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NEWS 2017 - Recent threats by President Trump to "totally destroy" North Korea and to repudiate the Iran deal have brought the world to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe and have intensified global insecurity. Responsible, moral leadership would recognize the Iran deal as an important example of successful diplomacy and conflict transformation that engaged many nations in an arduous, nonviolent process to build trust and avoid military confrontation. Similar honest and respectful, if difficult, diplomatic engagement should mark our approach to North Korea.

To threaten the existence of a nation of 25 million people goes against all the values of our Catholic faith as well as the principles of universal human rights on which the United Nations was founded. To 'totally destroy' North Korea would be an unspeakable crime against humanity; to threaten such an action is outrageous, reprehensible and beneath the dignity of a leader of one of the world's great democracies.

Moreover, the Iran deal has successfully reduced the nuclear danger and has opened the door to other diplomatic efforts in the Middle East, including de-escalating the wars in Syria and Iraq. It is an extremely important example of effective nonviolent action that has the potential in the long term of leading to just peace. As such, the Iran deal should shore up the commitment of the international community to dialogue and negotiation rather than war as a means of transforming conflict.

Pope Francis has called for dialogue with North Korea and a rejection of "the narrative of

fear…and the rhetoric of hatred." At the UN, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's foreign minister, said, "The international community must respond by seeking to revive negotiations ... Peace and international stability cannot be founded on mutually assured destruction or on the threat of annihilation."

Congress and the Administration should carefully protect the Iran Deal and apply similar diplomatic skills in our relationship with North Korea.

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