

Nagasaki Peace Declaration

We, as human beings, now have two paths before us.

While one can lead us to “a world without nuclear weapons,” the other will carry us toward annihilation, bringing us to suffer once again the destruction experienced in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 64 years ago.

This April, in Prague, the Czech Republic, U.S. President Barack Obama clearly stated that the United States of America will seek a world without nuclear weapons. The President described concrete steps, such as the resumption of negotiations on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with the Russians, pursuit of the U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bans all nuclear explosions in the air, the sea, underground and in outer space, and seeking to conclude a treaty to ban the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium, both essential components of nuclear weapons. The President demonstrated strong determination by saying that “as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act,” which profoundly moved people in Nagasaki, a city that has suffered the horror of atomic bombing.

President Obama’s speech was a watershed event, in that the U.S., a superpower possessing nuclear weapons, finally took a step towards the elimination of nuclear armaments.

Nevertheless, this May, North Korea conducted its second nuclear test, in violation of the United Nations Security Council resolution. As long as the world continues to rely on nuclear deterrence and nuclear weapons continue to exist, the possibility always exists that dangerous nations, like North Korea, and terrorists will emerge. International society must absolutely make North Korea destroy its nuclear arsenal, and the five nuclear-weapon states must also reduce their nuclear weapons. In addition to the U.S. and Russia, the U.K., France and China must sincerely fulfill their responsibility to reduce nuclear arms under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In a bid for thorough elimination of nuclear armaments, we urge the strongest efforts towards the Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), which the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon last year called on governments to negotiate actively. It is necessary to insist that not only India, Pakistan and North Korea, but also Israel, a nation widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, and Iran, a nation suspected of nuclear development, should participate in the convention in order to ensure that those nations totally eliminate their nuclear weapons.

Supporting the speech delivered in Prague, the Government of Japan, a nation that has experienced nuclear devastation, must play a leading role in international society. Moreover, the government must globally disseminate the ideals of peace and renunciation of war prescribed in the Japanese Constitution. The government must also embark on measures to establish a firm position on the Three Non-Nuclear Principles by enacting them into law, and to create a Northeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, incorporating North Korea.

We strongly urge U.S. President Obama, Russia’s President Medvedev, U.K. Prime Minister Brown, France’s President Sarkozy and China’s President Hu Jintao, as well as India’s Prime Minister

Singh, Pakistan's President Zardari, North Korea's General Secretary Kim Jong-il, Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu and Iran's President Ahmadinejad, and all the other world's leaders, as follows.

Visit Nagasaki, a city that suffered nuclear destruction.

Visit the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and stand at the site of nuclear devastation, where the bones of numerous victims are still interred. On August 9, 1945 at 11:02 a.m., Nagasaki was devastated by intense radiation, heat rays of several thousand degrees Centigrade and horrific blast winds. Fierce fires destroyed Nagasaki, turning the city into a silent ruin. While 74,000 dead victims screamed silently, 75,000 injured people moaned. Everybody who visits is sure to be overwhelmed with the anguish of those who died in this atomic bombing.

You will see those who managed to survive the atomic bombing. You will hear the voices of elderly victims, who try to tell the story of their experiences even as they continue to suffer from the after-effects. You will be stimulated by the passion of young people, who carry out their activities in the belief that although they did not share the experience of the atomic bombing, they can share the awareness that strives for the elimination of nuclear armaments.

Now, in Nagasaki, the General Conference of Mayors for Peace is being held. In February next year, the Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons will be held, attended by NGOs from both within Japan and overseas. For the next year's NPT Review Conference, citizens, NGOs and cities strive to strengthen their unity.

People in Nagasaki are circulating petitions calling for President Obama to visit Nagasaki, a city that experienced atomic bombing. Each of us plays a vital role in creating history. We must never leave this responsibility only to leaders or governments.

We ask the people of the world, now, in each place, in each of your lives, to initiate efforts to declare support for the Prague speech and take steps together towards "a world without nuclear weapons."

Some 64 years have passed since the atomic bombing. The remaining survivors are growing old. We call once again for the Japanese government, from the perspective of the provision of relief for atomic bomb survivors, to hasten to offer them support that corresponds with their reality.

We pray from our hearts for the repose of the souls of those who died in the atomic bombing, and pledge our commitment to the elimination of nuclear armaments.

Tomihisa Taue
Mayor of Nagasaki
August 9, 2009