

Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition

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If nuclear weapons epitomize the forces that would divide and destroy the world, they can only be overcome by the solidarity of ordinary citizens, which transforms hope into the energy to create a new era.

Even though the threat of global nuclear war has diminished since the end of the Cold War, the number of states with nuclear arms has nearly doubled since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force in 1970. There are still some 25,000 nuclear warheads in existence in the world. At the same time, there is rising fear that the spread of nuclear weapons technologies and materials through the black market will unleash the nightmare of nuclear terrorism.

I would like to urge the leaders of all states that either possess nuclear weapons themselves or whose national security is reliant on the nuclear weapons of other states to ask themselves these questions:

Are nuclear weapons really necessary? Why do we need to keep them?

What justifies our own stockpiles of nuclear weapons when we make an issue out of other states' possession of them?

Does humanity really have no choice but to live under the threat of nuclear weapons?

In considering these questions, the concept of “self-education” is key. This has been evidenced throughout the history of nuclear weapons, both in the deep concerns and misgivings of many of the scientists involved in their creation and in the actions of statesmen who have faced nuclear crises and participated in disarmament talks.

Although it ended without agreement to abolish nuclear weapons, the Reykjavík summit between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. President Ronald Reagan in October 1986 demonstrated the importance of a number of factors: a shared vision based on a clear awareness of crisis; unflagging determination to take the initiative; and a sense of mutual trust sustained to the end.

I urge the world's leaders to take these lessons to heart as they struggle to free humankind from the dire threat of nuclear weapons.

In 1957, my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, issued a historic call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. His speech, which denounced nuclear weapons as an absolute evil, contains three themes of particular relevance for today: the need for a transformation in the consciousness of political leaders; the need for a clearly shared vision toward the outlawing of nuclear weapons; and the need to establish “human security” on a global scale.

I believe it is possible to lay the foundations for a world without nuclear weapons during the next five years, and to this end would suggest a five-part plan. I call on:

1. **The five declared nuclear-weapon states** to announce their commitment to a shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons at next year's NPT Review Conference and to promptly initiate concrete steps toward its achievement.

2. **The United Nations** to establish a panel of experts on nuclear abolition, strengthening collaborative relations with civil society regarding the disarmament process.

3. **The states parties to the NPT** to strengthen nonproliferation mechanisms and remove obstacles to the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2015.

4. **All states** to actively cooperate to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security and to advance on a global scale toward the establishment of security arrangements that are not dependent on nuclear weapons by the year 2015.

5. **The world's people** to clearly manifest their will for the outlawing of nuclear weapons and to establish, by the year 2015, the international norm that will serve as the foundation for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC).

The path to the adoption of an NWC is likely to be a difficult one. But, rather than be paralyzed by this difficulty, we should take action now to generate overwhelming popular support for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, such that calls for the adoption of an NWC become impossible to ignore.

I would like to suggest that the real significance of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is by no means limited to their physical elimination. Rather, it involves transforming the very nature of states and interstate relations.

Just over 100 years ago, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, proposed a new mode of competition, “humanitarian competition”—in which “by benefiting others we benefit ourselves”—as a means of overcoming conflict among nations. He called on each state to engage in a positive rivalry to contribute to the world through humane action, in order to spread the spirit of peaceful coexistence and build a truly global society.

If we are to put the era of nuclear terror behind us, we must struggle against the real “enemy.” That enemy is not nuclear weapons *per se*, nor is it the states that possess or develop them. The real enemy that we must confront is the ways of thinking that justify nuclear weapons; the readiness to annihilate others when they are seen as a threat or as a hindrance to the realization of our objectives.

This was the enemy that Josei Toda referred to when he spoke of declawing the threat hidden in the very depths of nuclear weapons. He was convinced that a shared determination to combat this evil could serve as the basis for a transnational solidarity among the world's people.

Let us abandon the habit of studiously ignoring the menace posed to Earth by nuclear weapons and instead demonstrate that a world without nuclear weapons can indeed be realized in our lifetimes.

Raising one's voice or taking action is something we all can do. All that is required are the natural feelings shared by people everywhere: the desire to live in peace, the wish to protect those we love, the determination to spare the world's children needless suffering.

It is the passion of youth that spreads the flames of courage throughout society. This courage, transmitted from one person to the next, can melt the daunting walls of difficulty and open the horizons on a new era in human history.

Based on the proud determination to make the struggle for nuclear abolition the foundation for a world without war, and convinced that participation in this unprecedented undertaking is the greatest gift we can offer the future, I call on people of goodwill everywhere to work together toward the realization of a world finally free from the menace of nuclear weapons.