

# Nuclear-Free World from the Cities

Pugwash, Canada

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City of Hiroshima

Mr. chairman, Minister MacKay, Premier MacDonald, the Honorable Murray Scott, former Chief Justice of Nova Scotia Lorne Clarke, ladies and gentlemen,

At this point, if I were to follow standard speech protocol, I would say that I am honored and pleased to be here celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Pugwash Conference. It is true that I am honored, and on behalf of the people of Hiroshima, I offer my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude for 50 years of devotion to the cause of nuclear abolition and world peace.

I am feeling again today the same honor and pride most Japanese felt 50 years ago when we found out that Dr. Hideki Yukawa and Dr. Shinichiro Tomonaga were among the prominent scientific leaders you asked to help address, on our behalf, the most serious threat to humanity.

Fifty years have passed since then, and we still have to worry about possible use of nuclear weapons, which is why I cannot say that I am happy that this conference has reached its 50th anniversary. Rather than happy, I am actually a bit resentful that we still have to be meeting like this.

This Pugwash Conference represents the wisdom of humanity. You are the elders, the wise persons of the human family. You are our scientists, scholars and intellectuals. You have studied the situation and have come to the conclusion that nuclear weapons should be abolished.

You have also inspired other intellectual and professional groups whose opinions world leaders should follow. In the early eighties, physicians around the world formed the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, or IPPNW, and warned the world that once a nuclear war starts there is nothing physicians can do to cure the damage done. In 1988, lawyers founded the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms or

IALANA. Now a full-fledged international citizens' organization with consultative status with the United Nations, IALANA developed a model Nuclear Weapons Convention that, if signed by all nuclear weapon states, would be a practical and effective approach to realizing a nuclear weapon free world.

In 1996, the International Court of Justice, the highest court on this planet, took an unequivocal stand on this issue. The judges of the International Court of Justice found nuclear weapons to be illegal under international law, and they found unanimously that: “There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

As several people mentioned, former Secretaries of State Kissinger and Shultz, former Secretary of Defense Perry, and former Senator Nunn called last January in the Wall Street Journal for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. They are just the latest in a long line of former government and military officials who have called for the abolition of nuclear weapons, and leaders like this also constitute an important part of collective human wisdom.

Perhaps no group of people welcomed these strong calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons more than the *hibakusha*, who had felt so alone for so long. I believe the *hibakusha* are still among the least understood groups of people. Very few people know what they have actually gone through. And yet, everyone seems to take for granted their determination to eliminate nuclear weapons and countless courageous actions without even trying to imagine that it was a miracle that they came to their conclusion and continue their struggle.

To set the record straight, I have previously enumerated the three giant footsteps the *hibakusha* have left so far. Let me quote from the 1999 Peace Declaration:

There are three major contributions:

The first is that they were able to transcend the infernal pain and despair that the bombings sowed and to opt for life. I want young people to remember that today's elderly *hibakusha* were as young as they are when their families, their schools, and their communities were destroyed in a flash. They hovered between life and death in a corpse-strewn sea of rubble and ruin—circumstances under which none would have blamed them had they chosen death. Yet they chose life. We should never forget the will and courage that made it possible for the *hibakusha* to continue to be human.

Their second accomplishment is that they effectively prevented a third use of nuclear weapons. Whenever conflict and war break out, there are those who advocate nuclear weapon's use. This was true even in Kosovo. Yet the hibakusha's will that the evil not be repeated has prevented the unleashing of this lunacy. Their determination to tell their story to the world, to argue eloquently that to use nuclear weapons is to doom the human race, and to show the use of nuclear weapons to be the ultimate evil has brought about this result. We owe our future and our children's future to them.

Their third achievement lies in their representing the new worldview as engraved on the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims and articulated in the Japanese Constitution. They have rejected the path of revenge and animosity that leads to extinction for all humankind. Instead, they have taken upon themselves not only the evil that Japan as a nation perpetrated but also the evil of war itself. They have also chosen to put their "trust in the justice and faith" of all humankind in order to create a future full of hope. As peace-loving people from all over the world solemnly proclaimed at the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference this May, this is the path that humankind should take in the new century. We ardently applaud all of the countries and people who have written this philosophy into their Constitutions and their laws.

(End of quote)

We should not forget that most countries on Earth oppose nuclear weapons, even though they have not written this opposition into their constitutions.

