



## Committee on International Justice and Peace

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October 4, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St 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 write to commend you for signing the Arms Trade Treaty on behalf of the United States and for entering into substantive negotiations with Iran over their nuclear program.

As I mentioned in an earlier letter, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “The production and the sale of arms affect the common good of nations and of the international community. Hence public authorities have the right and duty to regulate them” (No. 2316). Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, welcomed the Treaty as “a step towards establishing in the world a culture of responsibility and accountability.” The treaty is not perfect, but it is an important step. In solidarity visits to Latin America and African nations, Church and civil society leaders have frequently shared with me stories of the unimaginable human suffering that comes from the unregulated flow of arms.

The longstanding position of the Holy See and our Bishops’ Conference supports what Pope Benedict XVI called “dialogue” and “joint solutions” regarding Iran. The present situation seems to afford the possibility of a significant diplomatic breakthrough. A diplomatic solution with Iran is much preferable to military action, which could have unpredictable and dramatic repercussions for the region. A peaceful resolution will require direct, sustained negotiations over a period of time. Experts have told us that the outline for an agreement might include: Iran’s right to enrich uranium short of weapons-grade potential as confirmed by verifiable inspections; credible negative security assurances to Iran by the international community; and assured Iranian access to international nuclear fuel cycle services at market rates.

The community of nations must regulate the international transfers of arms to save lives. Dialogue with Iran is essential to forge a peaceful way forward. Our Committee recognizes that the prospects of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and negotiations with Iran may elicit intense opposition from some quarters, but we remain committed to supporting both initiatives.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates  
Bishop of Des Moines  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops