

Thank you, Mayor Diaz, Mayor Cicillini and Tom Cochran, fellow mayors, honorable guests for providing me with this opportunity to speak at this great gathering of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

How things have changed since I spoke to you first at your Washington meeting in 2005! At the same time, what has not changed is how honored, privileged and proud I feel to be here among my fellow mayors who care about and work strenuously for the citizens they serve and who are committed to creating a better future for our children and their children.

Although I intend to explain what Mayors for Peace has been and will be doing shortly let me start by describing a discovery I have recently made.

I was actually surprised to learn how far back you and I have been struggling together for nuclear sanity. Tom – the USCM’s institutional memory! – reminded me that in 1990, the USCM adopted a resolution supporting amendment of the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty into a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Well, it so happens that the driving force behind that international effort was not governments, but an international network of politicians of which I was an active member. At that time, I was not a mayor but a member of the Japanese parliament; the network I belonged to was Parliamentarians for Global Action.

We had convinced non-nuclear-weapon states that they had to take responsibility for keeping the test ban issue alive in the face of opposition by President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher. On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, these non-nuclear weapon states formally proposed an amendment and garnered enough international support to require the convening of an amendment Conference.

Members of the US Congress then used the 1991 Partial Test Ban Treaty Amendment Conference as the launch pad for their efforts to cut off funding for nuclear testing which succeeded in 1992. In 1993, negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty began in Geneva and were successfully concluded three years later; President Clinton was the first to sign the agreement at UN Headquarters.

I tell this story not out of nostalgia, but because I believe it is happening again in compressed time and on an epic scale. Allow me to explain.

The first thing I need to remind you is that you American mayors have led the 2020 Vision Campaign of Mayors for Peace to its prominence now. Your generous support that has, time after time, preceded that of all other national mayoral associations—even Japan’s! has been invaluable, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

In this regard I would like to thank the Mayors for Peace members here in the United States – who now number 138 – who, together with our international leadership, including the Honorable Donald Plusquellic of Akron, have asked you for your help. You have considered it, and you have given it.

As a graduate of Elmwood Park High, a small community high school outside of Chicago, Illinois, I consider such an action a model of true American democracy that I learned in my high school civic class.

Now let me list what you have done for the future generations of the world.

Last year, you endorsed the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol. This proposal for fast-tracking nuclear disarmament would mean that by 2020 – or sooner – the shadow of nuclear annihilation would no longer be cast over the cities of America, or any other city in the world. On the heels of your endorsement, over 700 cities worldwide also endorsed the Protocol.

With that backing, our representatives in Vienna and New York were able to challenge non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the NPT) to press this issue at the treaty review process meeting in New York last month. I addressed that meeting and urged the delegates to unanimously support the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear-weapon-free world.

They tried. The chairman offered a comprehensive draft document in which starting talks on a nuclear weapons convention was a key important point. Unfortunately, consensus was unachievable, in part because one major delegation was not ready yet to make any major decisions. Which delegation? Yours: the US.

In fairness, it had been barely a month since your new President had made a major speech on nuclear policy in Prague. If you have not the chance to read it, please do. The text is on the web and I have a few copies with me in case you cannot wait. It is a statement of moral leadership that has galvanized leaders around the world.

I am glad to report that it has now also galvanized the State Department! Two weeks ago, in Geneva, the 13-year deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament was finally broken. Item one of the new work program is nuclear disarmament! Last week a Working Group was established within the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament and met for the first time. The talks have begun! You should take a moment to savor this victory, because it is largely yours. I thank you again for your epoch-making contribution.

But we cannot rest on our laurels! The mandate of the Working Group is weak; hardly the fast-track to a nuclear weapon-free world we are seeking. So, let's put this in perspective; what distance have we covered and what distance do we still need to travel?

In 2004, the US Conference of Mayors called for comprehensive nuclear disarmament negotiations to begin. In 2009, talks have finally begun; the United States played a valuable part in the breakthrough. But it is not clear that a comprehensive approach will be adopted.

In 2006, the USCM underscored the urgency of eliminating the threat to cities with a "Cities Are Not Targets!" resolution. The Working Group in Geneva's mandate does not properly reflect that urgency. Fortunately, many countries do feel the urgency, but the position of the United States is not yet clear.

In 2008, the USCM endorsed the 2020 target date, as espoused in the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol. In recent months, we have identified a core group of countries that recognize the profound importance of working toward a target date. This group needs to be rapidly expanded, and it must include the United States.

I know you and the Obama Administration have a long and complex agenda to cover. I wish you every success in grappling with the many pressing domestic issues you face; I face them, too!

But at your very next encounter, I hope you will tell the President that you are expecting comprehensive, urgent negotiations for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020, in one short phrase: fast-track global nuclear disarmament! They may not expect to hear this from mayors beset by so many issues 'closer to home.' For that very reason, they will listen more closely. We need them to acknowledge that cities are indeed on the frontline of any nuclear war and have every reason to want to see this problem solved without delay.

I know you have a long list of things you want Congress to deal with, but there is one other item I want you to add to your Senate list! The Senate has some important unfinished business. I started by talking about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Well, its ratification was rejected by the Senate in 1998 and it has been gathering dust in the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee ever since. Republican and Democratic mayors should tell their Senators to get busy and ratify that treaty.

The case is simple: there is no better way to destroy the 2010 NPT Review Conference and put the entire nonproliferation regime in jeopardy than continuing to snub the 150 NPT States Parties who have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The US has all the weapons it needs and even has the ability to do sub-critical nuclear tests and computer simulations. Of course, we oppose such testing, but my point is that ratifying the CTBT will cost the US nothing, and yet, the United States finds itself in the glorious company of the four states in the world that stand outside the NPT: India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea.

In Prague, President Obama said he would aggressively pursue ratification of the Treaty, and he has made Vice President Biden the point man. The sad truth is, they need your help. Please give it to them. If you help deliver that two-thirds majority for the test ban, they might be more receptive to the nuclear disarmament fast-track!

My friends,

I am a practical man. I know that things don't change because we want them to, or because they ought to. Big change comes when you organize for it. It comes when your organizing is successful in gathering greater and greater support. Mayors for Peace has been growing at a terrific pace since we launched the 2020 Vision Campaign. When we launched it in 2003, 560 cities were affiliated with Mayors for Peace. Today, we have close to 3,000 cities, and to be more precise, 2,926 city members to be exact in 134 countries and regions.

Those are impressive figures, but we will soon be far more impressive. We should have 5000 members by the time of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. So, let's see, where could I find, say 300 new mayors for peace?

[LOOK AROUND THE ROOM AS IF EXPECTING AN ANSWER, AND TRANSITION TO LOOKING AS IF YOU SEE THE ANSWER RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.]

On your chair you will find the Mayors for Peace registration forms. Please do not sit on it, but please sign one right now if you can; take it home if you must, but please do sign it!

Let me remind you that most likely you do not need any approval from your city council. There are no fees, which is a big factor. All we ask is that we should aim at a nuclear weapon free world as your President has clearly stated in Prague with just one more additional condition that the time limit we try to set is 2020. On specific issues Mayors for Peace will take up, you don't have to agree on every point. You are free to issue your own disclaimer. That is how we operate.

So please do join us!

By joining in the hundreds, you are sending an unmistakable message that the days of holding cities hostage to annihilation are over, and that you demand liberation from the threat of nuclear winter and global famine. This risk-taking at our expense has gone on too long. With terrorists in our midst, the concept of nuclear deterrence has become obsolete, utterly reckless, indeed, criminally negligent.

I am more confident than ever that the world will choose the right path. I sense a sea change in the near future. Your President senses it and is its most prominent representative. He and the vast majority of nations and people on this planet are becoming a new and exciting superpower; I call it the Obamajority.

In Prague, breaking from his prepared speech, President Obama assured his international television audience that, "Yes, we can!" eliminate nuclear weapons. With his help, we can and we will; the first step is to grasp the urgency and set ourselves a target date. The US Conference of Mayors has done it; the United States can do it; and if we do, the world will gladly follow.

During my term as mayor, Hiroshima has been graced by the visits of two Presidents of USCM, Donald Plusquellic and Beverly O'Neill as well as Tom Cochran. I want to say to each and every U.S. Mayor: you are always welcome to visit Hiroshima to see for yourself what inspires me and so many other people to dedicate themselves to ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

But I would also like to ask your help in encouraging one very special person to come to Hiroshima. I have extended an invitation to President Obama to come to Hiroshima at his earliest convenience. I can assure him and you that Hiroshima's citizens, especially the hibakusha, the survivors of the A-bomb, will embrace a visit by him as a statement that, while we cannot change history, our focus is firmly on creating a common future for all humanity.

Like Kennedy's visit to Berlin or even Nixon's visit to China, such a visit would be seen as a breakthrough, a world-changing moment that would make him a hero for centuries to come. Judging by the thoughtful reference to 1945 in his Prague speech and his declared desire to bring people together as citizens of the world, he may very well be inclined to accept this invitation. I really hope you will encourage him to do so.

Thank You!

And please sign those forms! Thank you.