

WORLD MARCH FOR PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE - WELLINGTON SPEECH

Rafael de la Rubia - Wellington October 2nd, 2009

Today, on the 2nd of October 2009, the 140th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, the international day of Nonviolence, in Oceania, in Wellington, we initiate the World March for Peace and Nonviolence.

New Zealand, the most easterly country on the planet, is a reference for the world in the struggle for peace and disarmament because New Zealanders have shaken off the yolk of foreign military bases and nuclear weapons.

From this remote place, far from the centres of power we are initiating this worldwide action. We are coming from even further east, from the Chatham Islands, the place on this planet that receives the first rays of the sun at the start of every day. It is there with friends from an ancient culture, the Moriori, that we started this journey of symbolic value.

This world march, called by some the greatest ever demonstration for Peace and Nonviolence, will pass through more than 100 countries on 5 continents, something that has never before occurred in history and will conclude on the 2nd of January, 2010 in the Park of Study and Reflection in Punta de Vacas at the foot of Mount Aconcagua, the roof of the West.

We aspire that, in the same way the sun dawns on the new day for the planet here, a new day starts for all of humanity, with a world without nuclear weapons and without wars.

Friends, as all of you know apart from in Wellington, today in many other cities, towns, and even small villages, this great march also begins with a multitude of actions. We send warm greetings for the friends from Australia, from the countries of Asia, of Africa, for the friends of Europe, and the friends of North and South America.

This march has already made an impression on our consciousness. We are resolute in working for the disappearance of wars and the elimination of violence. This yearning that the majority of human beings have elevated in their hearts since ancient times today is charged with new meaning hence we are able to be in tune as one voice across the planet. Never before have we had an opportunity such as this. This march can become an unprecedented phenomenon that puts us in a new historical moment.

Where are we coming from? In our collective memory, wars, conquests and invasions continue to be the principal thread of our history. This is how it is taught in our schools. Violence continues to tower as the highest exponent of honour and value. This has brought us to this situation of general violence where destructive force is imposed. Who are those countries deciding for the world at an international level? They are those that have the most power to destroy. Moreover, today this power is interlinked with others, the power of the military moves the economy, which in turn controls the media, and all of them end up managing political power. This violence has been installed as a complex web which, starting from levels of governments and institutions, is projected into all spheres of society.

Meanwhile, with the progress achieved through the passage of history, humanity should have sufficient resources to take a gigantic step guaranteeing all human beings sufficient food, water, medical assistance, adequate housing, and a dignified education. This is possible with the measureless resources used to develop weapons, and in militarization. This draining of society's resources even affects the quality of life in the middle classes of society in all

corners of the planet, increasingly holding back the weakest sectors such as youth and children, women and the elderly.

The World March has begun in the year in which this system experienced its most serious world financial crisis. We all have experienced the restrictions of recession. Nevertheless this year will go down in history as a record breaking year for investment in weapons.

Across the entire planet the discontented increase in numbers. And what do governments in general do? They increase repression and militarization and controls are on the increase, reaching unsustainable extremes.

There is no lack of feverish minds among those who govern us and the economic groups of the military-industrial complex; the power in the shadows, see armed confrontation as the way out of this "disorder" that they themselves have generated. This is how they have been operating for centuries. Their solution is "great wars for great crises".

But today it goes even further than that. There are countries that have spoken of the possibility of carrying out "controlled" nuclear attacks in conventional wars. There are minority groups looking to drag us into a third world war to once again terrorize humanity in order to maintain their world hegemony for another 60 or 70 years. They want another Hiroshima and Nagasaki to prop up their out-of-date and outmoded power. And they call themselves civilized countries...

But history has its twists and turns. At the same time other things are happening, not everything is negative, new possibilities are opening. In the world today change is in the air. Once more hope for something new is being savoured ...

There are thousands of thousands, millions of reasons, as uncountable the number of dead throughout human history crying out, "Enough is enough". Let's stop the violence, once and for all. We want a world without armed aggression, without invasions, where military spending is reduced. Let's give a new direction to military budgets targeting them for the benefit of civil society which needs it so much! Let's finally re-position the function of armies to supporting people in catastrophes, humanitarian assistance, etc. Enough with armed forces of war, let's construct armies for peace.

