What We Believe

The World Without War Council was founded in 1958 to be a place in American society where those committed to developing alternatives to war could gather and pursue this goal in the context of a commitment to American national values and to social change through nonviolent means.

A limited number of moral and political beliefs distinguish our work to end war:

* **Focus on Citizen Education.** The actions of government on issues of war and peace are in part expressions of ideas, values, and attitudes held by ordinary citizens, members of the general society. Beyond the evident role of experts, elected leaders, and the major government bureaucracies, we believe that public opinion and thought in the communities, associations, and myriad social groupings of American life also are significant shapers of our nation's foreign affairs. The Council works to improve citizen understanding of the realities of international conflict and to promote more effective American leadership in efforts to develop alternatives to war.

* **Avoidance of Dogma.** The Council's educational work avoids dogma. It does not adhere to liberal, conservative, or any other orthodoxies. It is based only on the assumption that an American citizenry more informed and thoughtful about the nature of war and the range of possible alternatives to it will be more united and effective in pursuing those alternatives as a nation.

* **The Need for Both Idealism and Realism.** The United States has the responsibility and capacity to demonstrate more vision and to set higher goals in the world arena. Realism requires us to acknowledge the limits to our influence, to avoid commitments we cannot keep, and to recognize that intentions alone are not the test of moral behavior. But our knowledge that different human societies can live together and manage their inevitable conflicts peacefully also tells us that ending war is a reasonable, if difficult, goal. The achievement of such a large and difficult goal requires a common vision, however, and a sense that there are values greater than those encompassed by the concept of national security. Through its community-based activities, the Council seeks to articulate those wider values, developing both a realistic appreciation of the problems work to end war must address and the vision without which such work is unlikely to take place.

* **The Resolution of All Conflict Not Required.** The elimination of war as an instrument of international politics does not depend on the