



Message from the Mayor

I would like to say a few words on the occasion of the Bay Area Japanese Peace Lantern Ceremony.

Sixty-five years ago, the people of Hiroshima witnessed the inhumane nature of the atomic bombing along with the end of the world. “No one else should ever suffer as I did,” a *hibakusha*’s message derived from that experience, has now become part of a growing worldwide movement.

U.S. President Obama’s Prague speech last April, the UN Security Council’s resolution for the abolition of nuclear weapons last September, and the new START treaty concluded by the U.S. and Russia this past April are among many developments indicating that the drive to eliminate nuclear weapons has been set in motion. Furthermore, this May all signatories to the NPT Review Conference, including nuclear weapons states, agreed on taking actions to realize a world without nuclear weapons. Now, we must all concentrate on completing the task.

The City of Hiroshima is currently working with the over 4,000 member cities of Mayors for Peace, their citizens, and peace-related NGOs around the world to realize our 2020 Vision. We are determined to abolish nuclear weapons by 2020 because we wish to enter a world without nuclear weapons with as many *hibakusha* as possible. Furthermore, if the current generation fails to eliminate nuclear weapons, we will have failed to fulfill our minimum responsibility to those that follow.

With the goal of 2020 in mind, we are working to grow the global groundswell for nuclear abolition and generate sufficient political will among governments to launch negotiations for a nuclear-weapon-free world. The time has come to press hard for a Nuclear Weapons Convention or other legal framework, insisting on timeframes compatible with our 2020 Vision.

Here in the 21st century, cities and citizens have the power to solve world problems. As seen in the anti-personnel landmine ban, liberation from poverty through the Grameen Bank, the prevention of global warming and other such movements, global democracy, which respects the majority will of the world and solves problems through the power of the people, has truly begun to grow. In this context, your Lantern Ceremony and the wish for peace it symbolizes are of profound significance. You are contributing to the growth of global democracy and the abolition of nuclear weapons, and I have the deepest respect for your commitment and endeavors.

Eliminating nuclear weapons will be one of humanity’s greatest achievements. To celebrate this achievement, the City of Hiroshima is exploring the possibility of bidding for the 2020 Olympics, which we would make a “Global Festival of Peace.” I sincerely hope that you will help us make our double dream—the Hiroshima Olympics in a nuclear weapon-free world—come true in the current decade.

In closing, I offer my best wishes for the success of the Bay Area Japanese Peace Lantern Ceremony and for the health and prosperity of all the participants.



August 6, 2010

Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima