



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

March 30, 2009

Dear Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to cosponsor the "Global Security Priorities" Resolution (H.Res. 278), which Congressmen Dan Lungren and James McGovern reintroduced on March 24, 2009. 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, and is consistent with the Administration's goals of eliminating nuclear weapons and increasing international assistance.

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" Resolution 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.

The Church's social teaching has particular relevance to the necessary struggle against terrorism. 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 went on to say, "Our nation must join with others in addressing policies and problems that 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 the Resolution's commitment to "enhance child survival in the world's most needy countries" and to improve "child nutrition and educational opportunities." Through funding

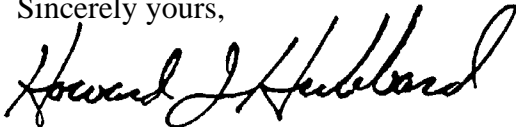
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such vital programs we can strengthen our nation's commitment to reduce global poverty and the desperate situations of injustice and deprivation that terrorists exploit for their own terrible purposes. These programs will also advance President Obama's desire for U.S. leadership in the international campaign to reduce global poverty by doubling international assistance.

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

Our Conference of Bishops urges you to cosponsor the "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 fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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