

# **Global solidarity to denuclearize**

Sep 8, 2009

If nuclear weapons epitomize the forces that would divide and destroy the world, they can only be overcome by the solidarity of ordinary citizens. This solidarity has the power to make hope an irresistible force transforming history.

Although 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 1970, when the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force. There are still some 25,000 nuclear warheads 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.

In recent years, there have been signs that at last the world is getting serious about eliminating nuclear weapons. In a speech delivered in Prague in April, U.S. President Barack Obama expressed his resolve to realize a world without nuclear weapons. When Obama met with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in April and again in July, they agreed on the broad outlines of a nuclear disarmament treaty to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expires in December.

The NPT Review Conference scheduled for May 2010 will be crucial in determining whether these positive signs coalesce into real progress toward a world without nuclear weapons.

On Sept. 8, 1957, my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, issued an impassioned call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. His speech, which denounced these weapons as an absolute evil, contains three themes of particular relevance for today: the need to transform the consciousness of political leaders; the need for a shared vision toward the outlawing of nuclear weapons; and the need to establish “human security” on a global scale.

Using very powerful language — “devil incarnate,” “fiend” — he denounced those who would use nuclear weapons. While we may find such terms disconcerting today, Toda’s intent was to expose the aberrant nature of nuclear deterrence — the cold and inhuman readiness to sacrifice vast numbers of people in order to realize one’s own security or dominance.

I believe it is possible to lay the foundations for a world without nuclear weapons during the next five years, and to this end propose 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 that are party to the NPT to strengthen nonproliferation mechanisms and remove obstacles to the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2015. The 2010 Review Conference should establish a standing working group to focus on these issues.
- 4. All states to actively cooperate to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security and to advance 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.

In his Prague speech, President Obama noted the moral responsibility of the United States as the only country to have actually used nuclear weapons; he also

announced the scaling back of the role of these weapons in U.S. security strategy and urged other states to follow suit.

However, U.S. disarmament efforts will be complicated if allies insist on continuing or strengthening the “nuclear umbrella.” Such a demand would constitute a violation of the spirit of the NPT.

It is crucial for nuclear-weapon states and their allies to engage in careful and earnest deliberations regarding extended deterrence. Together, they should develop alternatives, starting with effective measures for reducing regional tensions.

A clear demonstration of political will on the part of the United States and Japan could transform conditions in Northeast Asia, specifically the stalemate surrounding North Korea’s nuclear development program.

I urge all the countries currently engaged in the six-party talks — China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and the U.S. — to declare Northeast Asia a nuclear non-use region.

Universalizing the commitment that no country or people should ever fall victim to the horrors of nuclear weapons should be the pivotal element of U.S.-Japanese partnership in the 21st century.

Together, our two countries should take the lead in creating a world free from nuclear weapons.

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 is the way of thinking that justifies nuclear weapons — the readiness to annihilate others when they are seen as a threat or as a hindrance.

This was the “enemy” that Josei Toda had in mind 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 prove that a world without nuclear weapons can be realized in our lifetimes.