



## United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Washington, D.C.

### ***Urge President Obama to Change Outdated Nuclear Policy***

- T. Michael McNulty, SJ Justice and Peace Director Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM)

The Obama administration is currently weighing cuts in U.S. nuclear forces. Within weeks, the President will be making important, once-in-a-decade decisions on the Presidential nuclear weapons policy "guidance."

This guidance affects everything from war plans to the size, structure and cost of the nuclear arsenal. It will help determine whether we continue to live with the threat of nuclear annihilation by accident or by design--or move closer to a world free of the danger of nuclear war.

At a time of fiscal restraints, our nation is currently planning to spend about \$210 billion over the next ten years to maintain our Cold War-based nuclear force structure. We could save tens of billions of dollars for other needs. As the Second Vatican Council taught: "[T]he arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity, and one which ensnares the poor to an intolerable degree."

During the 2010 debate on a treaty to reduce the numbers of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, then President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote: "The horribly destructive capacity of nuclear arms makes them disproportionate and indiscriminate weapons that endanger human life and dignity like no other armaments. Their use as a weapon of war is rejected in Church teaching based on just war norms. Although we cannot anticipate every step on the path humanity must walk, we can point with moral clarity to a destination that moves beyond deterrence to a world free of the nuclear threat."

While possession of a minimal nuclear capability may deter the use of nuclear weapons by others, the Church urges that nuclear deterrence be replaced with concrete measures of disarmament based on dialogue and multilateral negotiations. As Pope Benedict XVI stated in his 2010 World Day of Peace Message, "I firmly hope that ... concrete decisions will be made towards progressive disarmament, with a view to freeing our planet from nuclear arms."

Now is our opportunity to make our voices heard by pressing President Obama to make good on his commitment to "put an end to Cold War thinking" and pursue further, dramatic steps that would make us all safer from the threat of nuclear weapons.

The link to the petition can be found below:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/nuclear-weapons/petition-to-change-nuclear-policy.cfm>

The deadline for signing is March 31.