Today, 113 countries are parties to nuclear-free zone treaties. The entire southern hemisphere is off-limits to nuclear weapons. In vote after vote at the UN, the international community expresses its majority will. Most recently, in October 2006, the First Committee voted 169 to 3 in favor of Japan's resolution to abolish nuclear weapons. In March 2005, an AP-IPSOS poll revealed that 66% of Americans favor the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. The fact is, the overwhelming majority of nations and people around the world wish to be liberated from the nuclear threat, and yet, the leaders of nuclear weapon states ignore that majority, and most of the media act as if the elimination of nuclear weapons were a non-issue, some sort of utopian pipedream that is not even worth discussing.

Let me tell you a story that illustrates the problem. I served as interpreter for a historic meeting between Akihiro Takahashi, one of Hiroshima's leading *hibakusha* who also served as Director of the Peace Memorial Museum, and Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the Enola Gay, the B29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. When these two men met, they both did

their best to be polite. Takahashi did not have to say much because the massive damage done by that bomb was so obvious from his shriveled ears, permanently bent arm, and twisted fingers with a large, deformed black fingernail. Tibbets asked, “Was that caused by the bomb?” Takahashi answered, “Yes.” That was enough. Mr. Takahashi’s case was clear. He explained the endless suffering of the victims, who were mostly civilian noncombatants, and concluded with the case for abolishing nuclear weapons to save humankind from utter annihilation. “No one else should ever suffer as I did,” were his last words. When he was finished, Tibbets looked at him and said, “If I were ordered to drop that bomb today, I would do it again.”

Paul Tibbets knew the suffering he caused. He knew that the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians is illegal under international law, and yet, his loyalty remained with his superiors, that is, he remained determined to carry out the orders he received from above.

There is something extremely top-down about nuclear weapons. They are controlled by a tiny cult of mostly men that appears impervious to democracy. Somehow, it seems this group can wave the words “national security” like a wand, and national politicians of all stripes completely forget their wise elders, international law, and the wishes of the people. They take such a firm, unalterable and unanimous stand behind their nuclear weapons that now the media and the people don’t even bother to challenge them any more. We can even say that the world has become convinced that nothing can be done about nuclear weapons.

Why is the nuclear cult so powerful? Why is it that national leaders so consistently reject or ignore democracy when it comes to nuclear weapons and other matters related to “national security?”

From our city-oriented point of view, one reason is that world leaders do not know the facts about nuclear weapons. That is why I frequently repeat my standing invitation to all national leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I do believe they should know what they are talking about when they talk about nuclear weapons. Knowing what actually happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 62 years ago and understanding the hibakusha’s message that came out of that experience could be the first step for them to forge the political will to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The City of Hiroshima, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, the peace arm of the City of Hiroshima, and Hiroshima citizens have made all out efforts for more than sixty years to help the world understand the realities of the atomic bombing and support the plea of the *hibakusha*. We made a comprehensive list of what we can do and launched coordinated

efforts to implement all of them. They include writing to our friends about the nuclear issue, strengthening peace education curricula in schools in the city, starting what we call Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Studies courses at colleges and universities round the world, holding A-bomb exhibitions world wide, and supporting efforts to make good movies about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, just to name a few.

There is another reason that the nuclear cult is so powerful despite our good and honest efforts. The international system under which our nations and our planet are governed is obsolete. It works most effectively and smoothly to block the formation of political will toward a nuclear-free world. It keeps people from working together to deal with matters of critical importance, such as the survival of the human race and the earth itself. President Eisenhower chose the expression “the Military-Industrial Complex” to warn us of this problem.

In the process of creating the political will required for the abolition of nuclear weapons, a major structural change in the international system will probably occur, just as the end of the Cold War required and triggered major structural changes within the Soviet Union and the world order. The structural change I am talking about will help world leaders to base their decisions on the opinions of the vast majority of people on earth. I’m not suggesting that national governments somehow come up with a solution within the present paradigm. We actually need a new paradigm to accomplish our goal. If I may use a mathematical analogy, we need a higher dimensional model of the world when we deal with nuclear weapons issues. One extra dimension is the collective voice of the majority citizens of the world, and this is where mayors can and must step in.

Let me illustrate this “extra dimension” by drawing a diagram. Suppose that our aim is to reach Point B, which is outside of this circle. We are leaving from Point A, inside the circle and we want to arrive without touching the circle, which represents the “obstacles”. As long as we stay on this sheet of paper we can never reach Point B without touching the circle.

However, if we add one more dimension and try to reach Point B from Point A, we can easily accomplish our goal by “flying” from Point A to Point B. This is what I am talking about when I advocate that we need to “add an extra dimension”.

When I became mayor of Hiroshima, I took on the responsibility of presenting a Peace Declaration every August. When I was first elected, I wanted to make sure that a strong case could be made for the mayor to present this Peace Declaration. Some have argued over the years that it would be more appropriate for the declaration to come from a *hibakusha*, or

maybe from the prime minister of Japan. I have, however, come to the conclusion that a mayor is actually the perfect person to issue a peace declaration.

One reason I have come to this conclusion is that, although nations are the way we human beings now understand citizenship and war, cities are the way we understand suffering. I have recently visited Gernika, Spain, and Ypres, Belgium, for example. Both cities are as devoted as Hiroshima to remembering the tragedies they suffered in war and to preventing any repetition of such tragedies, not just in their own cities but anywhere on Earth.

People rarely suffer alone. The suffering of any individual is actually the suffering of at least a family, if not a neighborhood or a wider community, and a city is a vital, true and personally relevant level of collective identity. That is why we speak of Auschwitz, the My Lai massacre, the Dresden bombing, for example, when we refer to these sufferings. And this is why cities that suffer massive destruction become cities that work for peace. Suffering becomes an integral part of the collective memory, and peace is the natural answer to the question, how can we keep this from happening again?

Mayors generally arise from the collective consciousness of their city. We are close to our citizens. We suffer when they suffer. We are generally more honest than national politicians because we cannot deny facts. When garbage is left on a curbside or a pothole is left unfilled, we cannot pretend it is not there. We are relatively neutral in terms of ideology and other values in that we must collect garbage and build roads for all our citizens regardless of their political affiliations. To do our job under these conditions requires a rational, comprehensive worldview. As a result, mayors get used to relying on the advice of experts, and we need those experts to be right, not politically correct.

National leaders live far from the everyday realities of ordinary people. Although they command a broad national view of events, they do not normally feel the heartbeat of the people they govern. They can get away with ignoring important realities by “manufacturing” fictions and “manipulating” the media.

I should hasten to add “present company excepted.” What I am describing now is a general trend, and there are always exceptions.

Contrary to popular belief, running a city is much more complicated than running a country. A country is a relatively abstract notion, with politics that are far more tolerant of internal contradiction. Cities are where real life takes place, with real problems that must be solved in real time. We are forced to identify and resolve our contradictions or conflicts because

they are numerous, pressing, and concrete.

Given the closer relationship of cities to “reality,” it is obvious that the international system, which is so sorely and obviously lacking the basic skills of democracy and civilized behavior, requires far greater input from cities. We need to institutionalize a civil society-driven process, most notably exemplified by the one that led to the Anti-Personnel Land Mine Convention. We need a process that reflects city views and values when important decisions are made. We need to create some new and more democratic transnational structures. We need more intercity structures and agreements. Overall, we cities need to pool resources and work together to demand more rational, “bottom-up” democracy that respects facts, and the experiences and the values of average citizens.

This line of thinking applies most urgently to issues of grave importance to the survival of humanity, and nuclear weapons are a prime example. As I said earlier, the vast majority of nations and people on this planet want to see nuclear weapons eliminated. Somehow, we need to insist that overwhelming majority opinion be reflected in international policy and action. Mayors for Peace has been working to do just that.

In 2003, we launched what we called an Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons. Our primary demands have been for immediate de-alerting of all nuclear weapons, for immediate substantive negotiations toward a framework agreement, for the conclusion of such an agreement by 2010, and the total, physical elimination of all nuclear weapons and all weapon-grade fissile materials by 2020.

Because we are promoting our vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020, our campaign is now usually referred to as the 2020 Vision Campaign. In the 4 years since we began, our membership has grown from 440 city members to nearly 1700, and we now include the likes of Moscow, London, Paris, Beijing, New Delhi, Rawalpindi, and Jerusalem. I expect that Pugwash will join us soon!

In addition, the 1139 members of the US Conference of Mayors have three times, in 2004, 2006 and again this past June 25 in Los Angeles, passed by acclamation strong resolutions in support of our campaign. Also in June, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions recommended that our 2020 Vision project “Cities Are Not Targets!”-- which I will speak about soon -- be adopted by the Second World Congress of United Cities and Local Governments, to be held this October in South Korea. When the World Congress approves our campaign, which we have reason to believe it will, the largest organization of cities in the world, the organization recognized by the UN as the voice of the cities, will be calling for the

elimination of nuclear weapons. At that point, we will be speaking for more than half of all human beings. This is not some random poll or wishful thinking by peace activists. We will actually be speaking for the cities of the world, and that should mean something. We intend to make it mean something.

Speaking as the highest court on earth, the International Court of Justice declared in its 1996 advisory opinion that nuclear weapons are illegal under international law. In July 2006, Mayors for Peace sought to draw attention to this landmark opinion by issuing a Good Faith Challenge. Our challenge to all nations, with or without nuclear weapons, is this: Are you actually doing everything in your power to pursue nuclear disarmament? We are encouraging people everywhere to ask this question of their elected officials at all levels, and even of themselves.

At the same time, we launched what we call our Cities Are Not Targets project. In responding as cities to the Good Faith Challenge, we decided to demand assurances from all nuclear-armed states that they are not now targeting and will not in the future target any city for nuclear attack. Obviously, this initiative is not a selfish effort by cities to protect themselves at the expense of the countryside. Our goal is to bring attention to the fact that the nuclear-armed states do, in fact, have plans that, if implemented, would result in the total obliteration of many cities. We are also seeking to bring attention to the fact that any such attack is a war crime. In fact, according to the ICJ, even the threat is a war crime. We are attempting to deliver the message that we cities are no longer willing to serve as passive hostages to MAD threats and counter threats. We are demanding to live in a safer world.

I believe we are living in an extremely dangerous and confusing time of transition. The human family will decide in the next few years whether to eliminate nuclear weapons or allow them to spread uncontrollably to many more nations and even to non-state actors. For example, just last month, all of the frontrunners for the US presidency, in both the Republican and Democratic parties, unhesitatingly stated in response to direct questions that they are willing to use tactical nuclear weapons to prevent Iran from obtaining such a weapon. And these horrifying statements were met with almost no outrage in the US or around the world.

You do not have to be a *hibakusha* to know that if nuclear weapons spread, it is only a matter of time before they are used. You do not have to be a mayor or a scientist to know that if the so-called war on terror becomes a nuclear war, our fragile, interdependent civilization will crumble quickly. All hope for peace, justice and environmental cooperation will go up in radioactive smoke as we sink to fighting violently for physical survival.



As the *hibakusha* have always told us, the only way to survive is to eliminate nuclear weapons. What we need now is a global, grassroots groundswell of demand for a massive and sincere international effort to find and eliminate all nuclear weapons and weapon-grade fissile material. We know that we will have the cooperation of dozens of key nations. Cities and local governments will be demanding that national governments, especially those of nuclear weapon states, finally listen to and respect the voices of the majority of the people on earth. What we need is enthusiastic, determined activity by NGOs, peace groups, environmental groups, social justice groups, and concerned citizens. This campaign could usher in an era of true democracy at the international level.

This is a victory the forces for peace can and must win. In fact, I believe it is the easiest global struggle we face. Eliminating nuclear weapons will be far easier than eliminating poverty, racism, social injustice or war. It is far easier than stopping global warming or pollution. Nuclear weapons are so obviously wrong; they are supported only by a tiny minority. The rest of us want them gone.

Nothing is more important in these next few years than preventing the spread and use of nuclear weapons. To that end, we need an active, energized, and determined Pugwash Conference out where it has always been, in the lead. Your leadership will challenge all of us to do more.

At the same time, all of us are challenged by the future generations. For example, at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, a twelve year old Canadian named Severn Suzuki challenged all of us to live up to our words for the children of the future.

Let me quote:

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us to behave in the world.

You teach us:

not to fight with others,  
to work things out,  
to respect others,  
to clean up our mess,  
not to hurt other creatures  
to share - not be greedy

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Do not forget why you're attending these conferences, who you're doing this for - we are your own children.

You are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in.

Then she concluded by saying, "I challenge you, please make your actions reflect your words".

I would like to propose that we take up her challenge and make it our Good Faith Challenge from now. Working together, I do believe we can bequeath to our children a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020.

Thank you.