

MEMORANDUM

March 30, 2011

To: File No. S7-40-10 (Conflict Minerals)

From: Zachary S. May
Office of Commissioner Luis A. Aguilar

Re: Meeting with Representatives of Catholic Relief Services and United States
Conference of Catholic Bishops

On March 15, 2011, Commissioner Luis A. Aguilar and Zachary S. May, counsel to the Commissioner, met with the following persons: Rees Warne (Strategic Issues Advisor for Extractive Industries, Catholic Relief Services) and Fr. Juan Molina (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of International Justice and Peace Policy Advisor). The participants discussed the Commission's proposal to implement Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, titled Conflict Minerals.

Following the meeting, Fr. Molina provided the attached letters.



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February 19, 2010

[This letter was sent to the members of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee.]

Dear Senator:

We write in support of the Congo Conflict Minerals Act (S. 891) and ask you to cosponsor the bill so that it moves quickly through the legislative process. This bill represents an important start and an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by requiring the U.S. government to focus greater attention on the causes of the deadly conflict and the resulting dire humanitarian situation. The bill could help significantly reduce the levels of violence and increase respect for human rights in the eastern DRC.

USCCB recently received a letter from the National Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo (known by its French acronym CENCO) seeking our support for legislative initiatives to "fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources" in the DRC and expressing their deep gratitude to the Senate cosponsors of S. 891. As Bishop Nicolas Djomo Lola, President of CENCO, wrote:

For more than 10 years, CENCO has not ceased to point out in its statements and messages the relationship between the wars and recurring conflicts in the DR Congo and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Likewise, it has always called for the various summits for peace, especially in the Eastern DRC, to address the root causes of these wars and conflicts, and not only their effects, in particular the widespread violations of human rights, rapes and sexual violence used as weapons of war, as well as corruption. ... It is necessary to highlight that the exploitation of natural resources is one of the causes, if not the main cause, of tragedy in Eastern Congo....

Recognizing the complex nature of the conflict in the eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region and out of solidarity with the Church in the DRC, we call on Congress and the Administration to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict. To this end, we respectfully request that the Senate strengthen S. 891 as it moves forward with additional provisions such as: auditing key mineral supply chains; denying entry into the United States of goods that contain metals that have been found to be derived from conflict minerals; and providing incentives for use of conflict-free minerals, for example, regulating labeling of products as "conflict mineral-free." We also recommend the bill include a sense of Congress that the U.S. State Department should expand its support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and strengthen local and U.S. agencies providing development assistance and humanitarian aid to the victims of the tragic conflict in the eastern region of the DRC.

Along with the Church and our partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we thank you for your commitment to peace and development in that violence-torn country.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Ken Hackett
President
Catholic Relief Services



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May 3, 2010

The Honorable Christopher Dodd
Chairman
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

Dear Senator Dodd and Senator Shelby:

In solidarity with all those who suffer because of the mismanagement and inequitable exploitation of natural resource wealth, we write to express support for the Energy Security through Transparency Act (S.1700), which was introduced with strong bipartisan support. We call on the Senate to support this important piece of legislation and to move its swift passage.

The Energy Security through Transparency Act presents an important opportunity to improve the lives of hundreds of millions of poor people throughout the world and to promote the common good of their societies. S. 1700 would accomplish this through the simple low-cost requirement that oil, gas and mining companies, no matter where they are based, include in their annual reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission the amount of money that they pay to the governments where they operate. Making this information public would provide people around the world with the knowledge they need to hold their governments accountable for the use of those funds. It would also be a crucial step toward reducing corruption and conflict, improving governance, and increasing investor awareness of company risks.

In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI pointed to the links among natural resource wealth, conflict and poverty, and called on the international community to “find institutional means” to address them. Catholic bishops’ conferences around the world have called on their own governments to increase extractives revenue transparency and on advanced nations to require companies to make available the information needed to support this vital effort. At the recent Synod in Rome, Bishops from across Africa issued an appeal to the international community “to encourage the formulation of national and international legislation for the just distribution of revenue generated by natural resources.”

Catholic Relief Services works in 37 poor, but resource-rich, countries and sees firsthand the effects of poorly managed natural resource wealth and the tremendous potential for positive change. The Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services have made extractive industries revenue transparency – and thus support for this bill – a priority within the *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* initiative.

When the revenues that oil, gas and mineral extraction generate for governments are well-used, they can drive economic development that enable those countries – and their citizens – to get out of poverty. This development can both reduce the need for foreign aid, and increase national and international stability. Investors also benefit from knowing the risks companies are taking and their prospects for stable profits.

S.1700 would benefit both the United States and people living in poverty around the world. Thank you for supporting it and for your commitment to development and to peace.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Ken Hackett
President
Catholic Relief Services

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs



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December 17, 2009

Rep. Jim McDermott
Rep. Frank Wolf

Rep. Barney Frank
Rep. Donald Payne

Dear Representatives:

We write to express support for your bipartisan initiative, the Conflict Minerals Trade Act (H.R. 4128). This bill represents an important start and an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by requiring the U.S. government to focus greater attention on the causes of the deadly conflict and the resulting dire humanitarian situation. The bill could help significantly reduce the levels of violence in the eastern DRC.

USCCB recently received a letter from the National Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo (known by its French acronym CENCO) seeking our support for legislative initiatives to "fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources" in the DRC. As Bishop Nicolas Djomo Lola, Bishop of Tshumbe and President of CENCO, wrote:

For more than 10 years, CENCO has not ceased to point out in its statements and messages the relationship between the wars and recurring conflicts in the DR Congo and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Likewise, it has always called for the various summits for peace, especially in the Eastern DRC, to address the root causes of these wars and conflicts, and not only their effects, in particular the widespread violations of human rights, rapes and sexual violence used as weapons of war, as well as corruption. ... It is necessary to highlight that the exploitation of natural resources is one of the causes, if not the main cause, of tragedy in Eastern Congo....

Recognizing the complex nature of the conflict in the eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region and out of solidarity with the Church in the DRC, we call on Congress and the Administration to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict. This strategy should include denial of entry into the United States of goods that contain metals from facilities that have been audited and certified as "conflict mineral facilities." We ask Congress to improve H.R. 4128 as it moves forward to include a sense of Congress that the U.S. State Department should expand its efforts to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to strengthen local and U.S. agencies providing development assistance and humanitarian aid to those suffering from this tragedy in the eastern region of the DRC.

Along with the Church and our partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we thank you for your commitment to peace and development in that violence-torn country.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
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Ken Hackett
President
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