

Peace Message

On behalf of the people of Hiroshima Prefecture, I pray for the souls of those who lost their lives in the atomic bombing as I offer my condolences to the bereaved families and express my deepest sympathies to the atomic bomb survivors who even today still suffer from the after-effects of the bomb.

On the morning of August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was detonated. We are standing roughly 300 meters from the hypocenter. This area was exposed to temperatures as high as 3,000 degrees Celsius with radiation amounting to an estimated 90 Sieverts, followed by a blast with a tremendous pressure of 25 tons per square meter. By the end of December, the atomic bomb had killed some 140,000 people.

Later, humankind devised a doctrine called Mutually Assured Destruction, whereby a nuclear attack by one party would invite a counter-attack and absolutely destroy both parties. This has been interpreted as a 'strategy' to justify the continued manufacturing of nuclear weapons. As a result, the world now has 15,395 nuclear weapons. Those who support this 'strategy' assert that it helps to protect all humankind, not to mention their own nation.

Adherents to nuclear programs that include deterrence have used these numbers and concepts that they call strategies to argue their position.

But can nuclear weapons really be discussed simply using numbers and concepts like this? Do they really ensure the safety of humankind?

There are atomic bomb survivors who tell us of how babies, struck by the heat wave, had their skin peeled away to become lumps of raw flesh; of how female students exposed to radiation had all of their hair fall out and purple spots appear all over; of people who died with their organs and eyeballs protruding from their bodies because of the bomb's blast. All of these people had precious memories and bright futures ahead of them. They

lost everything. This is what happens when you use nuclear weapons. It's not about numbers and concepts.

In May this year, United States President Obama, leader of the largest nuclear-weapon state that dropped the atomic bomb, visited Hiroshima. I would like to pay my heartfelt respect to the President for his courage in making the decision to visit Hiroshima and for his firm determination to abolish all nuclear weapons. In his speech, President Obama expressed his compassion for the innocent people who lost their lives in the bombing, touching upon the fact that they were ordinary people leading calm, ordinary lives, filled with love.

Surely what the world's leaders need now is this kind of imagination.

From a security standpoint, those who advocate that we need nuclear weapons are called realists, and those who aim for their abolition are called idealists. But isn't the opposite true? Because those appealing for the abolition of nuclear weapons are the people who are looking squarely at the terrible reality of what happens when nuclear weapons are used. Theories like nuclear deterrence are nothing more than idealism.

The nuclear deterrence doctrine does not guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again. The only thing that will guarantee that is abolition.

While dealing with complex feelings themselves, the *hibakusha*, as witnesses of a nuclear attack, have continued to appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons and called for political leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They have only one wish; "No one should ever have to suffer what we went through."

I would like once again to call for the world's leaders, particularly those from nuclear-armed states, to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Please see for yourselves the reality of what happens when nuclear weapons are used.

In line with the Hiroshima for Global Peace Plan, Hiroshima Prefecture will be pursuing further discussions on measures for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, efforts will be focused on training the next generation, both in Japan and abroad, to enable them to forge a path forward to build a peaceful world, free of nuclear weapons.

I conclude my peace message by vowing here today, as my duty to all *hibakusha*, to work together with the people of the world to abolish nuclear weapons and leave for future generations a peaceful world where everyone can lead a rich and happy life. I also pledge to do my best to further enhance support for the aging *hibakusha* living in Japan and abroad.

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Hidehiko Yuzaki
Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture