

≡ 広島市長

秋葉忠利

June 20, 2005

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To:

For Mother Earth  
K. Maria Hendrikaplein 5  
9000 Gent, BELGIUM

Dear friends in Belgium and across Europe,

With this letter I wish to express my support for the peace walk from Ypres to NATO headquarters in Brussels then on to the nuclear weapon base of Kleine Brogel, an initiative organised to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 60 years ago. I also understand that the walk is supported by a growing number of Belgian mayors who have joined the Mayors for Peace network and are taking initiatives to realise the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by 2020.

I am writing to ask the people of Europe and of Belgium in particular to participate in and support this walk. We sincerely hope that many will join –even for one day– and walk in solidarity with the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whose wish is “No more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis ever again”.

We live in a dangerous time. The NPT Review Conference has failed, and we are still threatened by almost 30,000 nuclear warheads. At a time when apathy and ignorance are common enemies, I applaud the walkers who are taking this action to expose the double standard of the Western states concerning weapons of mass-destruction. Of course, we cannot condone nuclear weapons in North-Korea, Iran or Iraq. But why should we tolerate nuclear weapons in Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey or anywhere else? Is it credible for a smoker to forbid other adults to smoke because of health concerns? Of course not. Yet this is exactly what NATO, the US, and the EU are doing when they ask other nations not to acquire nuclear weapons. How can they expect restraint from others while they themselves cling to the false sense of power and security they derive from nuclear weapons?

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We all feel frustrated by the outcome of the Review Conference and the latest NATO Defence Ministers meeting. However, the Review Conference did again confirm the fact that the overwhelming majority of people and nations on this planet wish to be rid of nuclear weapons. The fate of the human race should be dictated by the majority, not by a handful of men who still live in the dark ages of competitive empire-building.

Finally, I wish to thank For Mother Earth for their excellent work in enrolling nearly half of all Belgian Mayors in the Mayors for Peace network. The new surge of energy emanating from Belgium is impressive and inspiring! Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tadashi Akiba', written in a cursive style.

Tadatashi Akiba  
Mayor of Hiroshima  
& President of Mayors for Peace