



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to commend you for introducing the Richard G. Lugar and Ellen O. Tauscher Act to Maintain Limits on Russian Nuclear Forces (H.R. 2529). If the New START Treaty is not extended or replaced before it expires in 2021, the United States runs the risk of having no legally binding, verifiable limits on the Russian Federation's strategic nuclear arsenal for the first time since

The bipartisan nature of this initiative is important. Historically, nuclear disarmament as a security and moral concern has been supported by leaders of both major political parties. President Ronald Reagan famously argued in his 1984 State of the Union Address: "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?" President Barack Obama reiterated this conviction in his Prague speech of 2011: "So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly — perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence."

H.R. 2529 represents a patient and persistent step in the direction of reducing the nuclear threat. The bill articulates a sense of Congress supporting extension of the New START Treaty unless Russia is in material breach of the Treaty or the Treaty is replaced with a more robust one with equal or greater constraints, transparency and verification measures. The legislation also outlines a number of prudent reporting and certification requirements that will contribute to informed national dialogue and appropriate Congressional oversight.

The visit of Pope Francis to Hiroshima and Nagasaki this week, following in the steps of Saint Pope John Paul II, highlights the Church's concern for nuclear weapons, a concern rooted in our commitment to protect human life and dignity. In Hiroshima, Pope Francis poignantly stated: "With deep conviction I wish once more to declare that the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home."

Please be assured of our prayers as you work on prudent nuclear disarmament measures related to the extension of the New START Treaty, such as H.R. 2529, and other steps toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Sincerely yours,

The Most Reverend David J. Malloy, D.D., J.C.L., S.T.D.
Bishop of Rockford
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace