

## Peace Message (2018 Hiroshima City Peace Memorial Ceremony)

On behalf of the people of Hiroshima Prefecture, I pray for the souls of those who lost their lives in the atomic bombing. I would also like to offer my condolences to the bereaved families and express my deepest sympathies to the *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb survivors, who even today suffer from the aftereffects of the bomb.

Shortly after the atomic bombing, it was believed that not even a single blade of grass would grow in Hiroshima for 75 years. We will reach that milestone in just two years as we live in this era of great change.

We see a ray of light: the international community has agreed to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which stresses the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons. This was achieved because many countries knew about the devastatingly inhumane experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—experiences that are beyond description—thanks to the many years of efforts of *hibakusha* to testify to what they actually went through, despite the fact that it was painful for them to even recall it.

On the other hand, we see increased international tension in various parts of the world. Nuclear states are upgrading their nuclear weapons and enhancing their performance, and are even walking on developing “usable” nuclear weapons. This is because many countries, particularly nuclear states, still believe in the balance of power ensured by nuclear deterrence.

How will you explain the essence of nuclear deterrence to your children? Using simple words that children could understand, I would describe it as follows:

“You see, we don’t get along well with our next-door neighbor. So we have set a bomb that can blow up their house with all the family inside, just in case. We can press the button to set off this bomb any time. Our neighbor, on the other hand, has also set a bomb to blow up our house. Of course, neither family wants both families to end up dead, so I feel assured that they will never press the button. We will never do so, either. In short, we will never go into battle against each other. And the bombs will probably not malfunction. And we won’t press the button by mistake, either, I hope. So, you don’t have to worry.”

How many of you could seriously offer such an explanation to your children? Rather than setting a bomb to blow up the next-door house, we must consider the best way to avoid conflicts, and act accordingly.

Our house in Japan has been blown up twice. Even today, we still have many people injured by the blasts and radiation, and they continue to suffer from the aftereffects. As the only nation that has experienced these calamities, we firmly believe that we should gather the wisdom of people all over the world to build a new security strategy by releasing ourselves from the yoke of nuclear deterrence and overcoming the notion. In 2020, two years from now, the NPT Review Conference will be held. In the lead-up to that year, which marks the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings, the international community must rise together and act in concert to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

I firmly believe that it is the moral responsibility of the Japanese people to work to foster world peace so that we can assure our children, and children all over the world, that their houses will be safe in a true sense.

I would like to conclude my message of peace by vowing here today to join with the people of the world to abolish nuclear weapons and leave for future generations a peaceful world where everyone can lead an enriched and happy life. I also pledge to do my best to enhance our support to the aging *hibakusha* living both within and outside Japan.

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Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture