

# **CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Proposed) OPPOSITION TO DEVELOPMENT OF NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Authors: Robert M. Gould, MD, and Robert Lull, MD

Resolution was unanimously supported by CMA Delegations representing San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey County Medical Associations, with CMA Reference Committee recommendation to approve on "Consent Agenda" Final Action: "Temporarily Tabled" March 17, 2005

Whereas, the California Medical Association has for many years shared the medical community's understanding that nuclear weapons pose a unique threat to human survival that is a legitimate concern of physicians (AMA Policy 520.999, AMA Policy 520.997), underscoring its support for the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction (CMA Resolution 118-97);[1] and,

Whereas, the U.S. government has released a Nuclear Posture Review that calls for developing and deploying new nuclear weapons, and explicitly discusses contingencies for U.S. use of its proposed improved "nuclear strike capabilities";[2] and,

Whereas, U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories are designing advanced earth-penetrating (bunker-busting) weapons, manufacturing a new generation of nuclear components to update old warheads, and preparing for renewed nuclear testing;[3] and,

Whereas, it has been estimated that even a very low-yield nuclear weapon used in an urban environment would risk producing tens of thousands of civilian radiation casualties that could overwhelm even the most effective medical care system; and

Whereas, U.S. plans for developing and deploying new nuclear weapons threaten to usher in a new era of nuclear weapons proliferation that could increase the chances for nuclear or radiologic weapons to be used in "terrorist" scenarios; and,

Whereas, in 2004 the Maine and Oregon Medical Associations passed resolutions calling on the United States government to abandon plans to modernize its nuclear weapons arsenal and to abandon its plans to initiate a new era of nuclear testing; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That CMA calls on the United States government to abandon plans to develop and deploy new nuclear weapons, and to immediately halt any preparation for resuming the testing of nuclear weapons; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CMA calls on the United States government to explicitly reaffirm its historical commitment to international treaties aimed at curbing the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CMA should refer this issue for national action.

#### References

1 CMA Resolution 118-97 "Abolition of Weapons of Mass Destruction."

2 Hulse C and Dao J. Bush Administration Examines Steps to a Revamped Arsenal. New York Times. May 29, 2003; Gordon MR. U.S. Nuclear Plan Sees New Targets and New Weapons. New York Times. March 10, 2002, A1; Physicians for Social Responsibility. Nuclear Weapons in Counterproliferation: Responding to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat. Washington DC, 2001. Available at: <http://www.psr.org/s11/chembionuclthreat.html>. Accessed November 6, 2002; Cushman Jr J. Rattling New Sabers. New York Times, March 10, 2002, A1.

3 Richter P. Door Opened for New Era of Nuclear Arms. Los Angeles Times. May 10, 2003; Sterngold J. Resurgence for Nuclear Labs. Scientists Designing Weapons for Terror War, Planning Underground Tests. San Francisco Chronicle, October 22, 2002; Sidel VW, Geiger HJ, Abrams HL, Nelson RW and Loretz J. The Threat of Low-Yield Earth-Penetrating Nuclear Weapons to Civilian Populations: Nuclear "Bunker Busters" and Their Medical Consequences. Cambridge, Mass.: International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 2003 (Available at <http://www.ippnw.org/IPPNWEPWReport.pdf>. Accessed 1-2-04.)