
2020 VISION: A CAMPAIGN TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS



In 1982, the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki formed the **World Conference of Mayors for Peace** to promote solidarity and co-operation among cities in arousing the collective international will to create a peaceful world, free from all nuclear weapons. This was not simply to be a 'protest movement'. Considerable emphasis was placed on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 when all "non-nuclear-weapon" states undertook never to develop or possess nuclear weapons. This was in response to the "nuclear-weapon" states working towards the elimination of their own stockpiles.

The Treaty is reviewed every five years, and the intermediate years have Preparatory Committees to get the agenda ready. This year's Preparatory Committee starts in April, and a massive public demonstration is planned for May 1st in New York to which the Mayors for Peace plan to send a sizeable representation.

In May 2002, the Treaty's Review Conference unanimously adopted a final document which included the promise "of an unequivocal understanding by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals". Yet the United Kingdom continues to sustain and update the Trident missile system, and the USA has publicly stated that it intends to develop "use-able" nuclear weapons, and reserves the right to use them pre-emptively even against a non-nuclear-weapon state.

India, Pakistan and Israel have never been signatories to the Treaty; North Korea has now withdrawn in the face of the threat it foresees from the USA which has failed to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and has reneged on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, both of which are intimately bound up with nuclear disarmament.

On behalf of world citizens rather than governments, Mayors for Peace are seeking to increase their numbers from 554 cities in 107 countries by signing up to a new Declaration expressing a demand that all states should honour the undertakings they have solemnly given. They want there to be a new affirmation of states' intentions at the Review Conference in April 2005 leading to nuclear abolition by 2020.

I spoke to the Mayor of Hiroshima in Geneva at the 2003 Preparatory Committee and expressed the hope that we could alert Wales to the initiative. All the 130 Mayors of County, County-Borough and Town Councils in Wales have now received a letter urging them to join the campaign. However, the scheme does not end there. It is looking for mutual co-operation between Mayors and citizens to ensure a high profile commemoration of the Hiroshima/ Nagasaki disasters on August 6th-9th, and to begin to create a momentum for a truly massive presence in New York in April 2005 of Mayors, Non-Governmental Organisations and concerned citizens.

This is really an exercise in democratic accountability, and fits very well with the widespread sentiments of the public over the war against Iraq. In developing their campaign, Mayors will certainly want some of the knowledge and experience of peace activists, and even before that we need to assure them of our support – as citizens of towns and cities, we would be the main victims of the use of nuclear weapons.

We cannot feel secure when we know that our state has the capacity to launch a first-strike on thousands of people like ourselves, and that it would be willing to do so in response to any attack on our country. Humanity needs to stand together against this political and moral blasphemy.

OLYMPIC PEACE APPEAL

The **International Peace Bureau**, meeting on the site of the ancient Olympic Games, reported that the Greek Government has taken the initiative to revive the "ekecheiria" (the ancient Greek term for 'handshake'), and to apply it to modern conditions. The IPB is therefore making a commitment to support an agreement to cease combat during the period of the next Olympic Games, August 13-27 2004, and appeals to everyone engaged in violent hostilities to abide by this truce.