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USCCB asks Catholics to urge Congress vote against military intervention in Syria

Thomas Reese | Sep. 3, 2013 NCR Today

The United States Conference of Catholics Bishops has asked Catholics to urge Congress "to vote against a resolution authorizing the use of military force in Syria. Instead, ask them to support U.S. leadership, in collaboration with the international community, for an immediate ceasefire in Syria and serious, inclusive negotiations for peace."

In an "Action Alert [1]," the conference asks Catholics to tell their representatives and senators:

As Congress debates a resolution authorizing military force in Syria, I urge the Senator/Representative instead to support U.S. leadership for peace.

Both the Holy See and Conference of Bishops have condemned the chemical attack, but remain convinced that only dialogue can save lives and bring about peace in Syria.

In a recent letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, Bishop Richard E. Pates, Chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, wrote: "'[T]he path of dialogue and negotiation between all components of Syrian society, with the support of the international community, is the only option to put an end to the conflict....' We ask the United States to work with other governments to obtain a ceasefire, initiate serious negotiations, provide impartial and neutral humanitarian assistance, and encourage building an inclusive society in Syria that protects the rights of all its citizens, including Christians and other minorities."

The bishops note that:

During the week of September 9, Congress is expected to take up a resolution authorizing the use of military force in Syria in response to heinous chemical weapons attacks on innocent civilians.

Providentially, Pope Francis has declared September 7 a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace in Syria, the Middle East, and throughout the World. In solidarity with our Holy Father, USCCB will engage in prayer, fasting and advocacy for peace in Syria.

USCCB POSITION & CHURCH TEACHING

USCCB Policy Letters on Syria[2]:

Pope Francis' Declaration of a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Syria [3]

Position of the Holy See on Syria: [4]

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Links:
[1] http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=xvqllyfab&v=001qzs_PlB-J6O0bIlQsdbrPQillbpS3GhyW_iBAui1Ifr0Z40oAI3zsaZNHTuFsbvAS_kLekj363NHm90_4FlPOCHjUy7YM8884HuZ
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[2] http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/global-issues/middle-east/syria/index.cfm
[3] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/angelus/2013/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20130901_en.html
[4] http://www.news.va/en/news/in-syria-dialogue-is-the-only-option
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