

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2009
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-A042
TITLE: First Use Military Action
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns
COMMITTEE: National and International Concerns

Directly Related: (attached)

2006-D020 Oppose the War in Iraq and Support Nonviolent Means to Ending Conflict
2003-A033 Urge Church Members to Study Just War Theory and Criteria
2003-A132 Urge Dioceses and Congregations to Study Just War Theory and Pacifism
2003-D068 Prepare a Study on New Warfare Situations
1982-D031 Urge a Governmental Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons

Indirectly Related:

2006-D016 On the Topic of a Pre-Emptive Military Strike Against Islamic Republic of Iran
(Rejected)
2003-C024 Support Non-violent Foreign Policy

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions of General Convention for the period 1976 through 2006, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. Committee members who are interested in obtaining copies of "indirectly related" resolutions, legislative history before 1976, or who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.



Resolution Number: 2006-D020
Title: Oppose the War in Iraq and Support Nonviolent Means to Ending Conflict
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the conclusion of the October 1, 2002 letter of the House of Bishops to members of Congress, stating that the conditions of the “Just War” tradition have not been met in the national government’s decision to attack the nation of Iraq; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention of The Episcopal Church call upon the Congress and the President to immediately develop for implementation a plan for the stabilization of Iraq, to be followed by the prompt withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq, to provide for a transfer of peacekeeping functions to an international peacekeeping force, to work through international and Iraqi organizations in the reconstruction of Iraq’s civil and economic infrastructure, and for the full restoration of Iraqi sovereignty; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on The Episcopal Church to acknowledge and confess that our government’s participation in the war in Iraq has resulted in individual and global injustices including passive acceptance of the loss of our military personnel, lack of support and care for those returning home, indifference to the loss of countless Iraqi citizens, silent response to atrocities, illegal confinement without representation or formal charges and torture; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on The Episcopal Church to request the Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer to step-up dialogue with the Iraqi Muslim and Christian community to work toward nonviolent resolutions to conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention, as a community of faith committed to reconciliation and nonviolence taught in the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, direct the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council to encourage wide use of Christian formation materials that stress nonviolent methods to conflict resolution and change; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention request the Standing Liturgical Commission to commission prayers and liturgies to be used in time of war, and that the General Convention call on Episcopalians to honor and support, through their prayers and actions, the armed service men and women who return home with injuries to body, mind, and spirit that they might be restored to wholeness of life and assisted in recovering from injury and trauma; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on all Episcopalians to honor through their prayers and actions the men and women who conscientiously serve their country and especially those who have been killed and wounded; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call upon all Episcopalians as an act of penitence, to oppose and resist through advocacy, protest, and electoral action the continuation of the war in Iraq, and encourage the President and Congress to take proactive steps to end our participation as soon as possible.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 662-663.



Resolution Number: 2003-A033
Title: Urge Church Members to Study Just War Theory and Criteria
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention call upon all members of The Episcopal Church, in discussions about war and especially the strategy of preemptive strikes, to seriously consider and utilize the Just War criteria developed over the centuries and generally expressed as follows. First, whether lethal force may be used is governed by the following criteria:

- **Just cause:** Force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations.
- **Comparative justice:** While there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to override the presumption against the use of force, the injustice suffered by one part must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other.
- **Legitimate authority:** Only duly constituted public authorities may use deadly force or wage war.
- **Right intention:** Force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose.
- **Probability of success:** Arms may not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success.
- **Proportionality:** The overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved.
- **Last resort:** Force may be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted.

These criteria taken as a whole must be satisfied in order to override the strong presumption against the use of force. Second, the Just War tradition seeks also to curb the violence of war through restraint on armed combat between the contending parties by imposing the following moral standards for the conduct of armed conflict:

- **Noncombatant immunity:** Civilians may not be the objects of direct attack, and military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimize indirect harm to civilians.
- **Proportionality:** In the conduct of hostilities, efforts must be made to attain military objectives with no more force than is militarily necessary and to avoid disproportionate collateral damage to civilian life and property.
- **Right intention:** Even in the midst of conflict, the aim of political and military leaders must be peace with justice, so that acts of vengeance and indiscriminate violence, whether by individuals, military units or governments, are forbidden; and be it further

Resolved, That when legitimate civilian authority determines that war is justified, members of The Episcopal Church recall our Lord's teaching to love our enemies, counsel that participation in or refusal to participate in any war is a discernment process requiring deep reflection and prayer with humility, and acknowledge that one participates in war with great reluctance, always seeking God's mercy and forgiveness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention, recalling the longstanding Episcopal Church view, originally adopted by the 1930 Lambeth Conference and by the 1931 General Convention, that "war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ," urge dioceses and congregations to study and better understand Just War theory and pacifism as they apply to the situation of the United States in responding to contemporary international conflicts.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 317f.



Resolution Number: 2003-A132
Title: Urge Dioceses and Congregations to Study Just War Theory and Pacifism
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention urge dioceses and congregations to study and better understand Just War theory and pacifism as they apply to the situation of the United States in responding to contemporary international conflicts; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend "Just Peace Readings" from the Office of the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies of the Episcopal Church Center, and the website, www.episcopalchurch.org/chaplain, as an important resource in the continuing study of Just War.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 320.



Resolution Number: 2003-D068
Title: Prepare a Study on New Warfare Situations
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops be urged to prepare a study on new warfare situations which may not be adequately addressed by the Just War Theory, such as non-declared wars, asymmetric warfare, pre-emptive strikes, invitations to intervene by legitimate foreign authorities, international terrorism without boundaries, and other forms of military intervention not imagined in past centuries.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 329.



Resolution Number: 1982-D031
Title: Urge a Governmental Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Submitted
Final Text:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, **That this 67th General Convention urges the governments of both the United States and the Soviet Union to adopt a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons; and directs the Secretary of this Convention to communicate this to the President of the United States, members of Congress, and the President of the USSR.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-127.

09 - National and International Concerns

A042

TOPIC/TITLE: Warfare: First Use Military Action
PROPOSER: Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with
Justice Concerns
C&C PAGE:
BB PAGE: 101

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention condemn in
- 2 any nation the first use of armed force in the form of a preventive or pre-emptive strike that is
- 3 aimed at disrupting a non-imminent, uncertain military threat; and be it further
- 4
- 5 *Resolved*, That the Convention strongly admonish the United States Government to renounce its
- 6 2002 policy that asserts the right to act, by armed force if necessary, to "forestall or prevent"
- 7 threats even if "uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack"; and be it
- 8 further
- 9
- 10 *Resolved*, That ordained and lay leadership of The Episcopal Church promote the renunciation of
- 11 "first use" military action as the established teaching of our Church, encouraging parish study and
- 12 public witness.
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