

Acceptance Remarks for “Diplomatic Service Medal 2021”

December 20, 2021

KITANO Mitsuru

Ambassador of Japan to Ireland

Mr. Miceal O’Hurley, Editor-in-Chief, 'Diplomacy in Ireland - The European Diplomat',
Ms. Oksana Shadrina, Chair of the Awards Committee,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for this distinction.

I am deeply honoured to be awarded the Diplomatic Service Medal 2021. I am not quite sure whether I am worthy of such a tribute. However, I would like to humbly accept it.

I am truly gratified that my speech at the Ceremony of Hiroshima commemoration on August 6 this year was valued as advocacy for a world without nuclear weapons by the Awards Committee. I would like to thank the Reverend Canon Patrick Comerford, President of the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Dr. David Hutchinson Edgar, Chairperson of Irish CND, and Councillor Joe Costello, Deputy Mayor of Dublin, who were instrumental in organizing the ceremony. Without them, I would not have had an occasion to speak.

In my speech, I talked about the consequences of the atomic bomb which was dropped above Hiroshima on August 6 1945. Now the place has become the Peace Memorial Park. But, it used to be a busy city area with houses, shops and streets. The atomic bomb transformed the area into no man’s land. That was what I talked about.

In this connection, there is another person with whom I would like to share this great honour. His name is Mr. TANABE Masaaki, he lives in Hiroshima and is currently eighty-four years old. He lost his father, mother and younger brother in the atomic bombing. He himself survived but was exposed to radiation. He became a computer graphic artist. His life’s passion has been to reproduce the townscape of Hiroshima which was lost instantly in the atomic bombing, using the technique of computer graphics. He wants to show the people of the world what atomic bomb brings about.

Now you may understand that what I said in my speech is my modest attempt to convey what Mr. TANABE has tried to do in his computer graphic work of reproducing the townscape of Hiroshima. It is with a view to share the experience of Hiroshima transcending generations and borders.

Our path toward a world free of nuclear weapons is not easy. But, I am convinced that to the extent that there are people like the Reverend Canon Comerford, Dr. Hutchinson Edgar, and

Mr. Tanabe, we can be hopeful. I stand ready to continue to advocate practical steps for realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. I feel honoured that my humble effort was recognized in such a wonderful manner.

Last but not least, I thank my colleagues of the Embassy and my family for their great help and support.

Thank you very much again.