

8089:3/82

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD
AFFAIRS**

Since international affairs have the potential of life or death consequences for millions of people, it is very important that the United States government determine its policies, both domestic and foreign, within the framework of a world community. We need to understand that:

1. a paramount force in our time is rapid and comprehensive social change due to the breakup of Soviet power, ethnic and nationalistic hostilities, the growth of international terrorism, and the growing gap between the rich and the poor;
2. a paramount factor in our time is the interdependence of large and small nations;
3. a paramount question of our time is whether the majority of all humanity will be able to acquire the conditions necessary for human dignity;
4. a paramount requirement of our time is the establishment of politically effective and just relations with the rest of the world.

We are concerned that United States foreign policy rests on some assumptions that are not sufficiently sensitive and responsive to the needs of other members of the world community. It is our conviction that:

1. In its role as a world leader the U.S. has used military force to preserve human freedom. However, there is still too great a reliance upon the role of the military in U.S. foreign policy. The most fundamental issues of our time are not primarily military but economic, social, political and ecological. It is imperative that resources used for military purposes be freed for more constructive purposes at home and abroad.
2. The adversarial assumptions of the cold war are being turned by some toward creating new enemies in Asia, Africa or elsewhere. Rather than creating new hostilities, the U.S. should strive diligently for building greater political and economic cooperation and interdependence. We urge strong support for the freedom all of nations to determine their own affairs in constructive dialogue among the community of nations.
3. The U.S. should reaffirm its faith in the rule of international law and in international organizations. Since the United Nations is the most important organ for peace and dialogue in the world community, the U.S. should give stronger support to United Nations' initiatives in settling international disputes; strengthen its contributions to United Nations' peacekeeping and economic development efforts; pay its full financial obligations to the United Nations; submit to World Court verdicts even

when viewed as unfavorable; and urge the inclusion of all national governments of the world community in the United Nations.

Therefore, the United States should review its national goals and give greater priority to strategies that fit the rapid changes in our world, restrain unwarranted use of military power, and increase its economic and political support of people striving for self respect and control over their future.

We urge all bodies of the American Baptist Churches USA and its member congregations to demonstrate denominationally and ecumenically this concept of the world community of nations that we hereby urge on our government.

Adopted by the American Baptist Convention 1969

1000 For, 206 Against, 63 Abstentions

Affirmed as an American Baptist Resolution by the Executive Committee of the General Board March 1982

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1993

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1997

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 2001

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board – March 2005
(General Board Reference # 8089:3/82)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Military and Foreign Policy

Responsible Use of Power

Powerful and wealthy nations must be held accountable to recognize that they have received their power from many sources and they have an obligation to use and restrain that power for the common good.

Security and Stability

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

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

Pursuit of Peace and Justice

Global understanding and cooperation are essential to the pursuit of peace. Our welfare is fundamentally linked to that of all people. National actions and priorities continually need to be reassessed in light of this global interdependence. The needs and rights of all peoples must be respected if there is to be a solid foundation for peace.

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.

The United States should lend its efforts and influence to bringing about reforms in the United Nations that will strengthen it to meet present needs. Global enforcement systems such as police and courts will be necessary to assure compliance with international agreements. Collective judgment and common action must be utilized to solve world problems.