

A Resolution of Christian Witness in Support of New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ Congregations

Back from the Brink Initiative

A call for the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ and NH UCC churches to endorse the *Back from the Brink Initiative* to end the threat of nuclear war.

Proposed by: Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group of the Justice and Witness Ministry of New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ.
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Summary: This resolution is a call to the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ and NHCUCC congregations to gain awareness leading to advocacy and action regarding the urgent need to prevent nuclear war as the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

Background: Today the danger of nuclear war is real and growing. We are marching to the brink of a catastrophe that threatens all of humanity. We need to act now. The explosion of any nuclear weapons would have a devastating impact on the air, water, human and other animal and plant life worldwide.

Rationale:

Whereas, "Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War" is a national grassroots initiative seeking to fundamentally change U.S. nuclear weapons policy and lead us away from the dangerous path we are on. The Call lays out five common-sense steps that the United States should take to reform its nuclear policy. The *Back from the Brink Initiative* is asking organizations and individuals around the country to endorse the Call and build support for the U.S. government to adopt it as its highest national security priority.

Whereas, United States reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first. This increases the chance that a conflict could escalate to nuclear war. Currently any U.S. President has sole unchecked authority to launch a nuclear attack.

Whereas, the President has unchecked authority to order the use of nuclear weapons, either first or in response to a nuclear attack. To order a launch, the President could simply notify the military of his/her decision. The President would likely consult advisers, but this is not required, and no one has the authority to countermand a legal launch order.

Whereas, there is a "prompt launch"/hair-trigger alert system on U.S. nuclear weapons. The United States deploys several hundred nuclear warheads on missiles in underground silos, ready to launch within minutes of a presidential order. This

alert status increases the chance of a launch in response to a false alarm, increasing the danger of accidental war. There have been numerous close calls over the past 40 years due to both human and technical errors.

Whereas, the United States will spend over a trillion dollars in the next 30 years to replace its entire nuclear arsenal, including the bombers, missiles, and submarines that deliver the weapons. This tremendous investment demonstrates that nuclear weapons are still central to U.S. military policy. The new weapons will have enhanced capabilities.

Whereas, the United States — like Britain, China, France, and Russia — pledged under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to eliminate its nuclear arsenal. Non-nuclear weapons states under the NPT are increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress toward meeting this obligation. One result is the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was a cry from the world to make it illegal to “develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess, or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”

Whereas, in October 2018 the President announced he plans to “terminate” the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, raising concerns about the return of Cold War-style tensions over U.S. and Russian deployments of intermediate-range missiles in Europe and elsewhere and the future of the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)

Whereas, human beings are commissioned to nurture the earth and all life upon it, not threaten God’s creation with destruction: “God blessed (human beings) and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves on the earth... I give you all plants that bear seed and every tree that bears fruit with seed: they shall be yours for food. All green plants I give for food to the wild animals... birds...and every living creature.” (Genesis 1:28 -30)

Whereas, after creation of the earth and all that was in it, we read that, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” A nuclear war would destroy God’s creation as we know it. (Genesis 1:31)

Whereas, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Preventing destruction of the earth by a nuclear holocaust would be the greatest peacemaking endeavor possible. (Matthew 5:9)

Whereas, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they train for war any more. But each one shall sit under their vine and under their fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid.” This resolution moves us in the direction of living in peace and unafraid of nuclear war. (Micah 4:3-4)

Therefore, be it resolved:

that the churches of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to make intentional efforts to become informed about and engage in ongoing study of the issues of nuclear war in the effort to build a safer world for our children to inherit.

- Learning about the issues necessitating the 5 actions needed for the U.S. to step back from the brink of nuclear war.
 - 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
 - Cancelling the plan to replace its entire nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons.
 - Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Be it further resolved:

that the NH UCC calls upon all United Church of Christ churches in New Hampshire and congregants to become active endorsers of the *Back from the Brink Initiative* in order to build support for the U.S. government to adopt these actions as its highest national security priority by taking action including, but not limited to:

- ☐ Endorsing the *Back from the Brink Initiative* on the national website (<https://www.preventnuclearwar.org/>).
 - And by inviting other organizations, local governments and individuals to endorse the *Back from the Brink Initiative*, as has been endorsed by seven other cities and towns in NH as well as the Justice and Witness Ministry of the United Church of Christ and the NHCUCC Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group. In addition, a resolution was passed by the 2019 UCC Synod to endorse this national initiative.

Implementation:

The Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group of the New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ will take the lead in supporting and monitoring implementation of this Resolution as part of its annual programmatic action plan and budget. The group also calls upon the Board of Directors, Conference Ministers and Association leaders to partner with the Peace with Justice Advocates Mission Group in building awareness of this Resolution and encouraging and guiding its implementation throughout the Conference.