



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 28, 2020

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember Ben Bartlett,
Councilmember Susan Wengraf, and Councilmember Sophie Hahn

Subject: Opposition to Nuclear Warfare

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution marking the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a call to prevent nuclear war.

BACKGROUND

On August 6 and 9, 1945, an estimated 210,000 were killed during the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 75 years later and the consequences of nuclear weapons continues. In January 2020, the Doomsday Clock, a symbolic clock designed in 1947 to show the risk of existential dangers, moved to 100 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to midnight. The dual threat of nuclear weapons and climate change were attributed to this dire announcement. Mining, storage, and disposal of radioactive materials such as uranium frequently take place by indigenous lands. And over the next 30 years, the United States is planning to spend \$1.7 trillion on upgrading its nuclear arsenal instead of phasing it out. Also of great concern, the Trump administration has taken action that has increased the threat of nuclear weapons, such as leaving international treaties including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Iran Deal, along with fumbling negotiations with North Korea.

The City of Berkeley has taken similar action in the past regarding nuclear weapons. Most notably, Berkeley voters approved the Nuclear Free Berkeley Act in 1986. While this act was in response to the growing threat of nuclear warfare during the Cold War, nuclear warfare remains a significant existential threat with continued proliferation and tensions between nuclear nations. Berkeley is also a part of Mayors for Peace, an organization consisting of over 7,900 cities worldwide that advocates for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The detonation of even a small number of nuclear weapons could have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could affect everyone on the planet.

[Title of Report]

CONSENT CALENDAR
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CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguín 510-981-7100

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ON THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. ATOMIC BOMBINGS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI; A CALL TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR

WHEREAS, August 6 and 9, 2020 mark the 75th anniversaries of the United States atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and

WHEREAS, on August 6, 1945 the United States unleashed the nuclear age, dropping a single atomic bomb on Hiroshima – a tiny and crude nuclear weapon by today’s standards – indiscriminately incinerating tens of thousands of ordinary people and killing or injuring over 90% of the doctors and nurses in Hiroshima; and

WHEREAS, three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki; and

WHEREAS, by the end of 1945 more than 210,000 people - mainly civilians - were dead, and the surviving A-bomb victims (“hibakusha”), their children and grandchildren continue to suffer from physical and psychological effects of the bombings; and

WHEREAS, indigenous and colonized peoples have, in large part, borne the brunt of more than 75 years of nuclear devastation resulting from the mining of uranium, the testing of nuclear weapons, the dumping, storage and transport of plutonium and nuclear wastes, and the theft of their lands for nuclear infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, today, more than 13,000 nuclear weapons, most an order of magnitude more powerful than the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki— 92% held by the United States and Russia, continue to pose an intolerable threat to humanity; and

WHEREAS, the detonation of even a small number of these weapons could have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could affect everyone on the planet; and

WHEREAS, over the next 30 years, the United States plans to spend an estimated \$1.7 Trillion to replace its entire nuclear weapons infrastructure and upgrade its nuclear bombs and warheads and the bombers, missiles and submarines that deliver them; and

WHEREAS, all the nuclear-armed nations are upgrading their nuclear arsenals; and

WHEREAS, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved the hands of its iconic Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds to midnight, the closest it’s ever been set since its inception in 1947, due to “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”; and

WHEREAS, according to United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu: “The specter of unconstrained nuclear competition looms over us for the first time since the 1970s. We are witnessing what has been termed a qualitative nuclear arms race, one not based on numbers but on faster, stealthier and more accurate weapons. Regional conflicts with a nuclear dimension are worsening, and proliferation challenges are not receding;” and

WHEREAS, the administration has requested over \$740 billion for the military in its FY 2021 budget proposal, far more than the United States spent for military purposes at the height of the Korean or Vietnam Wars or the peak of the Reagan buildup of the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, the biggest increase in the proposed FY 2021 budget is a nearly 20% increase in spending on nuclear weapons at \$45 billion; and

WHEREAS, the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has come close to overwhelming the health care system even when only a small fraction of the population has required hospitalization— and hospitals were intact to provide care – demonstrates that there can be no meaningful response to or recovery from nuclear war; and

WHEREAS, every city in America is now facing severe budget challenges as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing them to lay off employees and make cuts to critical programs, including those for public safety; and

WHEREAS, according to a recent study, the amount of money spent by the United States in one year on nuclear weapons could instead provide 300,000 ICU (intensive care unit) beds, 35,000 ventilators and 75,000 doctors’ salaries; and

WHEREAS, the United States is obligated under the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to take concrete steps to eliminate its nuclear arsenal; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has been a Nuclear Free Zone since passage of “The Nuclear Free Berkeley Act” (Ord.5784-NS Section 1, 1986), Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) 12.90, which states: “The people of Berkeley find that: A. The nuclear arms race poses an intolerable threat to humanity;” and

WHEREAS, a grassroots movement called “Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War” has been endorsed by 250 health, environmental, academic, peace, and justice organizations and has resulted in resolutions approved by the United States Conference of Mayors and 32 municipalities, including Los Angeles, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, and Washington DC, with more under consideration.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that on the 75th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the City of Berkeley calls on the President and Congress to step back from the brink and to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first; ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack; taking U.S. 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Berkeley urges the United States government to retract its opposition to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to embrace the Treaty as a welcome step towards negotiation of a comprehensive agreement on the achievement and permanent maintenance of a world free of nuclear arms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Berkeley calls on the President and Congress to reverse federal spending priorities and to redirect funds currently allocated to nuclear weapons and unwarranted military spending to support safe and resilient cities and meet human needs, including by providing immediate funding for critical needs exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic such as health care accessible and affordable for all, more robust public health capacity at every level of government, programs to secure housing and food security, and measures to assure secure funding for municipalities and states throughout this and future disasters for which they are the first line of defense; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Congressman Barbara Lee and to Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris.

