

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

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Friends,

After the disruptions of the worst of the Covid pandemic, it is a delight and privilege to rejoin the World Conference. Given the increasingly dangerous great power confrontations and accelerating nuclear arms races, as well as the unique opportunity that the TPNW affords us, our collaborations are more important than ever. I also want to appreciate Gensuikyo's welcoming my grandson Mateo. I wanted to introduce him to the spirit of the Japanese peace and nuclear weapons abolition movement and to Hiroshima's legacies and lessons.

As a U.S. American, I was shocked and angered by Ambassador Emanuel's machinations in engineering the sister park arrangement between Hiroshima and Pearl Harbor and by Mayor Matsui's craven acceptance of the scheme. The agreement obscures the scale of my country's massive A-bomb war crimes. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was certainly a dastardly war crime launched to reinforce Japanese Asia-Pacific imperialism. It claimed just over 2,000 lives, most of them military. Contrast that with the A-bombings that indiscriminately claimed almost 200,000 innocent civilian lives – and many more over time – in what was the imperial U.S.-Soviet Cold War competition that had already begun.

The A-bombings did not cause Japan's surrender. Japan was already functionally defeated. U.S. naval and air force leaders advised Truman that Japan's unconditional surrender could be achieved with a blockade. Truman's inner most circle rejected this because they sought an immediate end to the war to limit Soviet influence in Manchuria, northern China, Korea, and possibly even Japan. It was Moscow's August 9 declaration of war, not the A-bombs, which led Hirohito to order the surrender. The sister-park agreement reinforces the U.S.-Japanese military

alliance and is a truth bending blasphemy that contributes to the myth that the A-bombings were a just response to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Like May's G-7 declaration which endorsed the dangerous doctrine of nuclear deterrence, the sister park agreement is a setback in the pursuit of a nuclear weapons-free world.

We meet in a challenging time. Following in the U.S. tradition of preparing and threatening to initiate nuclear war during international crises and wars, Putin, Medvedev, and other Russians have been rattling their nuclear sabers. The weapons are unlikely to be launched unless Ukraine unexpectedly threatens Russian control of Crimea, which has functionally been Russian since 1853, longer than Okinawa has been Japanese. To maintain nuclear pressure, Putin is deploying nuclear weapons to Belarus to offset Moscow's deteriorating conventional military capacity. Among the sources of concern is whether these nuclear weapons will be securely under anyone's control in Belarus. Senior Russian analysts have been clear that for years to come Russia's conventional inferiority will increase its reliance on its nuclear arsenal.

Elsewhere, the U.S., Japan, and their allies are increasing their already massive levels of military spending. This means sacrificing spending for human needs, including for climate resilience. In the U.S. this includes funding replacements of its entire nuclear arsenal and its triad of delivery systems. It also pays for missile defense systems which can function as shields to reinforce nuclear first-strike swords. Biden is deploying new B-61-12 nuclear warheads to bases in six European nations, and U.S. nuclear powered and nuclear armed submarines are returning to South Korea. Also, here in Northeast Asia all six parties to the region's tensions have functional first strike doctrines, including Japan's ostensibly conventional preemptive strike capacity reinforced by the purchase of U.S. cruise missiles. Indian-Pakistani tensions continue apace, with Pakistan again on the brink of becoming a failed state.

After Bush II and Trump attacked the foundations of the world's arms control architecture by withdrawing from the ABM and INF treaties, Moscow has put the last nails in the arms control coffin by suspending its participation in the New START and Open Skies Treaties. Refusing to be intimidated by the ongoing U.S. and NATO pivots to Asia and the Pacific, China has increased the size of its nuclear arsenal and is preparing the way to achieve nuclear parity with Washington and Moscow. And then

there are the French, British, and Israeli nuclear arsenals and Iran's nuclear program which threatens regional nuclear proliferation..

All of this takes place in the context of Biden's *National Security Strategy* which states that: "the post-Cold War era is definitely over, and competition is underway between the major powers to shape what comes next." Fiona Hill, the former US diplomat who warned against inviting Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO, put it another way: The Ukraine War, she said, marks "the passing of *Pax America* apparent to everyone". Not everyone. Many in Washington and most of the general public have failed to recognize this reality. The belief that "America is the indispensable nation" still guides U.S. policy makers, fueling self-defeating policies and provocative and dangerous actions including seeking to strategically defeat Russia in Ukraine and sending warships through the Taiwan Strait.

The U.S. is not alone in refusing to adjust to the multipolar disorder in life affirming ways. Putin seeks to rule in the tradition of Peter the Great. China seeks to establish its East Asian hegemony in the tradition of the Monroe Doctrine. And the Cold War never ended on the Korean peninsula. If we are to prevent escalation to nuclear cataclysm, we must address what former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd named "the avoidable war." Intensifying U.S.-China military confrontations and their economic, technological, and diplomatic competition are a replay of the Thucydides Trap, the inevitable tensions between rising and declining powers that too often climaxed in catastrophic wars.

The contest for Asia-Pacific hegemony is related to the outcome of the Ukraine War. Given Russian-Chinese strategic interdependence, as well as Chinese dependence on U.S. technology and the U.S. and European markets, China has much to lose as well as to gain midst the Ukraine War. With its economic and diplomatic support for Russia, China's leadership seeks to ensure that Washington and NATO will continue to face a Russian great power in Europe in order to limit the threatening military buildup by the U.S., its Asian and Pacific allies, and NATO. But, Beijing's Ukraine peace plan, its warnings against Russian use of nuclear weapons, its Global Security Initiative, and its facilitation of the Iran-Saudi agreement demonstrate that China's partnership with Moscow is not "unlimited."

With its dispatches of warships to the Taiwan Strait, its sorties of nuclear capable bombers across South Korea, its reinforced military alliances, its expanding military presence across the Asia-Pacific, and its undermining of the One China doctrine, the Biden Administration seeks to reinforce the four generation old Bretton Woods/NATO systems and threats to the misnamed “rules based” order. Yes, Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine, China’s menacing naval forces in Philippine and Vietnamese waters, and Beijing’s rejection of the International Court of Arbitration’s South China/West Philippine Sea sovereignty decision are gross violations of the “the rules based order.”

But they are not the only ones. Keep in mind the AUKUS challenge to the NPT, Biden’s dispatch of cluster munitions to Ukraine, Trump’s, and Bush II’s assault on the arms control order, U.S. invasions of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, Reagan’s rejection the International Court of Justice, and Washington’s support for Israeli apartheid.

Biden’s *Security Strategy* gives the “China threat” pride of place in this “decisive decade.” China is seen as “the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and increasingly the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do it.” The *Strategy* names Chinese military modernization as the “pacing threat” that drives U.S. military planning, operations, and spending. Biden’s cohort understand that the U.S. can no longer enforce U.S. hegemony unilaterally. Thus, the priority given to integrating their allies’ military, economic and technological power to resist China’s challenge. They encouraged Japan to double its military spending, consolidated the QUAD and AUKUS alliances, pressed Tokyo, and Seoul to build a tripartite alliance. Marcos has reembraced the U.S. military alliance. And NATO’s new strategic concept names containing China as an Alliance priority.

China hasn’t stood still. It has reportedly doubled the size of its nuclear arsenal and may be aiming for nuclear parity with the U.S. Its navy is larger than the 7<sup>th</sup> fleet and is the leading edge of its effort to enforce its imperial nine-dash line. Beijing has repeatedly sent its warplanes across the median line in the Taiwan Strait. And its space and cyber weapons pose challenges to those of the U.S.

Taiwan is the most dangerous potential flash point of this geopolitical stew. Leading Washington analysts agree that, except in the case of an unexpected military accident or incident, Beijing has no intention of invading Taiwan in the near term. But bi-partisan madness is driving the U.S. Congress toward confrontation. There are other potential triggers for a catastrophic regional war involving the U.S., Japan, and China: militarized Japanese Chinese competition for the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, competition for control over the resources and sea lanes of the South China/West Philippine Sea, and unanticipated accidents or miscalculations.

As I prepared this talk I thought about how my grandson, as well as all of you, would hear the repeated references to the existential dangers of war, nuclear war, and the climate emergency. As I close, I want to point to sources of hope. One of my favorite poets, Leonard Cohen, wrote that “there are cracks in everything/that’s how the light gets in.”

We, the movements to stop the killing in Ukraine, those who are pressing Common Security diplomacy instead of militarism across Asia and the Pacific, people working to stanch and reverse the climate emergency, for democracy and above all to create a nuclear weapons-free world are all cracks in the war and nuclear systems.

I want to stress the importance of continuing to teach about the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and celebrating the extraordinary courage of Hibakusha – Japanese and others - who have provided humanity with the gift of their searing testimonies that eviscerate the illogic of “security” based on nuclear deterrence.

It is painful to witness the passing of Hibakusha, people like Watanabe Chieko, Yamaguchi Senji, and Taniguchi Sumiteru, who have lit our ways. In addition to rekindling their heart rending testimonies during these commemorations, we must keep their voices, vision, and courage alive in other gatherings, in literature, films, webinars and more to echo their warnings and hopes long into the future.

Reflecting on the linkage between Hibakusha and the TPNW, Austrian Ambassador Kmentt came to mind. He became the godfather of the TPNW after being profoundly moved by the Hibakusha testimonies that he heard here in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They obviously fueled his organizing of the Third Humanitarian Consequences conference, his roles in negotiation of the TPNW, and promoting it. When Reiner Braun and I spoke to him a few months ago about the

coming States Parties meeting, with urgency, patience, and his usual humility, Ambassador Kmentt celebrated the G-20 statement on the inadmissibility of the use of nuclear weapons, achieved by the intervention of TPNW states. He focused on building the TPNW's transformative bridge to a nuclear weapons free world, expecting more governments - possibly Brazil and Indonesia - ratifying the Treaty in time for November's Second Meeting of States Parties in New York. That Meeting, he told us, will focus on implementing the Action Plan adopted in Vienna, progress toward creating a nuclear weapons victims trust fund, verification processes, and winning universal adoption of the Treaty. There will also be a focus on how to deal with Treaty skeptics, especially nuclear umbrella states like Japan, and a new TPNW declaration that rejects nuclear threats, and which reinforces the nuclear taboo.

There is the classical debate about whether there is sound when a tree falls in a forest, and no one is there to hear it. Our responsibility, as we work to ensure Mateo's and so many others' futures, is to make sure that there will be sound and powerful reverberations when the Second States Parties Meeting is held next winter. Representatives of more than 20 organizations, including ICAN, Peace Action, CPDCS, Gensuikyo and others, have been meeting to plan and coordinate our activities in November. We look forward to hosting our Japanese and other partners as we join to build pressure on the nuclear powers and the umbrella states for the nuclear weapons-free world we need and deserve. I hope to see many of you there as we deepen the cracks and raise a nuclear weapons abolition din to shake the world!