

RESPONSE FORM

YES, please add my name to “The First Step in a New START,” to be published in the April 29th issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*. Please print name as you wish it to appear.

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This form can also be sent by fax to Pax Christi USA. “Attention: Sign-on.” at: 814-452-4784. For more information please contact our office at 202-635-2741, or contact us by email at info@paxchristiusa.org.

**PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO
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APRIL 8TH, 2011**

PAX CHRISTI USA SIGN-ON AD CAMPAIGN

Pax Christi USA, in conjunction with Abolition 2000, has launched a campaign to move the nuclear weapons states to end the decades-old launch-on warning policy and de-alert their nuclear arsenals.

This sign-on statement will be published in the April 29th issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* and sent to President Obama.

De-alerting Nuclear Weapons became a central focus in the May 2010 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference final document because of the immediate threat that a launch ready, high-alert status for nuclear weapons has always posed to our global community. The US agreed at the Review Conference to, “Consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security, [specifically aimed at reducing] the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons.”

President Obama has the responsibility to set the alert posture of US nuclear forces. Help us send a clear message to the President: De-alert the arsenal now!

For more information visit our website and under programs click on:

A New Moment for Nuclear Disarmament.

**To support this statement this form
must be returned to Pax Christi USA
no later than April 8, 2011**



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The
Time
Has
Come



to Take the
FIRST STEP
Back from
the Brink

The Time Has Come to Take the FIRST STEP Back from the Brink

“Keeping nuclear weapons ready to launch on a moment’s notice is a dangerous relic of the Cold War. Such policies increase the risk of catastrophic accidents or miscalculation. I believe that we must address this dangerous situation—something that President Bush promised to do when he campaigned for president back in 2000, but did not do once in office. I will work with Russia to end such outdated Cold War policies in a mutual and verifiable way.”

~ President-elect Obama, December 2008

“The United States and the Russian Federation can also use this opportunity to work toward taking weapons off immediately available alert status.”

~ Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, July 2009

The importance of the recent ratification of the New START treaty is that after nearly a decade of inaction, the United States and the Russian Republic have once again begun to address the Cold War legacy of their most destructive weapons. These two arsenals continue to hold the entire world at risk of unimaginable catastrophe. Although New START will, over the next seven years, reduce the deployed nuclear weapons on both sides, it does nothing to address the immediate danger that these weapons pose today. Both the United States and the Russian Republic maintain thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger, “launch-on-warning” status—literally minutes away from use. The time has come to remove this very real “sword of Damocles” which hangs over the heads of every person on Earth, holding the very future of humanity hostage to outmoded ideas of security and Mutual Assured Destruction.

Since the end of the Cold War, numerous calls have been initiated by world leaders, Nobel Laureates, citizen groups, the Vatican and the United Nations all calling on the United States and the Russian Republic to take these weapons off alert. Countless experts have confirmed that reducing the alert posture of these weapons will not hinder the national security of the Russian Republic, the United States or our allies. Rather, eliminating the very real potential of an accidental or miscalculated launch of nuclear weapons will remove an existential threat to the planet and therefore enhance the security of all nations.

As people of faith who have long labored to secure the world from the threat of nuclear annihilation, we reassert this call for reducing the alert posture of nuclear weapons. Having secured a New START, it is now time to take a First Step—remove the constant and immediate danger these weapons pose by taking them off hair trigger alert.

- We call upon President Obama to concretely build on New START and begin negotiations with the Russian Republic to end the outmoded and inherently dangerous policy of “launch on warning” and take these weapons off alert.
- We call on the leadership of both political parties to place the real security of the people of the United States above partisan and corporate interests, to move beyond outdated, Cold War thinking, and remove the very real danger that these weapons pose today.