



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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September 24, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2100 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520
-via email-

Dear Secretary Blinken:

In our Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) February 2020 [statement](#), we reaffirmed “the need to move away from the threat of mutual destruction toward genuine and universal disarmament...” As Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the USCCB, stated last year on the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, “we join our voice with Pope Francis and call on our national and world leaders to persevere in their efforts to abolish these weapons of mass destruction...”

The Catholic Church and the U.S. bishops have a long history of offering moral and ethical reflection regarding the grave dangers of [nuclear weapons](#). We also recognize these well-known dangers must be considered in light of the just demands of statecraft in our post-Cold War multipolar world including emerging complexities from state and non-state actors, asymmetrical warfare, and rapidly developing cyber technologies.

The failure of the Ninth NPT Review Conference in 2015 to reach consensus on a final document is both disappointing and troubling. We are witnessing the U.S. and Russia increase defense budget spending to modernize and upgrade their massive nuclear stockpiles. Each side is rapidly developing emerging technologies such as offensive cyber and hypersonic weapons. Such advances by the two largest nuclear-weapons states make it increasingly difficult to claim commitment to Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race.” We hope the Tenth NPT Review Conference scheduled for January 2022 will advance that commitment. Where negotiations have come up short, we take heart in the guidance and wisdom offered by Pope Francis in his encyclical, [Fratelli Tutti](#): “Rules by themselves will not suffice if we continue to think that the solution to current problems is deterrence through fear or the threat of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons...” (262)

We support the affirmation of U.S. President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding the principle that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” during their June summit. We are also encouraged that the Biden Administration has formally begun developing its Nuclear Posture Review. In the pursuit of a more just and peaceful world, we commend you and this Administration for undertaking the difficult work of progressing

towards international arms control and nuclear disarmament. Be assured of our prayers for you in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ David J. Malloy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a plus sign at the beginning.

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

CC: Mallory Stewart, Special Assistant to the President, Senior Director for Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation