



20 September, 2016

Greetings on behalf of the U.S. members of Mayors for Peace. I regret that previous commitments prevent me from joining you in person at this Second Regional Summit of Latin American and Caribbean Mayors for Peace, in the beautiful city of Mexico City.

We Mayors for Peace are keenly aware that nuclear weapons were designed to wipe cities off the map. Cities around the world are utterly unprepared to respond to a catastrophe of that scale. Prevention is the only cure.

Motivated by growing concern about rising international tensions and a disquieting Presidential campaign, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), the non-partisan association of cities with populations over 30,000, at its annual meeting in June unanimously adopted a strong resolution put forward by members of Mayors for Peace, warning that “the nuclear-armed countries are edging ever closer to direct military confrontation in conflict zones around the world,” and calling on the next President of the United States “to pursue new diplomatic initiatives to lower tensions with Russia and China and to dramatically reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles.”

Cautioning that “more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, most orders of magnitude more powerful than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, 94% held by the United States and Russia, continue to pose an intolerable threat to cities and humanity,” the USCM resolution “calls on the next President of the United States, in good faith, to participate in or initiate... multilateral negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons as required by the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.”

Nuclear weapons also consume enormous amounts of federal funding which is desperately needed in our communities to build affordable housing, create jobs with livable wages, improve public transit, and develop sustainable energy sources.

Therefore, while the USCM resolution commends President Obama for visiting Hiroshima and concluding negotiations with Iran, it notes that “the Obama Administration has laid the groundwork for the United States to spend one trillion dollars over the next three decades to maintain and modernize its nuclear bombs and warheads, production facilities, delivery systems, and command and control.”

The resolution “calls on the next President and Congress of the United States to reduce nuclear weapons spending to the minimum necessary to assure the safety and security of the existing weapons as they await disablement and dismantlement, and to redirect those funds to address the urgent needs of cities and rebuild our nation’s crumbling infrastructure.”

As the U.S. Conference of Mayors has recognized, nuclear arms continue to pose a global and regional threat. To address these threats, examples of the successful institutionalization of nuclear disarmament,

such as Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, are instructive. Here, Mexico can play a pivotal role, as both the initiator of the world's first populated nuclear weapon free zone, codified by the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, and a neighbor of the world's leading nuclear and military power, sharing not only a border but strong social, cultural, and economic ties.

There are more than 50 million people of Latin American heritage in the United States, making up almost 17% of the U.S. population. The Latin American population has grown by 43% in the last decade, making it the largest ethnic or racial minority in the U.S. The U.S. has the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Spanish speaking population in the world. Mexico has historically served as a bridge between Latin America and North America.

As has become evident in the current U.S. Presidential campaign, candidates and potential voters of Latin American heritage have become increasingly influential. Projecting the proud heritage of Latin America's historic leadership on nuclear disarmament across the border to Latin Americans living "north of Tlatelolco" could provide a new channel to raise awareness of current nuclear dangers within the U.S. population, and help create the political will necessary to compel the U.S. to take leadership in commencing a process for the global elimination of nuclear weapons, as it is required to do under the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Increased communications between Mayors for Peace members and mayoral associations from Latin America and the U.S. as well as between non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other sectors of society in Latin America and the U.S. offer the opportunity for a new "North of Tlatelolco" campaign.

A good starting point for a fresh look at disarmament is a cross-border dialogue that places the task of eliminating nuclear weapons in a broader context, stressing values that the people and leaders in both countries claim to believe: that the path to peace lies not through more weapons but through removing the causes of conflict, that a more peaceful world must also be more fair.

Mayors are primarily responsible for public safety. Let us help set sensible priorities with the aspiration that our collaboration puts the hopes, dreams and possibilities of future generations ahead of war. Let peace be the stage for our future!

I wish you a successful Summit and look forward to our future collaboration, "North of Tlatelolco."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T.M. Franklin Cownie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honorable T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines Iowa; Lead U.S. City, Mayors for Peace