

Friends Meeting of Washington Minute on the War in Ukraine

**Presented by FMW's Committee on Peace & Social Concerns
Agreed upon at FMW's Meeting for Business, September 11, 2022**

War is never the best answer. It brings death, injury, destruction, and disruption that often spreads far beyond the immediate "war zone." It hardens hearts and attitudes, too often leading makers and survivors of war to dehumanize members of the "other" side.

Like many around the world, members of Friends Meeting of Washington were deeply disturbed by the invasion of Ukraine that Russia launched in Second Month 2022, and by the destruction that invasion visited (and continues to visit) on the people of Ukraine, on the already-tenuous food security status of nations of the global South, on global efforts to combat climate change, and many other aspects of the interconnected world we live in.

We have searched our hearts for the best way to respond to the invasion, mindful of valued teachings such as that of early Quaker Margaret Fell who said, " We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity; it is our desire that others' feet may walk in the same, and do deny and bear our testimony against all strife, and wars... and [we] love and desire the good of all."

We appreciate the facts that our president has not sent U.S. troops to Ukraine; that he has remained careful not to escalate tensions with Russia to the point at which a direct conflict between these two nuclear-armed nations might erupt; that he has provided humanitarian aid for the people and communities devastated by the war; and that in this case he has stressed our country's strong opposition to the practices of invading or occupying other people's countries.

But we are also deeply dismayed at the strongly military nature of the response of our government to the crisis in Ukraine and its apparent reluctance to seek direct talks with Russia to explore ways to end the fighting or to support the efforts of other governments to do so. Indeed, President Biden and some cabinet members have made ill-considered statements that implied a desire for "regime change" in Russia. Those statements, like the strongly military nature of Washington's interventions in Ukraine, have dangerously increased the level of tension between our country and Russia, two countries whose massively capable nuclear arsenals give their leaders unique responsibilities for the survival of humanity and the natural world we live in.

We are mindful, too, that every million dollars paid to arms manufacturers to procure arms for Ukraine is a million dollars that the U.S. government could have invested into much-needed social and infrastructure programs worldwide or here at home.

Friends Meeting of Washington calls on Pres. Biden to work for an immediate, all-parties ceasefire in Ukraine in order to halt the carnage there and to allow a swift return to the high-level diplomacy with Russia, Ukraine, and all other interested parties that is needed to bring about a lasting end to this crisis. He should pursue this diplomacy with the goal of speedily attaining lasting, sustainable formulas for both the intra-Ukrainian governance issues and the broader Europe-wide security issues that underlay the eruption of the current conflict.