

Nagasaki peace declaration

The atomic bomb that exploded in the sky over this spot at 11:02 a.m., August 9, 1945 generated a ferocious flash of heat, blast wind and deadly radiation and instantly reduced the city to a wasteland.

Blackened corpses lay scattered in heaps, and people wandered about begging for water and searching for loved ones. Some managed to survive, but they suffered mental and physical injuries that would remain for the rest of their lives. A total of 74,000 people died and 75,000 were injured in this catastrophe reminiscent of the end of the world.

1. Let the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings be the first year in the era of nuclear disarmament

Five decades have passed since the atomic bombing. The survivors are advancing into old age, and their experiences are fading into the mist of memory. Since about 70% of the current Nagasaki city population was born after World War 2, the problem of how to impress younger generations with the misery of war, the horror of the atomic bombings and the importance of peace is a matter of pressing concern.

The atomic bomb exhibition planned by the Smithsonian Institution was canceled in January this year, revealing the wide gap between American and Japanese perceptions of the atomic bombings. Has the message of Nagasaki reached the ears of the world?

The question of the abolition of nuclear weapons was raised at the U.N. Conference on Disarmament Issues in Nagasaki this past June, but there is still a high wall standing between the aspiration of the citizens of Nagasaki and the insistence of the nuclear states on the concept of nuclear deterrence or security through the possession of nuclear weapons.

Let us continue to transmit the message of Nagasaki to the world, in that way gradually reducing the height of this wall and making the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings the first year in the era of nuclear disarmament.

2. Let us make the suspension of nuclear tests a milestone on the road of human survival

The indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) was decided at the conference held this past May to review the treaty. This decision is unacceptable because it perpetuates the right of five countries to possess nuclear weapons. Moreover, soon after the nuclear states agreed at the above conference to suspend nuclear tests and to try to end negotiations on a nuclear test ban treaty by next year, the People's Republic China conducted a test, France announced its decision to resume tests and the United States revealed that it was considering a similar decision. It is clear that the nuclear states striving to perfect the technology of nuclear testing through simulation and that there has been no decline in their commitment to the development of nuclear weapons.

The citizens of Nagasaki demand that the nuclear states immediately conclude a nuclear test ban treaty and begin concrete negotiations on the establishment of a time schedule for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

To protect the earth's environment and to ensure the survival of the human race, it is also imperative that the United Nations make efforts to cut off the manufacture of weapons-related nuclear materials, to abolish biological and chemical weapons and to achieve reductions in conventional weapons.

Japan should play a leading role in these efforts by the United Nations.

3. Let us forge a life of coexistence with the countries of Asia on the basis of the lessons of history

This year is also the 50th anniversary of the end of World War 2. We must conduct a rigorous reflection on Japan's history of invasion and aggression in Asia. Without this reflection and apologies to the countries of Asia, our appeals for the abolition of nuclear weapons will not reach the hearts of the world's people.

I ask the Japanese government to strive for the establishment of world peace while standing on the lessons of the past and upholding a view of history that is consistent with that embraced by the other people of Asia.

As the only country in the world to experience atomic bombings, Japan must clearly declare in the International Court of Justice that the use of nuclear weapons is a breach of international law. It must also enact the three-fold non-nuclear principle as law and strive for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Asia -Pacific region. Furthermore, I ask the Japanese government to improve measures for the relief of atomic bomb survivors in view of the survivor's circumstances and also to extend helping hand to non-Japanese survivors.

4. Let us study the reality of the atomic bombings and forge a peaceful future

Japan has seen period of peace continue during the postwar decades and tremendous economic development ensure from the tireless efforts of its citizens. In many of the countries, however, children are leading anything but a peaceful life, unable to receive adequate nourishment or education due to wars and local conflicts and not even certain whether or not they will be alive tomorrow.

The postwar generation, of which I am a member, has no experience of war or the atomic bombings. We must listen to the words of the atomic bomb survivors, study about the historical events leading to World War 2, the horror of war and the reality of the atomic bombings, and recognize the fact that the human race cannot coexist with nuclear weapons. Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in rising above the barriers of age and nationality and in forging a peaceful future for all humankind.

5. Let us take the first step on a new endeavor

The atomic bomb survivors greet this 50th anniversary after overcoming the grief of losing family and friends and the long struggle with the anguish of late atomic bomb effects. They cannot wait another 50 years. Their highest hope is to see the abolition of nuclear weapons within their own lifetime. It is a steep climb to this goal, but one from which we must never relent.

While transmitting information to the world about the atomic bombing and the aspiration for peace through media such as photographs, films and computer networks, Nagasaki will make efforts to host the "Nuclear Disarmament Seminar" advocated by the Japanese government and to serve once again as a venue for the "U.N. Conference on Disarmament Issues."

I offer my prayers for the repose of the souls of the atomic bomb victims and all the victims of war, and I declare to the people of Japan and the world Nagasaki's determination to take a strong new step for the abolition of nuclear weapons and for the realization of lasting world peace.

Ichho Itoh
Mayor of Nagasaki
August 9, 1995