

**SOUTH BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION**

Calling for the United States to “Pull Back from the Brink” and Prevent Nuclear War

WHEREAS, since the height of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have dismantled more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, but over 14,000 of these weapons still exist and pose an intolerable risk to human survival; and

WHEREAS, 95 percent of these weapons are in the hands of the United State and Russia and the rest are held by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom¹; and

WHEREAS, the use of even a tiny fraction of these weapons would cause worldwide climate disruption and global famine; to wit, as few as 100 Hiroshima sized bombs, small by modern standards, would put at least 5 million tons of soot into the upper atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet, cutting food production and putting 2 billion people at risk of starvation²; and

WHEREAS, a large scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people directly and cause unimaginable environmental damage³ and catastrophic climate disruption dropping temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the last ice age; under these conditions the vast majority of the human race would starve and it is possible we would become extinct as a species⁴; and

WHEREAS, despite assurances that these arsenals exist solely to guarantee that they are never used, there have been many occasions when nuclear armed states have prepared to use these weapons, and war has been averted only at the last minute⁵; and

WHEREAS, nuclear weapons do not possess some magical quality that prevents their use; and

WHEREAS, former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said, speaking about the Cuban Missile Crisis, “It was luck that prevented nuclear war,” yet our nuclear policy cannot be the hope that luck will continue; and

WHEREAS, as the effects of climate change place increased stress on communities around the world and intensify the likelihood of conflict, the danger of nuclear war will grow⁶; and

WHEREAS, the planned expenditure of more than \$1 trillion to enhance our nuclear arsenal will not only increase the risk of nuclear disaster but fuel a global arms race and divert crucial resources needed to assure the well-being of the American people and people all over the world⁷; and

¹ <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>

² <http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/two-billion-at-risk.pdf>

³ <http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/projected-us-casualties-and-destruction.pdf>

⁴ <http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockNW2006JD008235.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2015/04/Close%20Calls%20with%20Nuclear%20Weapons.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/once-again-climate-change-cited-as-trigger-for-war/>

⁷ <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/USNuclearModernization>

WHEREAS, there is an alternative to this march to nuclear war: in July 2017, 122 nations called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons⁸.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of South Burlington, Vermont calls upon our state and federal leaders and our nation to embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of our national security policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of South Burlington will reach out to surrounding cities and townships to discuss appointing a regional citizens commission to study the feasibility of their respective localities becoming compliant with the requirements of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of South Burlington, Vermont calls upon our federal leaders and our nation to spearhead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to The Vermont House of Representatives, The Vermont Senate, Governor Phil Scott, U.S. Congressman Peter Welch, U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, and U.S. President Donald J. Trump.

⁸ <http://www.icanw.org/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>