

Worship and Action for Peace
March 9, 2007

Dear Friends,

Four years ago this month, our nation's armed forces attacked Iraq. We are living still with the tragic consequences of that action. And yet, our government is again preparing to launch its military fury against human beings in the Middle East, this time in Iran.

At its meeting on Saturday, March 3, during Coordinating Committee Weekend at Powell House, Friends in New York Yearly Meeting's Witness Coordinating Committee responded to urgent concern about a possible war against Iran by drafting a minute reiterating Friends' faithfulness to our testimony of peace, calling on the U.S. government to disavow the use of force in settling issues with Iran, and urging Friends to work for a peaceful resolution. The minute will be brought to the body of NYYM Friends at Representative Meeting in April at Chautauqua. Here is the minute:

**Minute on Refraining from
War against Iran**

Friends in New York Yearly Meeting hear anew the call to pray and work for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the Middle East. Fears that war with Iran may be imminent are fanned by news that the United States has dispatched additional troops and war ships to the region and is making claims of Iranian involvement in the fighting in Iraq. Time may be very limited to awaken neighbors and members of Congress if we are to prevent a tragic escalation of the present war.

NYYM's Faith and Practice reminds us that "all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons are contrary to our Christian testimony." It goes on to urge us "to maintain our testimony against war by endeavoring to exert an influence in favor of peaceful principles and the settlement of all differences by peaceful methods." It counsels us to "lend support to all that strengthens international friendship and understanding and give active help to movements that substitute cooperation and justice for force and intimidation."

In faithfulness to our testimony of peace, Friends call on the United States government to use diplomatic means in concert with the United Nations to resolve issues with the government of Iran, to disavow the use of military force in settling these issues, and to seek a positive, cooperative relationship with Iran in good faith. We call on the U.S. Congress to reassert its constitutional responsibilities and to take action to prevent aggression against Iran.

We urge all Friends to share this call within and beyond New York Yearly Meeting and to work for a peaceful resolution of the issues involving Iran. In these efforts, Friends should seek cooperative or collaborative relationships

with Friends organizations, such as the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the American Friends Service Committee and Quaker United Nations Office, and with other faith groups.

Approved by Witness Coordinating Committee, 3-3-07

At Chautauqua, Yearly Meeting will be asked to approve the minute and to direct that NYYM staff and committees make available resources to assist Meetings and Friends and to keep Friends informed about opportunities and activities in support of this witness.

Friends and Monthly Meetings are invited to sit with and share in worship, discussion and discernment this concern about an increasing possibility of United States war on Iran. Please share through the Yearly Meeting office your Meeting's worship and action to uphold peace and prevent war against Iran.

In the Fellowship of Peace,

Linda Chidsey, Fred Dettmer & Lu Harper for the
Worship & Action for Peace Working Group

So man's proneness to engage in war is still a fact. But wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force, but the destructive power of modern weapons eliminated even the possibility that war may serve as a negative good. If we assume that life is worth living and that man has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war. In a day when vehicles hurtle through outer space and guided ballistic missiles carve highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can claim victory in war. A so-called limited war will leave little more than a calamitous legacy of human suffering, political turmoil, and spiritual disillusionment. A world war—God forbid!—will leave only smoldering ashes as a mute testimony of a human race whose folly led inexorably to ultimate death. So if modern man continues to flirt unhesitatingly with war, he will transform his earthly habitat into an inferno such as even the mind of Dante could not imagine. . . .

We will not build a peaceful world by following a negative path. It is not enough to say 'We must not wage war.' It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace. . . .

So we must fix our vision not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but upon the positive affirmation of peace. We must see that peace represents a sweeter music, a cosmic melody that is far superior to the discords of war. . . . If we have the will and determination to mount such a peace offensive, we will unlock hitherto tightly sealed doors of hope and transform our imminent

cosmic elegy into a psalm of creative fulfillment.

Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, December 11, 1964, www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html