

# Hiroshima

In a recent Peace Declaration Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba, the Mayor of Hiroshima, used the following words to describe August 6, 1945: "That fateful summer, 8.15. The roar of a B-29 breaks the morning calm. A parachute opens in the blue sky. Then suddenly, a flash, an enormous blast - silence - hell on earth. The eyes of young girls watching the parachute were melted. Their faces became giant charred blisters. The skin of people seeking help dangled from their fingernails. Their hair stood on end. Their clothes were ripped to shreds. People trapped in houses toppled by the blast were burnt alive... Hiroshima was a hell where those who somehow survived envied the dead."

# Nuclear genocide

Ever since the tragic events of August, 1945, the worldwide peace movement has been working for complete abolition of nuclear weapons.

The key argument against nuclear weapons is their essentially genocidal nature. Any use of these weapons would involve a massive number of deaths among innocent civilians, including babies, young children, teenagers, men and women in their prime, and old people, just as it did in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What name can be given to this type of killing except genocide?

# The danger of accidental nuclear war

We must also remember that the concept of nuclear deterrence is flawed: There have been very many historical cases where nuclear war by accident has been narrowly avoided, for example during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and in a number of recent cases of false reports of attacks due to failures of warning systems. If nuclear weapons are retained for a long period of time, the probability of accidental nuclear war will continually increase, and will finally become a certainty.

# The danger of nuclear terrorism

As long as some nations retain nuclear weapons, others will want them. If these weapons are retained for a long period of time, then, as nuclear power generation becomes widespread, the number of nuclear weapons states will increase, and will include politically unstable states (the present example being Pakistan). Revolution in such states could easily allow the weapons to fall into the hands of subnational groups, such as organized criminals or terrorists, and against nuclear terrorism there is no effective defense.

# The danger of breakdown of the NPT

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty is due to be reviewed in 2010, and there is a danger that the treaty will break down entirely during the review conference because of dissatisfaction with the failure of the nuclear weapons states to meet their commitments for disarmament under Article VI.

# NATO's policies violate the NPT

One of the most important issues that we need to address here in Europe is the urgent need to make NATO's nuclear policies conform with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. At present NATO's policies violate both the spirit and the text of the NPT in several respects. Article VI of the NPT requires states possessing nuclear weapon to get rid of them within a reasonable period of time. This article is violated by fact that NATO policy is guided by the 1999 Strategic Concept, which visualizes the continued use of nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

# "Nuclear sharing" violates the NPT

Today there are more than 200 US nuclear weapons in Europe, based in the non-nuclear-weapon states, Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and Turkey. The air forces of these nations are regularly trained to deliver the US weapons. This "nuclear sharing", as it is called, violates Articles I and II of the NPT, which forbid the transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon states. It has been argued that the NPT would no longer be in force if a crisis arose, but there is nothing in the NPT saying that the treaty would not hold under all circumstances.

# NATO policy violates the no-first-use principle

The principle of no-first-use of nuclear weapons has been an extremely important safeguard over the years, but it is violated by present NATO policy, which permits the first-use of nuclear weapons in a wide variety of circumstances. This policy must be changed.

A more affirmative goal would be the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe.

# Visualizing complete abolition

For many frustrating years it seemed that the best anti-nuclear efforts and arguments of the peace movement were completely ignored by those in power. Last year, however, the very same arguments were put forward by former US Defense Secretary William Perry, Senator Sam Nunn, and two former Secretaries of State, George Schultz and Henry Kissinger, who expressed the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world in two widely-read articles in the Wall Street Journal. Similarly, four highly-placed British statesmen advocated complete nuclear abolition in the London Times.

# Prime Ministers of Britain and Australia

There are other signs of progress: On 19 March, 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain said to the British Parliament: "I can tell the House that Britain will be on the forefront of diplomatic action on nuclear weapons control and reduction... and ultimately freeing the world from nuclear weapons." The vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world was also expressed by Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, who has set up a commission to work for this goal.

# Barak Obama's Berlin speech

In a speech in Berlin a few weeks ago, Senator Barak Obama addressed an audience of a quarter of a million cheering listeners with the words: "This is the moment when we must renew the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The two superpowers that faced each other across the wall of this city came too close too often to destroying all that we have built and all that we love. With that wall gone, we need not stand idly by and watch the further spread of the deadly atom. It is time to secure all loose nuclear materials; to stop the spread of nuclear weapons; and to reduce the arsenals from another era. This is the moment to begin seeking the peace of the world without nuclear weapons."

# But we must persist

Thus the message of the global peace movement is finally being heard. But we must persist. We must make the powerholders of the world listen to the voice of civil society.

# Nuclear weapons violate democratic principles

The overwhelming majority of ordinary citizens everywhere in the world strongly favor complete abolition of nuclear weapons. A public opinion pole conducted by the Simmons Foundation showed that in six industrialized countries, on the average, more than 85 percent of the populations supported complete abolition of nuclear weapons. If countries in the developing world had been included in the poll, the percentage of people favoring abolition would undoubtedly have been even higher. In vote after vote on nuclear disarmament in the United Nations General Assembly, only a tiny handful of nations have opposed it. Thus the continued retention of nuclear weapons violates democratic principles.

# Waking from the nightmare of nuclear insanity

We must persist! Now is the time to make the voice of civil society heard! Now is the time for the final push! Together we can reduce the insanity of nuclear weapons to a memory, like the memory of a bad dream. Together we can change the insanity of war to a dark a memory, fading into the past, like the dark memory of slavery. Together we can move towards a bright future of global peace, cooperation and understanding. Let us join hands and work together for these great goals.