



# Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

Peter D. Neils, President  
Los Alamos Study Group

7 June, 2008

Mayor Martin Chavez  
City County Government Center  
Albuquerque, NM

Dear Mayor Chavez,

I write you in reference to our meeting of Monday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00 a.m. Our conversation was, unfortunately, sidetracked by your response to my fellow board member's (Ms. Shigeo Sasamori) request that you join Mayors for Peace.

I was, quite frankly, speechless when you responded to her request by introducing the fact that your uncle died at the hands of his Japanese captors on Bataan. Perhaps inadvertently, you implied a relationship between the suffering she endured as a result of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima with the Japanese' treatment of our troops, in particular your uncle, during the Bataan Death March.

I remind you that she, unlike your uncle, was a civilian not a combatant; a 13 year old girl on a city street when she was exposed to temperatures that incinerated people near her and knocked her down with 300 mile per hour winds. She lost virtually every square inch of skin that was not covered with her clothing, which was also burned to ash on her body. The face you saw was reconstructed by a team of surgeons in New York that was assembled by Dr. Norman Cousins, who subsequently adopted Shigeo. She has been a United States citizen since 1962.

To accept that our government engaged in a tactic which would subsequently be outlawed by the Geneva Conventions because of its disregard for civilian lives and offer her a civil reception would in no way be an affront to the memory of your uncle or the other brave men who died horrible deaths at the hands of their Japanese captors. Rather, it would affirm your humanity. Two wrongs don't make a right, and vengeance is a poor substitute for justice. The survivors of the atomic bombings have forgiven the people who visited such a horrible consequence on them. Could we, from our remote vantage point, not profit by doing the same?

We came to see you to offer you the opportunity to be a part of an historic moment in our nation's history. Neither the Los Alamos Study Group nor Mayors for Peace wish you to actively work on this issue, therefore it would not distract from your other priorities. In point of fact, if our vision were realized, there would be more federal money available for roads, schools, education, health care; many of the issues you indicated were priorities for your administration. Recognizing that nuclear weapons divert increasingly scarce resources from more socially beneficial programs is where the change starts.

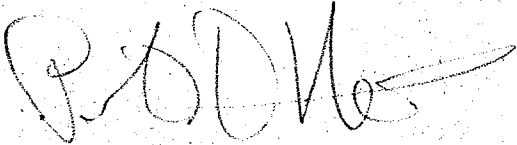
By becoming a signatory to our *Call for Nuclear Disarmament* and Mayors for Peace you could, with no further effort, place yourself in a position of leadership, joining thousands of civic leaders from around the world who are taking a courageous public stand asking our federal elected leaders to actively pursue negotiations which would lead to multilateral disarmament and

a verifiable, international oversight protocol. I would note that this is merely asking that our government fulfill existing obligations under International and U.S. law.

I have enclosed the "Covenant of the Mayors for Peace" as you requested, as well as an invitation to join Mayors for Peace from the Mayor of Hiroshima, Tadatashi Akiba. If you would like, we would be happy to arrange a phone conference with Mayor Akiba. As of June 2, 2008, there are 2,277 international member cities in Mayors for Peace.

I am offering you this opportunity to redress your regrettable response to Ms. Sasamori's request by offering her your sincere apology and join our campaign to rid the world of these horrible weapons. Failing the latter, I anticipate your willingness to extend the former and I await your thoughtful reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Neils", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Neils, President  
Los Alamos Study Group