



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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November 2, 2009

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to cosponsor and support the Global Security Priorities Resolution (H.Res. 278), which was reintroduced by Congressmen James McGovern and Dan Lungren earlier in this Congress. This bold initiative links long-term savings derived from reducing our nuclear arsenal to increased support for nuclear nonproliferation efforts and child survival programs. It sends a powerful message of hope to a world longing for greater security and peace based on justice.

We bishops approach the issues of reducing nuclear arsenals and securing nuclear materials as pastors and teachers, not as military experts. The use of nuclear weapons is rejected in Church teaching because their use cannot insure noncombatant immunity and their destructive potential and lingering radiation cannot be proportionate in any meaningful sense. Pope Benedict XVI has said, "In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims." (January 1, 2006)

For these moral reasons, the bishops have long supported the dismantling of nuclear weapons systems, the effective securing of nuclear materials from terrorists, and a reduction in the overall number of nuclear armaments. Our goal is to prevent proliferation of these horrific weapons, and ultimately to eliminate them. The Global Security Priorities Act embraces these goals and takes important steps in this direction.

By adopting deep cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, our nation can move toward meeting its obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty and encourage other nations to do the same. Reduction of nuclear weapons and securing of nuclear materials will strengthen our nation's credibility and leadership on the issue of nonproliferation. Other nuclear powers will be less dependent on their own nuclear deterrents, and non-nuclear nations will be less tempted to ignore their nonproliferation obligations.

Following 9/11 our Bishops' Conference argued, "A successful campaign against terrorism will require a combination of resolve to do what is necessary to see it through, restraint to ensure that we act justly, and a long term focus on broader issues of justice and peace." Our Conference recognizes the need to address the poverty and injustices that often "provide fertile ground in which terrorism can thrive." Based on the moral insight that if we want peace, we must work for justice, we commend H.Res. 278's commitment to "enhance child survival in the world's most needy countries" and to improve "child nutrition and educational opportunities." Through funding such vital programs we can strengthen our nation's commitment to reduce global poverty and the desperate situations of injustice and deprivation that terrorists exploit for their own terrible purposes. These programs will also advance the Administration's desire for U.S. leadership in the international campaign to halve global hunger and poverty by 2015.

Pope Benedict XVI has linked disarmament and development. In his January 1 message for the 2009 World Day of Peace he recommended that "resources saved [by reducing

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expenditures on arms] could then be earmarked for development projects to assist the poorest and most needy individuals and peoples.”

Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, former Archbishop of the Military Services and now Archbishop of Baltimore, said at the 2009 Deterrence Symposium organized by the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha: “Abolishing nuclear weapons is not a narrowly partisan or nationalistic issue; it is an issue of fundamental moral values that should unite people across national and ideological boundaries.”

Our Conference of Bishops urges you to cosponsor the bipartisan Global Security Priorities Resolution, H.Res. 278. This legislation will help our nation to contribute to greater security, justice and peace in our world through reducing nuclear armaments, securing nuclear material, especially from terrorists, and improving child survival and nutrition among desperately poor societies.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Howard J. Hubbard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "H".

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace