

BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

**Georgetown's Berkley Center Part of Renewed
Catholic Effort on Nuclear Disarmament**

WASHINGTON (April 28, 2014)—Nuclear weapons “present an existential threat to mankind,” said former US Secretary of State George Shultz to a group of Catholic leaders on April 25. “We need to reduce the numbers of these weapons, identify and take the steps needed to keep them under better control, and ultimately eliminate them.” Secretary Shultz and former Secretary of Defense William Perry hosted a “Colloquium on Revitalizing Catholic Engagement on Nuclear Disarmament,” April 24-25, at Stanford University.

The off-the-record event brought together 40 bishops, policy specialists, Catholic scholars, and young professionals and students to explore policy and moral challenges involved in moving toward a world without nuclear weapons. Drew Christiansen, S.J., senior research fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs was one of the speakers. The Berkley Center's Michael Kessler and Philosophy Professor John Langan, S.J. also participated in the colloquium.

“The bishops have made the moral case for ultimate nuclear disarmament; Shultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn have made the case for disarmament as a policy goal, a goal embraced by the US and Russian governments,” said Bishop Richard E. Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, chairman of the US bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. “My hope is that this colloquium will be the beginning of a process to invigorate and refine the voice of the US Catholic community in the debate on nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.”

Drew Christiansen, S.J. said: “Our rethinking of the moral acceptability of deterrence may begin with acknowledgement that the warrant for deterrence has always been provisional and conditional, and so is open to revision.”

Other speakers included Secretary Perry, former Senator Sam Nunn, retired Ambassador James Goodby, Fr. Bryan Hehir (Harvard), Fr. Kenneth Himes (Boston College), Scott Sagan (Stanford), and Stephen Colecchi (USCCB).

A Role for Catholic Universities

Fr. John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame and, with Bishop Pates, a co-convenor of the colloquium, emphasized the distinctive role of Catholic universities, which

“should serve as networks of discussion and sources of knowledge—able to explore and address the practical, technical and ethical issues that arise on the way to a global ban.”

Professor Michael Kessler, managing director of the Berkley Center said: "Universities like Georgetown and Notre Dame have a tremendous role to play in confronting global threats like nuclear weapons. We can work together to encourage scholars to advance our interdisciplinary knowledge about this grave threat, convene meetings with policymakers to spur government action, and further educate our students about this existential crisis, as they will become the leaders who will bear responsibility for confronting the nuclear challenge in the future."

The Church and Nuclear Issues

The colloquium was the kick-off of a [larger project](#), on which the Berkley Center is collaborating, intended to empower a new generation of Catholic bishops, scholars, professionals and students to address the ethical and policy challenges of reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. It will convene symposia for ethicists and policy experts, publish articles, and reach out to students and young professionals through a social media site that emphasizes the religious and ethical dimensions of nuclear disarmament.

The project is sponsored by the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. Additional collaborators include the USCCB's Office of International Justice and Peace and Boston College. The Hoover Institution and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University hosted the colloquium. The project is made possible with the support of the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

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