



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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May 12, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

Today as the bishops of the Committee on International Justice and Peace meet in Washington, DC, we are acutely aware of the Ninth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) meeting now at the United Nations in New York through May 22. It is critically important that the United States do its part to ensure the success of the NPT Review Conference.

For most Americans, there is an assumption that the nuclear threat receded with the end of the Cold War. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. In a multi-polar world where there are risks of nuclear proliferation and even nuclear terrorism, it is imperative that the world move systematically and relentlessly toward nuclear disarmament and the securing of nuclear materials. Preserving the NPT is a cornerstone of this effort. Article VI of the NPT commits nuclear-armed nations to nuclear disarmament; and Article II commits other nations not to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Holy See declared at the beginning of the NPT Review Conference: “We are all aware that the goal of a world without nuclear weapons is not easy to achieve. ... But this is neither a reason nor an excuse not to implement the obligations undertaken in conformity with the NPT. ... Ethics based on the threat of mutually assured destruction is not worthy of future generations.”

The United States and other nuclear weapons possessing states bear a particular responsibility for nuclear disarmament and despite the success of the New START Treaty in further reducing the numbers of weapons, there has not been enough progress. We urge bold and concrete commitments to accelerate verifiable nuclear disarmament, including taking weapons off “launch on warning” status to prevent a catastrophic accident, deeper cuts in nuclear arsenals, ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to bring it into force, serious negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and other prudent measures.

As the Holy See recently said: “Lack of concrete and effective nuclear disarmament will lead sooner or later to real risks of nuclear proliferation.” We share the view that “[t]he erosion of the credibility of the NPT could have catastrophic consequences for all countries and for the future of humanity as a whole.” Please be assured of our prayers as you work for a world without nuclear weapons.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú

Bishop of Las Cruces

Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace

cc: Ambassador Samantha Power, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Ambassador Susan Rice, National Security Advisor