

**Opening Remarks by
Alfred L. Marder
President, International Association of Peace Messenger Cities
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Mayor Jackson, Mayor Sullivan,, Distinguished Guests, Brothers and Sisters,

We salute the organizers of this historic Peace Forum, the Canadian Mayors who have rallied in support and the people of Vancouver who demonstrate their commitment to the struggle for peace. It is in this time when dark clouds of pending crisis are overhead that those who talk of peace must demonstrate that commitment. Vancouver will prove to be a rallying cry for peace!

This gathering is not an ordinary event. It is a gathering of activists who have come together with leaders of Cities to mobilize the largest grassroots peace movement in the history of humanity. We represent the majority of people whose voices must penetrate our sessions. We, together, Cities and communities, must build that united front to confront the ideologues of the death merchants with their killing machines. We have truth on our side; we have morality on our side; we have the people on our side. We have life on our side.

We must not couch the reality the world faces in vague, rhetorical tones. We are peace activists not diplomats. The stakes for humanity are too high! We are talking about issues of life and death!

What is that reality? Over hundred million people are roaming the earth looking for work, for food, for shelter. Why? Two billion people do not have clean drinking water. Why? How many children die every minute due to malnutrition, dehydration and disease! Why? How many people die every day from curable diseases? Why? With over 50% of the world's population living in cities, cities are struggling to provide the basic services required of urban living. Why?

Why? Each year globally over 1 trillion US dollars are spent on killing machines, and this figure is rising! That is why. Draining the national treasuries to enrich the death merchants!

Some will hesitate to point the finger! We are talking about policies not people! It is NOT anti-American to oppose these policies of the United States that are creating such a crisis in the world! The people of the United States, my people, are in the great majority opposed to those policies! President Jimmy Carter said on November 20th,

"There are determined efforts by US leaders to exert American imperial dominance throughout the world. These revolutionary policies have been orchestrated by those who believe that our nation's tremendous power and influence should not be internationally constrained..."

We must say it the way it is!

The rationale is to fight terrorism! A permanent never-ending war to fight terrorism. Is that why the United States has over 750 military bases around the world! Against terrorists"? Half of the US fleet of aircraft carriers are in the Pacific. Against "terrorists"? By 2008, the US will have 14 nuclear armed submarines in the Pacific with 336 Trident 2 ballistic missiles armed with 2,000 nuclear warheads! Against terrorists? Can anyone believe it is for a war against terrorism?

The policies of pre-emptive strike; nuclear weapons as an option; abrogation of signed treaties, an illegal invasion of Iraq; Afghanistan, threats against Iran and North Korea have brought the entire world to this juncture of crisis. These policies have inveigled some national governments into a coalition of complicity. The struggle for peace in those countries, against involvement in these policies of dominance, is a patriotic struggle for national sovereignty, national independence and peaceful relations.

These are our challenges! Out of this Peace Forum must come common actions and strategies that will mobilize the millions in all of our countries. My organization has called for the United Nations to declare a Special Session on Disarmament and an International Year on Disarmament to create a groundswell to end to this madness! Others will advocate other measures. We will listen to each other. We will gain strength from each other. We will march together. Peace is possible.

Thank you.