

2018 Nagasaki Appeal

“It’s two minutes to midnight”. On January 25, 2018, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists shocked the world by moving the hands of its symbolic Doomsday Clock 30 seconds closer to the end of humanity. It is now set as close as it has ever been set since its inception in 1947. Yet, the situation may be getting even worse. First, the United States released a new Nuclear Posture Review which advocates an expanded role for nuclear weapons and calls for development and deployment of new nuclear weapons that are more “usable”. Second, the US declared that it will no longer implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. Third, the US announced its intention to withdraw from the landmark Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia.

The rate of reduction of nuclear arsenals has slowed in recent years. An estimated 14,450 nuclear warheads remain, most held by the US and Russia, most an order of magnitude more powerful than the US atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mirroring the US nuclear posture, Russia has announced plans to develop new “invincible” nuclear weapons. In addition, China, France, India, Israel, Pakistan and the UK are engaged in nuclear weapons “modernization” programs intended to sustain their nuclear forces for the foreseeable future. And all of them are involved in war games and conflicts that could escalate catastrophically at any time. The stockpile of weapons-useable materials (highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium), including for civilian purposes, is also increasing and is now equivalent to more than 100,000 nuclear warheads. The five original Nuclear Weapon States are continuing to violate and ignore their obligations under the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) to end the arms race at an early date and to negotiate “in good faith” the elimination of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the subsequent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) have empowered us and given us hope. To date, 69 States have signed and 19 countries have ratified the Treaty. Although the TPNW may have sharpened the division between the nuclear-armed/nuclear-umbrella States and the States not possessing nuclear weapons, the majority of the world’s countries have embraced the Treaty, which has strengthened the norm that nuclear weapons are an “absolute evil”, incompatible with international humanitarian law.

Furthermore, promising developments are underway in Northeast Asia. The Summits between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Republic of Korea (ROK) have increased prospects for a nuclear-weapon-free Korean Peninsula, and the historic US-DPRK Summit in Singapore has given us hope that the Korean War and the long-hostile relationship between the two countries may finally end. This is an important opportunity to make a progress towards a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone including Japan, and to attain sustainable peace and security in Northeast Asia.

The testimonies and actions of Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) have been a powerful source of inspiration for nuclear disarmament movements since the beginning of the atomic age. But we must realize that the remaining time for Hibakusha to tell their own stories is growing short. It is essential for us to come up with innovative ways to transmit the tragic experiences of Hibakusha through pictures, music, movies, animations, and more. It is particularly encouraging to see that younger generations are becoming more active on nuclear disarmament and are initiating their own campaigns and peace education programs.

Japan's so-called "nuclear dilemma" – maintaining the goal of nuclear weapons abolition while depending on the US nuclear umbrella – has been deepening. The Japanese government has established a Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, to serve as a "bridge-builder" between the nuclear-armed/nuclear-umbrella States and the States not possessing nuclear weapons. Although this is a positive step, the Japanese government has not made any effective recommendations to that end. On the contrary, as Japan stands in opposition to the TPNW, it seems to have lost its way on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policy and is losing its stature as a central player in promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons. Japan's huge plutonium stockpile makes its nuclear policy even more questionable.

Based on the above observations, the participants in the 6th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons appeal for the following concrete actions.

1. We call for early ratification of the TPNW by all States, and good faith disarmament efforts pursuant to Article VI of the NPT, especially by the Nuclear Weapon States. In this context, we urge the US and Russian governments to renew dialogue aimed at maintaining the INF Treaty and extending and expanding the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that will expire in 2021. These talks should encompass not only nuclear arms but all aspects of "strategic stability" including but not limited to ballistic missile defense systems, hypersonic missiles, and weaponization of space. We also urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. And we call on all States to stop producing weapons-useable fissile materials, including for civilian purposes.
2. We call on all countries currently relying on the threatened use of nuclear weapons for their national security ("nuclear deterrence") to reduce and eliminate the role of nuclear weapons and to shift their security policies to policies based on global citizens' security.
3. We welcome the recent opening of dialogue between the DPRK and the ROK as well as between the DPRK and the US. We call upon all States concerned to fulfill the commitments made in connection with the recent Summits. In this respect, we urge them to accelerate their efforts to end the Korean War as a step towards establishing lasting peace and security in Northeast Asia. Building on the agreement to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, we urge all States in the region to start

negotiations to establish a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone with an effective verification regime. We also urge other States involved in conflicts to follow the example of dialogue and confidence-building now being set on the Korean Peninsula in order to build global peace.

4. Given the declining population of Hibakusha, we are encouraged by the younger generations' initiatives such as the proposed "Youth Network for Peace". We call on all generations to work together to actively remember and transmit the tragic experiences and wishes of the Hibakusha to succeeding generations through activities including promotion of the "Hibakusha Appeal" international signature campaign.
5. As the only State to experience a war-time nuclear attack, we urge the Japanese government to take advantage of the improved security environment in Northeast Asia. Japan should end its dependence on nuclear weapons and make genuine efforts to rebuild national and international trust by signing the TPNW and promoting a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

We pledge to continue our determined efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, and appeal to the people and governments of the world: "Nagasaki must be the last A-bombed city".

November 18th, 2018

The 6th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons