

2011 WORLD CONFERENCE AND JAPAN TRIP REPORT
GENSUIKYO – COUNCIL AGAINST ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS

In many ways my trip to the 2011 World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was an extension and expansion of a peace sisterhood launched May 4, 2010 during the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty meetings at the United Nations. That event was called “The Green Tea Party” and attendees came from Code Pink/New York, Code Pink/Osaka and the Granny Peace Brigade.

The following report is written from the perspective of a New York City activist visiting Japan for the first time. My impressions combine some awareness of Japan’s political and cultural landscape and fresh responses to the social currents observed briefly in Osaka, Hiroshima and Kyoto.

AUGUST 3 – Wednesday morning - HIROSHIMA

From the Sunroute Hotel small groups of overseas delegates were escorted to briefings at various hospitals. This provided a way for conference delegates to learn up to date information about the Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) and to become acquainted with each other. The Red Cross Hospital gave us a booklet and a briefing physician reviewed the information in more detail. Badly destroyed by the bomb, the hospital was only 1.5 km from the epicenter, and its new building is designed with an atrium – modern, light and very busy. 66 years after the bombs, it treats approximately 100 in-patients and up to 280 outpatients daily. Just recently a gene mutation has begun to appear for the first time. Their concern is for those who were 0-10 years of age in 1945, as well as persons now from the Fukushima area. On the lawn outside is a blasted section of the original hospital – the bomb force is evident in the twisted metal window frames and the wrecked brick and mortar walls.

**AUGUST 3 – Wednesday Afternoon through AUGUST 5 – Friday
CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

Plenary sessions and workshops of the 2011 World Conference Against A & H Bombs took place at the Bunka Koryu Kaikai Hall. The opening plenary began promptly at 2 p.m. and after preliminary welcome greetings and introductions, conference chairs were selected. Among them were Corazon Fabros from the Philippines who led the victorious struggle to close the USA base at Subic Bay and is now engaged in the campaign to end the “Visiting” Forces Agreement (she is barred entry to the USA); also Ingeborg Breines of the International Peace Bureau, Francois Gagnaire of Le Mouvement de la Paix, and Dave Webb of the U.K. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The continuing shadow of Fukushima hung over the conference, especially with revelations in newly declassified documents of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles outlining how the U.S. “sold” the idea of atomic power plants to Japan. An article in the July 24, 2011 *Japan Times* described the U.S. policy initiated in October 1954 to “remove the strong Japanese notion that atomic and nuclear energy is primarily destructive.”

Themes introduced were: the joint Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and Power Plants, Hibakusha compensation, and future NPT Preparatory conferences, and papers presented at the conference sessions amplified these ideas. Overseas presenters spoke of their solidarity and concern for the Japanese people in the aftermath of Fukushima.

Detailing each delegate’s message would be repetitive. Instead here follows a broad list of the most trenchant points to help further our aim of sharing information:

- The complacency of 25 years post-Chernobyl has been shattered by Fukushima and has shifted the balance in organizations from strictly anti-nuke to now encompass nuclear power plants. The 442 nuclear plants in 29 countries produce 15% of total electricity needs. An international non-violent struggle for complete energy transformation has already begun.
- Nuclear Weapons abolition remains our most urgent task. 23,000 Nuclear Weapons exist and 2000 are maintained on a high alert status. The technology is too complex to be mastered; thus “safety” is a myth. Likewise the Cold War strategy of “Mutual Assured Deterrence” is now exposed as myth.

- The 2015 NPT conference should be held in Hiroshima with significant progress to be made at the U.N. prep com meetings in 2012 and 2014; no significant progress has been made since last year's NPT meetings, in particular, work towards a nuclear free zone in the Middle East.
- The need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention is clearer now than ever before. The Non-Aligned Movement in May 2011 proposed a high-level international conference "to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons."
- The peoples of Japan and Guam have been caught in the middle of geopolitics that compromises the safety of the entire world. Peace and stability in Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Korea) is possible through regional cooperation.
- It is important to create Nuclear Free Zones, especially in the Middle East. Mayors For Peace, the world's largest organization working to abolish Nuclear Weapons, has 5000 member cities representing nearly one billion people.
- According to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) annual military spending is \$1.6 Trillion of which 100 Billion is for the nuclear industry.
- The U.S. has violated the NPT by illegally deploying nuclear weapons on its European bases. The German government was forced to admit that 20 U.S. nuclear bombs are deployed in Buchel. Now Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Norway have called on the U.S. to remove nuclear weapons from their territory.
- U.S. bases - Because of two Marine bases located at Mt. Fuji, the site cannot be registered as a World Cultural Heritage site. In the Philippines, the U.S. closed its base in 1992 but left a heavily contaminated area with resultant cancers like leukemia and miscarriages. This is a lesson for Japan to learn that it must stop hosting the USA.
- The City of Kobe has banned the presence of U.S. nuclear warships and submarines. Other cities in Japan should do likewise.
- A strong call for No More Hibakusha. Victims of Agent Orange should also be remembered.
- Korean Hibakusha abroad should be entitled to the same welfare benefits and compensation as Japanese Hibakusha. Likewise now for the new Hibakusha resulting from the Fukushima Daiichi plants.
- Chernobyl in 1986 has left millions who suffer its consequences but true facts are not available. In 1959 a contract between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) permits WHO release of information about radiation impact only after consultation with the IAEA.
- Death tolls continue to climb in the Marshall Islands after the 1954 Hydrogen bomb (Bikini) test and nuclear claims for compensation and restitution meet with little or no response from the U.S.
- Victims of the 193 tests conducted by France over a 30 year period (150 underground and 43 above) have struggled with the French government for compensation for tests in Polynesia and Algeria. They have launched an Appeal for a United Nations conference to take up the issue of Nuclear Test sites around the world for cleaning, rehabilitating and developing of all regions so affected.
- "Don't send our Students to Battlefields." Education for Peace is essential and textbooks need to be monitored for their description of nuclear energy – "Renewable Energy Sources" are usually portrayed as insufficient to meet energy needs.

The message from Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to the Conference, delivered by Sergio Duarte, U.N. High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, thanked Gensuikyo for its role in the work of disarmament. Mr. Duarte called the gathering a "Collective Conscience" that must push for accountability and, while

acknowledging the many obstacles as countries continue to modernize their arsenals, he expressed his gratitude for Gensuikyo's contributions.

AUGUST 6 – Saturday –

HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL CEREMONY – 8 to 8:45 a.m.

As a U.S. citizen attending this solemn, formal commemoration, the event was very painful – it was the U.S. that unleashed this horror on the world and inflicted a nightmare of destruction on the people of Japan. The Peace Park area was set with 12,000 chairs; escorts to seats done quietly with no frenzy; a program and a flower given to each person as they arrived; phalanxes of TV camera crews arrayed on the side; orchestras and choruses dressed all in white; the day was clear and hot and attendees were advised to drink water which was provided. At eight o'clock the ceremony began with a dedication of the register of names of the victims, a brief address and then foreign dignitaries presenting wreaths at the cenotaph. At 8:15 a.m. (the time when the bomb struck on August 6, 1945) a bell rang followed by silent prayer. The Mayor of Hiroshima spoke. Flocks of doves were released several times and a "Commitment to Peace" was read by the two 6th grade school children who had written it...their high voices sounding open and hopeful. A Peace Song was sung and the ceremony closed. We were invited to lay flowers at the monument where banks of Chrysanthemums had already been arranged.