



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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April 8, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I welcome the adoption of a framework by the United States and its P5+1 partners with Iran over Iran's nuclear program. This step is important 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. In order to achieve this goal, we urge the parties to work to finalize the details of the agreement and ensure its full implementation. As we have noted in the past, Iran has threatened its neighbors, especially Israel, and contributed to instability in the region. We hope this agreement is a first step in fostering greater stability and dialogue in the region.

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 will continue 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.

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." We share the Holy Father's hope.

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

Sincerely yours,

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