

***"The race had been won...but the demonstration of power against living creatures instead of dead matter created a bottomless wound in the living conscience of the race."***

**--James Agee, *Time Magazine*, August, 1945**

Dear President Obama:

We, the undersigned faith leaders from across the United States, write this urgent appeal for you to take dramatic steps to move our nation and world toward nuclear disarmament in the time remaining in your presidency.

The first atomic bomb was detonated at 5:29 a.m. on July 16, 1945 in New Mexico at the Trinity Site in the Tularosa Basin with an estimated 40,000 inhabitants at the time of the test. It was three weeks later that bombs designed in Los Alamos were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, inflicting what James Agee described at the time as "a bottomless wound in the living conscience of the race."

In your Prague speech in April of 2009 you made it clear that one of your highest priorities was to seek "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." We have been heartened by your steadfastness in hammering out and defending the agreement with Iran, and implore you to use the same energy to lead the way for Nuclear Non-Proliferation on a global scale.

At the same time, we have been dismayed to learn about the unprecedented plan to overhaul and modernize the U.S. nuclear forces at a cost of \$1 trillion over the next three decades, which includes the development of "safer" warheads, new delivery systems (missiles, submarines, and jets), and new bomb component manufacturing facilities. We cannot see how this plan can be squared with the priority in your Prague speech to reduce "the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy," while urging other nations to do the same.

Over 10,000 usable nuclear weapons are stockpiled on planet earth, with over 4,000 of them currently deployed by our nation and others. By redirecting the mission of our national laboratories from perpetuating the nuclear weapons complex to disarmament we insure the future of the laboratories for decades. They alone have the knowledge, experience and capabilities to provide global leadership in the areas of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation (monitoring, verification, and dismantlement).

In December of last year, Pope Francis stated a stark truth:

"Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states. The youth of today and tomorrow deserve far more. ... Now is the time to counter the logic of fear with the ethic of responsibility, and so foster a climate of trust and sincere dialogue."

With Pope Francis we ask whether we dare continue "squandering the wealth of nations" in this manner while there are so many pressing needs like health care, the alleviation of poverty, and economic development that truly serve the common good.

The recent words of Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, at the close of the 2015 meeting of Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, spell out what needs to happen immediately:

“Without fresh thinking and renewed action on the 70 year old problem of nuclear weapons, the future of the Treaty will be at risk and the possibility of nuclear weapons use will grow. We strongly urge President Barack Obama to recommit his administration to jumpstarting progress on the plan of action toward a world free of nuclear weapons that he first outlined in 2009 in Prague, that the UN Security Council endorsed in resolution 1887 in 2009, and that all Nonproliferation Treaty states committed to at the 2010 Review Conference. Nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation is a global enterprise and the United States is indispensable to the effort.”

President Obama, we implore you to lead us toward the world you envisioned in your Prague speech, a world where the spread of nuclear weapons is not inevitable; a world where we exercise our moral responsibility to press forward as you and other world leaders did with the Iran agreement. We stand ready to support you in every way we can—through prayer and study and specific actions that can treat “the bottomless wound” that is the consequence of using and threatening the use of nuclear weapons against our fellow human beings.

Faithfully,

Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, Bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces  
Most Reverend James Wall, Bishop of the Diocese of Gallup  
The Reverend James D. Brown, Executive Director (1992-96), General Assembly Mission Council,  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
The Reverend Dr. Donna L. McNeil, Executive Director, New Mexico Conference of Churches  
Jim Winkler, General Secretary and President, National Council of Churches  
The Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
and Chair, National Council of Churches  
Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Senior Vice President,  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Stanley J. Noffsinger, General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren  
The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
The Reverend Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ  
Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr., President, The Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church  
The Reverend Paula Clayton Dempsey, Director of Partnership Relations, Alliance of Baptists  
The Reverend Dr. Katharine R. Henderson, President, Auburn Theological Seminary  
The Reverend Dr. Serene Jones, President and Johnston Family Professor for Religion and Democracy  
at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York  
The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director, New York State Council of Churches  
The Reverend Brooke Newell, Director of Social Witness, New York State Council of Churches  
The Reverend Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society,  
The United Methodist Church  
Shan Cretin, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee  
Mark Harrison, Program Director, General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church  
The Reverend Dr. William F. Schulz, President, Unitarian Universalist service Committee  
The Reverend Dr. Jim Antal, Conference Minister and President, Massachusetts Conference,  
United Church of Christ  
The Reverend Paul Benz, Co-Director, Faith Action Network, Washington  
Ms. Elise DeGooyer, Co-Director, Faith Action Network, Washington  
Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Director, The Shalom Center  
Diane E. Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)  
Rabbi Peter Knobel, Past President Central Conference of American Rabbis, Special Advisor for  
Global Security to Religious Action Center

The Reverend Michael Neuroth, Policy Advocate for International Issues, United Church of Christ,  
Justice and Witness Ministries  
Marie Dennis, Co-President, Pax Christi International  
Bishop Francis E. Krebs, Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion  
The Reverend Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director, California Council of Churches IMPACT  
The Reverend Kristin Stoneking, Executive Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation  
Sister Patricia Chappell, Executive Director, Pax Christi USA  
Gerry G. Lee, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Washington, DC  
Lawrence Couch, Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
The Reverend Dr. Sallie M. Watson, Missional Presbyter/Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Santa Fe  
Scott Wright, Director, Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, JPIC office for the  
Missionary Society of St. Columban  
Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network  
Paul Alexander, PhD, President, Evangelicals for Social Action, Co-Founder, Pentecostals &  
Charismatics for Peace & Justice, Ronald J. Sider Professor of Religion, Ethics, and Public  
Policy, Eastern University  
The Reverend Jane Field, Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches  
The Reverend Dr. Peggy Cecil Hinds, Kentucky Council of Churches  
The Reverend Stephen Copley, Executive Director, Interfaith Arkansas  
The Reverend Paul Sherry, Former President of the United Church of Christ  
The Reverend Dr. Campbell Lovett, Conference Minister, Michigan Conference, United Church of Christ  
The Reverend John Vertigan, Conference Minister, Florida Conference, United Church of Christ  
Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Director, Tikkun Olam Commission of Jewish Reconstructionist Movement  
The Reverend Diane Weible, Conference Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference  
of the United Church of Christ  
The Reverend Dr. LaTaunya M. Bynum, Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
of Northern California-Nevada  
Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, a founder and former Director of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality  
Joseph Gerson, Director, Peace and Economic Security Program Committee, American Friends Service  
Committee  
Kathy Wanpovi Sanchez, Elder, Sayair Circle, Tewa Women United

