



Friends Committee on National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

May 19, 2016

Dear Senator:

I am writing to urge your support for the bipartisan Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (S.2551) that would maintain Congressional leadership in United States efforts to prevent mass violence. This bill extends the recommendations of the bipartisan S.Con.Res.71 that led to President Obama's May 18 Executive Order. S.2551 serves to better focus U.S. policy on the prevention of mass atrocities, and supports the moral obligation and commitment to the promise of "never again" made after The Holocaust.

The May 18 Executive Order institutionalizing the Atrocities Prevention Board is an important step in the long established bipartisan consensus that the U.S. should act to prevent mass atrocities and genocide. These actions stem back to 1988 when President Ronald Reagan signed into law the bill ratifying the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

- In his 2006 National Security Strategy, President George W. Bush highlighted the "moral imperative that states take action to prevent and punish genocide."
- In December 2008, the Genocide Prevention Task Force co-chaired by former Secretary of State Madeline Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen issued its report urging the incoming administration to "create a standing interagency mechanism for analysis of threats of genocide and mass atrocities and consideration of appropriate preventive action."
- In December 2010, the Senate took action by passing the bipartisan S.Con.Res.71 urging the President to, "to develop and communicate a whole of government approach and policy to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate acts of genocide and other mass atrocities."
- Following the Senate action, President Obama issued a Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities on August 4, 2011. The directive ordered the establishment of the Atrocities Prevention Board, which was stood up and met for the first time on April 23, 2012.

In 2012, the President committed to issue an Executive Order that would "publicly set forth the structure, functions, priorities, and objectives of the Board, provide further direction for its work, and include further measures for strengthening atrocity prevention and response capabilities as identified in the course of the Board's work." President Obama's Executive Order on the prevention of mass atrocities fulfills this commitment.

Congressional Leadership and Oversight on Atrocities Prevention

However, Congressional leadership is absolutely essential. By passing the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (S.2551), Congress will provide the necessary oversight of and support for the structures and tools required to ensure the U.S. government is better able to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities.

The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act permanently authorizes the Atrocities Prevention Board, establishes the Complex Crises Fund, requires training for Foreign Service Officers in violent conflict and atrocities prevention, and requires reporting from both the Department of State and Director for National Intelligence. These are critical tools that are needed to prevent violent conflict, save lives, protect security interests, and save U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Both the Executive Order and congressional action ensures that the U.S. government is taking strategic and decisive actions to prevent mass atrocities and genocide. Our lobbyists Theo Sittler (theo@fcnl.org) and Allyson Neville (allyson@fcnl.org) would be happy to answer questions from your staff.

Sincerely,



Diane Randall
Executive Secretary