



## *Committee on International Justice and Peace*

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

November 29, 2010

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge the Senate to ratify the New START Treaty during the lame duck session. Last April our Conference welcomed the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and the Russian Federation and joined the Holy See in calling for its ratification.

As bishops, we are pastors and teachers, not technical experts. We cannot comment on every technical aspect of the pending Treaty, but we can offer moral direction and encouragement. Both the Holy See and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops support the New START Treaty because it is a modest step toward a world with greater respect for human life.

Ratification of the New START Treaty is critical because verification ensures transparency and transparency builds trust. The earlier verification and monitoring requirements expired one year ago. Without a new treaty there is no verification requirement in place, a disturbing and potentially dangerous situation our nation has not faced in decades.

The Church's concern for nuclear weapons grows out of its commitment to the sanctity of human life. This commitment led to the development of just war criteria, including the principles of discrimination and proportionality. Nuclear weapons are a grave threat to human life and dignity. Nuclear war is rejected in Church teaching because the use of nuclear weapons cannot insure noncombatant immunity and their destructive potential and lingering radiation cannot be meaningfully proportionate. Pope Benedict XVI said in a January 2006 statement, "In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims."

Consistent with Catholic teaching, the Holy See and the U.S. bishops have long supported reducing the number of nuclear armaments, preventing their spread to other nations, and securing nuclear materials from terrorists. For decades they have promoted the twin and interrelated policy goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We understand this is an ideal that will take years to reach, but it is a task which our nation must take up with renewed energy.

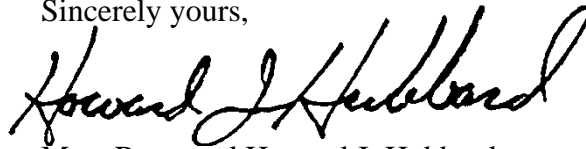
The New START Treaty is important for international efforts to address nonproliferation. The "grand bargain" of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was that states with nuclear weapons would work on disarmament, states without nuclear weapons would not acquire them, and all states would have access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Cooperation within the international community is essential for securing nuclear weapons and materials, and deterring other countries from developing their own arsenals. With fewer nuclear weapons in the world, the likelihood of one falling into terrorist hands is reduced and countries are more likely to cooperate in enforcing nonproliferation demands and controlling the supply of nuclear materials.

Letter to the Senate of the United States  
November 29, 2010  
Page 2

Military experts and former national leaders have come together across party lines to support the New START Treaty. Leaders from both parties, diplomats, and military experts argue that the Treaty does not constrain U.S. missile defense and that announced investments in our nation's nuclear weapons infrastructure will keep our nuclear deterrent safe and reliable.

The U.S. Bishops' Conference is urging strong bipartisan support for the New START Treaty because the Treaty makes our nation and world safer by reducing nuclear weapons in a verifiable way. We urge the Senate to take up the New START Treaty without delay.

Sincerely yours,

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

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard

Bishop of Albany

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace