

3) New challenge of nuclear disarmament in 2016

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The US President Barack Obama visited Hiroshima on April 27 (2016) as the first sitting President of the United States, meaning a historic step forward. He visited the Hiroshima Peace Museum, offered flowers of condolences, delivered remarks, and had short conversations with some Hibakusha (A-bombs sufferers). To lead this step forward to the realization of ‘a world without nuclear weapons’, the US must squarely look to its possession of nuclear arms and take concrete action, namely to embark on the start of international negotiation on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The US also changes her conventional nuclear policy, and the Japanese government must call for this change as a sole A-bombed country. Also, we are quite regrettable that we could not hear the President’s sincere apology for the country’s past deeds.

Toward the goal “No more Hiroshima, no more Nagasaki, no more Hibakusha”

We express concern over the existence of about 19,000 nuclear warheads in the world, since a highly volatile situation will continue unless an international agreement is reached on a complete ban on nuclear arms. We therefore demand that the nuclear nations take the initiative in opening negotiations for a total ban on nuclear weapons.

It will soon be the 71th summer since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were obliterated by two atomic bombs. With call of the survivors who witness the “nuclear hell” for “No more Hiroshima, No more Nagasaki, No more Hibakusha (A&H bomb sufferer)” and mounting public support for them, a historic momentum is building up to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The NPT Review Conference of May 2010 agreed to “achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” and declared, “all the states need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons”. According to the UN resolution in December of 2015, the government and civil society must take actions in unison to bring this goal to a reality. So far, although five years have elapsed since 2010, the path to reach this goal is not yet in sight. True, a certain number of nuclear weapons, including those dealt between the US and Russia, were cut down, but still some 19,000 nuclear weapons are stockpiles or developed. Even such moves as acquiring nuclear weapons are continuing, as seen in the current tension on Korean Peninsula. Whether intentional or accidental, the danger of nuclear weapons actually being used remains real as seen in the recent Russian President Putin’s disclosure of having prepared nuclear weapon usage (March 15, 2015).

Why does such a volatile situation continue? It is because of the lack of the agreement for a total ban on nuclear weapons in international politics. The use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity, threatening the survival of the human community and civilization. It is “contrary to the rule of international law, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law”, as declared by the International Court of Justice.

In order to eliminate nuclear weapons, the only way is to totally discard them. The UN has called to the unanimously confirm this and take actions to achieve a nuclear weapons convention (NWC). The

Security Council, especially its five permanent members, which are the nuclear weapon states, bears special responsibility to exert leadership to this end. They must recall the fact that the Security Council Summit held in September 2009 agreed to “create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons” and confirmed the obligation to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament mandated by Article 6 of NPT.

The conditions for totally banning nuclear weapons are ripe! At the GA of the UN, the resolution calling for nuclear weapons abolition has overwhelmingly received by majority support as mentioned above. If the nuclear weapon states make a decision, the UN Security Council or the GA confirms in consensus the need to totally ban nuclear weapons. Based on that, negotiations for a NWC can be launched. We must point out that any further delay in this decision and actions is tantamount to neglecting the danger of causing a second or third Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon renewed his determination to achieve “a world without nuclear weapons”. In support of the proposal by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki calling for the “abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020”, the world is invited to join together with the Hibakusha on 71th anniversary of the bombing to celebrate the end of nuclear weapons.

For the reasons above-described, we like to take initiative to achieve an agreement for a total ban on nuclear weapons, so that our movements will become a place to launch actions for definitely attaining the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

We must take effective measures to eliminate nuclear weapons

The 70th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolutions on December 7 (2015), calling for a ban on nuclear weapons. During the session, the UNGA also passed other resolutions demanding nuclear disarmament. However, the nuclear weapons’ states are strongly opposing the global call for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

One of the focal points is whether to legally ban nuclear arms. At the UNGA, a resolution titles “Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons”, which pushes for the ban on and abolition of nuclear arms as inhuman weapons, was adopted for the first time. The move denouncing the inhumanity of nuclear weapons originated from a joint statement issued by 16 states in 2012. At the 2015 NPT Review Conference in New York, 159 states, or more than 80% of the UN member states, supported a similar anti-nuke statement. The move has developed into a global trend, putting pressure on nuclear-possessing states.

The UNGA also carried out the following resolutions by the overwhelming majority of states: “Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”, the resolution promoted by Austria calling for legislative measures towards creating a world without nuclear arms; “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”, which seeks to set up “a task force” to discuss such legal measures; and “Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons”, which calls on the international community to begin negotiations on the convention without delay. It is very important approach for achieving our goal for the elimination of nuclear weapons. However, the five nuclear-weapon states are absent from the above international meeting in Geneva. On the other hand, the Japanese government criticizes the meeting in the name of the absence of those states concerned, insisting that such

meeting should necessarily be held in the presence of those nuclear states.

The nuclear-weapon states are raising the strongest objections ever to this trend. The five nuclear-weapon states – US, Russia, China, France and Britain – released a joint statement, saying that “an incremental, step-by-step approach is the only practical option for making progress towards nuclear disarmament.” How many years do they need to reach the goal by the manner of “step-by-step”? Is it ‘100 years’, ‘1,000 years’, or ‘until human’s extinction’? The “step-by-step” means that they don’t want to completely discard nuclear weapons. Not only that, but they also adhere to the nuclear deterrence policy for the ghost enemy that they never meet. Our task is not to proclaim “disarmament for nuclear weapons”, but to achieve “complete elimination of nuclear weapons on the earth”.

In discussion in the UNGA, it was pointed out that a new nuclear threat is emerging as terrorism and regional conflicts are spreading across the world. It is now called into question whether the global society can overcome once for all the outdated nuclear deterrence theory and implement effective measures to remove the threat of a global nuclear catastrophe.

We must criticize our governmental attitude for nuclear weapons’ questions. Being closely aligned with several nuclear powers’ states, the Japanese government abstained from voting on the above resolutions. The government has abstained for 20 years from voting on the nuclear-eliminating resolutions since 1996 when the first resolution for the elimination of nuclear weapons had proposed in the UNGA. The Abe administration had insisted that it would act as “an intermediately” between nuclear-having states and nonnuclear states at the international meeting, but it did nothing of this kind. As the only atomic bombed state in the world, Japan should join in the global efforts to push nuclear weapons’ states to abandon their nuclear weapons in the very near future.

Hibakusha want a world without nuclear weapons

The Hibakusha (victims of A&H bombs) suffered in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945), and Bikini (1954) attended the 2016 Bikini Day events on May 1, the day marking the 62nd anniversary of the US H-bomb test explosion at Bikini Atoll which caused radiation fallout on Marshal Islanders and more than 1,000 Japanese fishing boats. In the meeting, 2,000 people including foreign and Japanese peace activists participated.

The lectures were made by the former foreign minister Tony de Brum of the Republic of the Marshal Islands and other foreign delegates from France, Britain and US. The former Marshal Islands Foreign Minister made his debut at the rally and a previous day’s workshop. His country files with the International Court of Justice a lawsuit against nuclear weapons countries. Regarding to the 1954 year-US nuclear tests at Bikini Atoll, Marshallese people were deliberately exposed to radiation by the US military. On top of that, he said that it covered up critical health impacts, carried out human experimentation, and imposed on islanders’ immediate return to their places. He also expressed that what his country experienced over nuclear development is something like abuse and bullying and denial of human dignity by powerful people. Civilized society and human beings can never coexist with immoral and illegal nuclear weapons, he added. He also went on to say that nuclear weapons countries should begin negotiation to disarm immediately and negotiate in good faith an agreement for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The organizer also criticized that the five major nuclear weapons countries (USA, Russia, Britain, China and France) for trying to obstruct the momentum of international movements opposing nuclear arms. It is also pointed out that in the 2015 Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), 80% of the NPT member countries agreed on the need to put a legal ban on nuclear weapons and that the UN General Assembly in December 2015 adopted a resolution to set up a working group to discuss a legal framework to achieve a world free from nuclear bombs, and that these are important achievements attributable to the work of anti-nuke movements.

As mentioned above, the five nuclear weapons countries have issued a joint statement to voice their opposition to the move to establish a legal framework. This indicates that those nuclear weapons countries have been pushed into the corner. In order to further push them to the corner, Japanese anti-nuke activists should keep working to raise international awareness of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapon and should help start negotiation for a nuclear weapon convention.

There were some important speeches given in the meeting. The Hibakusha said, “We, Hibakusha, want a world without nuclear weapons. We want no more Hibakusha. To achieve these goals, this year, we will call on people across the world to work with us on our signature-collecting campaign”. The National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren) said that they expect this year’s Bikini Day events to give a boost to movements for elimination of nuclear weapons, and called for increasing efforts to stop the Abe administration’s runaway policies, repeal the war legislation-constitution revision, and shut down all the nuclear reactors in Japan.

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