

EASTER 1981

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

We rejoice in the blessings that have come to all mankind because the Lord Jesus Christ—the Prince of Peace—came forth from the grave in glorious immortality nearly two thousand years ago. And we glory in the angelic word, spoken in an open tomb, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.” (Luke 24:5.)

As his ancient apostles testified, so we testify anew that because of his redeeming sacrifice and resurrection all mankind will be raised in immortality, and that those who believe and obey his holy word will gain an eternal inheritance with him in the kingdom of his Father.

His message to all mankind, at this season and at all seasons, is one of peace—of peace on earth and good will to all. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto,” he said.

(John 14:27.) And so we raise a standard of peace to all the world; we invite all men to accept the gospel of peace; we renounce war and proclaim peace; and we look forward with joy to the Millennial day when peace will prevail over all the earth.

We are not, however, unmindful of present world conditions and “of the evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days.” (D&C 89:4.) It was our fellow believer James who spoke these Biblical words: “From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts?” (Jas. 4:1.) We live in a day of crime and evil and war, in the age in which peace has been taken from the earth, and in which Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of wars.

It is clear to all that nations the world over are arming themselves with the most awesome and destructive weapons ever devised by men. We deplore the use of nuclear weaponry with its terrible potential for the destruction of life, property, and even of civilization itself. We recognize that such weaponry exists in a number of nations and that others are devoting their wealth and means to acquire it. All history attests that armed nations become warring nations, and it was the Prince of Peace who said, “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matt. 26:52.)

Our constant prayer is that the United States of America will spare no effort in seeking to reach an understanding with other nations that would stop a catastrophic nuclear arms race. We hope and pray that the American nation will be a beacon of righteousness to all the world and will qualify to receive the Book of Mormon promise: “Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ.” (Ether 2:12.)

With reference to the proposed MX basing in Utah and Nevada we are most seriously concerned over the plan to concentrate all of this in one area. We would feel the same if

such concentration were to occur in any part of the United States. Under the present proposal the nation would expect one geographical segment of the population to bear a highly disproportionate share of the burden, in lives lost and property destroyed, in case of a missile attack, particularly if this were a saturation attack.

We are aware of the various dispersal alternatives that have been considered, and at this point we are not persuaded that one or more of these is without merit. The implications of concentration bear not only on the burden of sacrifice by one segment of the population in case of attack, but also during the period of construction and maintenance it is self-evident that there will be grave sociological, environmental, water and economic problems that could have serious consequences for the future.

We renew our Christmas Message issued in December 1980:

“We call upon the heads of nations to sit down and reason together in good faith to resolve their differences. If men of good will can bring themselves to do so, they may save the world from a holocaust, the depth and breadth of which can scarcely be imagined. We are confident that when there is enough of a desire for peace and a will to bring it about, it is not beyond the possibility of attainment.

“Not only do we urge renewed effort to resolve international difficulties, but also those of a domestic nature in communities and families. Ours is a diverse society, but we are persuaded that most men and women long for peace as they hunger for bread. Again, where there is a strong enough desire to bring it about, it may be achieved. The application of the Golden Rule laid down by the Savior of mankind will bring a resolution of almost any disagreement. This applies in the home, in the neighborhood, in the marketplace, the state, the nation and the world.” (*Deseret News*, December 20, 1980.)

Notwithstanding the evils and ills that sweep the earth, we view the present and look forward to the future with hope. We know the Almighty reigns and that all who keep his commandments will find peace and rest with him eventually in his kingdom.

We ask men of good will everywhere to join with us in prayer and faith and good works—all to the end that we may have peace in our day and a hope of everlasting reward hereafter.

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