



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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October 3, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write regarding U.S. policy toward two interrelated nuclear non-proliferation efforts: Iran and North Korea.

The Department of State, under your leadership, recertified Iran's compliance with the 2015 P5+1 Agreement with Iran in mid-July, while noting other concerns regarding actions of Iran in the Middle East. The next certification comes later this month.

The Holy See and our Conference of Bishops welcomed the P5+1 agreement with Iran. It was no small achievement that the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, China, Germany and France reached this agreement with Iran, and that the International Atomic Energy Agency is carefully monitoring its implementation.

The agreement with Iran is critical for progress in nuclear non-proliferation, and has implications for the deeply troubling prospect of a nuclear-armed North Korea. If a multinational agreement with Iran is unilaterally abandoned, any incentive for North Korea to negotiate will be weakened. The threat of violence from the North Korean regime cannot be ignored, but the prospect of catastrophic death and destruction from military action must prompt the United States to work with others in the international community for a diplomatic solution based on dialogue. It was encouraging to see news reports that you and the State Department have kept open channels of communication to North Korea.

As I noted in my letter of August 10, 2017, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) has pledged to "raise [their] voices for the peaceful co-existence of two Koreas." The President of the CBCK recently met with Pope Francis who offered his support of President Moon Jae-in's new peace efforts while stressing that "conflicts should be solved through dialogue and compromise."

Our nation must lead by example and work with other nations to meet disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, even as we work for nuclear non-proliferation, as the two are inextricably linked. U.S. diplomatic leadership is critical to promoting a peaceful resolution of concerns regarding nuclear proliferation.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace