

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION ON MILITARY SPENDING**

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, came into the world to break down the dividing walls of hostility (Eph. 2:11-19) between people. We are called to continue that work. Our Biblical faith leads us to work for peace and justice among the nations (Matt. 5:9; Ps. 34:14). We believe that building up war-making capabilities is not the way for nations to create a world of peace and justice (Is. 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-4). We worship the God of love and life, not of destruction and death. We are to work for God's shalom in the world, which means to work for peace, health, wholeness and security.

We view with dismay the continued reliance by many countries on military expenditures as a substitute for negotiations and diplomacy. The rapid advances in military technology and the significant increases in arms production and sales create less security for all of God's people on earth, not the greater security which we seek. Though mutually assured destruction with strategic nuclear weapons is no longer articulated as a basic military doctrine, the United States and other nations still consider nuclear strikes as a legitimate foreign policy option. In addition, these nations continue to maintain their nuclear weapons on alert status.

We are dismayed at the continued high levels of military spending both planned and enacted into law by our government. Although the Soviet Union has dissolved, the Warsaw Pact has collapsed and Russia is now an ally, the U.S. will spend more than one trillion dollars for its military over the next four years, while major needs in health, education, welfare, housing and transportation go unmet. Indeed, Congress authorized an increase in military spending for each Fiscal Year from 1995 through 1998. U.S. military spending has declined only modestly since the height of the Cold War. This emphasis on military spending as a means to national security ignores the fact that the security of a nation is weakened when its own people are treated unjustly. Cutting expenditures for human needs decreases our nation's security by increasing class conflict, racism, poverty, and illiteracy. We also recognize that since most military spending does not create consumer goods or services, such spending is an important contributor to inflation and the growth of our national debt. Recognizing further that the military industries are capital-intensive and employ highly skilled persons, we reject the arguments that military spending is an effective means to deal with unemployment.¹

In connection with each proposed military program and expenditure, no decision should be made until adequate answers to the following questions have been provided: What effect will the new program and expenditure have on our security, on potential adversaries, on inflation and the economy, on the increase in our national debt and on the social well-being of our own people?

Therefore, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches, USA:

1. urges the Administration and Congress to examine closely each military program and expenditure, in order to identify and eliminate all weapons which contribute to instability and needlessly escalate the arms race;
2. commends the current Administration and previous Administrations for diplomatic progress and for expenditures to eradicate the threat of chemical and biological weapons from the earth, and urges the Administration and Congress to stand firmly against any suggestions that the U.S. produce or use any chemical or biological weapons;

¹ The Defense Monitor, "Jobs and the Pentagon: Is Military Spending Good for the Economy?", Sept.-Oct. 1977, page 3.

Marion Anderson, "Converting the Work Force: Where the Jobs Would Be", (Employment Research Associates).

3. urges the Administration to continue its cooperative efforts with other nations to make mutual reductions in the stockpile of nuclear warheads and delivery systems, to remove nuclear weapons from alert status and to end worldwide nuclear testing, holding to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from the earth;
4. urges the Administration and Congress to pursue peace (other than through military expenditure) with the same effort as is used in pursuing adequate military defense;
5. urges American Baptist churches and church members to study and discuss prayerfully the issues of military spending, national security and the economy, and to become more active agents of peace and reconciliation.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1981
Adopted Unanimously
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1995
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1999
(General Board Reference # - 8077:12/81)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Military and Foreign Policy

Adopted December 1978

Nonmilitary means to resolve international conflict must be sought and practiced on an intentional and continual basis.

Military funding should be examined in light of the total needs of a nation and with the recognition that human needs must be met if a nation is to be secure.

The proliferation of increasingly powerful weapons does not guarantee national security and may result in less security...

...Arms control agreements should be pursued which deal with the larger range or arms production, including nonnuclear systems. The level of armaments should not be allowed to be determined by the competition among the military services for appropriations to produce their own weapons systems. Arms sales must not increase the likelihood of war or contribute to international instability...

...Social and economic justice, as well as concern for human welfare and potential, are essential elements in national security. Social, economic and political structures that do not respond constructively to the needs of people contribute to the causes of war and global instability.

Additional Supportive Positions

American Baptist Resolution on Disarmament- Adopted June 1978

...urges the U.S. Administration to take the initiative encouraging all nations to supplement disarmament and arms control negotiations with restraint on weapons development and arms sales, and reduction of the amount of national budget devoted to military hardware and support of the armed forces.

American Baptist Resolution on Peace with Justice-Adopted 1964 and Reaffirmed March 1979.

We live in a time of great tension and fear. The stockpiling of nuclear and

biological weapons by an increasing number of nations poses a constant threat to the future of the human race...