

URGENT CALL TO ACTION: EMBRACING THE GOALS AND PROVISION OF THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by adopting a number of provisions in current US Congressional proposals. This stands on the UU 6th Principle: The Goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for All.

Proposed by: Bob Warner, partnering with over 400 health, environmental, academic, peace, faith, and justice organizations support this movement, as well as resolutions approved by over 50 municipalities, including the cities of Los Angeles, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, and Washington DC, and the states of California and Oregon.

THEOLOGY:

This proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) is consistent with the theology and expression of UU and virtually all its principles, particularly the 6th principle: The Goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for All.

BACKGROUND:

In 1969, a Business Resolution passed the Statement of Consensus on the United Nations. It stated, in part, “We hail the initial steps on the long road to general and complete disarmament: the establishment of a hot-line, nuclear-free zones in Antarctica, Latin America, and outer space, the partial test-ban treaty, and the non-proliferation treaty.”

In 2010, the UU Peace Ministry Statement of Conscience stated, in part, “We support international efforts to curtail the vast world trade in armaments and call for nuclear disarmament and abolition of other weapons of mass destruction.”

In 2021, the UU Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Network summarized that, “There have been 13 past Statements of Conscience and Actions of Immediate Witness, along with countless letters and sign-ons by the UUA opposing nuclear weapons over a span of many years. The grounding in our seven principles for this resistance to nuclear weapons is clear.”

ACTION:

January 2023: There is now an opportunity to support a Resolution within the United States Congress to actualize the goals and concerns expressed previously by UU actions. Specifically, **House Resolution #77: Embracing the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, which currently has the support of 26 members of Congress.

As the threat of nuclear annihilation is currently the greatest threat to our planet and all life forms, and there is a movement within our Congress to prevent nuclear holocaust as put forward in House Resolution #77: “Embracing the Goals and Provision of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, it is incumbent upon UU to unite with this Resolution and update our Statement of Consensus.

Now more than ever, the United States needs to change our nuclear weapons policies. In January 2023, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists [set the Doomsday clock to 90 seconds to midnight](#) – the closest it has ever been. But instead of fulfilling obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to move in good faith toward eliminating our nuclear arsenal, the U.S. and other nuclear nations are building new, enhanced nuclear weapons.

RESOLUTION and ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

This following resolution is in large part crafted by the “Back from the Brink” movement (www.preventnuclearwar.org) and provides an opportunity to partner with this movement and other organizations supporting world peace and denuclearization. The Unitarian Universalist Association is listed as a current endorser; however, this AIW is brought forward to make individual UU congregations aware of the current urgency of the nuclear threat situation, the existence of House Resolution #77 and the need for individual, as well as congregational, support.

RESOLUTION:

Whereas, nine nations collectively have approximately 13,100 nuclear weapons in their arsenals, most of which are far more destructive than those that killed hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945; and,

Whereas, the detonation of even a small number of these weapons could have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could affect everyone on the planet; and,

Whereas, the United States maintains several hundred nuclear missiles in underground silos on hair-trigger alert, capable of being launched within minutes after a presidential order, which greatly increases the risk of an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized launch; and,

Whereas, the United States continues to reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first, which reduces the threshold for nuclear use and makes a nuclear war more likely; and,

Whereas, the U.S. president has the sole and unchecked authority to order the use of nuclear weapons; and,

Whereas, the world-wide climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recent racial justice uprisings have highlighted the need for greater investment in our healthcare system and our communities; and,

Whereas, over the next 30 years, the United States plans to spend an estimated \$1.7 trillion to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles and submarines that deliver them with more capable, more usable versions; and,

Whereas, U.S. taxpayers spend over \$2 million every hour of every day to maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal; and

Whereas, a grassroots movement called “Back from the Brink: Bringing Communities Together to Abolish Nuclear Weapons” has been endorsed by over 400 health, environmental, academic, peace, faith, and justice organizations and has resulted in resolutions approved by over 50 municipalities, including the cities of Los Angeles, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, and Washington DC, as well as the states of California and Oregon; and,

Whereas, the United States, as well as Britain, China, France and Russia, are obligated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to take concrete steps toward eliminating their nuclear arsenals; and

Whereas, in July 2017, 122 nations approved the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force on January 22, 2021 making it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, manufacture, or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

Therefore, the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals;
- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- ending the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. president to launch a nuclear attack;
- taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and
- cancelling the plan to replace the entire U.S. arsenal with enhanced weapons.

And, be it further resolved that Unitarian Universalists congregations join over 456 other peace groups and call on the United States to embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and encourage congregants to write to their Congressional Representatives, send

Letters to the Editors, use social media to bring awareness to this threat to life, and employ all other peaceful means to bring **bipartisan** support for passage of House Resolution #77.

#