

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-C027
Title: Endorse “Back from the Brink: A Call to Prevent Nuclear War”
Proposer: Central New York
Topic: Warfare

Directly Related: (Attached)

2009-D060 Dismantle US Nuclear Weapons and Explore a Nuclear Arms Moratorium
1997-D022 Support the Goal of Total Nuclear Disarmament
1994-D122 Urge U.S. President to Sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
1988-B013 Urge Continued Reduction of Nuclear Weapons and Funding for Human Needs
1976-D052 Commend Efforts to Control Nuclear Weapons

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

1994-B008 Observe War Anniversaries and Commit to Abolishing Racism and Nuclear War
1988-D056 Commend the Statement by the United Methodist Church on the Nuclear Crisis
1982-D030 Endorse a Bilateral Freeze on the Testing and Production of Nuclear Weapons
1982-D031 Urge a Governmental Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

C027 - Endorse “Back from the Brink: A Call to Prevent Nuclear War”

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Central New York

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 08 - Social Justice & United States Policy

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, that the 152nd Convention of the Diocese of Central New York, following Jesus' commandment to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, endorses the international grassroots initiative “Back from the Brink: the Call to Prevent Nuclear War.” Endorsing “Back from the Brink” supports the adoption of five common-sense steps:

- Renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- End the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a nuclear attack
- Take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair trigger alert;
- Cancel the 1.7 trillion dollar plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons;
- Pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed nations to eliminate their arsenals as established in the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Grassroots endorsements of these five steps will add pressure for change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy, calling on our national leaders to embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to make nuclear disarmament the center of our national security policy, seeking bilateral and multilateral agreements; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention's endorsement will be communicated by diocesan authorities to our elected N.Y. Representatives, Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, and the President of the United States; and be it further

Resolved, that this 152nd Convention of the Diocese of Central NY will submit this resolution to the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

Explanation

In January, the 2020 Doomsday Clock was re-set at 100 seconds to midnight, as announced in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. "Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers – nuclear war and climate change – that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare that undercuts society's ability to respond. The international security situation is dire, not just because these threats exist, but because world leaders have allowed the international political infrastructure for managing them to erode." This is a terrifying reality to face but as followers of Jesus, we must have the courage to act. We have learned in the battle with COVID-19 that when public health infrastructure and preparedness, whether national or international, are underfunded or defunded, a terrible price is paid in human life. The price for nuclear war and nuclear winter is beyond calculation. The Ithaca Area Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, working closely with the Nuclear Disarmament Group at Cornell, has sponsored several educational visits by Dr. Ira Helfand of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). In 2017 PSR collaborated with the Union of Concerned Scientists to launch "Back from the Brink." <https://www.preventnuclearwar.org/>. The vestries of St. John's Church in Ithaca and St. Thomas' Church in Slaterville Springs have responded to the unthinkable danger of nuclear war by endorsing "Back from the Brink." Both the Ithaca Common Council and the Town Council of Lansing voted to endorse as well. To build momentum for this grass-roots citizens' movement, the Ithaca Area EPF Chapter invites the parishes of our diocese to engage with "Back from the Brink" through the resolution process at our diocesan convention. We call on parishes and our diocese as a body to say YES to endorsement. By sending our diocesan resolution forward to the 80th General Convention, the call for endorsement will be shared with The Episcopal Church. This call is in line with nearly 40 years of Episcopal Church policy, urging the U.S. and the other nuclear nations to block the spread of nuclear weapons and eliminate all nuclear weapons from the world (see Addendum). The Doomsday Clock is ticking. Both The Episcopal Church's long-held policy on the nuclear threat and our Baptismal vow "to strive for peace and justice among all people" require us to respond by endorsing "Back from the Brink." Addendum: Episcopal Church Policy on Nuclear Disarmament - 1982 General Convention voted to endorse a bilateral nuclear freeze and nuclear disarmament for U.S. and the Soviet Russia. - 1988 G.C. voted to urge the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to continue disarmament and use saved funds for human needs. - 1994 G.C. voted to urge the U.S. to sign a Test Ban Treaty and to pursue elimination of nuclear weapons. - 1997 G.C. voted to support the goal of total nuclear disarmament by all the nuclear nations. - 2009 G.C. voted to call on all nuclear armed nations to determine a timely process for dismantling nuclear weapons. **Financial impact to the diocesan budget:** There is no funding required to endorse "Back from the Brink" and share that endorsement with elected officials and the wider Episcopal Church. **Who would be responsible for carrying out the resolution?** Dr. Baldwin and Dr. Gaither will post the endorsement on the "Back from the Brink" website.

Appropriate diocesan authorities will communicate the endorsement to our elected federal representatives and senators, as well as with the President of the United States. Secretary of Convention will forward this resolution to the Secretary of General Convention, for consideration at the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church.



Resolution Number: 2009-D060

Title: Dismantle US Nuclear Weapons and Explore a Nuclear Arms Moratorium

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention commend the President's recent invitation to nations to scale down the world's nuclear weapons stockpile; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention call upon U.S. policy makers to determine a timely process for the dismantling of existing U.S. nuclear weapons while urging other nations to do likewise; and be it further

Resolved, That this Church urge the President and Congress to explore a moratorium on production of new nuclear arms.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 367.



Resolution Number: 1997-D022
Title: Support the Goal of Total Nuclear Disarmament
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church support the goal of total nuclear disarmament; and note with appreciation and pleasure the progress that has been made toward this goal; but inasmuch as the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons continue, more must be done to achieve that nuclear disarmament; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention urge the Government of the United States to exercise leadership among the nations, especially the nuclear weapons states, by immediately initiating negotiations for an International Treaty on Comprehensive Nuclear Disarmament in all its aspects to include a deadline for the completion of nuclear disarmament; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention support the World Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and encourage Episcopalians to sign the Campaign's Citizens Pledge on Nuclear Weapons Abolition; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention call upon the comparable bodies in our sister Churches in the Anglican Communion to speak out in a similar way to their civil authorities and governments so that the world-wide Anglican Communion works in concert for total nuclear disarmament; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be transmitted by the Secretary of General Convention to the President of the United States, the Secretaries of State, Defense and Energy, the appropriate Members of Congress, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, and the Primates of the Anglican Communion.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), pp. 231-232.



Resolution Number: 1994-D122

Title: Urge U.S. President to Sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 71st Convention of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with our faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, urge the President of the United States, and the U.S. negotiators at Geneva, to take immediate international leadership in signing and implementing a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the coming year, and to pursue diplomatic initiatives, for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons design, testing, and manufacture anywhere in the world.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 326.



Resolution Number: 1988-B013
Title: Urge Continued Reduction of Nuclear Weapons and Funding for Human Needs
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the leadership of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. be urged to continue their recent success in the reduction of nuclear weapons and to use all funds saved from that and all future disarmament agreements to minister to the social and human needs in their respective countries and, in no event, use the funds for other weapons or instruments of war.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 292.



Resolution Number: 1976-D052
Title: Commend Efforts to Control Nuclear Weapons
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the General Convention of 1976 commend the efforts made at the SALT talks to limit the number of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the arsenals of the major powers; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention support the efforts by the government of the U.S. and other governments to check the proliferation of nuclear arms; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention express its hope for a time when we may end our dependence on the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war and may use nuclear power exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis 1976* (New York: General Convention, 1977), p. C-119.