hiroshima, which are basically their dreams when they were children 64 years ago.

When you issue your report, please let your heart speak to them. Let us not make them wait any longer. The time has come. The political will is available if we have the courage to demand it.

The days are long gone when nuclear weapon states take cities, and especially the children in them hostage under the name of deterrence.

We must begin the work now. Your Commission can cater to the 'realities' of the past or you can help shape the 'realities' of the future.

And let me repeat, you are the strongest hope we have now for creating a nuclear weapon free world. You have the POWER. You have the responsibility. And we are the Obamjority. Together we can do it. Yes, we can!

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you here. I look forward to seeing you again in Hiroshima.