



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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July 14, 2015

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I welcome the momentous agreement just reached between the United States and its P5+1 partners with Iran. This significant achievement aims to curb Iran's development of nuclear weapons while allowing them to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

More importantly, this agreement signals progress in global nuclear non-proliferation. In January 2015, Pope Francis said, "I express my hope that a definitive agreement may soon be reached between Iran and the P5+1 Group regarding the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and my appreciation of the efforts already made in this regard."

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 this agreement with Iran. We hope that the full implementation of the agreement will gradually foster an environment in which all parties build mutual confidence and trust, so that progress will be made toward greater stability and dialogue in the region. In that spirit, our Committee will continue to urge Congress to endorse the result of these intense negotiations because the alternative leads toward armed conflict, an outcome of profound concern to the Church.

The United States and its international partners have taken a remarkable step with Iran in reaching this agreement. We encourage Congress to support these efforts to build bridges that foster peace and greater understanding. In the words of Pope Francis, may the negotiated framework "be a definitive step toward a more secure and fraternal world," a goal we all share.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops