

Association for a Non-Nuclear Government

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APPEAL

FOR SUCCESSFUL 2008 WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A & H BOMBS

In August, as we mark the 63rd anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the 2008 World Conference against A & H Bombs will be held in the two A-bombed cities under the slogan: "For a peaceful and just world free of nuclear weapons." This year's World Conference is to provide a springboard to the movement in preparation for the next Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2010 to further develop international joint action to get nuclear weapons abolished. Our Association, which is working to heighten public awareness and increase the nationwide movement calling for a non-nuclear Japan through establishing a government that rejects nuclear weapons, calls on all peace-loving people who wish to get the world free of nuclear weapons to assemble in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Noteworthy changes are taking place in the world regarding the effort to achieve a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. The United Nations General Assembly last autumn adopted resolutions related to nuclear disarmament by overwhelming majority votes. This is another proof of the fact that the calls for a world without nuclear weapons are forming the world's main current. During the past year, four former senior US government officials published their joint articles calling for a nuclear-free world, and calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons have been heard even from within the ruling circles of nuclear powers. Moves to respond to these initiatives have taken place in various parts of the world. The current of thought toward a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons, which has been called for by the Japanese Movement against A & H Bombs, is being embraced by wider sectors throughout the world.

At the same time, however, we must not forget even for a moment the fact that more than 27,000 nuclear weapons deployed or stockpiled in the world are threatening the survival of humanity. Clearly, the US Bush administration representing the only remaining superpower has exposed its failure of the policy of strength. It is faced with sharp contradictions and deep political isolation domestically as well as internationally. Nevertheless, the Bush administration maintains its nuclear arsenals as the main component of global strategy to promote its dangerous updates and reinforcements.

Under these circumstances, the Japanese government, which should take the lead in international political arena in calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, goes against expectations at home and internationally by such action as abstaining from voting on

resolutions demanding that nuclear weapons be abolished. In the recent Group of Eight (G8) summit, Japan was the chairman, but it did not even ask nuclear powers to show their intention to eliminate their nuclear weapons. This is undoubtedly due to Japan's dangerous policy of accommodating itself to the expanded deterrence approach adopted by the United States relying mainly on nuclear forces. The task now is for the Japanese government to opt to break away from US nuclear umbrella in order to fulfill its responsibility as the government of the only atomic-bombed country by pressing the United States and other nuclear weapons possessing countries to give up their nuclear weapons.

On the issue of certification of Hibakusha (A-bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) as suffering from illnesses caused by exposure to atomic-bomb radiation, the movement has achieved an epoch-making result. In the concerted lawsuits filed by Hibakusha against the state, the Sendai and Osaka high courts in May rejected the state's appeal against lower court decisions and recognized all the plaintiffs as Hibakusha suffering from illnesses caused by A-bomb radiation exposure. In June, the Nagasaki District Court gave a ruling in favor of the plaintiffs. In advance of these rulings, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) and the plaintiffs' group succeeded in having the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare give up on relying on the so-called "probability of causing A-bomb diseases" used as rationale for rejecting certification and recognize the effect of residual radiation as a cause. Nevertheless, the government still tries to narrow the range of diseases that should be recognized as caused by exposure to atomic bomb radiation. It still has no intention of improving the certification administration that is cold to Hibakusha. Now is the time to demand that the government relieve all plaintiffs and fundamentally review the administration for atomic-bomb survivors.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first UN General Assembly special session devoted to nuclear disarmament, which became a milestone toward the growth of international opinion calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is also the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Let us reconfirm the starting point of the movement for a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons, build an even larger cooperation by NGOs in preparation for the next NPT Review Conference to be held in two years, and pave the reliable way for getting nuclear weapons abolished. Let us make a success of the 2008 World Conference against A & H Bombs and join forces to achieve an equitable and peaceful world without nuclear weapons and war.

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