



VETERANS FOR PEACE

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April 5, 2017

The Honorable Nikki Haley
Ambassador of the United States
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York, 10017

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Dear Madam Ambassador:

I am the president of Veterans For Peace (VFP), an international organization of veterans that was organized in the United States 32 years ago. Since 1991, VFP has been represented at the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Two of our principal goals are to abolish war as an instrument of national policy, and to end the arms race and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons.

VFP is profoundly disappointed the United States has refused to take part in the negotiations at the United Nations to ban nuclear weapons. This is but one in a series of missed opportunities by the United States to use its position as the world's undisputed military power to change the course of history and join with the majority of member nations at the United Nations to end the danger and peril that nuclear weapons pose to the world.

Perhaps President John F. Kennedy said it best in a 1961 address to the United Nations: "Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness." The world has changed since President Kennedy spoke those words, but, unfortunately, it has changed for the worse. The world has become more dangerous and the chance of nuclear war is now greater than during the height of the cold war. The Trump Administration has at its disposal the most powerful nuclear arsenal in the world. Yet, it still wants more. President Trump even welcomes a new arms race and is apparently willing to spend billions of dollars for such folly in clear violation of Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). To continue down this path can only increase the risk and dangers of nuclear war.

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ORGANIZED LOCALLY. RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONALLY. EXPOSING THE TRUE COSTS OF WAR SINCE 1985.

Further, VFP cannot overstate its disappointment with the United States' efforts to derail the ongoing United Nations negotiations to reach an agreement on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Your recent press conference was a distressing commentary on how the United States has chosen to abandon diplomacy and, in its stead, simply run roughshod over international treaties, rules and established conventions. Our government's duplicity seems to have no bounds. We blithely ignore our treaty obligations under the NPT, now foment the old cry that we cannot trust Iran and North Korea, countries which voted to support the ongoing negotiations, forgetting that we already hold Iran to our own "test and verify" standards, and seem to be adamant that a treaty banning nuclear weapons be taken off the table. Would it not be diplomatically more prudent to use the UN negotiations as an opportunity to engage Iran and North Korea in discussions to determine if there is some common ground on which to proceed and lessen tensions in the Middle East and the Far East? To the eyes of VFP, and to so many member states of the UN and people of the world honest attempts at diplomacy have for too long of a time been absent in the United States actions overseas.

Last year I attended a conference in Astana, Kazakhstan on Building a Nuclear Weapons Free World. I met diplomats, former diplomats, and representatives of NGOs from across the globe. Leaders of countries from Africa, South America, Oceania, Southeast Asia, the Baltic States and elsewhere resoundingly called for peace. These men and women seek an end to nuclear weapons, support for efforts to stem climate change, a life of justice for their people, and a better world for their children. As you settle into your role as Ambassador to the United Nations, I hope you will set aside time to listen to the representatives of those nations not aligned with the powerful, the rich and the nuclear armed. Maybe they will inspire you to find a way for the United States to be a world leader with a goal to build a legacy of lasting peace, something the world needs now more than ever.

Respectfully,



President, Board of Directors
Veterans For Peace

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