

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: August 1, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No. 18-0002-S94
Assignment No. 18-07-0718

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz) to SUPPORT U.S. entry into the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Koretz) to include in the City's 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program, SUPPORT for the United States to enter into the international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and pursue ways to eliminate its nuclear stockpile.

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Koretz), introduced July 31st, 2018, advises that nuclear weapons present an existential threat to humanity, and that every President since Ronald Reagan has worked to reduce global nuclear stockpiles. The Resolution further advises that the Trump administration has broken this precedent with bellicose language and a planned \$1.2 trillion investment in the United States' nuclear arsenal, stoking tensions with Russia and other nuclear powers. The Resolution further advises that in July 2017, 122 nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would ban nuclear weapons. Therefore, the Resolution requests that the City support the United States' entry into this treaty, in addition to calling upon federal leaders to take other steps toward nuclear disarmament such as cancelling the \$1.2 trillion investment and revising protocols related to nuclear attacks.

BACKGROUND:

As of June 2018, the United States has 6,550 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, 5,350 of which are active, according to estimates from the Arms Control Association. This is the second largest stockpile in the world, behind Russia's 6,850 warheads. Other countries with nuclear arsenals include France, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and China, although none of these countries have more than 300 warheads at their disposal.

The United States' nuclear arsenal reached its peak in 1965 with over 30,000 warheads. Most of the decrease happening after the 1991 START I agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. The New START Treaty of 2010 aims to further reduce American and Russian stockpiles to 1,550 by 2021.

President Donald Trump expressed opposition to this treaty shortly after taking office in 2017 and has indicated he will not seek to renew it. President Trump has also threatened nuclear attacks on several occasions against countries like North Korea and Iran. Under current protocols, the President retains the sole authority to order a nuclear strike.

The Trump administration has proposed a \$1.2 trillion plan to rebuild the American nuclear arsenal over 30 years. The Pentagon's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review advocates development and use of low-yield nuclear weapons as a deterrent against possible aggression from Russia or other adversaries. Defense officials claim these will not violate any current arms treaties, and would only be deployed in "extreme circumstances".

On July 7th, 2017, 122 countries signed a United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons urging international cooperation to deactivate all nuclear weapons and prevent their further development,

thus treating them much like chemical and biological weapons in this regard. No countries possessing nuclear weapons voted on the treaty, although it is supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and over 300 diplomatic and military experts.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED:

None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Campbell", is written above a solid horizontal line.

Chris Campbell
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Koretz)

RESOLUTION RULES, ELECTIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must first have been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, there exist over 15,000 nuclear weapons globally, most possessed by the United States and Russia and most significantly more destructive than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and

WHEREAS, the use and detonation of even a small number of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic human, environmental and economic consequences globally – impacting everyone on the planet; and

WHEREAS, despite assurances that nuclear arsenals exist solely to guarantee that they are never used, there have been many near-misses due to accident or miscalculation over the course of the nuclear age when war was averted only at the last moment; 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 grow; and

WHEREAS, nuclear weapons threaten all of humanity but disproportionately impact low-income communities of color; from Indigenous communities harmed by uranium mining and nuclear testing to those who would not have the means to evacuate or relocate after a disaster; and

WHEREAS, every American President since Ronald Reagan has worked to reduce global nuclear stockpiles in an effort to ultimately eliminate these weapons of mass destruction; and

WHEREAS, Donald Trump has repeatedly questioned why we cannot use nuclear weapons and called for a substantial nuclear buildup; and

WHEREAS, the office of the President of the United States currently has the sole and unilateral power to launch a nuclear war without any consultation or any system of check and balances; and

WHEREAS, the planned expenditure by the Trump Administration of more than \$1 trillion to enhance our nuclear arsenal will increase the risk of nuclear disaster, fuel a global arms race, and divert crucial resources that could be better spent on education, healthcare, jobs or infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the production of new nuclear weapons will threaten health and the environment by creating tons of dangerous radioactive waste as well as pressure to test new designs, risking a new generation of “downwinders” or people made ill by radiation released during testing; and

WHEREAS, tensions between the United States and Russia have risen to levels not seen since the Cold War, with the two nuclear giants confronting each other in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, and Syria and an accelerated tempo of military exercises and war games, both conventional and nuclear, on both sides; and risky close encounters between Russian and U.S./NATO forces have increased dramatically in the Baltic region and Syria; and

WHEREAS, these are only some of the many nuclear flashpoints occurring in the world, from the Korean Peninsula, to the South China Sea to the Middle East and South Asia, where all of the nuclear-armed states are engaged in unpredictable conflicts that could catastrophically escalate out of control; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Administration’s 2018 National Defense Strategy, released on January 19, 2018, portrays a shift from the “war on terrorism” to “great power competition,” with a focus on China and Russia as strategic competitors; and

WHEREAS, China, France, the United Kingdom, India and Pakistan are also engaged in nuclear weapons modernization programs; and



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WHEREAS, on March 1, 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a major address to Russia's Federal Assembly, presented a detailed description of an array of new nuclear weapons delivery systems, including a nuclear-powered cruise missile and an underwater drone; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, released on February 2, 2018, manifests a commitment to an increasing and long-term reliance on nuclear arms, lowers the threshold for use of nuclear weapons, emphasizing the role of such weapons in responding to "non-nuclear strategic attacks;" and endorses current plans to sustain and upgrade existing nuclear forces and infrastructure projected to cost well over a trillion dollars over the next three decades; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, through tax dollars, the people of the City of Los Angeles spent a cumulative \$766,022,289 on nuclear weapons programs, costs that will increase dramatically with the Trump Administration's plan to drastically increase the U.S. nuclear arsenal; and

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 voting to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would stigmatize and ban nuclear weapons just as chemical, biological, and other indiscriminate weapons of war are banned; and

WHEREAS, more than 300 former heads of state, experts, and religious and military leaders have called for urgent action to eliminate all nuclear weapons globally; and

WHEREAS, a resolution unanimously adopted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, June 11, 2018, at its 86th Annual meeting in Boston, MA, calls on the Trump administration and Congress to "step back from the brink and exercise global leadership in preventing nuclear war; and

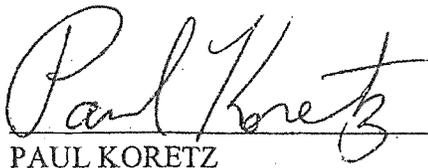
WHEREAS, the residents of Los Angeles have the right to live a life free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for the United States to enter into the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and making nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of its national security policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Los Angeles calls upon our federal leaders 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 U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, canceling 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 Los Angeles City Clerk shall be directed to transmit copies of this resolution to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the President of the United States, and to Governor Jerry Brown.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ

Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: