

“We Shall Not Repeat the Evil: How Japan Can Lead us Towards a Nuclear Free World”

Mayor Taue,

Vice-Governor Satomi,

Professor Shirabe,

Professor Suzuki,

People of Nagasaki,

Thank you for welcoming me here today.

This is a place that has been important for me to visit, to see with my own eyes and put real markers to the stories I have heard.

It is incredibly powerful for me to see the roads, buildings, the remnants of the city that once was; and the buildings, roads and most importantly people that gave it a new life.

It is in this city where we witnessed the worst of what humanity can unleash.

The world was introduced to a new vernacular, new language was needed to describe the explosive horror of the Atomic Age.

It is here where we first learned the indiscriminate nature of these weapons — that their terror cannot be targeted or contained.

It is here that the medical profession witnessed the rise of a new type of mass suffering brought on by radiation.

It is here that we realized the blast of an atomic bomb is not the end of carnage, but the sad beginning of years...decades of pain and death.

But these facts are not the only exceptional truths held by Nagasaki and Hiroshima — two cities united by a painful but powerful bond. It is here where the best of humanity faced the worst, and ultimately overcame.

And while we must never minimize those who were lost, we would be remiss if we did not also honor and learn from the courage of those who survived.

At a time when the world desperately wanted to close a chapter of history, the hibakusha refused to go quietly.

They refused to disappear and let the world forget the horror that occurred here along with the horrors of the Second World War.

They knew that while the story of another world war was ending, a new, possibly darker story was beginning.

This city was home to the first chapter.

The people of Nagasaki rebuilt with their hands and they spoke out with their voices. They bore witness to what happened here for more than seven decades, and wouldn't let the world ignore.

I have had the honor to meet many hibakusha. I have listened to their remembrances everywhere from small community meetings, to schools, to houses of worship, to meetings with heads of state and ringing through the halls of the United Nations.

They say unequivocally: "Hear our stories, do not look away. Do not repeat one of the great errors of human history."

They relive the painful past, retell their painful memories, so that we all can create a better future.

And I can say unequivocally, as somebody who leads ICAN and has been intimately involved in the negotiations toward nuclear disarmament: the nuclear ban treaty would not exist without the hibakusha.

I ask that we all pause for a moment, here in this sacred city, this sacred place, and truly reflect on that. We have a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Though it may not seem like it, we are actually closer than ever to nuclear disarmament. And that is true because of the hibakusha.

They stood as defiant witnesses to the horrors of history, not as passive victims but as active advocates. They refused to stay silent and to forget.

They bore their scars — mental and physical — as cautionary warnings to us that have been lucky enough to have not had to live through what they lived through.

I'd like to take this moment to recognize the hibakusha with us here and wherever they may be, as well as their families who have also carried their

stories. The people of Nagasaki that came after them and carried with them their stories of survival.

Please join me in honoring, celebrating and thanking them for being tireless voices of truth.

Certainly, while the hibakusha played a singular and invaluable role in making the ban treaty a reality, they were not alone and could not have done it alone.

That is why it is so appropriate that the Norwegian Nobel Committee did not recognize a single person, or a single organisation, but the global coalition of ICAN for the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

They chose to honour a campaign that is made up of hundreds of organisations, and thousands of campaigners, from every corner of the world.

Whether their contribution is walking the halls of Westminster Parliament in London or telling their personal stories of the impact of nuclear testing on a Pacific island, every ICAN member played their role in moving the world closer to one where we can all live free of the threat of nuclear destruction.

A global problem needs a global solution.

This truly is a global endeavor and every single person in this room, this city, this country — actually, every single person on this planet has a role to play.

It can be no other way, because nuclear weapons do not respect borders.

It's unlikely that one nation will launch one warhead and that will be the horrible end to nuclear conflict.

More likely is a domino effect with many missiles striking many targets simultaneously, and when the nuclear dust clears — that will only be the beginning of suffering.

As more information is declassified and more research becomes available, we are seeing that past nuclear use had a far reaching ripple effect.

Nuclear weapons create multiple waves of destruction and death by poisoning our water, food, and land.

New research from the United States has revised the estimate of

Americans killed by their own programs to develop nuclear weapons at between 340,000 to 690,000 people.

The vast impact prompted one Senator, former astronaut John Glenn, to sagely remark, "What good is it to protect ourselves with nuclear weapons, if we poison our people in the process?"

No good has come or can come from these weapons, and because they affect us all, we all deserve a say in their continued existence.

That has been a large part of ICAN's mission: to bring democracy to disarmament.

Nuclear weapons are by their very nature, and the structures we have put in place — authoritarian. Their use betrays humanity, their continued development betrays reason and their stockpiling betrays democracy.

Any democratic country that support their continued use and stockpiling is betraying democracy too.

Nuclear weapons are the great contradiction of our time. They are the paradox that promises peace by proposing destruction. It is a dangerous balance, that cannot hold forever.

Today, I want to talk about that contradiction, and other contradictions that have allowed nuclear weapons to not only survive past the end of the Cold War, but proliferate.

We must confront, bridge and ultimately conquer these contradictions if we are to be the ones who write the end of the story that began in this city — the end of nuclear weapons.

If we shy away, if we live in denial, if we leave the outcome to others, the weapons will write the end of the story, and it it will be end of us all.

Part I Naivety vs Reality

This city is an appropriate place to discuss the contradictions of the nuclear age; they were in many ways born here and are embodied by the inhabitants of this city, past and present.

As I mentioned before, it is here that we saw the very worst of humanity when the bomb with the dreadfully comic codename, "Fat Man" was dropped on unsuspecting citizens.

A new type of destruction was brought to bear, which ushered in a new age of terror and ironically robbed the world of potential peace.

Rather than ending World War II and forging an era of stability and rebuilding, the bombings guaranteed decades of proxy conflict and constant flirtations with total destruction — we were set on a path...an arms race to total annihilation.

But this is not a city that only serves as a warning.

Nagasaki did not recede into dust like Pompeii after the volcano, a city and story held in history books. No, Nagasaki rose. Nagasaki is alive today.

The memory of what was before and what came after the bomb was held and guarded by survivors. You and your ancestors rebuilt. The people of Nagasaki countered the worst of humanity with the best.

In so doing, one can certainly say Nagasaki became a city of hope.

I believe in Nagasaki. I believe in the power of collective humanity to stand together and face down any threat.

I believe we will overcome the destructive force and threat of nuclear weapons once and for all. Otherwise, I wouldn't do this work.

Some may say that makes me an "Idealist." I gladly accept that term.

I know that the vast majority of the world wants to use our ingenuity to permanently solve the nuclear problem, not to develop more weapons and expand the nuclear threat.

I am an idealist who believed against all odds that the nuclear ban treaty would be a reality.

I am an idealist who knows that our role as campaigners is to make that which seems impossible — inevitable.

Idealism is not foolhardy, it is necessary and desperately called for at this moment in the story of humankind and nuclear weapons.

The truth that critics of our movement simply cannot face is that their belief in the perpetual ability of nuclear weapons to prevent conflict simply defies reason.

That nuclear weapons have not been used in conflict since they were in this city is not do to prudent leadership, but good fortune. We cannot simply wait for our luck to run out.

If you ask a mathematician, they will tell you the likelihood of nuclear weapons being used at any given time is greater than zero.

Just how likely that risk is fluctuates — the likelihood is higher than it was last year thanks to North Korea and the US, but that chance is always greater than zero.

That means, given enough time, it is certain the nuclear weapons will be used.

Let me then ask this question to those who accuse us of being naive and irrational: if you know that this story will end either with the eventual use of nuclear weapons or their elimination, who is the irrational one?

The person who calls for the elimination of nuclear weapons or the person who thinks it is ok to live side by side with them?

We are not naive, we are not irrational. We are on the side of humanity and the survival of the human race.

We simply cannot bear to do nothing, for doing nothing is accepting the eventual use of nuclear weapons.

The fact remains that as long as nuclear weapons exist in any form, the clock is counting down to the moment of their use.

The British philosopher Bertrand Russell said this clearly in noting his opposition to nuclear weapons:

"You may reasonably expect a man to walk a tightrope safely for ten minutes; it would be unreasonable to do so without accident for two hundred years."

We are going on 73 years of walking this tightrope. We cannot walk this tightrope forever, our time is already running out. The need to act is urgent.

Part II Nagasaki vs Tokyo

You here in Nagasaki, the people in this room, your friends, families and neighbours, you all have a unique role to play in leading the rest of the world towards a nuclear-free future.

You are essential characters in this story. Your voices and unique moral authority are needed.

And you all understand that.

That is why you have extended me the honour of an invitation to come here and talk about this museum and its exhibition, so soon after collecting the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway.

That is why you have erected monuments like this one we stand in today, as a warning bell to others who may forget the lessons of history.

That is why there are inscriptions such as the one in the Hiroshima Memorial Cenotaph that states "We Shall Not Repeat the Evil".

But there is one particular audience that needs to hear that message. One group of people that must be encouraged to share the values of the people from Nagasaki — and that is your government in Tokyo.

The Japanese Government should know better than any other nation the consequences of nuclear weapons, yet Tokyo is happy to live under the umbrella of US nuclear protection, and has not joined the Treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Is your government ok with repeating the evil that was done to Nagasaki and Hiroshima to other cities?

As long as your government believes in the effect of deterrence, they are encouraging nuclear proliferation, and, along with other nations living under the protection of nuclear alliances, moving the world closer towards the use of nuclear weapons.

There exists a large gap between the values represented in Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the policy coming out of Tokyo. We must close that gap.

We must harness your voices to show your national government in Tokyo that it is unacceptable to be a willing participant in this nuclear umbrella.

That Japan must be a leader in the global movement for nuclear disarmament. That Japan must join this Treaty.

Japan, as a democracy, is answerable to the wishes of the people. If you can unite your fellow citizens in one clear voice, it will be impossible for your government to ignore you.

The people of Nagasaki are a moral authority on this issue, and Japan can be a moral authority as a nation to know first hand the consequences of nuclear war.

Encourage your politicians to take up your cause. Grow louder if they do not listen.

Know that you have millions of people around the world who share your values and your cause. Join with them to create an unstoppable force of democratic disarmament.

That grassroots power is what led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, even when those in power said it was impossible.

With this treaty, we have the framework to create a new international norm that casts these weapons not as a symbol of power but as a symbol of shame.

They said banning chemical weapons was impossible. Biological weapons. Land mines and cluster munitions. But we banned them.

They always say something hard is impossible.

But ICAN campaigners showed that it can be made a reality if there are enough of us all calling for change loud enough.

Governments answer to people, people know nuclear weapons no longer make sense, and they are demanding change.

That is how the people of Nagasaki can ask for more from the Government in Tokyo, and that is how Tokyo should be standing up for nuclear disarmament among the community of nations.

Part III Past vs Future

Japan is also unique in this debate for another reason.

Just across the water, North Korea is threatening destruction and devastation with its nuclear program. Once more Japan could be in the crosshairs of a nuclear attack.

But rather than provoking fear and having us rush to the conclusion that we need more nuclear weapons, better nuclear weapons, bigger nuclear weapons, it should give us pause to think "will we ever be free of this threat, as long as there are nuclear weapons anywhere?".

These weapons lead us closer to war.

They did not deter North Korea from developing their own nuclear weapons, and we should not rely on cool heads being the only thing to stop them from using them.

If you are uncomfortable with Kim Jong Un or Donald Trump having the power to destroy us all, then you are uncomfortable with nuclear weapons.

Without nuclear weapons would the United States be defenseless against North Korea? Of course they would not be. And the US having nuclear weapons has done nothing to stop North Korea's nuclear ambitions, it has only fueled it.

So I have a solution to the North Korean situation. Luckily, it solves all these other problems too.

We ban all nuclear weapons. Eliminate them.

And the good news is, with the UN Treaty we have the framework to do just that.

History shows that the prohibition of certain types of weapons facilitates progress towards their elimination.

Weapons that have been outlawed by international treaties are increasingly seen as illegitimate, losing their political status.

Arms companies find it more difficult to acquire funds for work on illegal weapons, and such work carries a significant reputational risk.

Banks, pension funds and other financial institutions divest from these producers.

Underpinning the decision by governments and civil society to pursue the ban was our belief that changing the rules regarding nuclear weapons would have a major impact even beyond those nations that would formally adopt the treaty at the outset.

The path forward is clear: ICAN announced in December the launch of the 1000 Day Fund, a Fund to push as many countries as possible to join the Treaty, as the best path forward to nuclear disarmament.

ICAN has been given an unprecedented opportunity to make an impact with the Nobel Peace Prize.

We will be using the platform to call for an end to nuclear weapons, and we will use the prize money to kickstart the "1000 Day Fund" to empower campaigns that help achieve that end.

We are an international campaign, but every action is local.

We have hundreds of groups active around the world and we will be helping resource efforts to convince national governments to ratify this treaty and create a pathway to complete nuclear disarmament.

The need has never been more urgent, especially with news this week from the Trump Administration in the US.

We have just seen a leaked copy of the United States' Nuclear Posture Review.

What is contained in that review should deeply worry us all.

It has revealed that the US, instead of making progress towards disarmament, instead of admitting the failure of deterrence and forging a new safer reality, they are wanting to *increase* their nuclear weapons stockpiles and create new 'low yield' nuclear weapons that they say will make them *more* likely to use them.

The rationale is that the US needs low-yield/tactical nuclear weapons to increase the credibility of their nuclear deterrent against Russia.

The explosive power of these new warheads is not public knowledge.

They have supposedly been concerned that US policy makers will be reluctant to respond to Russian low-yield nuclear strikes with 'retaliatory' nuclear strikes because existing US nuclear weapons are 'too big' and 'too deadly', thus ruling out a nuclear strike altogether.

Here is the problem with their thinking: by today's terms, the nuclear bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki were very 'low yield'.

Just one Trident submarine, for example, carries 70 times the destructive power that was dropped here in 1945.

So what the US officials are saying, is that they consider what happened here to Nagasaki to be 'minor'.

They are worried that their potential enemies will think they are too concerned to drop a bigger bomb, but wouldn't think twice about dropping bombs like the ones that destroyed this city.

That they wouldn't think twice about causing another Nagasaki.

It is up to the people of Nagasaki to tell the story of what happened here, or else people around the world will think what happened here was 'minor', and is likely to happen again.

It is up to the people around the world to share your stories with their own people, so their own governments do not buy into this dangerous thinking that insults the memory of the hibakusha and all the victims of nuclear attacks.

The US already has the nuclear ability to destroy the world many times

over.

The idea that they need *more* not *less* nuclear weapons would be laughable if it wasn't so dangerous.

The rest of the world is moving towards a total ban of nuclear weapons, the US is planning to develop weapons they admit they are more likely to use.

Part IV Hope vs Fear

It can sometimes be a sobering and depressing topic, to talk so much about the end of our world through nuclear armageddon.

It can be scary to think about the precipice we constantly live on, where at a moment without any notice life as we know it could end.

That the sky could rain down destruction one morning, just as it did here on an unsuspecting population 73 years ago.

But the antidote to fear is hope.

And I want to finish today by talking to you about my hope, ICAN's hope, that we will see the end of nuclear weapons.

By the very admission of those who possess them, the real utility of nuclear weapons is in their ability to provoke fear. When they refer to their "deterrent" effect, proponents of nuclear weapons are celebrating fear as a weapon of war.

We would consider any threat to use chemical or biological weapons monstrous, and any leader who is willing to use the weapons a war criminal.

But the leaders of the world's most populous and richest democracies can make the same threats with the deadliest weapons ever invented.

We cannot celebrate fear as the basis for foreign policy, and continue to be infatuated by nuclear weapons as if they are different from other weapons that are designed to do one thing: kill as many civilians as possible.

We should be afraid of these weapons. Fear is rational. The threat is real.

We are closer than any time in recent history to the use of nuclear weapons. We are shockingly seeing the near-daily threats between countries to wipe each other off the map.

We are so close to the war of words becoming a war of weapons.

But, my friends, we are also closer than we have ever been to their elimination.

We have much cause to be hopeful. To defeat fear with hope.

122 countries signed the Treaty to ban nuclear weapons last year at the United Nations. That is the vast majority of nations.

We are closer than ever to eliminating nuclear weapons, but there is much work to be done.

We live in democracies, so there is a choice. If our political leaders refuse to join us on the side of hope, on the side of rationality, on the side of a future, then we must elect different leaders that will.

If our countries refuse to join this Treaty, then we must grow louder until we are impossible to ignore.

We must make those countries that live under the protection of nuclear weapons isolated on the world stage, and the countries that possess those weapons surrounded by shame and stigma.

What happened to Nagasaki must not be forgotten. You have such an important part to play in this story.

Nagasaki has a unique place in history. Our challenge is to make sure Nagasaki remains unique. That there are no more cities that join Nagasaki in the list of nuclear bomb sites. That there are no more hibakusha.

I am more hopeful than ever that we will succeed.

Your values must become Tokyo's values and the world's values.

Your voices must ring out from this hall to be heard around the world, to join with other voices calling for common sense and hope.

That is how we will see the end of nuclear weapons, and I look forward to working with you all to achieve that aim.

Thank you.

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