

## HIROSHIMA DAY MESSAGE 2006

Dear Friends,

As I write, wars are raging in Lebanon and in Iraq. Innocent people are being injured and killed. The war machines of powerful nations are demonstrating yet again that both munitions and life are expendable on the altar of war. The leaders, of course, are far from the fronts where the battles are being fought.

These wars are being waged in the 61<sup>st</sup> year of the Nuclear Age, an age in which our technologies have become capable of destroying humankind and most forms of life on our planet. We should never lose sight of the fact that nuclear weapons are always available to be used by those who possess them.

Nuclear weapons are illegal and immoral weapons. They are also anti-democratic, anti-human, anti-life and anti-environment. These weapons reflect a pronounced form of cowardice, being long-distance killing devices that threaten indiscriminate mass murder of civilians and combatants, men and women, infants and the elderly.

There can be no honor in producing, possessing, testing, threatening or using nuclear weapons. Those who take part in nuclear weapons programs, and gain livelihood from them, are worse than war profiteers, risking the destruction of humanity for personal gain.

We are challenged as never before in human history. Our responsibility as citizens of Earth in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to end the nuclear weapons threat to humanity and to end war as a social institution. Unfortunately, we are far from those twin goals so critical to the future of life on earth.

The survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the ambassadors and prophets of the Nuclear Age. They have seen atomic destruction at close hand. Their testimonies are sober reflections on the unleashed power of the atom. They speak out so that their past will not become our future.

But their testimony is not enough. We must act as though the very future of humanity depended upon our success in eliminating nuclear weapons and war. The stakes are very high and the prospects dim, but with courage and persistence we may succeed. And it is that flicker of hope in a dark time that should inspire us to summon the courage to change the world.

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