

**2023 World Conference against A and H Bombs
International Meeting – Session 2**

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I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you who have participated in the 2023 World Conference against A & H Bombs from Japan and around the world.

This year's World Conference is being held in a critical situation over peace and nuclear weapons. Russia continues its aggression against Ukraine and has publicly asserted its "nuclear threat", while NATO is responding to the threat by strengthening its military bloc and nuclear deterrence.

Prohibition and Abolition of Nuclear Weapons is the Key to Overcoming the Crisis

In June, Russia deployed tactical nuclear weapons in neighboring Belarus. The deployed nuclear weapons are said to be three times more powerful than Hiroshima-type weapons. In response, NATO conducted the greatest air exercise in its history. In Northeast Asia, North Korea has repeatedly conducted ballistic missile tests, and it was also revealed that China is increasing its nuclear warheads.

Such a dangerous response of "nuclear" against "nuclear" and "military" against "military" will only escalate the situation to a more dangerous stage. The key to ending the crisis lies in the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

Last November, the G20 Summit (in Indonesia), in which Russia participated, adopted the Leaders' Declaration stating that "the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible." In December, the 78th UN General Assembly Session adopted a resolution calling for support and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with support from two-thirds of the UN member states.

The number of signatories to the TPNW, which entered into force on January 22, 2021, is now 92, and the number of ratifications continues to increase to 68. With five more countries to join the treaty, the number of signatories will reach a majority of the UN member states.

Regarding the Ukrainian issue, the UN resolution condemning Russia's aggression and calling for the immediate, unconditional, and total withdrawal of Russian troops and a peaceful resolution based on the UN Charter was adopted with the support of

70% of member states. The main current of the world is for peace and the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

In order to stop this dangerous move that could lead to the annihilation of humanity and to achieve a "peaceful and just world without nuclear weapons," we must significantly develop the joint efforts with the United Nations, national governments, and civil society of the world.

This year's Conference will be joined by UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Nakamitsu Izumi, Ambassador Alexander Kmentt of Austria, who chaired the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, a representative of the Mexican government, which will chair the next Meeting of States Parties, and a representative of the Malaysian government, a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. Let us make this World Conference a great success and open the prospects for a "world without nuclear weapons".

We must defeat the "nuclear deterrence theory," the logic for the destruction of the human race

In May this year, the G7 Summit of the major economies was held in the A-bombed city of Hiroshima. The "Hiroshima Vision," the declaration adopted at the summit, set the elimination of nuclear weapons as the "ultimate goal" to be achieved in an indefinite future. Saying that "nuclear weapons should serve defensive purposes," it blatantly affirmed the "nuclear deterrence" theory, which presupposes the use of nuclear weapons.

While gathering in the A-bombed city of Hiroshima, the G7 leaders failed to seriously confront the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and turned their backs on the abolition of nuclear weapons. Their attitude naturally provoked disappointment and criticism from A-bomb survivors and many others at home and internationally.

Prior to the ongoing NPT Preparatory Committee, the "Communique" of the NATO Summit held in Vilnius, Lithuania, stated that "nuclear weapons are unique", "strategic nuclear forces are the supreme guarantee of security," and "As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance." This was, in effect, an outrageous declaration to make the possession of nuclear weapons permanent.

Nuclear deterrence is precisely the logic of the nuclear arms race and the driving force of nuclear proliferation that has threatened and continues to threaten the very survival of the human race. The situation we face today clearly shows that nuclear weapons cannot prevent aggression, protect people's safety, or prevent nuclear threats.

Is it legally and ethically acceptable to threaten and reproduce the destruction and

carnage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for reasons of national "security"? That is the question. The answer is simply NO. We must defeat the theory of "nuclear deterrence," which is a primary cause of pushing the human race to the brink of annihilation.

Stop Kishida's Massive Military Buildup and Make Japan a Leader in the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

As the only country to have suffered the atomic bombings and to have Article 9 of the Constitution that renounces war, it is the international responsibility of the Japanese movement to ensure that the Japanese government plays a role appropriate for such a country.

The arms expansion that the Kishida government is now attempting to push through without public approval is of an unimaginably large-scale and dangerous nature. These include the deployment of long-range missiles to the Nansei Islands from Kagoshima to near Taiwan, the introduction of 400 Aegis-launched Tomahawk missiles, F35 stealth fighter jets, the conversion of destroyers into aircraft carriers, and the undergrounding of the SDF command centers in preparation for possible attacks with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. These are truly a major military buildup for an all-out war.

If this plan is completed, Japan's military spending will overtake that of Russia and become the world's third largest after the U.S. and China. The Kishida government must never be allowed to carry out this outrage, which could trigger the calamity of war, including nuclear war.

U.S. President Biden said at a rally of his supporters in California on June 20 (local time), that he met Kishida three times, including in Hiroshima [at the G7 Hiroshima Summit], and convinced him to drastically increase Japan's military spending. At the recent NATO summit, President Biden sent an unusual compliment to PM Kishida. Kishida's role is nothing more than a pawn for the US Biden administration.

Prime Minister Kishida has repeatedly stated that "Today's Ukraine may be tomorrow's East Asia" and is pushing forward on the path to a warmongering state. What the Japanese government should do now, however, is to prevent war through peaceful diplomacy based on Article 9 of the Constitution and, as the only A-bombed nation, to join the TPNW and take the lead in banning and eliminating nuclear weapons.

It is true that the public has been affected by the propaganda using North Korea's repeated missile launches and China's attempts to change status quo by force over the East China and South China Seas. However, the people do not tolerate the

government's arrogant politics.

If the A-bombed Japan joins the TPNW, it will accelerate the abolition of nuclear weapons in the world, stop Japan's rapid transformation into a warmongering nation, and contribute greatly to achieving a country that can lead the global efforts for peaceful resolution of disputes, disarmament, and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Local governments' resolutions calling on the Japanese government to sign and ratify the TPNW have been adopted by 600 local assemblies. And the total number of signatures for the TPNW, which are being carried out by a broad range of co-sponsors, has reached 1,304,019 and was submitted to the Japanese government on July 5.

The key lies in the development of grassroots public opinion and movement. We are determined to expand the network of broad-based joint efforts of people across ideologies, political beliefs, and movements, based on the success of the World Conference and on the signature campaign to urge the Japanese government to join the TPNW.

Together with our friends around the world, we are planning international joint actions for the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW coming November. In preparation for these actions, we will expand dialogue with the public through the signature campaign, press the government to join the TPNW and contribute to the success of the New York actions in November.

Last but not least, there is a possibility of a general election here in Japan before the end of this year. The "four-party coalition" of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito, and their complementary forces, Nippon Ishin (Japan Innovation Party) and the Democratic Party for the People, are promoting military buildup, constitutional change, and destruction of people's livelihoods. Nippon Ishin's leader Baba Nobuyuki stated in a June 29 interview with Reuters that "nuclear sharing" should be discussed. In the general election, the participation in the TPNW will be a crucial issue to be debated.

We must stop the four-party coalition's attempt to establish a war-mongering state. Japan should conduct peaceful diplomacy based on Article 9 of the constitution, actively take part in the TPNW and lead the global effort to abolish nuclear weapons. For that purpose, I would like to express our determination to do our very best to develop public opinion for peace into their political choice for a nuclear-free and peaceful Japan. Friends, let us work together. ///