

## **Mt Toby's Response to Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting on the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

seasoned by Peace and Social Concerns Committee for monthly meeting January 12, 2018

At its October 7, 2017 meeting Northampton Friends Meeting presented to Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting (CVQM) the following minute approved by Northampton October 1, 2017:

*Consistent with Friends long-standing peace testimony, Northampton Friends Meeting calls on Friends to support the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons passed on 7 July, 2017. It was signed by many and supported by a majority of nations at the United Nations to take action to prevent nuclear war – not just now but for all time – by eliminating all nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. These weapons of mass destruction threaten all life on Earth and go against everything we believe in.*

Minute 11 of CVQM further states:

Northampton Friends Meeting asks Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting to request all Meetings in the Quarter to find ways to take action on this minute, and to consider forwarding a minute to New England Yearly Meeting.

We approve this request and **ask Meetings to report to the February 4, 2018 Quarterly Meeting on their response to this minute.**

Peace and Social Concerns Committee was grateful to hear from David Ahlfeld, who has been active in groups in Northampton relating to this concern, and was eager to forward the concern to monthly meeting in time to respond to Quarterly Meeting. He provided the following background:

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the United Nations in July 2017 with the approval of 122 nations. It opened for signature and ratification on September 20, 2017 and will go into force when 50 nations have ratified it. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its work in shepherding the treaty to adoption ([www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org)). The treaty prohibits the possession, the use or threat of use, and the production and testing of nuclear weapons. Once fully implemented, this treaty has the potential to lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons on the planet.

To date none of the nuclear weapon states has participated in any aspect of developing the treaty. Citizens of the United States have a particular responsibility to move forward on nuclear disarmament and two local groups are very active in doing so.

Acknowledging the challenges of moving the United States and other nuclear weapons states to immediate elimination of nuclear weapons, a group led by the Physicians for Social Responsibility (and locally led by Dr. Ira Helfand) invites individual citizens and

organizations of all types to join them in calling on the United States to carry out these specific incremental steps ([www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/back-from-the-brink.html](http://www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/back-from-the-brink.html)):

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

Recognizing that entities within the United States, such as cities and states, businesses, and faith communities, can insure their own compliance with the treaty even before the United States signs the treaty, a Western Massachusetts based group has initiated the Treaty Compliance Campaign ([www.nuclearban.us](http://www.nuclearban.us)). This campaign provides a framework for individuals and entities to become treaty compliant.

After discussion of these topics at its January 8, 2018 meeting the P&SC committee was clear to recommend the following minute for approval by the meeting. We recognize that additional action steps may be called for but are not yet prepared to make a recommendation on these.

**Proposed minute for approval by Mt Toby Monthly Meeting:**

*Mt Toby Friends Meeting joins with Northampton Friends in supporting the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We support the efforts of Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting to find unity among Meetings of the Quarter on determining a way forward on this issue.*