

Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons have only been used twice in combat, both times against Japan by the United States at the end of World War Two. The bombs were dropped on August 6th and 9th, 1945.

The **Hiroshima** uranium bomb, nicknamed "Little Boy", had an explosive energy of about 15 kilotons.

The **Nagasaki** plutonium bomb had an explosive power of about 22 kilotons.

These bombs killed over **200 000 people** immediately, and many survivors (hibakusha) died later of burns and radiation

Pain caused by radiation has lasted for 55 years: Many hibakusha were disfigured, disabled and genetically damaged.

Both cities were reduced to plains of scorched rubble.



Hiroshima after the bombing. Photo credit USAF

Today, there are over 30,000 nuclear bombs with explosive power over 500,000 times that of those first bombs. 5,000 of them are on alert status, meaning they are set to be deployed on warning. As few as two percent of those bombs would cause a nuclear winter that could destroy all plant and animal life on earth.

Eight nations have nuclear weapons. Five nations are the declared nuclear weapons states which include China, France, Russia, The United Kingdom and The United States. India, Israel and Pakistan are also known to have nuclear weapons.

In 1998, an Angus Reid survey found that **93% of Canadians** want to get rid of nuclear weapons and 92% want Canada to take a leadership role in abolishing nuclear weapons.

Recent steps away from Nuclear Disarmament...

In October, 1999, the U.S. voted against ratifying the Nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

In January 2000, the Russian government recinded its "no first use" policy meaning that it reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first (a policy shared by the United States).

"Hiroshima has changed everything except the manner in which we think.
Remember your humanity and forget the rest."

Albert Einstein