

AMERICAN BAPTIST POLICY STATEMENT ON MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Christians are called to be peacemakers and this call includes the responsibility to work for peace among nations.

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.

The United States should work to remove injustice and lack of equal opportunity and seek allies to promote justice throughout the world.

Security and Stability

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 and Disarmament

Arms control and disarmament are essential for the welfare and survival of humanity. These goals must be pursued multilaterally and bilaterally where possible and with safeguards, but nations must, at times, also take some unilateral steps to halt the arms race in order to encourage trust and reduce the likelihood and destructiveness of war.

Arms control agreements should be pursued which deal with the larger range of 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.

Conscientious efforts should be made to reduce nuclear armaments and to impose safeguards on nuclear technology to prevent further proliferation.

Goals for the immediate future which should be pursued include a comprehensive global ban on nuclear weapons testing, controls on weapons research and development, nuclear nonproliferation agreements, and broader inclusion of nuclear and nonnuclear countries in these global decisions that affect them. Longer range goals should also be sought for disarmament down to levels that provide for internal policing within nations and international policing as adopted among nations.

Economic Considerations

Diversifications and economic conversion by nations whose economies have become dependent on military production are essential if we are to hope for a world of peace. The United States must take leadership in technological conversion, to provide employment in human service fields and to lessen the economic dependence on military production.

International economic systems must transcend narrow national self-interests and provide a framework for global justice and peace.

Effective civilian oversight and control must determine military and foreign policy. Such policy should be influenced by diplomatic initiatives rather than prescribing them. Elected officials must be challenged to live up to their responsibilities to act on behalf of the larger public interest. Safeguards must be developed to prevent entanglement between military policy and industries with defense contracts which subverts the public interest.

Accountability and Enforcement

U. S. corporations that violate the letter or the spirit of U. S. foreign policy limiting arms sales should be subject to economic and criminal sanctions. Corporations should develop their own policies in light of national and international considerations consistent with eco-justice.

Pursuit of Peace and Justice

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 endorsement 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.

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.

Commitment to Peace

As American Baptists, we commit ourselves to seek peace and to pursue it, to emphasize peace education, to examine our lives so that we may be a better witness for peace and justice, and to work together with others pursuing these goals.

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