

Collaboration between mayors and parliamentarians

Suggestions for speech by Keith Hunter,
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Mayors for Peace is an international network of over 2200 cities – 70 in Canada - supporting a vision for a world without nuclear weapons and collaborating on initiatives to help realize such a world.

[When and why Cumberland became a member of Mayors for Peace]

Mayors and parliamentarians have much in common with respect to the threat of nuclear weapons. As either local body legislators or national legislators we have a role to protect the security of citizens living within our jurisdictions and to protect our localities for future generations. Such security is not advanced when there remains the threat of nuclear disaster.

Regardless of where nuclear weapons might be targeted or detonated, or whether they would be used by terrorist organisations or State militaries, no-one would escape the calamitous consequences of a nuclear attack. Even cities and countries that are not the direct brunt of an attack would feel the global economic, social and medical repercussions. Any use of nuclear weapons would cause unimaginable devastation requiring massive aid, global effects from nuclear fall-out and a rise in refugees seeking to escape the most contaminated regions.

The only way to prevent the use of nuclear weapons is to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Such an aim has been agreed by nuclear weapon States in Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), supported by numerous United Nations resolutions, reinforced by the 1996 World Court case on nuclear weapons, and reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Yet the principal nuclear weapon States continue to drag their feet.

Together, Mayors for Peace and PNND represent the will of civil society for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and can help develop the political will to achieve this aspiration. Already there have been some positive collaborative efforts between Mayors for Peace and PNND.

In May 2005, PNND and Mayors for Peace presented an *Appeal of mayors and parliamentarians for a nuclear weapons-free world* to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. In October 2005, PNND and Mayors for Peace presented the appeal to the United Nations General Assembly. The presentation was made by Mayors for Peace Vice-President Donald Plusquellic and PNND Co-President Alexa McDonough.

At that time, a key focus was to get multilateral negotiations underway in the Conference on Disarmament. This is still a key goal. However, in order to build confidence in governments that nuclear disarmament is feasible, we must build a vision for a nuclear weapons free world.

Mayors for Peace have provided such a vision – calling for negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention that would provide a phased programme for nuclear disarmament under international control. The campaign is called 2020 Vision – because it encompasses a clear vision for a better world without nuclear weapons and the belief that such a world could be achieved by the year 2020.

A key tool in developing this vision is the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention (model NWC), drafted by a consortium of experts and submitted to the NPT and the United Nations General Assembly by Costa Rica and Malaysia. Mayors for Peace and PNND have collaborated with civil society organisations in launches around the world of the Model NWC and the book *Securing our Survival*, which outlines the convention and how it could be achieved.

For the New Zealand launch in August 2007, Mayors for Peace President Tadashi Akiba said: “It is fitting and hopeful that, as we here in Hiroshima commemorate the first ever use of a nuclear weapon, we will also be celebrating the launch of *Securing Our Survival: The Case for Nuclear Weapons Convention*. Such a convention is supported by the vast majority of nations and people on Earth, and I am grateful to the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament for bringing it to our attention. The time has come. As a species, we are making a fateful decision. Will we eliminate nuclear weapons or let them spread uncontrolled? Anyone who respects democracy, values civilization or wishes to secure our collective survival should be aware of this document and do everything in their power to bring it into force as the law of the planet.”

Just last week, on the 40th anniversary of the NPT, Mayors for Peace and the European Section of PNND held a very successful conference in the European parliament which launched a Parliamentary statement supporting a nuclear weapons convention and committing endorsers to take action to promote a convention. The statement was endorsed by parliamentarians from all political blocks within the European Parliament, including former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard. I am certain that Mayors for Peace and PNND can promote this statement in order to gather endorsements from parliamentarians around the world in order to increase the political impetus for the achievement of such a treaty.

We know that a treaty to completely abolish nuclear weapons would take some time to complete and implement. In the meantime there are concrete disarmament and non-proliferation steps that Mayors for Peace is promoting and which could also be of interest to PNND. One of these is the Cities are Not Targets campaign. The message from this campaign is that civilians cannot be made targets in military conflict. At the very least cities, which are comprised predominantly of citizens, cannot legitimately be targeted by nuclear weapons. The International Court of Justice concluded in 1996 that “The use of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in time or space.” Thus, the use of nuclear weapons anywhere would impact on citizens living in cities – or living outside cities – and would be illegal. The Cities are not Targets campaign draws attention to this illegality of the use of nuclear weapons

The campaign is new, but is already experiencing success. On June 13th 2008 - Around 400 local government representatives from more than 70 different countries together in The Hague for the First World Conference on City Diplomacy adopted a statement which says: ‘We support the initiative of the Mayors for Peace campaign which lobbies the international community to renounce weapons of mass destruction. We call on nation states and armed groups to cease considering cities as military objectives.’”

Mayors for Peace is also active on the steps to end the deployment of nuclear weapons on foreign territories. In December last year Mayors for Peace released a statement from its Executive members and the mayors of all NATO local authorities in which the US deploys nuclear weapons under NATO nuclear-sharing arrangements. The statement says that:

“The Soviet Union withdrew its nuclear weapons from the Ukraine and Belarus... Unfortunately NATO didn't follow Russia's actions, and U.S. tactical nuclear weapons remained in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK.” However, “membership in NATO does not require any state to accept nuclear deployments. For example Greece stopped hosting U.S. nuclear weapons in 2001. Let us take control of this fast-moving aircraft and, as an important step, remove the last foreign deployed nuclear weapons from the territory of another state. That would also be a step towards a new NATO defence policy not reliant on nuclear weapons.”

Mayors for Peace found support in this action from the actions already being taken by parliamentarians in a number of the NATO countries including raising this issue in the parliamentary debates, resolutions and joint parliamentarians' statements.

With NATO now examining its nuclear policy as part of the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept, there is an opportunity for further collaborative actions between mayors and parliamentarians on this issue in NATO countries.

I would like to conclude by affirming that Mayors for Peace and PNND can collaborate not only on actions and issues, but also in the strengthening of each others' organisations. PNND members have been encouraging their local mayors to join Mayors for Peace. Similarly some members of Mayors for Peace have been encouraging national legislators from their localities to join PNND. Increasing such mutual support could help build our organisations into an even stronger political force to ensure success in our campaigns for a nuclear weapons free world.

Thank you