Friends, this is a march that has no return. This is a march that can only be halted when wars stop throughout the world. This is a march by those of us who are tired of so much violence. This is a march that comes from way back in history. The roots of the march can be traced to the moment in which the first human being was violent to another. It arose in when the first tribe assaulted a weaker one, when the first minority was exterminated. There, we find the origins of this violence that is recreated every day when we are violent to people around us, when some groups discriminate against others, when power is utilized to repress, control, and impose, when we don't treat others as we would like to be treated.

This is a march that will travel the world alerting the world to the grave danger we are facing, but also announcing that we find ourselves in front of the possibility of finally leaving behind "human prehistory".

Saying "enough is enough" we set ourselves to march, full of hope that this march will not end until nuclear arms and wars disappear from the face of the earth.

We call on those who have carried out any pacifist and nonviolent struggle, on all those who in some moment rebelled against the established violence, on those who also were violated and who did not have the strength to rebel, on all those who have seen their social ideals fail, on all those good people of the world, no matter where they come from or the colours of their banners; what unites us is the future.

We are going to visit governments and institutions to speak about these things and we are going to deliver this manifesto parts of which I will read.

"To the Presidents and Prime Ministers of; the United States of America; the Russian Federation; the People's Republic of China; the Republic of France; the United Kingdom; the Republic of India; the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; the State of Israel:

The responsibility of this moment in which the future of humanity is decided falls to you. You are those who will decide between history and prehistory, between humanization and animalization, between an earth for all and a world of fear, between a generous earth and a contaminated desert. You will be responsible for the social atmosphere that we breathe in the coming years.

Today we demand that you prioritize in your policies of defence and foreign relations

- * nuclear disarmament at a global level
- * the immediate withdrawal of invading troops from occupied territories
- * the progressive and proportional reduction of conventional weapons
- * the signing of non-aggression treaties between countries
- * the renunciation by governments of the use of war as a means to resolve conflicts"

The moment has come to say thank you and remember all those who have made this World March possible. In just over two years, starting with a few people who have been joined by others, and others, and others. Hence, in a soft way, without resources, without support of the powers that be, or companies, through "word of mouth" this idea went on expanding, growing until becoming a "possibility", after which it turned into a "certainty" that has ended up being an inspiration for many. Revolving and revolving this has reached nearly 100 countries of the planet. It started from the humanist organization World without Wars and in a short time hundreds, today thousands of organizations have joined in. We are thankful to the humanists of the world, and their organisations and action fronts. We are thankful to the world network of Mayors for Peace, Federico Mayor Zaragoza from the Culture for Peace Foundation, the Network of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Disarmament, the Network of Abolition 2000, the Summit of Nobel Laureates, to mention but a few. There are thousands of intellectuals, artists, academics and sporting figures who joined this March together with Presidents, Mayors and spiritual leaders. And, together with Mahatma Gandhi let's not forget Martin Luther King as the greatest exponents of nonviolence, and Mario Rodriguez Cobos (Silo) creator of Universalist Humanism. Without all of you this World March would not have been possible. But the great protagonists of this march are those hundreds of thousands and we hope millions of anonymous people, the "invisible of the world" who are at the end of the day those who suffer violence in all its forms. This is the March for all those who have never marched, who never demonstrated but who think that the moment has come to say enough to so much barbarism for the first time in history at a worldwide level.

Friends to finish, I want to refer to a story that has been very inspiring and of great significance for many in this march:

A long time ago, in their search for food and shelter the first inhabitants stepped onto inhospitable and unknown lands where they fought against savage animals, the elements, and the forces of nature. And so it was for millennia. By the end of the era they came to populate the entire earth.

In another era they searched for wealth, possessions and adventures, some peoples subjugated other peoples. They massacred and enslaved others, taking their goods, their resources, their bodies, and also their minds. And so the world has turned until today, sewing subjugation, hunger, misery, illness and pain; a lot of pain.

But today the times of renewal are coming, in which the human being once more circles the planet earth. Not to satisfy their hunger, nor to enslave or steal from others, but rather, to extend a hand in recognition of their brothers and sisters, to reconcile, to collaborate, to construct the base of a new culture, a new civilization as there has never been before on earth. To resolutely construct the universal human nation...

The time has come in which the human being has decided to stand up and come together from distinct races, beliefs and generations, for the first time in history in a common cause: a great march that will go around the world moving the human consciousness and the heart...

Friends... Let's march and not stop until we have fulfilled our goal!
A world without Wars and without Violence

Long live the World March for Peace and Nonviolence!