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Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Declarations, 2002

Mayor of Hiroshima, Mayor of Nagasaki

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Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

For more than half a century, the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have issued peace declarations in the name of the victims of the atomic bomb. Reflecting the spirit of Hiroshima/Nagasaki, which transcends international enmity among nations in the search for world peace, the annual peace declarations of the two cities have never warned of the actions of a particular state. In light of the dangers of war in 2002, the Mayors of both cities called again for reconciliation and warned of the dangers of Pax Americana, framing a principle of "no annihilation without representation" and warning of the consequences of the use of "instruments of mass destruction."

Peace Declaration
Hiroshima, August 6, 2002

Another hot, agonizing summer has arrived for our *hibakusha* who, fifty-seven years ago, experienced "the end of the world," and, consequently, have worked tirelessly to bring peace to this world because "we cannot allow anyone else to go through that experience."

One reason for their agony, of course, is the annual reliving of that terrible tragedy.

In some ways more painful is the fact that their experience appears to be fading from the collective memory of humankind. Having never experienced an atomic bombing, the vast majority around the world can only vaguely imagine such horror, and these days, John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* are all but forgotten. As predicted by the saying, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," the probability that nuclear weapons will be used and the danger of nuclear war are increasing.

Since the terrorist attack against the American people on September 11 last year, the danger has become more striking. The path of reconciliation--severing chains of hatred, violence and retaliation--so long advocated by the survivors has been abandoned. Today, the prevailing philosophy seems to be "I'll show you" and "I'm stronger than you are." In Afghanistan and the Middle East, in India and Pakistan, and wherever violent conflict erupts, the victims of this philosophy are overwhelmingly women, children, the elderly, and those least able to defend themselves.

President Kennedy said, "World peace...does not require that each man love his neighbor--it requires only that they live together with mutual tolerance...." Within this framework of tolerance, we must all begin cooperating in any small way possible to build a common, brighter future for the human family. This is the meaning of reconciliation.

The spirit of reconciliation is not concerned with judging the past. Rather, it open-mindedly accepts human error and works toward preventing such errors in the future. To that end, conscientious exploration and understanding of the past is vital, which is precisely why we are working to establish the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Study Course in colleges and universities around the world.

In the "spiritual home for all people" that Hiroshima is building grows an abundant Forest of Memory, and the River of Reconciliation and Humanity flowing from that forest is plied by Reason, Conscience and Compassion, ships that ultimately sail to the Sea of Hope and the Future.

I strongly urge President Bush to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to walk through that forest and ride that river. I beg him to encounter this human legacy and confirm with his own eyes what nuclear weapons hold in store for us all.

The United States government has no right to force Pax Americana on the rest of us, or to unilaterally determine the fate of the world. On the contrary, we, the people of the world, have the right to demand "no annihilation without representation."

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution stipulates that "The Emperor or the Regent as well as Ministers of State, members of the Diet, judges, and all other public officials have the obligation to respect and uphold this Constitution." The proper role of the Japanese government, under this provision, is to avoid making Japan a "normal country" capable of making war "like all the other nations." The government is bound to reject nuclear weapons absolutely and to renounce war. Furthermore, the national government has a responsibility to convey the memories,

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voices, and prayers of Hiroshima and Nagasaki throughout the world, especially to the United States, and, for the sake of tomorrow's children, to prevent war.

The first step is to listen humbly to the *hibakusha* of the world. Assistance to all *hibakusha*, in particular to those dwelling overseas, must be enhanced to allow them to continue, in full security, to communicate their message of peace.
Today, in recalling the events of 57 years ago, we, the people of Hiroshima, honor this collective human memory, vow to do our utmost to create a "century of peace and humanity," and offer our sincere prayers for the peaceful repose of all the atomic bomb victims.

Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima

The Nagasaki Peace Declaration
August 9, 2002

Fifty-seven years ago today, August 9th, the City of Nagasaki was instantly transformed into ruins. Dropped from an altitude of 9,600 meters, a single atomic bomb was detonated 500 meters above the ground, emitting heat rays of several thousand degrees Celsius and creating a blast winds of tremendous force, unleashed against a civilian population of women, the elderly, and blameless children. Some 74,000 people were killed, and 75,000 injured. Radiation-induced leukemia and cancer have gradually claimed many more lives since. Even more than half a century later, the survivors of the atomic bomb suffer constant anxiety over their health, and are stalked by death.

If the instruments of indiscriminate mass destruction known as nuclear weapons were ever to be used again, the environment would be destroyed and the very survival of all humanity would be jeopardized. The citizens of Nagasaki, having themselves experienced the tragedy of an atomic bombing firsthand, have continued to appeal to the world for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, there remain in existence some 30,000 nuclear warheads, each with unimaginably more destructive power than the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki. Most of these weapons are in a state of immediate launch readiness.

Terrorist attacks against the United States were staged on September 11th of last year, and we were outraged at this wanton destruction of life and property. International tensions have since been heightened by the ensuing attacks against Afghanistan and intensified strife in the Middle East, as well as military clashes between India and Pakistan that have threatened to devolve into nuclear conflict.

In the midst of such serious international conditions, the government of the United States has unilaterally withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with Russia in the name of terrorist countermeasures, and is moving forward with missile defense programs. The United States has also rejected ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and has suggested the possibilities of restarting the production of plutonium triggers, developing a new generation of compact nuclear weapons, and engaging in preemptive nuclear strikes. Other concepts, such as the redeployment of many warheads subject to deactivation according to the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty with Russia, also run counter to the disarmament efforts of international society. We are appalled by this series of unilateral actions taken by the government of the United States, actions which are also being condemned by people of sound judgment throughout the world.

Domestically, comments by leaders of the Japanese government concerning reconsideration of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles have also stabbed at the hearts of Nagasaki citizens. As the only nation ever to have sustained nuclear attack, it behooves Japan to stand at the forefront of nuclear arms abolition. For this reason, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles stating that Japan will not possess, manufacture or allow nuclear weapons into the country must be passed into law without delay. The Nagasaki City Council has adopted a resolution calling for such legislation. The Japanese government should embark on the creation of a Northeast Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, and should clearly present to international society a posture of non-reliance on the "nuclear umbrella." At the same time, we call on our nation's government to take steps to enhance the welfare of aging atomic bomb survivors residing both within and outside of Japan.

At home, citizens and local governments in Nagasaki are working together to host a worldwide NGO gathering for the second time in November 2003, and preparations are proceeding apace. As of today, no fewer than 80% of Japan's local governments have declared themselves to be in opposition to nuclear weapons. We are forming linkages among NGOs, local governments, and United Nations institutions, and we are resolved to work for the building of a peaceful society.

The hibakusha atomic bomb survivors desire that they be the final victims of atomic weapons. May our young people inherit this desire for peace, and may they themselves consider what is to be done, take action, and pass on this spirit to the future. Many of Nagasaki's young people are involved in volunteer activities for peace. The City of Nagasaki supports the expansion of these efforts, and is promoting the Nagasaki Peace Education Program for the training and development of youth who are motivated to

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take autonomous action.

The abolition of nuclear arms through mutual understanding and dialogue is an absolute precondition for the realization of a peaceful world. It is up to us, ordinary citizens, to rise up and lead the world to peace.

Nagasaki must remain the final site of the calamity of nuclear attack. Today, on the 57th anniversary of the atomic bombing, we pray for the repose of those who died, and, in the name of the citizens of the City of Nagasaki, I declare our undying commitment to the complete and permanent elimination of nuclear weapons.

Iccho Itoh
Mayor of Nagasaki

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