

September 12, 2003

To: Senate Defense Aides

From: Leaders of religious denominations and heads of national religious groups

Dear Senator:

We are concerned to learn that some Members of Congress and some officials in the Administration propose to develop new and so-called "useable" nuclear weapons. New nuclear weapons, they say, will advance nonproliferation, but we believe it will have unintended, though predictable, consequences for proliferation.

The Administration's budget request for FY 2004 includes \$15 million for research on the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, or "bunker buster" and \$6 million for advanced nuclear weapons concepts. Although research on these new nuclear weapons was authorized in the House and Senate in May, funding for new nuclear weapons must still be appropriated. We urge you to support amendments to cut the funding for the new nuclear weapons when the energy and water appropriations bill reaches the Senate floor.

We share a common concern to uphold the sanctity of human life and the holiness of God's creation. We must work in concert to eliminate the nuclear threat to life. We call on you to act quickly and well to stop this rush toward the abyss of nuclear war fighting. We appeal to you to turn our country toward the light of a world governed by law, a world free from the threats of nuclear brinkmanship.

We pray that your deciding vote will be informed by a careful review of this departure from previous U.S. nonproliferation policy and your wisdom will be a guidepost for future generations of lawmakers here and abroad.

Sincerely,

Brenda Girton-Mitchell, Associate General Secretary for Public Policy

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Maureen Shea, Director, Office of Government Relations

Episcopal Church, USA

Jaydee Hanson, Assistant General Secretary
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society

Dwight Lundgren, Director of Reconciliation Ministries, Board of
National Ministries

American Baptist Churches USA

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director

Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office

Esther Pineda, CSJ, Acting National Coordinator
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Mark B. Brown, Asst. Director for International Affairs and Human Rights
Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America

Brian R. Hinman, Associate Director for Public Policy & DC Rep.

Church World Service

The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Rev. Ron Stief, Head of Office, Washington, DC
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

Jeanette Holt, Associate Executive Director
Alliance of Baptists

Marie Dennis, Director

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Wesley Granberg Michaelson, General Secretary

Reformed Church in America

Mary Lord, Director, Peace Building Unit

American Friends Service Committee

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Director

The Shalom Center

William Chris Hobgood, Director of the Center for Public Witness

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Barbara G. Green, Executive Director

Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy

Phil Jones, Coordinator

Church of the Brethren Washington Office

Joe Volk, Executive Secretary

Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)

Ronald J. Sider, President

Evangelicals for Social Action

Bruce Birchard, General Secretary

Friends General Conference (Quakers)

Carole Shinnick, Executive Director

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

J. Daryl Byler, Director, Washington Office

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Howard W. Hallman, Chair

Methodists United for Peace with Justice

David Robinson, National Coordinator

Pax Christi USA: National Catholic Peace Movement

Jim Wallis, Executive Director

Sojourners

Ibrahim Ramey, Director, Disarmament Program

Fellowship of Reconciliation

Jerrye Champion, National Board President

Church Women United

Rev. Kathryn J. Johnson, Executive Director

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Ted Keating, SM, Executive Director

Conference of Major Superiors of Men