

**The 6th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**  
**Opening Session**  
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It is a great honor to be one of the opening speakers at the 6<sup>th</sup> Nagasaki Global Citizen's Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. I have participated in all six Assemblies! It is also my honor to work closely with your wonderful mayor, Mayor Taue, in my capacity as U.S. Coordinator of Mayors for Peace. Being here I truly feel the "Nagasaki spirit". I want you to know that people around the world look to the *hibakusha* and citizens of Nagasaki for your tireless leadership and inspiration.

I am a firm believer in the importance of historical apologies. As a U.S. citizen born after the end of World War II, I deeply regret that the government of the United States has never apologized for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which opened the nuclear age that continues to threaten everyone's existence. An apology is an acknowledgement of wrong doing, and it is a first step in correcting the wrong. A historic understanding of the reality of nuclear weapons confirms that *nothing* could have justified those horrific bombings.

As then-Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka testified before the International Court of Justice in 1995: "History is written by the victors. Thus, the heinous massacre that was Hiroshima has been handed down to us as a perfectly justified act of war. As a result, for over 50 years we have never directly confronted the full implications of this terrifying act for the future of the human race."

In stark contrast, John McNeill, Senior Deputy General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Defense told the Court: "We believe the policy of nuclear deterrence has saved many millions of lives from the scourge of war during the past 50 years. In this special sense, nuclear weapons have been 'used', defensively, every day for over half a century - to preserve the peace."

Today we see the conflict in these two world views in even sharper relief.

Ominously, all the nuclear-armed nations are engaged in a new nuclear arms race. Despite their growing animosities toward each other, they are united in their opposition to the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). And the original nuclear-armed states are continuing to violate and ignore their obligations under the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to end the arms race at an early date and to negotiate "in good faith" the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Appealing to the 1982 UN Second Special Session on Disarmament, Hiroshima Mayor Takeshi Araki declared: "Hiroshima is not merely a witness of history. Hiroshima is an endless warning for the future of humankind. If Hiroshima is ever forgotten, it is evident that the mistake will be repeated and bring human history to an end."

Nagasaki Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima added: “Nagasaki has to be forever the last city in the world bombed by nuclear weapons!”

The role of civil society in promoting nuclear weapons abolition has never been more important. And our *first* job is to make sure that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never forgotten. That is why we’re *here* this weekend.

With more simultaneous nuclear hotspots than ever before, the historic diplomatic opening on the Korean Peninsula is positive exception. We can thank the Candlelight Revolution, a massive, sustained nonviolent popular movement calling for peaceful reunification and normalization of relations with the DPRK, for propelling President Moon Jae-in into office, carrying their agenda. This opening, in turn, has led to a lowering of tensions in the region and discussions of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula – which cannot be limited to the DPRK. The Candlelight Revolution should serve as a guide and inspiration to civil society movements around the world.

The TPNW’s unambiguous prohibition of *threat of use* is an essential point for the peace movements in the nuclear-armed and nuclear-dependent states to highlight in our public education and advocacy. The ideology of nuclear deterrence *must* be delegitimized and stigmatized to make progress on abolishing nuclear weapons. *Our* task is to change the discourse *from the bottom up*.

To achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and a global society that is more fair, peaceful and ecologically sustainable, we will need to move public opinion from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. We will also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarization, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs and protect the environment. *Our work is cut out for us!*

At the outset of this 6<sup>th</sup> Global Citizen’s Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, we gather again in Nagasaki to declare “Never Again!” to the use of nuclear weapons, to demand a halt to their “modernization” and to call for their global abolition.