



Mayors for Peace

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Mayors for Peace Appeal to Nuclear Armed States and Their Umbrella Allies

~ For the sake of reliable international security, civil society expects
your bold actions to achieve a world without nuclear weapons ~

Four hundred years before the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, a similar devastating earthquake and tsunami attacked North East Japan. What Masamune Date, feudal lord of Sendai, did as a part of his overall reconstruction plan, is worth remembering as a decisive leadership.

He sent selected young men to Europe to negotiate trade and to study advanced civilizations and technology—a remarkable decision, given that the central Government of Japan at the time was about to close the door to the outside world. While he of course was doing his best to rescue people, in the face of a totally devastated economy, this overseas mission seemed to amount to an extravaganza and a negligence of people's misery.

Lord Date was proven right, however. These young men who returned from their overseas mission brought back an indispensable vision and technology to help in realizing the far-sighted and successful reconstruction that made Sendai a prosperous center of culture and the economy.

Last May, President Obama became the first sitting President of the United States to visit Hiroshima. Seventy-one years after the atomic bombing, he said in the Peace Park of Hiroshima, “among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them.” He also said:

. . . above all, we must reimagine our connection to one another as members of one human race . . . We can learn. We can choose. We can tell our children a different story—one that describes a common humanity; one that makes war less likely and cruelty less easily accepted.

This may not represent the common view of the nuclear-weapon States. This may not even represent the dominant view of the US establishment. We honor and support this message of President Obama, however, because it demonstrates what political leadership is all about.

On 19 August this year, UN's Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament adopted its report by an overwhelming vote. It “recommended with widespread support for the General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017, open to all states, with the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society, to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”. It also, however, “recognized that other States did not agree with the above recommendation and that they recommended that any process to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament

negotiations must address national, international and collective security concerns and supported the pursuit of practical steps consisting of parallel and simultaneous effective legal and non-legal measures to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”.

Mayors for Peace welcomes this recommendation to convene a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, because, in our view, the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons can effectively serve as a watershed towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Without such decisiveness, discussions lose clear direction. On the other hand, once world leaders have agreed on this clear direction, discussions on transparency, irreversibility, verification etc. would become technical issues to settle.

We are also fully aware of the reservation expressed, in the Open-ended Working Group, by States under nuclear umbrella on the basis of security concerns. Nonetheless, Mayors for Peace strongly encourages the nuclear-weapon States and their umbrella allies to listen to the widespread voices of civil society and non-nuclear-weapon States that do not depend on the concept of nuclear deterrence.

These widespread views of non-nuclear-weapon States do recognize national and international security concerns. They do not, however, see any effective contributions that nuclear deterrence can make in settling global security challenges we face today. Nuclear deterrence can also fail with unacceptable humanitarian consequences as have been revealed in declassified documents, including the risks of inadvertent use of such weapons due to accident or miscalculation. There is the persisting risk of intentional use of existing nuclear arsenals. And as for the danger of nuclear terrorism, nuclear deterrence is simply irrelevant.

Furthermore, this concept also leads to dangers of nuclear proliferation, including problems similar to North Korea’s nuclear developments. Former Director General of IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei used to say that possession of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States is the worst temptation to proliferate. In his words, it is like an old man with a cigar in his mouth, preaching young kids not to smoke.

Given their catastrophic effects, more members of the international community, especially those of non-nuclear-weapon States, have started paying fresh attention to the firsthand experiences of the *hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and have developed a keen awareness that anyone could become a victim of a nuclear detonation or terrorism. Non-nuclear-weapon States strictly observing their NPT non-proliferation obligations are no exception. Everyone has a stake in preventing such catastrophes from occurring. And the most reliable way to do so is to eliminate the weapons that produce such effects. These views rest a solid foundation and are worthy of serious attention.

Some argue, however, that the security environment has not matured enough for taking bolder steps. We disagree. They should recall that past nuclear disarmament measures were taken

during peaks of international tension by joint initiatives of political leaders. For example, Presidents Kennedy and Khrushchev signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, soon after the Cuban missile crisis. This month will mark the 30th anniversary of the Reagan and Gorbachev summit in Iceland, where they discussed both nuclear disarmament and a proposal to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles, which became a bilateral treaty in 1987. What world community is facing today is equally urgent for settlement, as risks of nuclear proliferation as well as inadvertent use of nuclear weapons are also higher. It should gather courage and wisdom to reach out and encourage joint leadership to settle these problems.

Emerging challenges demand new thinking and innovative approaches. In this context, we believe that the international community needs to join forces and discuss how we can address real issues. It is urgent for nuclear-weapon States, those under the nuclear “umbrella”, and the non-NPT States to conduct an earnest dialogue on planning for their security without reliance on the concept of nuclear deterrence. Now is the time for world leaders to show their decisive leadership.

In this endeavor, world leaders can also count on the important role and commitment of civil society. People around the world have a vital role in nurturing better conditions for political leadership by striving to overcome mutual distrust and by cultivating a shared awareness of belonging to one human family, regardless of cultural, religious and ethnic differences. We, Mayors for Peace, will continue to engage ourselves and support initiatives to create an atmosphere conducive to accelerate progress towards nuclear abolition. We also believe that progress in—not just “towards”—nuclear disarmament will help improve the general political climate to settle other international challenges and to achieve peace.

In conclusion, Mayors for Peace sincerely expect the nuclear-weapon States and their umbrella allies to undertake concrete actions to fulfill their responsibilities to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. On the eve of the commencement of this year’s deliberations in the General Assembly’s first committee, we call upon such States to demonstrate some innovative leadership in advancing this cause, through their national policies and international cooperation. Mayors for Peace as well as diverse civil society partners will whole-heartedly support such initiatives. Let’s work together to complete this important work for all of us, for all of humanity.

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