



## ***Committee on International Justice and Peace***

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April 13, 2015

United States Senate  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510

Dear Senator/Representative:

In a recent letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, I welcomed the adoption of a framework by the United States and its P5+1 partners as an important step in advancing a peaceful resolution of the serious questions that have been raised regarding Iran's nuclear program. On Easter Sunday, Pope Francis prayed that "the framework recently agreed to in Lausanne ... may be a definitive step toward a more secure and fraternal world." We share the Holy Father's hope.

Since 2007 our Committee on International Justice and Peace, reflecting the longstanding position of the Holy See, has urged our nation to pursue diplomacy to ensure Iran's compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. For years, we have supported dialogue and a negotiated resolution of the conflict, in collaboration with international partners.

It is no small achievement that the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, China, Germany and France have reached another milestone in the process of negotiations with Iran, one that aims to curb the unacceptable prospect of Iran developing nuclear weapons. As we have noted in the past, Iran's statements and actions have threatened its neighbors, especially Israel, and contributed to instability in the region. We hope the agreement is a first step in fostering greater stability and dialogue in the Middle East.

Despite the challenges, it is vital to continue to foster an environment in which all parties can build mutual confidence and trust in order to work towards a final accord that enhances peace. For this reason, our Committee continues to oppose Congressional efforts that seek to undermine the negotiation process or make a responsible multi-party agreement more difficult to achieve and implement. The alternative to an agreement leads toward armed conflict, an outcome of profound concern to the Church.

We welcome the most recent step the United States and its international partners have taken with Iran and encourage our nation to continue down this path. Now is the time for dialogue and building bridges which foster peace and greater understanding. We urge Congress to support these efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú  
Bishop of Las Cruces

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops