

Catholic Bishops and Scholars from Europe and the United States

Renew Efforts on Nuclear Disarmament

On May 24th and 25th, 40 bishops, Catholic scholars, and policy specialists from nine countries gathered in London to identify issues that need to be addressed to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, especially largely unexamined theological and moral issues. The meeting, which included a public event as well private meetings, also highlighted policy issues on which religious leaders and ethicists have a comparative advantage or can make a distinctive contribution.

In an effort to support and enhance this religious and moral voice, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales joined The Rt. Hon. the Lord Browne of Ladyton and The Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith, and the University of Notre Dame's London Global Gateway in hosting this Colloquium on Catholic Approaches to Nuclear Proliferation and Disarmament.

“The technical strategic debate about nuclear proliferation and disarmament is critically important, but it must be guided by moral considerations,” said Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Westminster), President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW).

“Global leaders are responsible for the security of their citizens, but faith communities have a responsibility to engage when it comes to matters that challenge and threaten our humanity and indeed, our very survival,” said Des Browne, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Browne of Ladyton, who serves as Vice Chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative and served as UK Secretary of State for Defence.

Bishop Stephan Ackermann (Trier), President of the German Commission for Justice and Peace, stated, “It is time to broaden this discourse beyond the usual suspects. We should include also representatives from Russia, China, India etc. Nuclear Disarmament has to be treated in the context of global security and disarmament policy and in the perspective of the global common good.”

“The policy debate is ahead of the moral debate,” noted Bishop Oscar Cantú (Las Cruces), the Chair of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, in introducing the Colloquium. He added, “We need to educate and empower new generations of Catholic leaders on the ethical and policy arguments for reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons.”

This London Colloquium is connected to a U.S. initiative to revitalize Catholic engagement on nuclear proliferation and disarmament.

At the opening public event, held at the University of Notre Dame's Global Gateway, Maryann Cusimano Love of The Catholic University of America urged that “the Church and policymakers

go beyond the debate on the ethics of nuclear deterrence and consider nuclear disarmament as a challenge of peacebuilding.”

Colloquium participants included *Bishop Marc Stenger* (Troyes), President of Pax Christi France; *Bishop Werner Freistetter*, Military Ordinary of Austria; *Fr. Bryan Hehir* of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government; *Patricia Lewis* of Chatham House; *Sylvie Bukhari-de Pontual* of the Catholic Institute of Paris; *Bishop William Nolan* (Galloway), President of the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Scotland; *Bishop Declan Lang* (Clifton), Chairman of the CBCEW’s Department of International Affairs; *Bishop Robert McElroy* (San Diego) of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace; *Paolo Conversi* of the Holy See’s Secretariat of State; *Fred Frederickson*, Director of NATO’s Nuclear Policy Directorate; *Kelsey Davenport* of the Arms Control Association; and *Charles Reed*, senior policy adviser for the Church of England.

This event was sponsored by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales; Deutsche Bischofskonferenz; Justice et Paix, Conférence des évêques de France; the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace; the University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies; Institut für Theologie und Frieden; the Catholic Peacebuilding Network; Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

The initiative has included a major Colloquium at Stanford hosted by former Secretary of State George Shultz and former Defense Secretary William Perry (April 2014); a symposium at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops headquarters (September 2014), and public events at the [Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs](#) (May 2015) and in [Washington](#) tied to the visit of Pope Francis (September 2015).

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